The Latino Landscape in Oakland, California

A report prepared for the City of Oakland Department of Violence Prevention[1]

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was prepared for the City of Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) as a landscape analysis of the Latino community in Oakland. The study's core objectives were to identify and summarize data that are available about the Latino community in Oakland, including demographics and crime and violence data, and identify risk and protective factors for this population. To that end, the authors identified and analyzed existing data and conducted primary research through semi-structured interviews with various individuals and organizations that are a part of or work closely with the Latino community in Oakland. Interviewees included school and school district officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), police and probation officers, community members and a social worker, among others.

Section 1 introduces demographic data, including race and ethnicity among the population as a whole and specifically among students. We present an analysis of data from different sources, including the Census, but primarily the American Community Survey. We provide a prospective outlook regarding the future Latino population in the city by analyzing the main patterns of English learners obtained from school district data. The intention is to extrapolate what the Latino landscape may look like as a generational replacement occurs in the coming decade. We also describe the Latino population in Oakland with a breakdown into ancestry groups.

The population of the city of Oakland is very diverse, and school district data tell us that the share of the Hispanic population is only going to increase in the future (Latinos comprise 23.4% of the 2020 the Census respondents, but 43.6% of the students enrolled in the Oakland Unified School District). Age profiles are also rather telling, in this sense, about the future of the city: Hispanics are much younger than other ethno-racial groups. Demographic processes, even with the arrival of new immigrants or out migration, are rather predictable. The city should expect its Hispanic population to continue growing, comprising the majority in many areas of the City.

Section 2 provides an overview of the main risk and protective factors that can be identified among Latino groups, in terms of poverty, age structure, and schooling. Findings from the qualitative interviews complement and extend the quantitative insights from the data analysis. The findings highlight important differences in poverty, age and schooling profiles among different Latino national origins, which can be incorporated into public policies aiming to reduce the vulnerability of those groups as victims of violence or potential recruits of gangs and criminal organizations.

Young Honduran, Guatemalan and Salvadoran men and women in Oakland are particularly vulnerable to crime and violence due to trauma that many experienced in their home countries or in the process of migrating to the United States. Particularly if kids are disconnected or separated from their families, as many of these youth arriving in Oakland are, they may gravitate to building their own street family to gain protection from them.

Risk and protective factors identified with specific ethno-racial groups should be interpreted carefully. Individuals who identify as Latino/Hispanic are not intrinsically or culturally more likely to be involved in crime or violence *because* they are from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras or

Mexico. Neither are they more likely to be victimized *because* they identify as Latino/Hispanic. However, ethnicity and national origin allow us to identify risk and protective factors because different social and economic conditions characterize different populations in the City. Support from preexisting social networks aids in their integration and search for jobs, and family structures help youth avoid risky behaviors.

The main findings regarding risk and protective factors for the Latino population in Oakland are:

1. The growing Latino/Hispanic share of the Oakland population is spurred by a younger population than the rest of the ethno-racial groups and by increases in numbers of Central American migrants. This has an important impact in demands for special school services catering to these students, since a significant number of these households only speak Spanish, as well as some indigenous languages, such as Mam.
2. Diversity within the City of Oakland presents challenges in terms of the potential for conflict and failures in cooperation, due to the fragmentation of ethno-racial groups. This is compounded with a shift towards majoritarian status of Hispanic groups that used to be minorities in some specific neighborhoods.
3. Recent Guatemalan and Honduran residents of Oakland are quite distinct in their risk and protective factors compared to other Latino groups. Among the Central American immigrants, Salvadoran origin residents are not as poor, with incomes similar to those of Mexican residents. The lowest human capital (in terms of schooling attainment) and income is observed among Guatemalan residents. And the youngest age profiles are observed among Hondurans.
4. The greatest vulnerability for Honduran residents is related to unaccompanied minors, as reflected in their very young age profile.
5. For the lowest income Guatemalan immigrants, income and employment support programs and policies should take into account that many of them do not speak Spanish, but are likely to be from indigenous Central American origins.
6. Recent Mexican immigrants appear to become integrated into existing networks of prior residents. When Mexican American/Chicano and new arrivals from Mexico are analyzed separately, these two groups do not appear to show significant differences in their poverty levels, schooling, or age profile.

In section 3, we provide an overview of crime and violence indicators for the city of Oakland. We reproduce the analysis of crime data from the Oakland Police Department with some descriptive statistics, and present maps overlaying crime data with relevant socio-demographic variables. The main purpose of this section is to highlight that even though Latinos have become victimized in greater numbers than in previous years, the general patterns of violence and crime do not seem to be driven by this specific ethno-racial group. In addition, there is little evidence suggesting that pattens of crime and violence in the City of Oakland, and in particular homicides, are changing due to the increased presence of Latino residents. However, there seems to be some increase in the victimization levels of Hispanic individuals.

Section 4 discusses the Latino groups involved in violence that are present in Oakland. This discussion is not meant to be comprehensive, as previous police data available to DVP already include all of the Latino gangs in Oakland and their geographic distribution. This section presents

new insights that were uncovered during the interviews, as well as information that is specific to the Central American gangs. Barrio 18 and MS-13 are not as visible in the City as other more established Latino or Black gangs. However, based on our examination of recent gang analysis reports that are cited in this study, it appears that Latino gang dynamics and rivalries have not been explored in as much depth as Black gangs. A more nuanced analysis of Latino gangs in Oakland could uncover more information about the presence of Central American gangs and how the dynamics between Latino gangs generate violence.

In the final section, we conclude the report and provide recommendations on how to leverage the landscape analysis for violence prevention program selection and implementation. Furthermore, this section provides directions for further research including designing statistical analyses to disentangle cultural dynamics from social and economic determinants of violence in the city of Oakland.

The main recommendations that emerge from this study's findings are the following:

1. Consider the possibility of earmarked resources to alleviate the poverty gap of Central American families, particularly the Guatemalan indigenous ones.
2. Provide greater support to schools that have newcomer minorities and might not be providing the kind of comprehensive support, beyond English Learner instruction, that specialized schools provide.
3. Provide greater support to schools serving newcomers so they can offer the intense kind of mentoring services needed to remove barriers to education, remove students from dangerous situations, and support medical needs and working and training efforts. A new kind of needed service is boarding, to address the housing and commuting challenges for this population.
4. Train police officers and other service providers on the diversity of Central American migrants, and in particular the circumstances of youth who are English and Spanish learners and come from indigenous origins.
5. Recruit and hire more Latino police officers, social workers, teachers and health providers who may be more attuned to the changing demographics of the City of Oakland. These new hires should include speakers of indigenous languages that are most common among Latino immigrants in Oakland, particularly Mam.
6. Invest in citywide efforts to better understand the way in which Latino gangs may be consolidating or fragmenting in cooperation or competition with existing criminal groups. This may involve greater police intelligence efforts aimed at this specific objective, or perhaps a better approach would involve connecting law enforcement with Latino community leaders and organizations.
7. Enhance the political voice and representation of Latino groups, and their diverse interests and needs, within the School District Board and the City Council. Continue studying and understanding the changing Latino landscape in Oakland, with the incorporation of best practices and the deep knowledge of community organizations and other local stakeholders.

Finally, this report provides some potential directions for further research. This includes a research project designed to disentangle cultural dynamics from social and economic determinants of

violence in the city of Oakland and the possibility of collecting targeted surveys of some of the most vulnerable populations.

1. Demographics

1.1 Study background

The City of Oakland's Department of Violence Prevention (DVP) contracted with the authors to conduct a landscape analysis of the Latino[4] community in Oakland. The study's core objectives were to: (1) identify and summarize data that are available about the Latino community in Oakland, including data regarding demographics and crime; (2) identify risk and protective factors for the Latino population related to crime and violence; and (3) identify and describe violent groups in Oakland that identify as Latino, including relationships between groups. To that end, the authors identified and analyzed existing data and conducted primary research through interviews with various individuals and organizations that are a part of or work closely with the Latino community in Oakland. Interviewees included school and school district officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), police and probation officers, community members, and a social worker, among others.

1.2 The ethnic composition of the City of Oakland

In order to facilitate the assessment of risk and protective factors characterizing the Latino population in Oakland, the next section provides a mapping of the neighborhoods where Latino residents live. These maps are only a first approximation to characterize the challenges this segment of residents face, as distinct from other ethno-racial groups within the city. The neighborhood where someone lives often determines a great deal about exposure to gangs and violence as well as victimization. Poor, new-arrived immigrants are usually concentrated in specific areas within any city. This is not only a consequence of housing markets and the availability of places to live but also due to complex processes of social interaction within communities. Ethnic discrimination or other structural conditions of exclusion and deprivation are usually lived experiences in specific territories or places.

Following an initial mapping of the Latino population in Oakland, the next section provides a breakdown of Latino residents into more nuanced categories, related to national origin, immigration status, and some of the most salient socio-economic characteristics of each distinct group. The report highlights the statistical uncertainty that surrounds any estimation of the actual number of Latino immigrants, particularly within vulnerable groups, including youth, unaccompanied children, or Guatemalan indigenous peoples. Notwithstanding the inherent

[4] In this document, the terms "Latino" and "Hispanic" are used indistinctly, as a nominal form that describes a heterogenous population. There are profound academic and public policy debates surrounding the nuance and difference these terms represent. The document will refrain from using "Latinx", a neutral gender form, because it is not yet firmly established in official nomenclatures. In this sense, it follows the conventional usage from the Census Bureau.

uncertainty, it is possible to characterize the relative size and characteristics of those populations, including estimating bounds that include the margin of error in those calculations.

Oakland is arguably the most ethnically diverse city in the United States.[5] The City government has made efforts to map this diversity in order to plan for greater equity, acknowledging persistent territorial inequalities. The City of Oakland Geographic Equity Toolbox, Version 2, was created by the Oakland Department of Transportation (OaklandDOT) Racial Equity Team as a tool that would allow the prioritization of neighborhoods for planning purposes, incorporating racial disparities from a spatial perspective.[6] The toolbox combines indicators related to the presence of minorities, low income, schooling, the elderly and disabled, and housing costs. The most heavily weighted component among these indicators are poverty and people of color (POC). POC is defined as the share of the non-White population, as estimated with the most recent updates (2019 in version 2) of the American Community Surveys (ACS). The highest priority neighborhoods in the City should be, according to these racial equity scores, Eastlake/Fruitvale, and Central East Oakland.

As noted in Figure 1, existing estimates of the share of the Hispanic population in Oakland from this source are not too different from those calculated from the most updated information collected by the Census Bureau in 2020. The Census, however, found an even larger share of Hispanic residents in many areas of Eastern Oakland (the areas depicted in the maps are Census tracts). The legend in the two maps keeps the same classification and color scheme, in order to make them comparable. The yellow color represents the areas of the city where Hispanics represent a minority of less than 10 percent. Conventional choropleth maps have a disadvantage in that they shade territories according to the land area represented, not necessarily reflecting population densities. Most of the yellow areas are not densely populated, hiding the fact that most of the city has, in fact, a significant Latino minority of at least 33% (these areas are shaded in various brown tones). There are many Census tracts where Latinos are the absolute majority (more than 50%) of the population in Oakland (shaded dark brown). Nevertheless, the shift in ethno-racial composition is a city-wide phenomenon.[7]

[5] There are different ways to measure ethnic, racial, cultural and linguistic diversity, but from the point of view of ethno-racial fractionalization, depending on the specific year data used, the only city in the US that might be more diverse than Oakland is Stockton, California. Whites in Oakland account for around 40% of the city residents. This makes Oakland rather unique: even among the most diverse California cities, Whites normally constitute a plurality, that is, more than half of the population.

[6] Accessed from: https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/oakdot-geographic-equity-toolbox#:~:text=Oakland%20Department%20of%20Transportation%20(OakDOT,experienced%20historic%20and%20current%20disparities

[7] The differences are not just about methodology for measurement. The OaklandDOT Equity Toolbox map reflects estimates generated from the 2019 update of a 5-year random sample of Oakland residents collected by the American Community Survey (ACS). The 2020 Census is not a sample, but reflect the full universe of residents responding the questionnaire. Virtually all of our interviewees pointed out that the share of the Latino population in Oakland is probably larger than any official estimate. This share has been growing over the past 20 years, particularly in some areas of East Oakland.

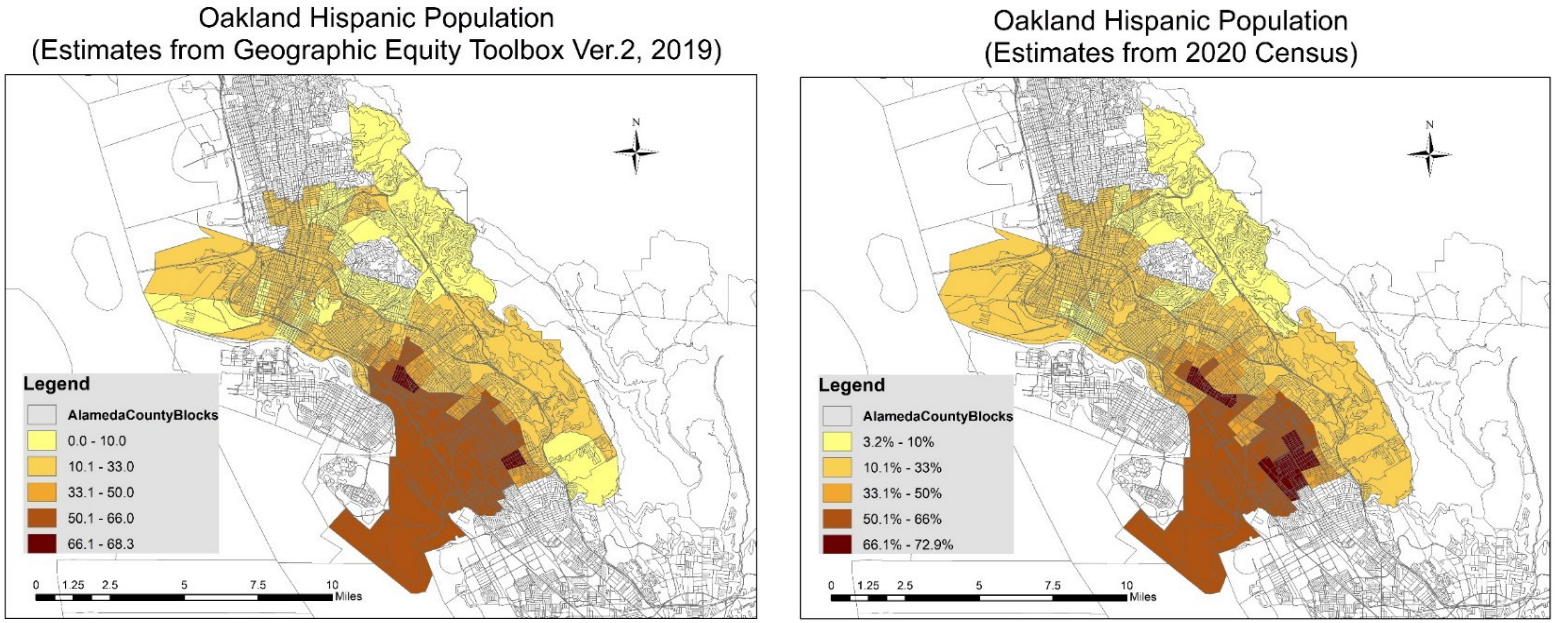


Figure 1: Comparison of Hispanic Population according to Oakland Geographic Equity Toolbox and the US 2020 Census

Emphasizing the category of people of color (POC) often obscures an ethno-racial re-composition that is occurring in Oakland, where the needs, risks and circumstances of African American residents might be quite different from those of the Hispanic populations, particularly when comparing newly arrived immigrants who are often undocumented and have little English proficiency, with long established residents from African descent who are US citizens. Both groups continue suffering from exclusion and racialized discrimination, but each deprivation takes specific distinct forms, and the family structures and social capital they may have available as protective factors from violence also differ.

Over the past few years, social scientists have learned that fractionalization among distinct linguistic, ethnic or racial groups makes it difficult to generate cooperation or solve collective action problems (Alesina et. al, 2003). In extreme conditions, a large degree of fractionalization can lead to competition for resources and conflict (Esteban and Ray, 2008). Diversity in the City of Oakland can be represented through a calculation of a metric called the "effective number" of ethno-racial groups that exist in a given territory. This is calculated as the inverse of the so-called fractionalization index, a measure of the probability that two randomly chosen individuals belong to the same group.[8] Figure 2 shows the calculation of this index at the level of Census tracts.

[8] The fractionalization or diversity index, more properly the Herfindahl-Hirschman (HH) index, is given by $\sum_1^n p^2$, where p is the fraction any group represents, and n is the number of groups. A simpler way to visualize fractionalization is through the calculation of its reciprocal value, 1/HH which represents the effective number of groups that inhabit a particular territorial space. This measure can be illustrated with an example. Let us imagine a place that has two distinct groups, of equal size. In that case the effective number of groups is exactly 2. But if one group is made up of 90 percent of the inhabitants and the other group of 10 percent, the effective number of groups is given by 1/[(0.9)^2+(0.1)^2], which is approximately 1.2.

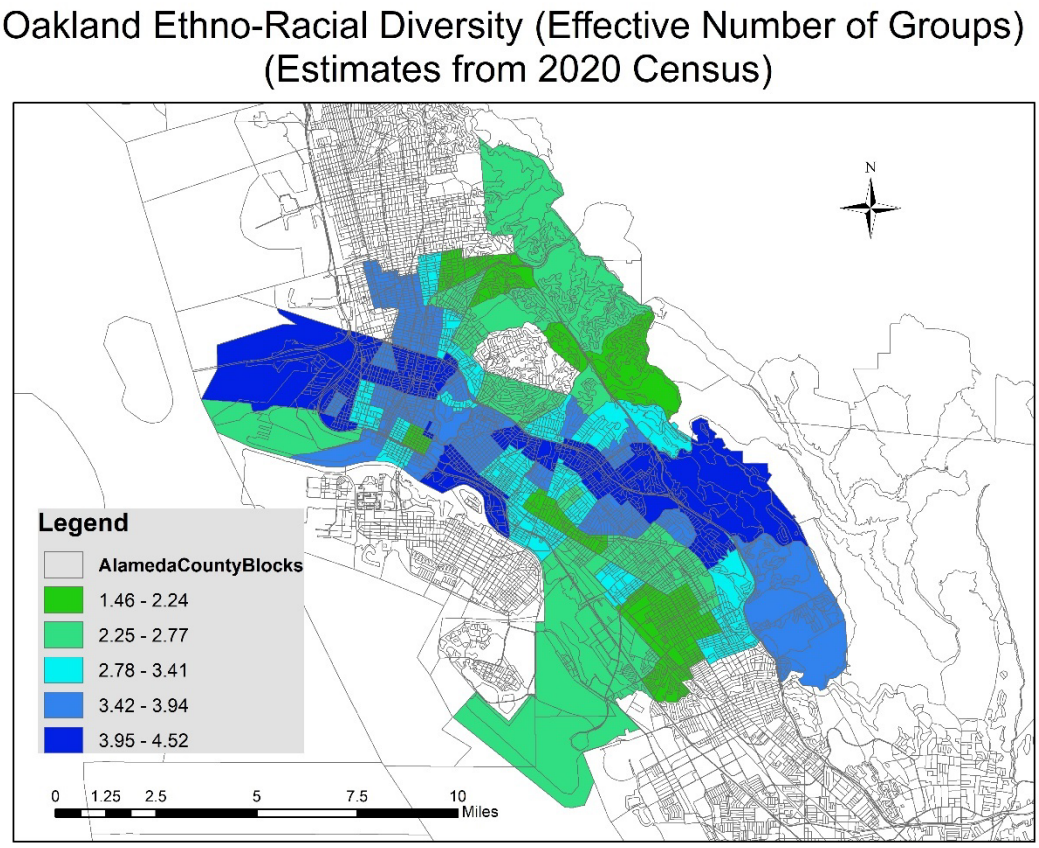
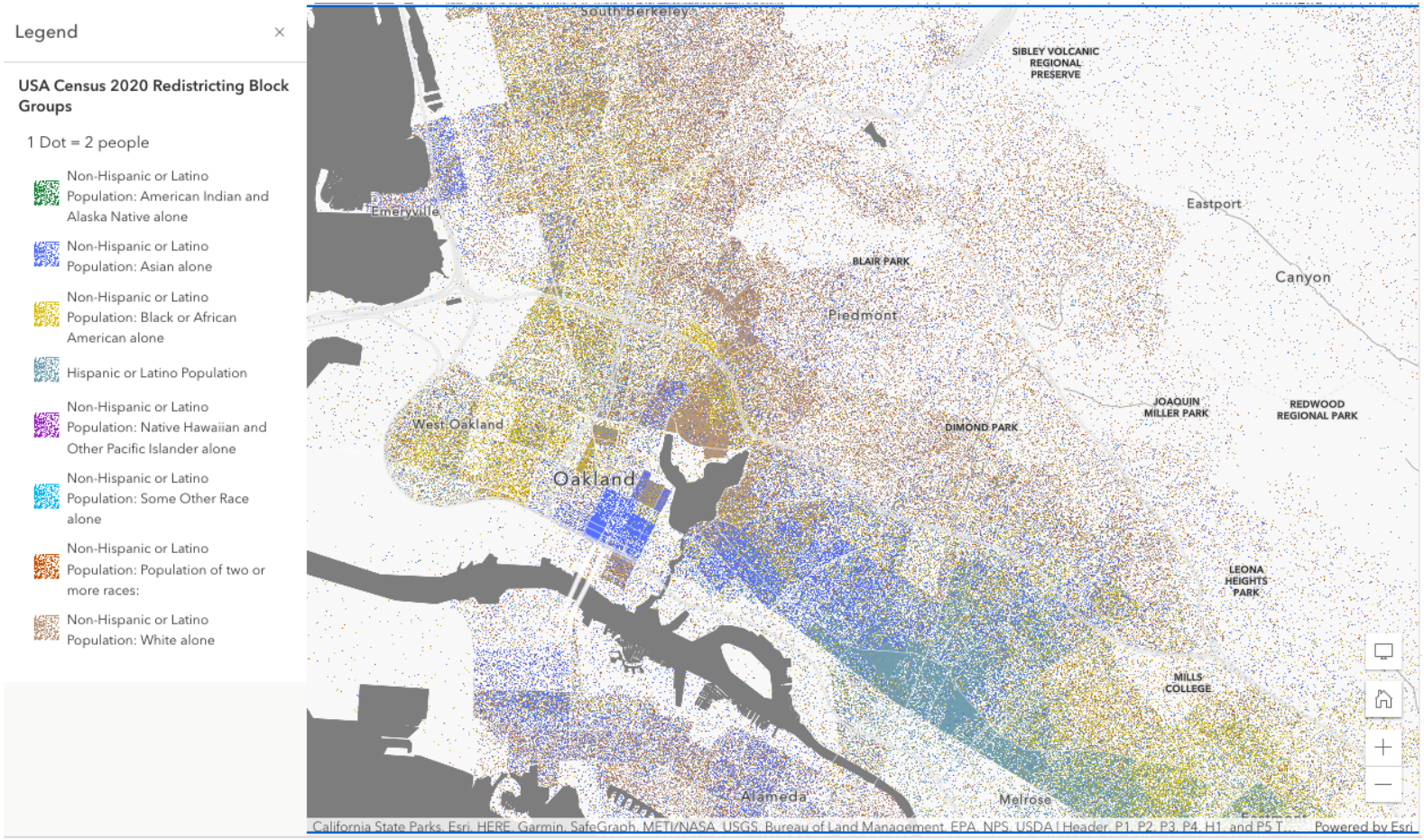


Figure 2: Oakland ethno-racial diversity (effective number of groups)

The degree of ethnic diversity in Oakland is hence substantial, but it is important to note that different groups are often residentially segregated. This can be seen in Figure 3, which depicts the Oakland population by ethnicity according to the 2020 Census, but in a representation called a Dot Map. Dots in this visualization represent the population of each race/ethnicity living within an area. This reconstruction is made at the level of city blocks, reflecting a mosaic of ethnic and racial homogeneity within a given block, even though a whole neighborhood (or census tract, as in the previous maps) may be very diverse.



Source: Data from U.S. Census Bureau's 2020 PL 94-171 data for tract, block group, and block. Produced by ESRI-demographics based on the now retired 2010 Racial Dot Map from the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service of the University of Virginia. https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=30d2e10d4d694b3eb4dc4d2e58dbb5a5

Figure 3: Ethnic diversity in the city of Oakland (2020 census data)

The previous maps show that Oakland is characterized by a remarkable degree of ethnic and racial diversity. Table 1 reports in numbers the ethno-racial composition of the City, which according to the 2020 census, has around one fourth (27.3%) of its population ethnically characterized as White, a share similar to the whole of Alameda County, but less than the State of California. There is an increasing number of individuals who report belonging to more than two ethnic groups (5.7%). The Black or African American population represents 20.8% of census respondents, significantly higher than for the rest of California. There is a smaller share of Asian residents, at 15.9%, lower than in the rest of Alameda County. The largest ethno-racial group, with almost a third (28.8%) of the population in the City, is made up of respondents reporting being Hispanic or Latino. These categories are likely to become even more fluid as demographic and identity processes continue to unfold.[9]

Table 1: Ethno-racial composition of Oakland in comparative perspective

	California		**Alameda**		**Oakland**		**OUSD**	
	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share	Number	Share
Hispanic or Latino	15,579,652	39.4%	393,749	23.4%	126,843	28.8%	15,555	45.0%
White	13,714,587	34.7%	472,277	28.1%	120,187	27.3%	3,871	11.2%
Black or African American	2,119,286	5.4%	159,499	9.5%	91,561	20.8%	7,432	21.5%
American Indian Alaska Native	156,085	0.4%	4,131	0.2%	1,371	0.3%	69	0.2%
Asian	5,978,795	15.1%	540,511	32.1%	69,906	15.9%	3,871	11.2%
Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander	138,167	0.3%	13,209	0.8%	2,668	0.6%	346	1.0%
Other	223,929	0.6%	10,440	0.6%	2,964	0.7%	933	2.7%
Two or more	1,627,722	4.1%	88,537	5.3%	25,146	5.7%	2,247	6.5%
Total	39,538,223	100.0%	1,682,353	100.0%	440,646	100.0%	34,566	100.0%

Note: California, Alameda County and Oakland data according to the 2020 Census. OUSD data come from the Oakland Unified School District Dashboard.

The future of the City of Oakland might be perhaps best reflected in the school age population. The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) data foreshadows future demographic trends as population ages and is replaced by younger residents. The current student K-12 body, according to the OUSD 2021/22 Dashboard, is only 11.2% White, 21.5% Black, 11.2% Asian or Asia/Pacific Islander, and 45% Hispanic/Latino.[10]

The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) faces a complex challenge in its education of the Latino children and youth in the city. The district has been losing numbers with the demographic transition as the Oakland population ages, but Latino students, particularly recent immigrants, have replaced those losses. In the last academic year, OUSD reported almost 50,000 enrolled students (see Table 2). Almost half of the student body (47.8%) in the OUSD is comprised of Hispanic

[9] Within the Hispanic-origin population it is possible that, due to their migratory status, a large number of undocumented Oakland dwellers did not get fully counted in the last census.

[10] Around a third of the students in the OUSD (15,525 in 2019/20) are English learners, and two-thirds of those (around 10,000) are native Spanish speakers, most of them overlapping with Hispanic identity. In addition, there are around another 10,000 students who speak Spanish at home but are not English learners because they are proficient in the language (EdData, n.d.).

Latino students. A large share of them (42%) do not go to their neighborhood school, but rather to charter schools or special programs. This contrasts sharply with the White non-Hispanic students, who comprise less than 10% of the student body and tend to attend neighborhood schools.

Table 2: Oakland Unified School District Ethno-Racial Composition (2021/22 Enrollment)

	Total enrollment	Ethno-racial composition	Charter or special program enrollment	Share of charter or special program	Neighborhood school enrollment	Share of neighborhood enrollment
Not reported	1,072	2.2%	294	27%	778	73%
American Indian	111	0.2%	34	31%	77	69%
Asian	5,620	11.5%	1,518	27%	4,102	73%
Pacific	412	0.8%	83	20%	329	80%
Filipino	402	0.8%	91	23%	311	77%
Hispanic Latino	**23,264**	**47.8%**	**9,846**	**42%**	**13,418**	**58%**
African American	10,551	21.7%	3,368	32%	7,183	68%
White non-Hispanic	4,790	9.8%	992	21%	3,798	79%
Two or more	2,482	5.1%	564	23%	1,918	77%
Total	48,704	100.0%	16,790	34%	31,914	66%

Source: California Department of Education EdData files.
Note: These enrollment figures may differ very slightly (usually by one or two students) from those reported in the OUSD dashboard. EdData is chosen as the source for replicability reasons. It provides a longer temporal frame of uniformly reported data, comparable to any other school district in the country.

1.3 Diversity within the Latino population

Characterizing Oakland residents as “Latino” or “Hispanic” masks important differences in the lived experiences and the social and economic conditions of specific groups within these categories. These differences are often captured in studies of crime and victimization through controlling for demographic variables that in a strict sense are not the “cause” of the differences in risk but are a proxy for some objective life chances and conditions: young men are more likely to be exposed to crime, violence, alcohol, gang activity and other social behaviors and situations that may not be directly observable. Those exposures to risk are the underlying causes that lead to the correlations observed between demographic structures and victimization or being perpetrators of crime.

Other characteristics related to migratory status, country of origin or linguistic characteristics distinguish different Hispanic groups within Oakland. These differences are not causes of violence or criminality, but they are observable characteristics correlated with risks and protective factors. The life experiences of long-time Mexican American or Chicano residents are different from newly arrived Mexicans, and those are also distinct from the conditions under which migrants from El

Salvador or Guatemala arrive to make new lives in the city. It is important to emphasize that national origin is not a *cause* determining risk or protective factors. It is an important indicator, however, of different social and economic conditions that characterize different populations in the city, with different support from preexisting social networks aiding their integration and search for jobs, as well as family structures that may help them avoid risky behaviors. In order to understand different risk profiles among the Latino population in Oakland, we must delve deeper into the ethnic, cultural, and national origin diversity of that population.

The American Community Survey is the most comprehensive information source available to understand the evolution of ethnic diversity, national origin and cultural backgrounds of immigrants in the City of Oakland over the past two decades. While the Census provides a snapshot every ten years, its questionnaire is limited to only some basic demographic information, broken down by race and ethnicity. The ACS, in contrast, has rich demographic, social and economic indicators, including employment, income, family structure, specific languages spoken at home, as well as nationality. The main difficulty with using the ACS for a fine-grained understanding of the Latino landscape in Oakland is that, due to the sampling methods used to collect the data, it is not possible to break down the information by neighborhood, let alone police beat or census tract.

The ACS provides valuable information regarding Spanish speaking people who live in the City of Oakland. According to the 2015-20 released dataset, 18% of Oakland residents speak Spanish at home. But the distribution varies greatly across regions, with only 5% of those who live in the Foothills speaking Spanish, 39% in East Oakland and 12% in Central Oakland. Citizenship status clearly correlates with the likelihood that someone speaks Spanish at home, with only 13% of US citizens speaking Spanish at home, while for the non-US citizens, half of them use Spanish. Perhaps it is not surprising to note that at least two thirds of the Hispanics from Guatemalan, Mexican and Salvadoran origins speak Spanish at home, while other national origins are far more likely to speak English at home.

To get a better sense of the kind of nuance that can be generated by the information in the ACS data, Figure 4 shows two variables of particular interest for this study, namely the proportion of Oakland Hispanic residents who were not born in the US and the share of Hispanic residents who are not US citizens. The information is shown by year, although it is important to note that yearly changes are more likely to be a consequence of sample variability than actual changes in any specific year.[11] This graph also includes for the sake of comparison the trends of the rest of the immigrants in the city, mostly of Chinese and Filipino origin. The yearly information provides a good sense of stability, since there have not been dramatic shifts over the past 15 years: regardless of the inflow of new immigrants and the processes of naturalization, through which many residents acquire the US citizenship, Oakland remains with around a quarter of its population being foreign born, and around 15% do not have US citizenship. But there are important differences among Hispanics and non-Hispanics. Around half of Hispanics in the City were foreign-born in 2006, and the number has decreased to around 40 percent. Almost half were not US citizens in 2006, while that number has decreased to around one third. This means that in contrast to what media reports

might highlight regarding the inflow of immigrants into the City of Oakland, most of the Hispanic residents are either US born citizens or naturalized US citizens, not undocumented.

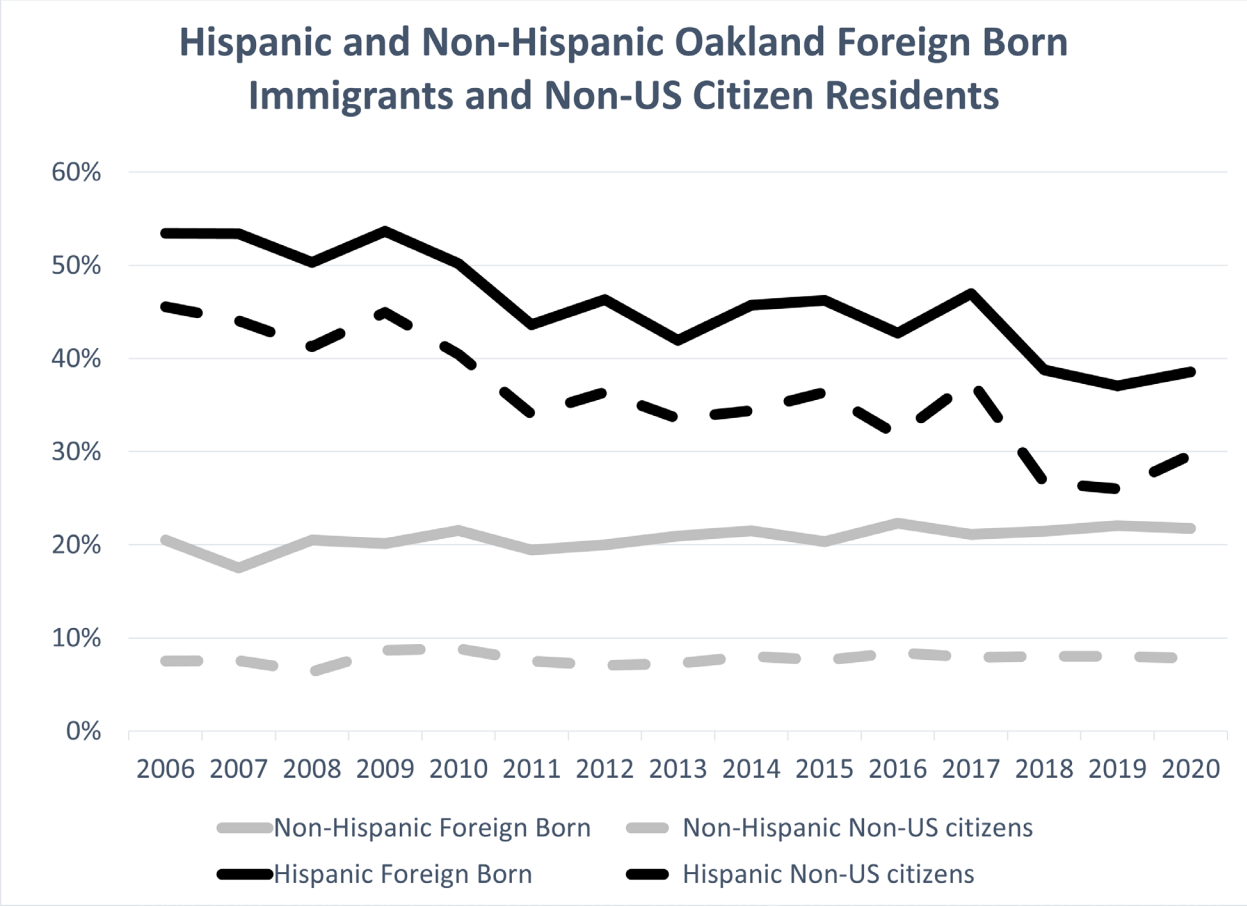


Figure 4: Share of Oakland foreign born immigrants and non-US citizen residents

The ACS yearly samples are designed in such way that it is possible to break down the city of Oakland into three Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), which are defined as "non-overlapping, statistical geographic areas that partition each state or equivalent entity into geographic areas containing no fewer than 100,000 people each." PUMAs are the lowest geographic aggregation, more-or-less equally sized, at which we can confidently analyze the ACS. Although Oakland is a large city, for the purposes of the ACS the city is divided into Central (PUMA code 00102), Foothills (00103), and Eastern (00104) Oakland. Admittedly, these are very large segments of the City. There are, to be sure, important heterogeneities inside each of these areas, as reflected in census tracts, school boundary areas, neighborhoods or police beats that conform them. But at the same time, the overall patterns of change and continuity in social, economic and demographic conditions can be observed quite clearly across these large aggregations. For example, Figure 5 shows that the age distribution of Hispanic residents in each of the PUMA regions in Oakland is quite different. Eastern Oakland has a much younger population (median age of Hispanics is 27, compared to non-Hispanics, who are not included in the graph, but have a median age of 37). The

PUMA of Central Oakland has a peculiar shape, with a bimodal distribution with both very young residents and a second peak of the mode close to the median age of Hispanics at 30. The Foothills show a much older age profile, where the few Hispanics who live there are much younger than the rest (median age of Hispanics is 32, compared to the unreported, much older non-Hispanics at 43).

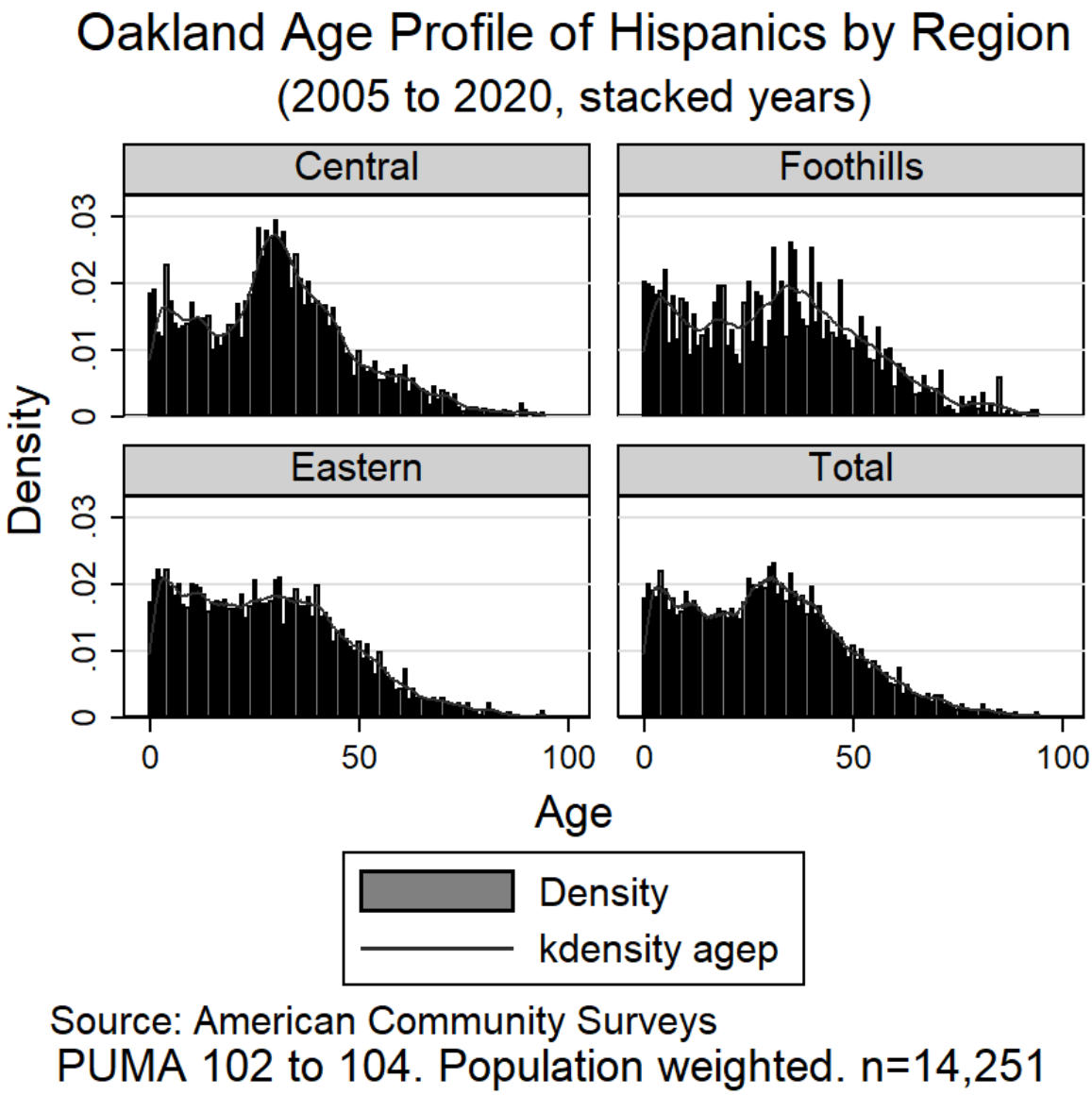


Figure 5: Oakland Hispanics age profile by region

As would be expected, educational outcomes are also very different across Oakland PUMA regions. Figure 6 shows the education profiles according to the ACS classification. The categorization takes into account whether different educational landmarks are achieved, such as completing high school or a GED, and it is not exactly years of schooling, but the ranking is very similar. In the horizontal axis a value of 9 corresponds to having completed 6th grade; 16 is having

completed high school with a diploma; and 21 is a BA college degree. The contrast between Eastern Oakland and the Foothills is again striking: while the median education attainment in the Eastern region is high school, with a very large number of adults only having finished until 6th grade, in the Foothills most of the population have a college or higher professional degree. Obviously, those differences also get reflected in income levels.

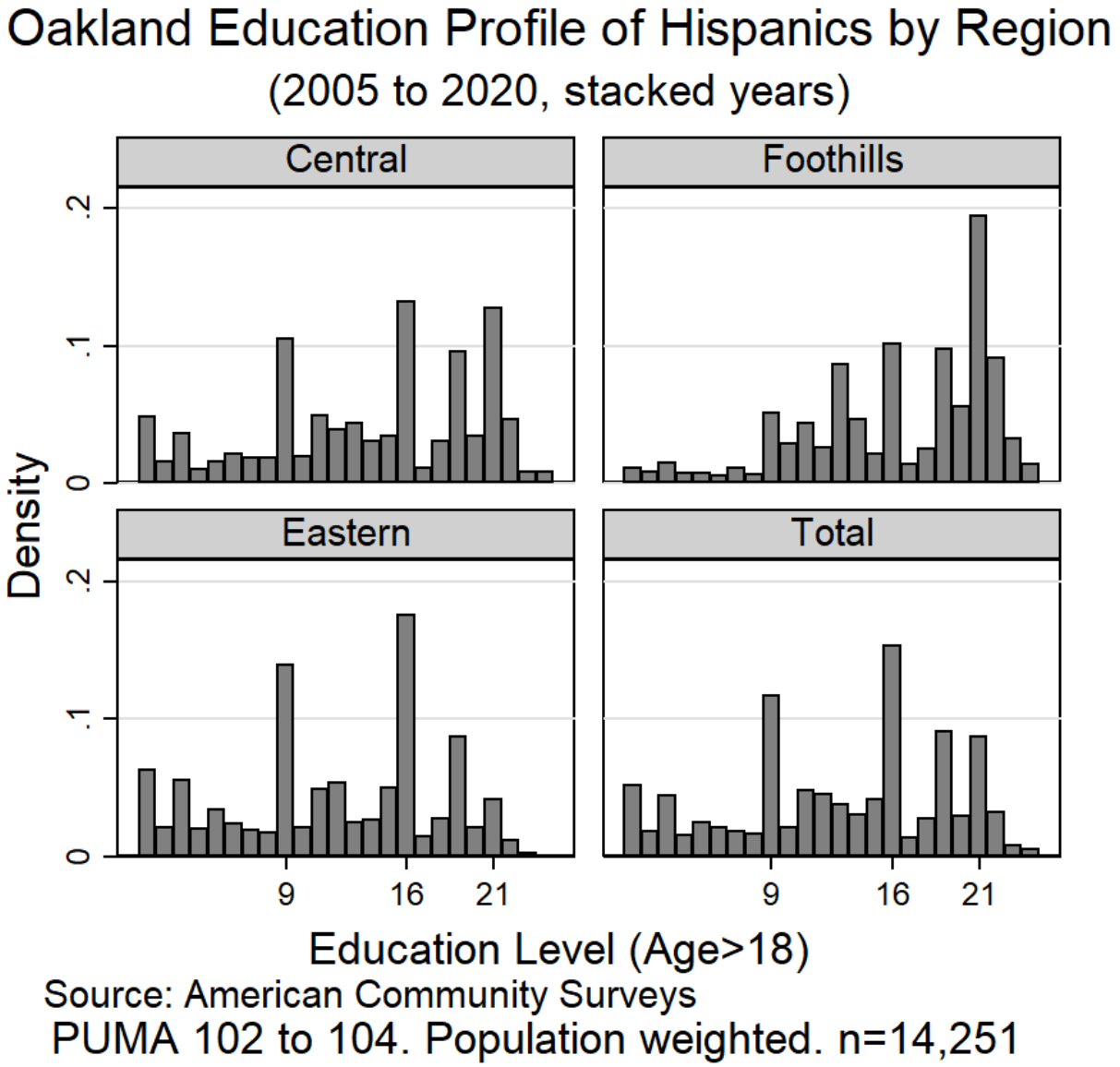


Figure 6: Oakland Hispanics educational profile by region

Using the data from ACS, it is possible to estimate the breakdown of Hispanic individual residents in Oakland into their country of origin. That information is provided in Table 3, according to an average point estimate. There is some statistical uncertainty regarding these numbers, but the table simplifies from this technical nuance, providing a reasonable rank ordering of the various groups.

The largest Hispanic group is composed of around 77,000 Mexican-origin individuals. Most of them live in Eastern Oakland. This is followed by around 10,000 Guatemalans, and a similar number (9,000) of Salvadorans, who also disproportionately live in Eastern Oakland. The number of Honduran-origin residents is much lower, and in fact similar to another group of Latin Americans, namely Colombians. However, it is noteworthy that Colombians (as well as most other South Americans) tend to live in the Foothills or Central Oakland, reflecting a very different social composition, probably comprised of a larger share of higher-income professionals.

Table 3: Number of residents of Hispanic origin in Oakland by PUMA region according to ACS, 2015-20

		PUMA			
		Central	**Foothills**	**Eastern**	**Total**
Central American	Not Hispanic	141,457	119,632	68,707	329,796
	Mexican	22,075	7,173	48,071	77,319
	Puerto Rican	1,294	693	1,615	3,602
	Cuban	457	338	590	1,385
	Dominican	139	119	51	309
	Costa Rican	197	70	0	267
	Guatemalan	2,565	725	6,778	10,068
	Honduran	380	58	933	1,371
	Nicaraguan	119	338	536	993
	Panamanian	171	40	150	361
	Salvadoran	2,012	583	6,553	9,148
	Other Central American	0	0	34	34
South American	Argentinean	147	193	76	416
	Bolivian	10	179	0	189
	Chilean	106	324	27	457
	Colombian	607	558	60	1,225
	Ecuadorian	209	50	0	259
	Paraguayan	9	0	0	9
	Peruvian	367	403	217	987
	Uruguayan	0	84	0	84
	Venezuelan	93	21	6	120
	Other South American	25	0	0	25
Other	Spaniard	486	362	172	1,020
	Other Hispanic	888	686	1,364	2,938
	Total	173,813	132,629	135,940	442,382

Table 4 delves deeper, by breaking down Oakland residents according to their reported ancestry and PUMA region they live in. Brackets under each point estimate of the share represented by each group report a 95% confidence interval, and in order to make the table less cluttered, the

standard errors are not reported. This is different from the Hispanic categorization because when residents are surveyed, many do not declare a specific national origin, and there are also differences in self-reporting, where respondents do not consider themselves Hispanic or Latino even though they come from Latin America. The ancestry table is calculated in an inclusive manner, by allowing respondents to be considered of a particular ancestry if at least one of their lineages (patrilineal or matrilineal) is from a specific place in the world. The largest share of ancestry reported in the table is Mexican, with a confidence 95% interval between 6.6% and 18.47% of residents.

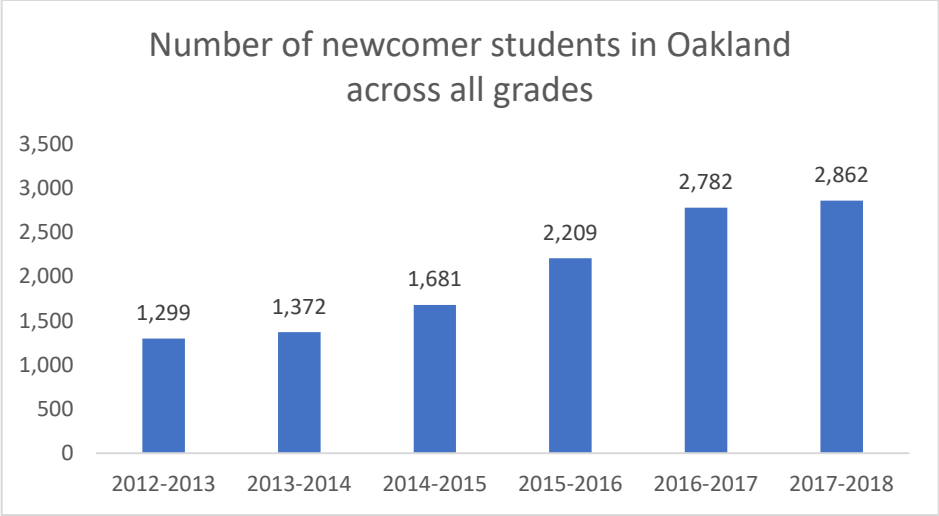
Table 4: Share of Oakland residents of Hispanic ancestry by PUMA region according to ACS, 2015-20

	Central	**Foothill**	**Eastern**	**Total**
Chicano/Latino	0.9% [.0057,.0151]	0.5% [.0022,.011]	1.8% [.0053,.0574]	1.0% [.0066,.0155]
Mexican	7.9% [.0494,.1238]	3.6% [.0293,.0451]	25.4% [.2087,.3047]	11.2% [.066,.1847]
Salvadoran	0.8% [.0028,.0236]	0.3% [.0014,.0049]	3.1% [.0133,.0692]	1.3% [.0039,.039]
Guatemalan	0.8% [.0028,.025]	0.2% [.0007,.007]	2.5% [.0096,.0631]	1.1% [.0032,.0367]
Honduran	0.2% [.0009,.0056]	0.1% [.0003,.0022]	0.8% [.0045,.0126]	0.3% [.0018,.0059]

1.4 Newcomers in the Oakland Unified School District

Newcomer students are defined as those who have been in the United States for less than three years and speak a language other than English at home. Most of the newest arrivals fall into the status of refugee, asylee, and/or unaccompanied minor. Many are fleeing violence, human trafficking or persecution in their country of origin (OUSD, n.d.). Given that the language spoken at home is such a prominent feature for the definition of newcomers, this section will discuss language characteristics in the OUSD, and then bring insights obtained from the qualitative research in the project.

The number of newcomer students in OUSD has increased significantly in the last decade, from 1,299 in the 2012-2013 year to 2,862 in 2017-2018 (see Figure 7). The number doubled between 2014 to 2020, with one in seven high schoolers in the district in 2020 being newcomers (Joffe-Block, 2020). Alameda County has received the second largest number of unaccompanied minors in California, behind only Los Angeles (Stavely, 2019). Given this influx and the different needs that the newcomer population often has, two high schools in Oakland are dedicated to serving only the newcomer population: Oakland International High School and Rudsdale Newcomer High School. In Fremont High School, a traditional school, 1/3 of the students are newcomers as well.



Source: Oakland Unified School District.

Figure 7: Number of newcomer students in Oakland across all grades

As shown in Table 5, most of the English learner students in OUSD come from Central America, with Guatemala and El Salvador as the countries with the highest numbers of students.

Table 5: Top 10 birth countries of English Language Learners in the 2017-2018 school year

Country	Number of students
Guatemala	**1,368**
El Salvador	**596**
Mexico	**476**
Yemen	396
China	279
Honduras	**199**
Vietnam	128
Afghanistan	105
Ethiopia	62
Philippines	45

Source: Oakland Unified School District. Non-Hispanic included for comparative purposes.

Among students who speak a home language other than English, the largest group speaks Spanish, followed by Cantonese, Arabic and Vietnamese (see Table 6). Mam speakers are a significantly

large group, with 665 speakers. It is possible that other indigenous languages of the Americas are included among "Other non-English."

Table 6: Number of OUSD students by home language for the year 2016-2017

Home language	Number of students
Spanish	**12,366**
Cantonese	1,704
Arabic	930
Vietnamese	880
Mam	**665**
Other non-English	646
Khmer	263
Mien	165
Tongan	151
Filipino	140

Source: Oakland Unified School District. Non-Hispanic included for comparative purposes.

Box 1: Mam indigenous peoples from Guatemala in Oakland

While the exact numbers of Mam Guatemalans in Oakland is not easy to ascertain, there are reports that suggest they are in the thousands (Romero, 2019). Mam is one of the 22 Mayan languages spoken in Guatemala by some 600,000 people, concentrated in the Northwestern highlands close to the Mexico border, in the departments of Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango and San Marcos. In addition, there are at least 10,000 Mam speakers in Mexico and an undetermined number in the United States (the US Census does not collect specific information about non-US languages). Mam speakers are often found in communities coexisting with other ethnic groups, since it is the third linguistic group in Guatemala, after Quiche and Cakchikel.

Mam is reputed to be the most difficult of Maya languages (England 2011). In this sense, it is important to note that as part of the Quichaen-Mamean branch of Maya languages, it is a distinct language, unintelligible to speakers of other Maya languages from Mexico, so translation in courts or for public services requires specific Mam speakers, not speakers of any Maya language.

Migration and movement to the coastal areas has been part of the life of Mam communities for many decades, as men look for jobs in seasonal agriculture. The most visible consequence of mobility is that men tend to be bilingual in Spanish while women often only speak their indigenous language. The connection between Mam communities and other majoritarian indigenous ethnic groups as well as ladinos (hispanized indigenous peoples) implies that ethnic Mam are accustomed to interacting with other cultures and ethnicities.

It is not easy to estimate whether violence was more intensely experienced among the Mam people than elsewhere in Guatemala, but the region has clearly been characterized by a complex process in which the violence perpetrated by state security forces during the Civil War has been replaced by violence perpetrated by criminal gangs and the use of vigilantism as a method of protection by communities (Bateson 2013).

In the specific case of Oakland, ethnographic research in hiring zones (*paradas*) where Mam day laborers seek jobs has shown that these workers not only face the stigma of being undocumented but an additional racialized dimension of discrimination due to their linguistic and cultural distinctiveness (Herrera 2016). While some early research in this area (Castañeda, Manz, and Davenport 2002) suggested that Guatemalan immigrants sought to improve their hirability through a strategy of Mexicanization, "swearing to be *paisano*" (where paisano is a term denoting Mexican origin), it is likely that with the greater numbers of Mam migrants, these mimetic mechanisms are less prevalent today. The Mam often do not identify as Latino, and many do not speak Spanish, although the public often assumes that they do.

Mam women have been victims of unimaginable gendered violence. As documented by Stephen (2019) through evidence collected in a community in the Huehuetenango department, as well as asylum hearings in US immigration courts, Mam women in the US are not only fleeing gang violence in their home communities but also spousal rape and sexual abuse perpetrated by fathers, other family members, and the police. It is important to note that men are also vulnerable. Many forms of victimization and trauma are documented among unaccompanied youth, where boys are more represented than girls (Heidbrink 2018).

Our own interviews at Rudsdale Newcomer, Oakland International, and Fremont High Schools, as well as recent media reports (Stavely 2019), suggest that education services in Oakland have quickly acknowledged and adapted their approaches to the reality of the influx of Mam speakers. That is not to say that there are not still great needs, for example, in terms of translation and language instruction services. School officials report that it is hard to get translators and provide Mam-speaking families with information.

On the other hand, our other interviews suggest that in the realms of health and public safety, the Mam are excluded. This exclusion happens due to a few different reasons: a language barrier, a distrust of the Mam towards some of these government agencies, and a cultural difference that is not understood nor respected in the day-to-day business and processes that these agencies carry out.

One of the main challenges that school officials face while serving newcomers is the huge variation in educational attainment and needs. Some students have never had formal education, others received poor education and have been out of school for years, and yet others went to private school in their home countries and are advanced academically but speak no English. Students in rural areas may not have had a junior high or high school available, or did not attend school because

of gangs (Stavely, 2019). Teachers and schools need to cater to these vast differences when serving these populations, which they identify as one of their biggest challenges.

Another difficulty with serving the newcomers is that many arrive with severe needs in an array of areas, from physical and mental health to trauma experienced during and/or prior to their journeys. All need legal support for their immigration cases. Many come unaccompanied and have to work and pay their bills while attending school. High school can be overwhelming for newcomers and many miss school because of work and family responsibilities (Stavely, 2019). It was because of these challenges that Oakland decided to open specialized high schools that cater to the needs of newcomers.

1.5 Specialized schools for newcomers with specialized needs

Oakland International High School was opened in 2007 to serve the newcomer high school student population, providing access to educational program and social and emotional support. The school has wraparound services for its students, so they can remove all the barriers that prevent students from succeeding in school. The school's wellness center is at the heart of the support that the school offers, which includes medical assistance, case management, parent classes, a space for legal check-ins, applying for medical insurance, helping them secure housing and referring students to services that go beyond what the school can offer.

Three-quarters of Oakland International's students are from Central America, with Guatemala far outpacing other countries. Most of the students are unaccompanied and undocumented. A lot of services are needed, and the staff problem-solve to identify the needs and meet them. Almost half (40%) of the students have a gap in their education.

Rudsdale Newcomer is a continuation school, offering a reduced schedule with no homework and more flexibility to increase the chances of graduation. At Rudsdale, the staff also face challenges with the large variation in educational attainment among newcomers. Many of the students come from rural areas and received little formal schooling. Even the students from these areas that have been in school for longer have difficulty with the material at Rudsdale, for example for being asked to think critically and work on projects, because their education before was more basic and revolved around filling out worksheets. The students first have to learn how to become learners.

Health is also a significant challenge among Rudsdale students: many students have not had medical check-ups in a long time and are in great need. Many of them need glasses and dental check-ups. Some suffer from chronic pain or injuries, and there are also some psychosomatic cases from the stress and trauma that the students experience. Drug use is also a reality for some of the students. Rudsdale has a program manager for Newcomer Safety and Success Initiative who works on violence prevention – street violence, intimate partner and domestic violence – and mediation and gang intervention. As much of the Rudsdale staff, the program manager also may assist with other issues as needed, as discussed later in this section.

One of the reasons that Rudsdale is able to support students is by having flexible funds to address emergencies and differing needs. The school receives funds from grants and other financial support. With these funds, the school is able to help with needs as varied as rent relief, court cases, a paternity test, tickets for driving without licenses, college applications, graduation photos, bus passes, shoes and backpacks, and food distribution with the food bank.

Fremont High, which is a traditional high school, has a support program for newcomers as well. Their goal is for newcomer students to join the mainstream classes and curriculum. Fremont usually has at least one cohort a year (~30 students) comprised of students with interrupted formal education (SIFE).

1.6 The newcomers' vulnerabilities

Many of the newcomer students do not have a caregiver. They must have a sponsor for immigration cases, but that person may also be struggling, and not able to provide monitoring nor help with school. In some cases, the students have had bad and even abusive situations with their sponsors, and have had to exit that arrangement. Changing sponsors affects their immigration case, so it is never an easy change to make.

Newcomers may also be targeted on the street because they are more vulnerable and lack the social ties and connections that could protect them. Some of our informants reported that the tension between African American and Latinos is very one-sided in Oakland, towards the Latinos. Newcomers, in particular, are targeted. Sometimes, newcomers are jumped right as they get off the bus when they arrive in Oakland for the first time.

Youth ALIVE! documented 11 cases of newcomer gun homicide victims in 2019, up from six in 2016 (Joffe-Block, 2020). After the 2017 killing of 13-year-old Anibal Andres Ramirez, educators, community partners and newcomer students met periodically to discuss what else could be done to support newcomers that had safety concerns. They identified dozens of factors that made newcomers more likely to become victims or perpetrators of violence, including "dangerous local neighborhoods, past trauma, poverty, debts to smugglers and a lack of support systems" (Joffe-Block, 2020). No existing program addressed all of these concerns, so the district partnered with a local non-profit, Bay Area Community Resources, to hire safety specialists at the schools.

Some of the most serious problems the safety specialists work on with his students are: human trafficking victimization, alcoholism, gang activities, intra-familiar abuse because of poverty or trauma, mental health challenges, survival sex and relationships, and labor trafficked by their sponsors who send them to work and keep their wages. Some newcomers are trapped in debt bondage, and the safety specialists educate them that these debts are illegal.

Part of their vulnerability is that newcomers are less likely to go to the police with problems. Newcomers may have negative feelings about the government and rhetoric of recent times concerning immigrants from Central America. They are fearful that the police will not protect them, and instead will try to send them back to their home countries. As one police officer put it,

“if I was them, I would not call the police either”, because he understands their fears. He wishes, though, that newcomers would come to him and report incidents.

Newcomers in particular need someone who they can really trust, and who can assist them in a myriad of ways, like the safety specialists are able to do with the Young Hawks program. Newcomers benefit from having a mentor or group of mentors who can become the support system that they may be missing, and who can help them navigate life in a new country.

2. Risk and protective factors

2.1 Data analysis

Many decades of research on crime prevention have uncovered systematic patterns in the vulnerability and risk of violence for various groups within society. Although those are just correlations, in the sense that they do not explain the actual incident or the series of events that may precipitate a conflict to escalate into the use of a firearm, and an actual death, they are useful proxies of the specific risks and protective factors. Poorer and less educated youth are far more vulnerable to violence than richer, older and relatively well-off residents. This section explores some of the characteristics of the Latino population in Oakland in terms of income levels, degree of schooling and age profile.

For the subgroups of various ancestry backgrounds, we calculate indicators during five years periods, because those temporal changes may be less reliable as yearly data. It is possible that change observed from one year to another is due to the different sample collected each specific year (sample variability), rather than a true change in the profiles.

Figure 8 shows the estimated relative economic position of Oakland residents according to their ancestry. The specific economic indicator is the Census bureau income to poverty ratio, which provides a rather compelling metric of how family income compares to a minimum standard. The vertical axis provides a range, between 0 and 6 times (600%) the income compared to the poverty line. The horizontal line shows ancestry groups, starting from a catch-all grouping of all the European ancestries and origins around the world, excluding Mexican, Central American, African, Chinese or Filipino. The point estimate is provided with 95% confidence intervals, denoted by the vertical lines around each point, which are often quite large. Each graph shows the profile of specific regions in Oakland, as provided by the ACS microdata PUMA areas, with the last one showing the total City.

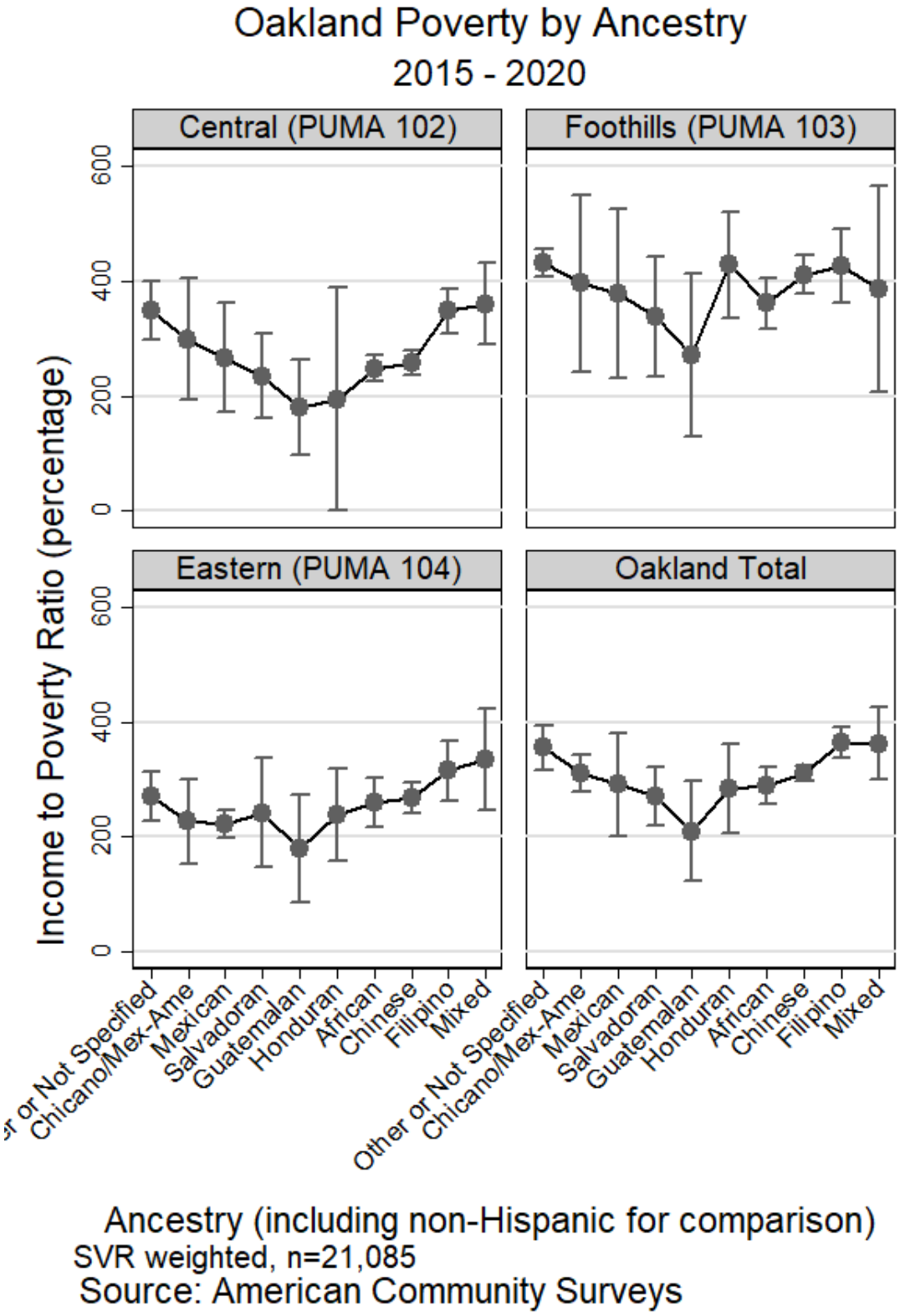


Figure 8: Income to poverty ratio by ancestry and region

Even accounting for the upper bounds of the confidence intervals, there is no question that the poorest Oakland residents are of Guatemalan origin. The other very clear pattern is that across all national origin groups, residents in the Oakland Foothills are much richer, and the poorest residents are in the Eastern region. Perhaps a lesser-known feature of the Latino population in Oakland is that Salvadorans are closer to Mexican and Chicano/Mexican American residents in their income profile. This may be due to the longer migration histories of these groups. In terms of the comparison with other groups outside the Latino population, one may note that, at least in Oakland, the Filipino population tends to be relatively better off than other immigrant groups.

More details regarding the poverty profile on the Latino population can be learned from a reconstruction of the income distribution and the shape and size of the poverty gap. An initial effort in this direction is presented in Figure 9. These graphs provide an ordering of the population according to their income (as a ratio, compared to the poverty line, so that any number under 100% means the person is poor by this standard). The graphs are truncated at 500% the poverty line, since the richer population is not the group of particular concern. The graph on the left provides the estimates of the poverty profile of Oakland residents who speak Spanish at home. The one on the right is an effort to glimpse of the indigenous peoples from Guatemala (most of whom we know are Mam speakers), by looking at the ones who speak a Central American language that is not Spanish. The vertical axis provides a point estimate of the number of people that fall in each income category, as calculated by the ACS data, stacked over the past 15 years. Since these are three five-year estimates, one should divide the frequency numbers by 3. Therefore, the data indicate, looking for example at the tallest bar in the graph to the right, that there were around 80 speakers of a Central American indigenous language (240 divided by 3), most likely Guatemalan, who earned around 150% above the poverty line.

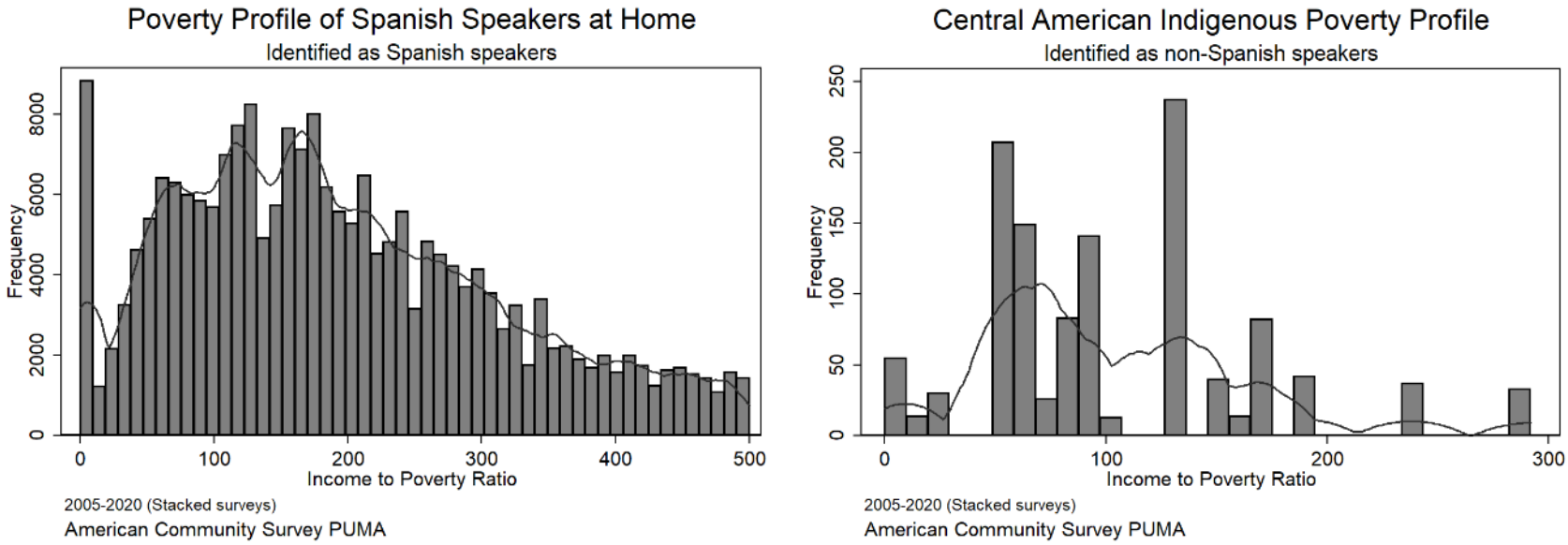


Figure 9: Poverty profiles and the poverty gap

An important insight emerges from visualizing specific populations, particularly those most vulnerable because they fall under the poverty line. From these figures one could calculate something that is referred to as the poverty gap, which is the amount of money that would be needed in a public budget, in the hypothetical condition where one could make a direct transfer, in order to lift those persons above the poverty line. It is clear that for a small, targeted group, such as the Central American residents who do not speak Spanish (perhaps somewhere 250 and 500 individuals in our estimation), a transfer to cover the value of the poverty gap is not too large. The poverty gap for Spanish speakers at home is much larger, since it involves perhaps some 20,000 individuals. However, since many of them are close to the threshold of the poverty line, if transfers could be graduated according to the gap, a significant number of moderately poor households could be helped with small budgetary amounts.

Figure 10 provides the age profiles of the various ancestry origins in Oakland. Although there are some nuances within the age structures, the summary indicator of the average age provides the most salient feature: Hondurans in the city are the youngest population, followed by Guatemalans. This is to be expected given the evidence emerging from our qualitative interviews regarding the process of migration of unaccompanied minors from those countries. Chicano/Mexican Americans as we define them in this categorization are also relatively young, and the same is true for mixed ancestries, but this is due to a very different phenomenon, namely a higher fertility rate among women in those groups. In contrast, Chinese and Filipino origin residents are much older, and the same is true of the well-established populations with African ancestry.

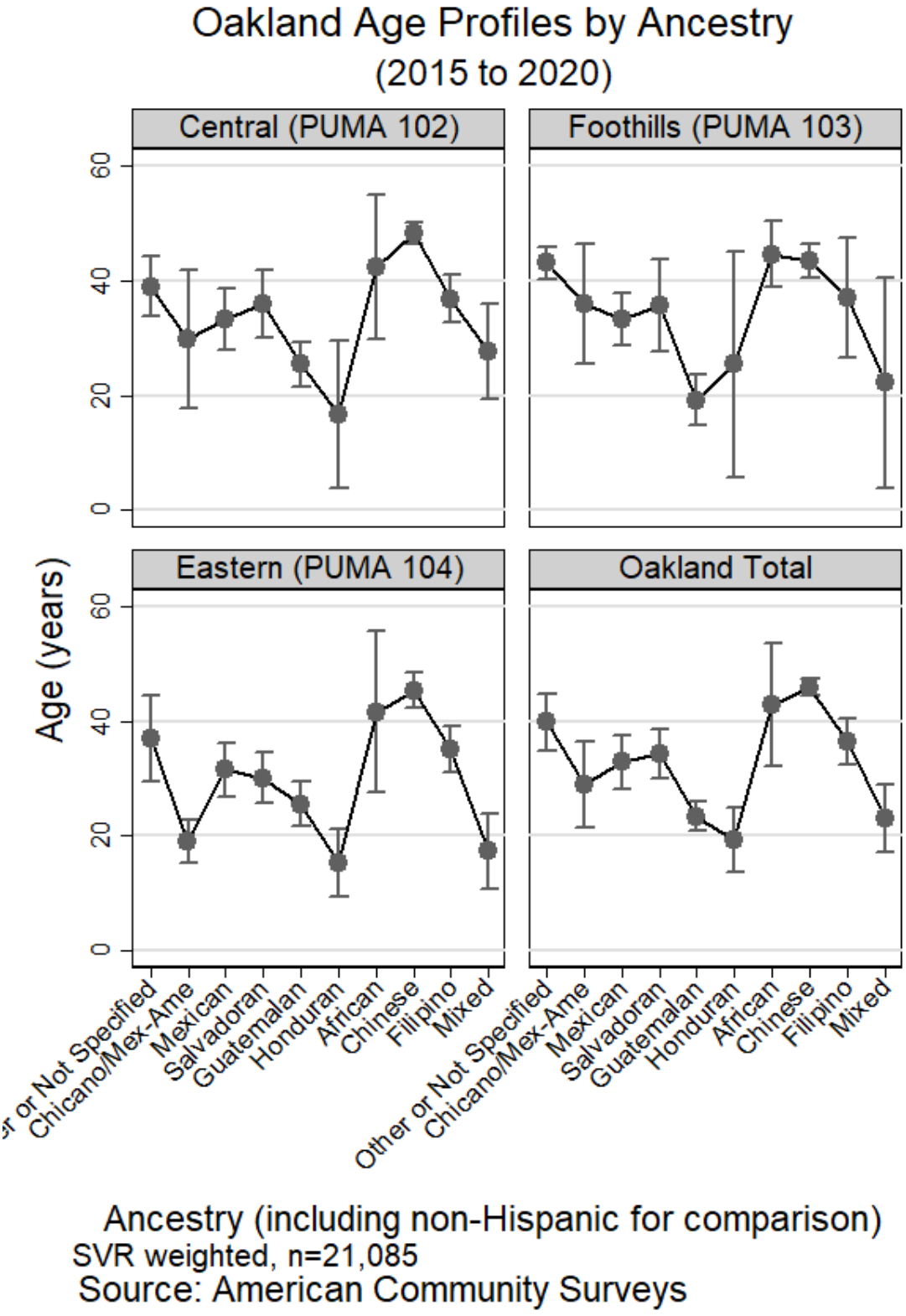


Figure 10: Age by ancestry and region

Age profiles are rather telling, in this sense, about the future of the city because demographic processes, even with the presence of new immigrants, are rather predictable. The city should expect its Hispanic population to keep on growing in the years to come.

Next, we examine schooling patterns. Guatemalan ancestry residents are highly distinctive in terms of lower schooling achievement, as compared to any of the other Latino groups, including Hondurans. This is a reflection of the precarious conditions of schooling in their home country, which are more extreme in Guatemala than elsewhere. It is important to recall that migrants are often more educated (and often more skilled and entrepreneurial) than the residents from their hometowns and villages they leave behind. Although migrants might appear to be less educated as compared to the rest of Oakland residents, they are already selected in terms of being likely to be among the most talented of the Mexicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans or Hondurans they leave behind. Of course, other factors beyond education make it possible for would-be migrants to engage in the process that moves them across borders, including having the savings to make the crossing as well as the social networks that enable them to find dwellings and jobs once they reach the United States.

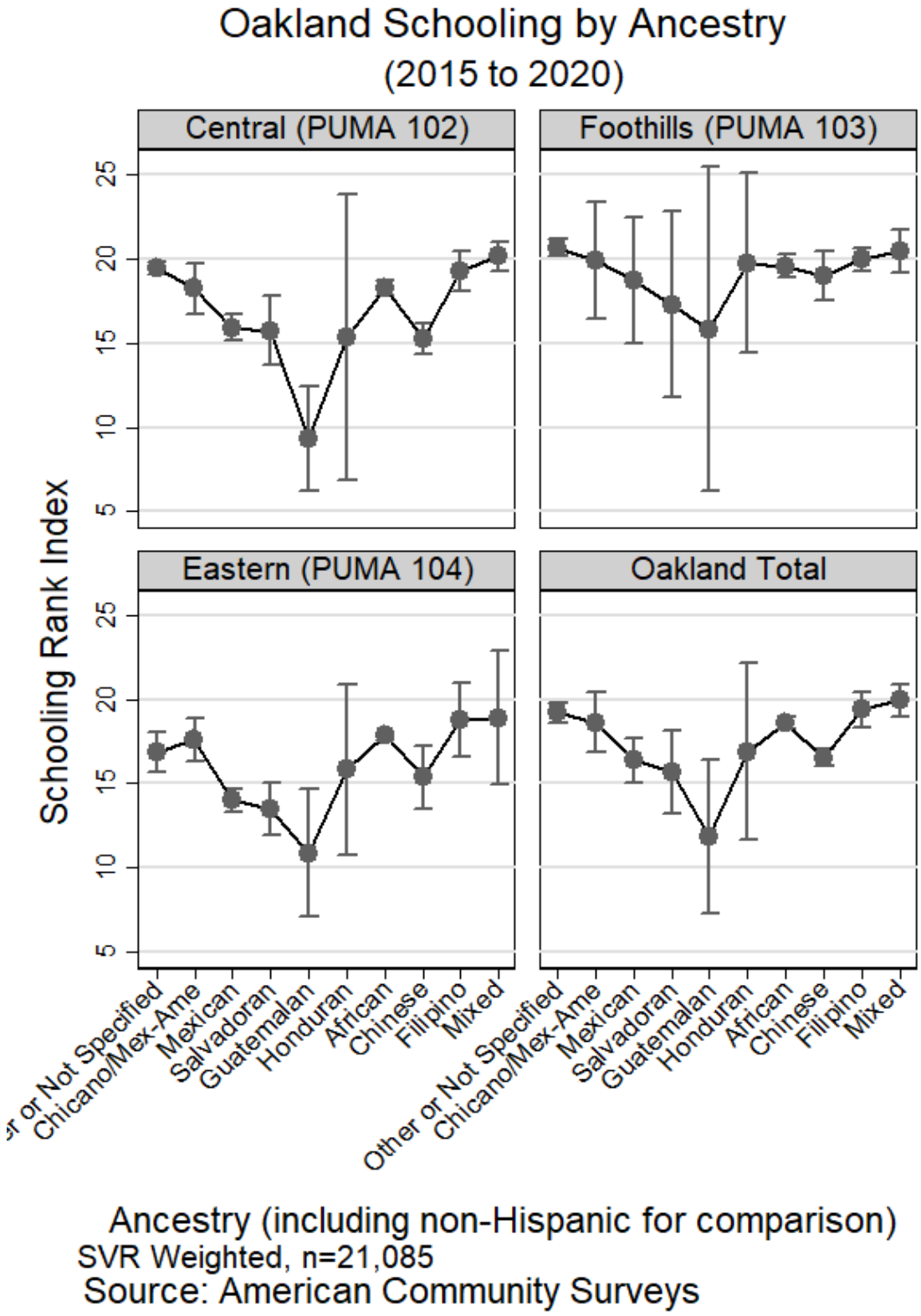


Figure 11: Schooling by ancestry and region

2.2 Qualitative interviews

Between the in-person fieldwork and remote interviews, a total of 11 total interviews were conducted for this study. Additionally, some informal discussions took place when opportunities arose during fieldwork, which contributed to the background discussions included in this report. Table 7 lists the organizations that we were able to interview for this study, for a total of 10.

Table 7: List of interviewees by institutional affiliation

Schools	Rudsdale Newcomer High School Oakland International High School Fremont High School
Government agencies	Oakland Unified School District Oakland Police Department Alameda County Probation Department Alameda County Care Connect (Social Services)
NGOs	Safe Passages Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ) Bay Area Community Resources (BACR)

In our interviews, there were some recurring themes along risk and protective factors, and gaps in support, that our informants discussed. This section presents those recurring themes as a complement and extension to the data analysis findings presented earlier in this section.

2.2.1 Risk factors

Feeling like the "other"

Even within the Latino community, there is racism and people being "othered". The Mam stand out because they may look and dress differently from other Latinos. When one does not have connections in their new community, and does not know the language and culture as well, it is natural for them to gravitate towards others that speak their language or may look like them. Some of our informants reported that Guatemalans are disproportionally targeted as victims of crimes in Oakland. Unfortunately, in some cases the group with whom youth may start to feel a sense of belonging may be a gang. One school official noted that for some kids, their outfit changes completely from one week to the next. It is part of their process of adapting to Oakland. They start wearing the same colors, clothes and hats as a certain group to gain belonging and protection.

Commuting across town

School officials reported that they dislike the idea of youth commuting on the bus across town to get to school, for two main reasons: 1) safety, because they may be approached and intimidated

while commuting, and 2) missing out on after-school activities. If youth live across town, they are less likely to stay on campus after school hours and become involved with positive activities, homework help, and get school dinner. The school campus is a safe space for them.

The community

For kids that become involved with gangs and then want to leave, it can be difficult. As a probation officer put it… "Loyalty is a factor: I have been around you my whole life and we have helped each other out. As long as I live in the community, it is hard to break away. Even if I leave, I will still see you every time I visit my family." Being around the same people and in the same community where one grew up makes it more difficult to break ties with the gang.

2.2.2 Protective factors

The protective factors that were mentioned most often in our interviews include schools, jobs and trainings, and a mentor that provides intensive monitoring and assistance (such as case managers that are willing and ready to assist with any needs that may arise). Schools offer a safe space for students, provide an education so they can make plans for a career, and can also connect them with other services they may need. Jobs and training are also important to provide youth with an income and a career. No specific job and training organizations were mentioned by our interviewees, apart from summer internship programs that some schools offer, and schools are requesting year-round services of this kind. Finally, intensive case management is essential to help youth get out of dangerous situations and remove barriers so they can focus on school.

2.2.3 Gaps in support

Mental health

There is great need for mental health support, particularly for newcomers. Sometimes, the students are not yet in a place to be talking to a therapist; they have urgent needs and concerns that need to be addressed before they are able to talk. The newcomer schools have therapists on site, and during the Covid-19 pandemic some of those services were exhausted, and students had to be served in groups rather than individually.

Substance abuse

Substance abuse is a serious issue among students, and the schools do not have enough specialized resources to assist in this area. There are not many substance abuse counselors available to young people, and there is a lack of language support for Mam communities.

Alcoholism was already a problem before the pandemic, and it has gotten worse. Methamphetamine use is also a serious problem: it is a drug that can help students stay up late, as many are working and exhausted, and it is easy to use and hide, because it does not leave a smell.

Meth is cheap and accessible. Diversion services and treatments, which sometimes youth are referred to, are not offered to newcomers.

Other medical care

"There is so much need," a school official tells us, "with vision problems, dental problems, a huge span of health issues. Chronic pain, injuries not dealt with, psychosomatic stuff. 'I can't feel my legs.' Drug abuse, dealing with the stress of working and going to school full time. Sometimes the family does not trust or understand medicine. It can be hard for students to get appointments, and then they miss work to attend the appointment." A health center on campus to serve students would be a welcome addition.

Housing for newcomers

A school official reports that housing for newcomers continues to be a major challenge. Some of the students are homeless. There is only one homeless shelter for youth in Oakland, and they lost their last Spanish-speaking staff. School officials proposed having a boarding school model, where students get a furnished room that is ready to live in and subsidized.

Jobs and trainings

School officials would like to have staff helping youth with jobs, trainings and mentoring. It would be most beneficial to have someone who not just guides them to where they can apply, but who also checks on them every week. Some schools have summer programs with internships and mentors, where youth get paid and learn a lot from the experience. The schools would like to have this service available year-round. It is a very successful strategy for low-income students, helping them find avenues to make money, instead of getting involved with drugs and gangs.

Mam language

School officials regret not being able to engage Mam-speaking students and their families as well due to the language barrier. To be able to really reach and serve this community, the schools need greater access to translators and translated materials.

Latinos left out of the decision-making and policy dialogue

Although Latinos make up 44% of the students in Oakland, only 17% of the teachers are Latino. The rest of the staff lack diversity too, and very few principals are Latino. Our informants report that there is strong African-American leadership in Oakland, but Latinos get left out of the policy dialogue.

The Latino community has some resources that were founded decades ago due to Latino community organizing, such as *La Clinica* and *Centro Legal de la Raza*. One of our informants explained that the Latino community worked to create these institutions because they were not being served by the city. The community continues to be dependent on them. The informant reports that city officials believe that because these spaces exist, the Latino community has what they need, but in reality, these spaces are not able to serve everyone because resources are still lacking.

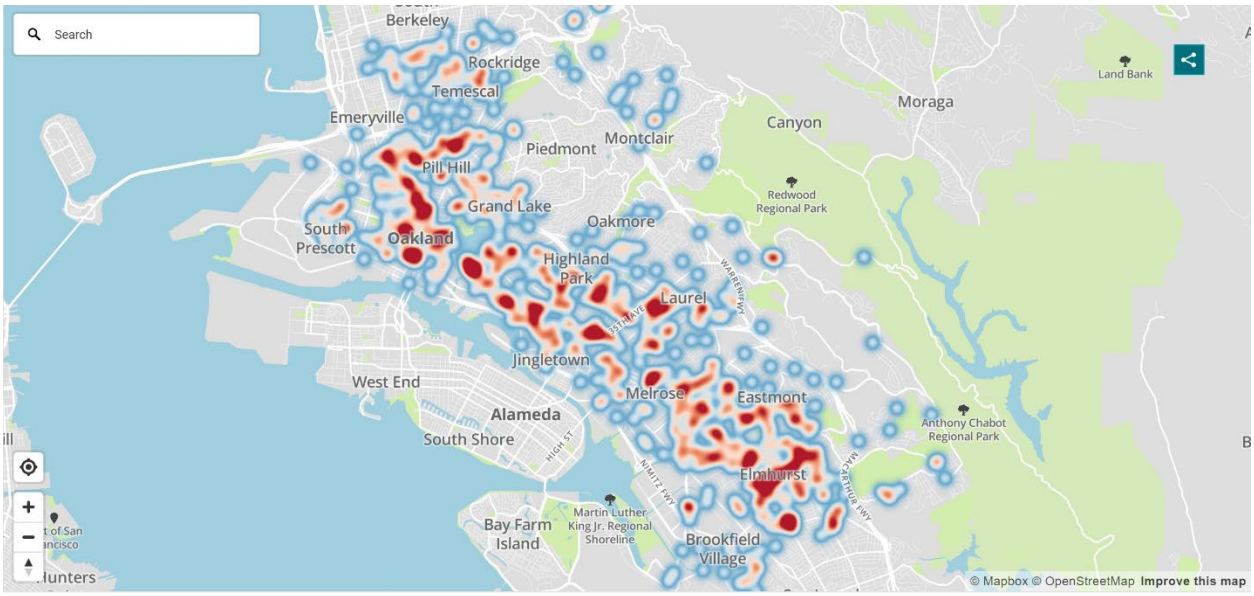
In addition, there is a diversity of experiences within the Latino community that is not always appreciated. There are Chicanos, Mexicans, Central Americans, indigenous peoples, newcomers. Some Latinos were born here and primarily speak English, others are recent arrivals and only speak Spanish or Mam. People from these communities should be involved in the decision-making that concerns the policies and services available to them.

3. Data on crime and violence

There have been substantial efforts over the past years to use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other spatial approaches in order to identify hotspots of criminal activity, in particular related to homicides. Crime and violence in Oakland are constantly reported through an open data platform that allows for the visualization of crimes. Figure 12 provides a visualization for homicides investigations in all OPD precincts in the first map, and in the second map three types of crime that predominantly affect women, namely attempted and forcible rape and prostitution. Homicides are spread out in different parts of the city, while attempted and forcible rape and prostitution are concentrated in the San Antonio district.

Although there are many metrics of criminal activity, including robbery, theft or burglary, as well as crimes that affect specific victims, such as domestic violence against women, homicide investigation hotspots provide two simple stylized facts that are useful when thinking about interventions that may reduce risk to vulnerable populations. First, violent crimes often occur in territorial clusters of specific neighborhoods and city blocks and are not randomly distributed throughout the landscape. Second, a greater concentration of homicide hotspots is found in areas with a large degree of ethno-racial diversity. According to data from the OPD, homicide suspects and victims are primarily African-American and Latino men between the ages of 18 and 34, and the majority of homicide cases have ties to local gangs (California Partnership for Safe Communities, n.d.).

Homicide Reports



Attempted and Forcible Rape and Prostitution

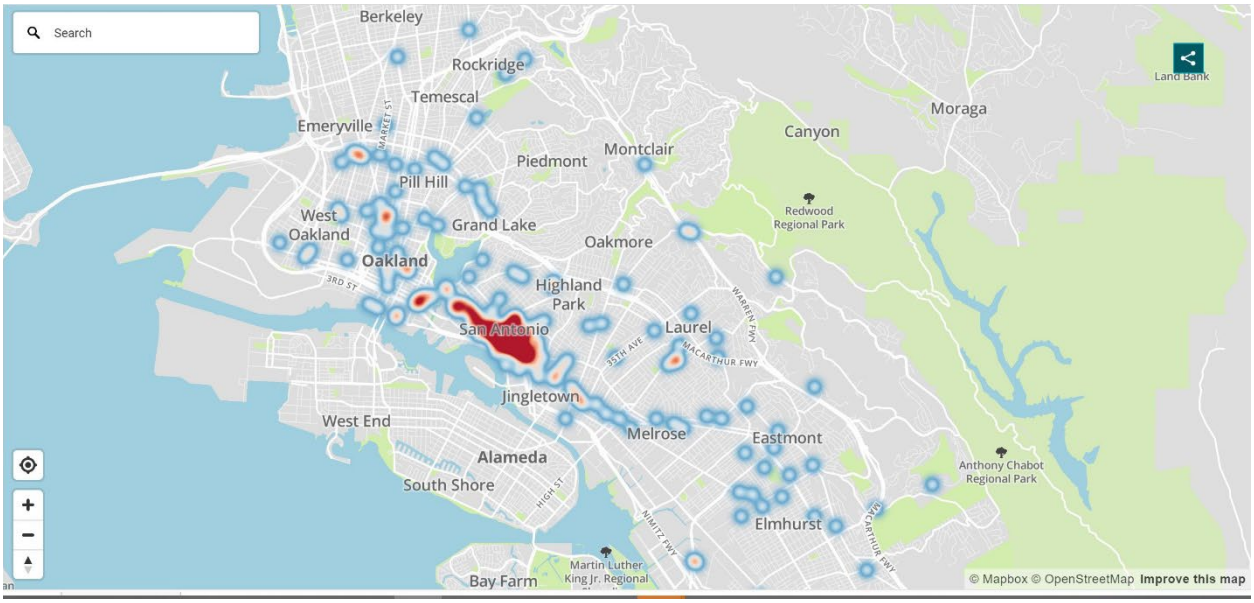


Figure 12: Visualization of Oakland crimes heatmap, 2021

Source: Crimewatch Data from the OPD for Homicide, Attempted and Forcible Rape and Prostitution reports from January 1 to December 31, 2021, for all police beats (accessed August 12, 2022). https://data.oaklandca.gov/Public-Safety/Download-Oakland-Crime-Heatmap/56xf-w7yc

These mappings do not mean that the concentration of some ethnic groups in specific neighborhoods or territories explains the criminal behavior or the vulnerabilities of individuals living in those spaces. Rather, the maps suggest why it is important to have a comprehensive landscape, as much as is possible with available data, in order to begin to understand the way in which ethnic identity and crime may be connected.

To the extent that a public health approach is undertaken as a strategy to address violence in Oakland, it is crucial to understand whether the clustering of crime is associated with specific conditions related to ethnic profiles, whether the spread of violence can have specific channels linked to ethnicity, and whether the marginalized communities that have been most exposed to violence have some specific repertoire of resources and social capital assets that may increase their resilience and reduce their vulnerability, notwithstanding poverty and historical trauma.

In 2021, Oakland reached the highest homicide numbers since 2012, when the Ceasefire[12] intervention was initiated (Barao and Braga, 2022). OPD figures put the number of homicides at 117 in 2020 and 138 for 2021. In 2020, the city also hit a record high for the number of guns being recovered by the police (Oaklandside, 2021). East Oakland in particular has been hardest hit, with police areas 4 (Mills, Leona) and 5 (Knowland Park), which cover the neighborhoods east of Fruitvale, having nearly 55% of the firearm assaults reported in the city in 2021 (Oakland Side, 2021).

A problem analysis of group-driven shootings and homicides in Oakland that was conducted by Drs. Lisa Barao and Anthony Braga for 2019-2020 provides a sobering perspective of the general patterns in homicides: most involve firearms and both victims and perpetrators are usually individuals known to the criminal justice system due to prior probation, conviction, or incarceration (Barao and Braga, 2022). While a small share of the victims and perpetrators are women (8% overall for homicides, 15% for shootings), the vast majority of them are young men, usually connected with gangs (Barao and Braga, 2022). In most incidents the race of victims or perpetrators is known, with Hispanics constituting 17% of the homicide suspects and 25% of the victims.

Figure 13 shows the relatively well-known pattern of homicides in the city since 1996, updating the Barao and Braga (2022) tallies with the latest figures provided by the Oakland Police Department. What is new in this figure is the effort to include the homicides that involve Hispanic victims. From 2018 to date OPD has been collecting information on the ethnicity of violence victims. Before 2017, an estimate was made hand coding the homicide rosters, by using the last names of the victims as listed in the yearly reports from the OPD. Clearly the numbers for Hispanics victims have been climbing, representing around one quarter of the victims in 2021. In the same year of 2021 the number of shooting victims is higher, with Hispanics being the victims of 592 of the 1651 reported in that year, comprising 36 percent.[13] There is not enough data to

[12] Ceasefire is a data-driven intervention to reduce violence through the coordination of community leaders, social services and law enforcement. It seeks to reduce gang related shootings, recidivism, and build community trust. More information can be found here: https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/oaklands-ceasefire-strategy

[13] Data on shootings is not included in the previous graph, due to unavailability of long series.

establish whether Hispanic shooting victims are going to move in the same direction as homicide victims, because these events may not be gang related. They may reflect different processes from the well-known escalations of violence when conflicts among gangs emerge.

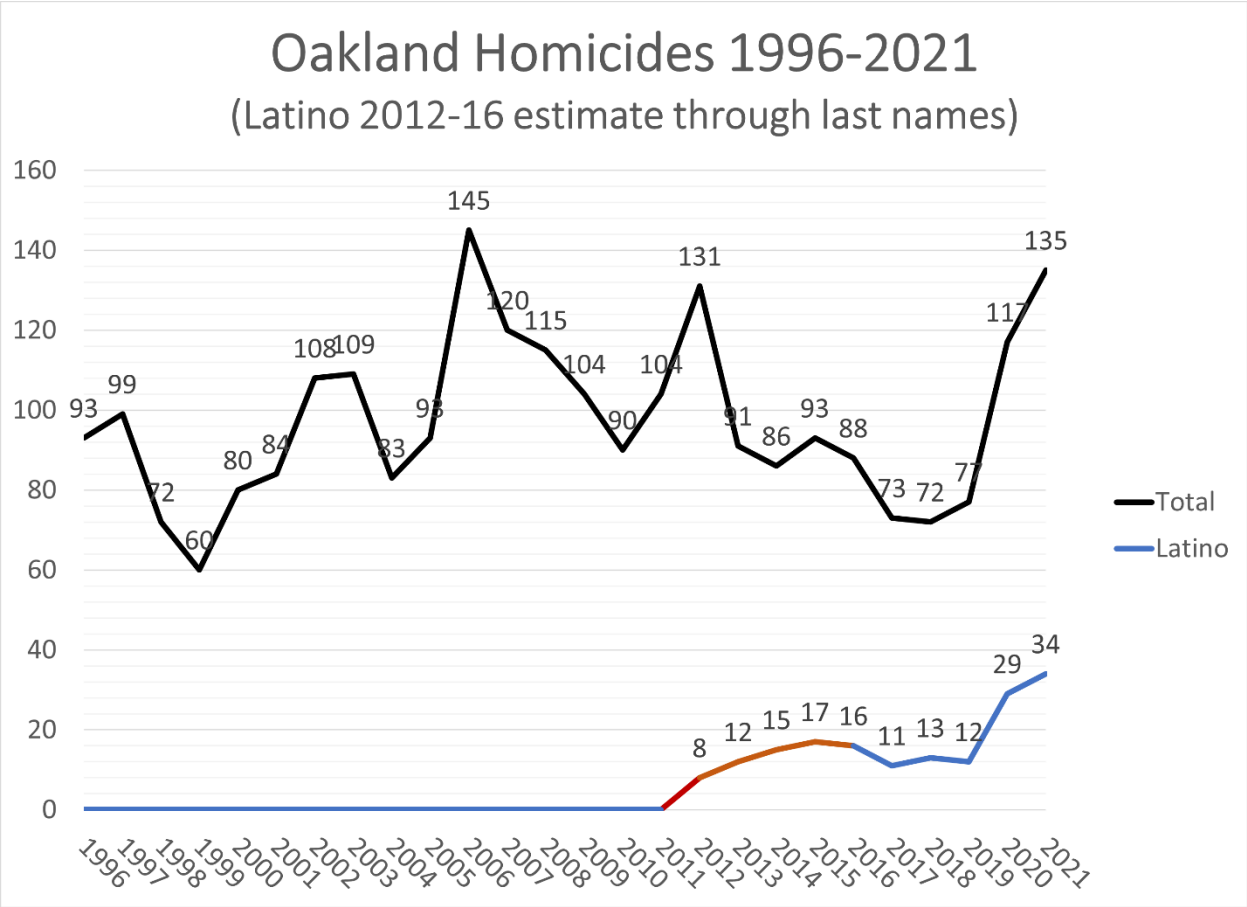


Figure 13: Number of homicides in Oakland, 1996-2021

Source: Barao and Braga (2022). Updated according to OPD dashboard since 2012, adding preliminary figures from OPD for 2021 and breaking down Latino victims by last name 2012-16.

Table 8 shows the evolution of crime reports in the City of Oakland over time. Police reports are filed, but these numbers do not necessarily match the final tally of crimes because some will be investigated and determined to not be a crime. This difference should be clear from looking at the number of homicide investigation files opened by the OPD since 2005: those have been around five or six hundred, even though the final number of homicides in the city is around one hundred. Unfortunately, with the exception of homicide victims, the breakdown of this data by race and ethnicity is not available.

Table 8: Number of reported crimes in Oakland over time, by type

	Total	Homicides	Domestic Violence	Vandalism	Stolen Vehicle	Petty Theft
2005	53,931	568	4,337	2,350	5,874	4,717
2006	55,596	632	4,644	2,601	7,004	4,451
2007	56,797	622	4,561	2,360	6,895	4,142
2008	57,461	617	4,731	2,325	5,939	4,327
2009	56,415	500	4,890	3,018	4,767	4,125
2010	50,594	473	4,472	3,014	3,656	3,706
2011	49,106	497	4,317	2,984	4,788	4,191
2012	58,289	570	4,823	3,537	5,882	3,726
2013	57,364	511	4,541	3,372	6,436	4,222
2014	58,638	543	4,782	3,626	6,658	5,009
2015	59,600	573	4,705	3,637	6,601	5,406
2016	58,855	626	4,639	4,174	7,296	4,537
2017	61,303	623	4,225	5,647	5,905	4,370
2018	56,518	676	3,989	4,502	5,482	4,775
2019	64,359	663	4,053	6,287	5,997	5,258
2020	58,339	898	3,605	5,787	7,369	4,041
2021	63,036	903	3,417	7,555	7,613	4,796

Using the total number of crimes, it is possible to visualize a corridor of the historical hotspot of crime in the City of Oakland (see Figure 14). This is constructed with more than one million reports over the course of more than 15 years, similar to the data reported in the table. It is important to note that the data cannot separate the Hispanic victims, but it shows that the areas where Hispanic residents are concentrated are also areas with criminal hotspots. Further research is required, as discussed in the conclusion, in order to understand whether crime disproportionately affects the Hispanic population.

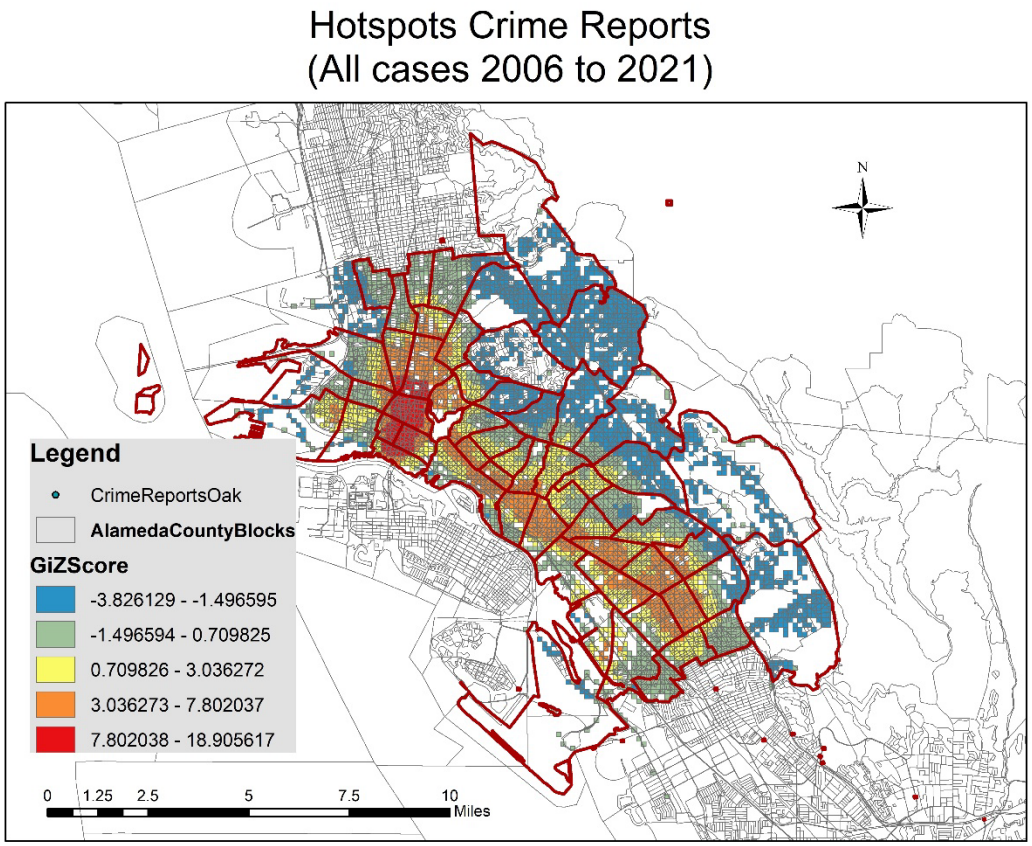


Figure 14: Hotspots for all crime reports in Oakland, 2006-2021

Data on crimes by race is more limited, beyond victims of homicide and gender-based violence. The City of Oakland Gender Based Violent Report for 2021 does not suggest that a disproportionate share of Hispanics are victims of these crimes, but there is a strong likelihood of underreporting given the nature of the crimes. In 2021, the number of reported Hispanic victims or rape was 80, and there were 178 reported Hispanic sex offences, and 894 cases of domestic violence. These represented between 20 and 40 percent of the overall reports in the city, within the bounds of the population share of Hispanics.[14]

[14] Incidents of Gender Based Violence in Oakland, 2021. Document shared with authors by DVP.

4. Violent groups in Oakland

This section offers a discussion of the violent Latino groups that are present in Oakland. This discussion is not meant to be comprehensive, as previous works available to DVP and the OPD conducted an exhaustive identification of all the Latino gangs in Oakland and mapped their territorial presence.[15] The section presents some new insights uncovered during the interviews and the review of documents and news articles, and also some information specific to the Central American gangs.

Oakland, like many other parts of California, has Latino gangs that are clustered as Norteños and Sureños. Originally, Norteño gangs were found north of Bakersfield, and Sureños to the south of it, but more recently these lines have been blurred (Napa County Grand Jury, 2009). Norteños identify with the color red and number 14, and pay allegiance to the Hispanic gang Nuestra Familia. The Sureños identify with the color blue and number 13, and pay allegiance to the Mexican Mafia (Napa County Grand Jury, 2009).

Lt. Fred Mestas, who directed the Oakland Police Gang Unit from 1991 to 1998, explained that Sureños arrived in Oakland around 2003, when more migrants were moving north, and started claiming blue and became Sureños. Before then, it was hard to find a Sureño (Johnson, 2011). In addition to having sets that identify as Norteños and Sureños, Oakland also has Border Brothers gangs, who usually wear all black (Johnson, 2011). According to Mestas, the Border Brothers were formed by "mules" – poor young men from Mexico or Central America who were smuggling drugs across borders – who were sent to prison and began to band together to protect themselves from the other gangs. They began by doing mercenary work for other gangs (Johnson, 2011).

4.1 Gang competition

Although the data are not very recent, it is estimated that around ten years ago, in 2011, there were approximately 700 Latino gang members in the city of Oakland: 400 Norteños, 150 Border Brothers, and 150 Sureños (Johnson, 2011).[16] While the numerous Black gangs in Oakland tend to have alliances and associations that change frequently, the alliances among Latino gangs appear to be much more predictable and stable, with three large groups consisting of Norteño gangs, Sureño gangs, and Border Brothers gangs (Gilbert et al., 2014). The relations within the groups are not usually of a formal alliance, but rather occur due to personal relationships, proximity (Gilbert et al., 2014), or, as informants to this study reported, immediate need.

Across the three groups, the relationship is of rivalry. Police, community activists and gang members say that gang violence in Oakland is not due to drug or arms trafficking, but rather "usually some form of disrespect or inferred disrespect" (Mestas in Johnson, 2011). For example, caused by flashing the "wrong" color of a rival in the neighborhood, or painting graffiti on a wall

[15] See, for example: Gilbert, Daniela, Vaughn Crandall and Stewart Wakeling. 2014. *Understanding Serious Violence in Oakland: A Problem and Opportunity Analysis.* California Partnership for Safe Communities.

[16] Accurate numbers on gang membership are notoriously difficult to estimate. Barao and Braga (2022) calculate in 2019 that between 1,516 and 1,751 individuals are involved in the 59 organizations they identify in Oakland. These numbers do not match the estimates from Johnson (2011), since, given population estimates, it is unlikely that half of the gang members in Oakland are Latino.

in a rival's area. One of the informants to this study reported that, more recently, some Black and Latino gangs have joined forces, particularly when they are from the same territories and grew up together. Tensions have been decreasing among the younger generations, and there are some cross-ethnic bonds being formed. These cross-ethnic allies may help each other with their conflicts with rivals.

4.2 Gangs and schools

Some of the school officials interviewed for this study reported that many of their Latino students are gang-impacted. Some students' lives have been lost to gangs. Salvadoran and Honduran students seem disproportionately impacted by gang activity and having access to weapons, and are being targeted and recruited to join gangs. Particularly when kids are disconnected or separated from their families, they may gravitate to building their own street family in order to gain protection from them. Schools can offer support, but the absence of their families as a support system creates a significant risk factor that makes kids more likely to engage in risky behaviors. Some of these gangs or groups are organized by adults, who approach and coerce youth into taking part.

The reasons for joining gangs include poverty and financial need, wanting protection and/or a sense of belonging. The gang can be like a family, where people look out for each other. For a young person, the members may share their ancestry and culture, and may even include a sibling, a cousin, an uncle. One of the informants of this study, who has worked with young people for a few decades, said that: "gang members call each other brothers, but the other guy is not really your brother, and it takes a while and usually a reality check for young people to realize that."

Many students are using drugs, which also makes them more vulnerable to being exploited and joining gangs. Once they are addicted and dealing drugs, they may evolve to robbing and stealing cars, or other gang activity. While it is not easy to estimate how prevalent drug use among students in Oakland may be, informants suggested it is widespread.

Moreover, youth do not have to be a part of a gang to be affected by it. Many of the youth will be adjacent, and will have to navigate those spaces where gangs are present. As one of the informants put it, "it only takes a few to ruin the bunch. Proximity affects others, it creates a ripple effect… For example, if I am not a gangster but I need to carry a gun to defend myself. So everybody surrounding those gangsters is now gun-carrying."

Some youth are pressured to join gangs on the way to school, on the bus, and outside of school. Some are targeted for other reasons as well, such as sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Girls are sometimes followed after school and invited to get into cars. Youth that do not have strong local ties nor are likely to go to the police, such as newcomers or indigenous Guatemalans, are especially vulnerable. "Gangs are just the tip of the iceberg", one informant reported.

4.3 Central American gangs

Central American gangs, such as Barrio 18 and Mara Salvatrucha (MS13), are reported to have some presence in the Oakland region. Barrio 18 is known to have a larger presence in the United

States than MS-13, with about 30,000-50,000 members in the US and over 16,000 in Central America (InsightCrime, 2021a). The gang has a close relationship with the Mexican Mafia, like the Sureño gangs. It is unclear how much coordination and collaboration there is between the different Barrio 18 units across borders or even within the same city (InsightCrime, 2021a).

MS13 members live off from extortion and create strong social bonds over acts of violence perpetrated against their rivals and sometimes one another (Insights Crime, 2021b). In the US, MS13 is more focused on local drug sales and controlling territories so they can extort small businesses (Insights Crime, 2021b). The extent of the presence and activities of the Central American gangs in the Oakland region is not clear.

Studies sometimes use proxies to detect whether there appears to be a sustained presence of a criminal group in a region. A recent study used Google Trends data to track criminal groups in Brazil and validated this methodology by comparing it to existing data on the groups (Stahlberg, 2021). That study uses the raw Google Trends data that allowed the author to directly compare the proportions of Google searches over time and estimate activity levels for the criminal groups. For this study, readily available data on the Google Trends website were used. Such data may be imperfect because they do not allow an estimate of the amount of criminal activity by these organizations, but they gives an indication of whether there is sustained interest by the public in these groups in the Oakland region, as compared to the rest of the United States. Sustained interest represented by Google searches is used here as a proxy for the presence of criminal groups in a region, similar to what was done in Stahlberg (2021).

Table 9 shows the rankings for metropolitan regions in the US in terms of the proportion of Google searches that concerned MS13, highlighting only the top metropolitan regions that are located in California. Google search interest for MS13 is large enough to appear in Google trends for more than 100 metropolitan areas in the country. In 2022, 5 out of the 10 metropolitan regions that were included in the top 10 ranking were in California, with the Monterey-Salinas area taking second place in terms of Google searches about MS13 in the whole country.

The San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose region took 120th place in 2006, 108th in 2010, 64th in 2020 and 41st in 2022. Hence there is a growing importance in terms of search interest about MS13 in the region, although it still seems far behind other regions in California that rank much higher in 2022. The results indicate that MS-13 has presence in California, but that the Oakland region is not the focus of their presence in the state.

Table 9: Rankings for "MS13" Google searches among metropolitan regions in the US

Metropolitan region	**2006**	**2010**	**2020**	**2022**	**Change in ranking from 2006 to 2022**
Monterey-Salinas CA	84	54	159	2	-82
Chico-Redding CA	·	·	105	3	
Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-San Luis Obispo CA	95	100	3	4	-91
Los Angeles CA	45	24	20	6	-39

Fresno-Visalia CA	81	57	32	9	-72
San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose CA	120	108	64	41	-79

As for Barrio 18, as shown in Table 10, only one metropolitan region in the United States had enough Google searches about this gang in 2006 to appear in the Google Trends rankings: Los Angeles, California. By 2010, there were 6 metropolitan regions, and San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose took the first spot. In 2022, there were 7 metropolitan regions, with San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose coming in at seventh. Although experts say that Barrio 18 has a larger presence in the United States than MS13, the latter seems more dispersed, while Barrio 18's presence seems more concentrated in 7 metropolitan regions. Oakland seems to have enough of a presence of Barrio 18 to appear in the rankings, although, again, it is hard to tell from these data how much presence these results represent.

Table 10: Rankings for "Barrio 18" Google searches among metropolitan regions in the US

	2006	**2010**	**2020**	**2022**
1	Los Angeles CA	**San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose CA**	Houston TX	Washington DC (Hagerstown MD)
2	.	Washington DC (Hagerstown MD)	**San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose CA**	Los Angeles CA
3	.	Houston TX	Washington DC (Hagerstown MD)	New York NY
4	.	Los Angeles CA	Los Angeles CA	Dallas-Ft. Worth TX
5	.	New York NY	Dallas-Ft. Worth TX	Chicago IL
6	.	Dallas-Ft. Worth TX	New York NY	Houston TX
7	.	.	Chicago IL	**San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose CA**

Oakland has been conducting, at least since 2016, Violence Problem Analyses, with detailed charting of gang activity, alliances and conflicts. That has informed the way in which OPD can deploy resources over a complex territory. However, as the visualizations in Figures 15 and 16 suggest, far more is known about the conflicts and linkages of Black gangs compared to Hispanic gangs. This is due to some extent to the longer presence of some criminal organizations, but also due to the greater embeddedness of police officers, social workers and other sources of knowledge regarding gang activity among Blacks compared to Hispanics.

The visualization is not meant to provide a corrective to what is known about the Hispanic gangs in Oakland, but seeks only to highlight that although a detailed mapping like the one on the left far exceeds the purposes of this investigation, something more nuanced is sorely needed. It is possible that Black gangs are indeed more complex and fragmented than Hispanic ones, with greater competition and hence risks of escalations of violence among those groups. But it is also likely that there are more rivalries and competition among subgroups of Hispanic gangs which are not well known. The possibility of violence interrupters to be put into action before violence escalates

among Hispanic gang members, as one police officer interviewed in this study suggested, depends on knowing the stakeholders and actors in the territory.

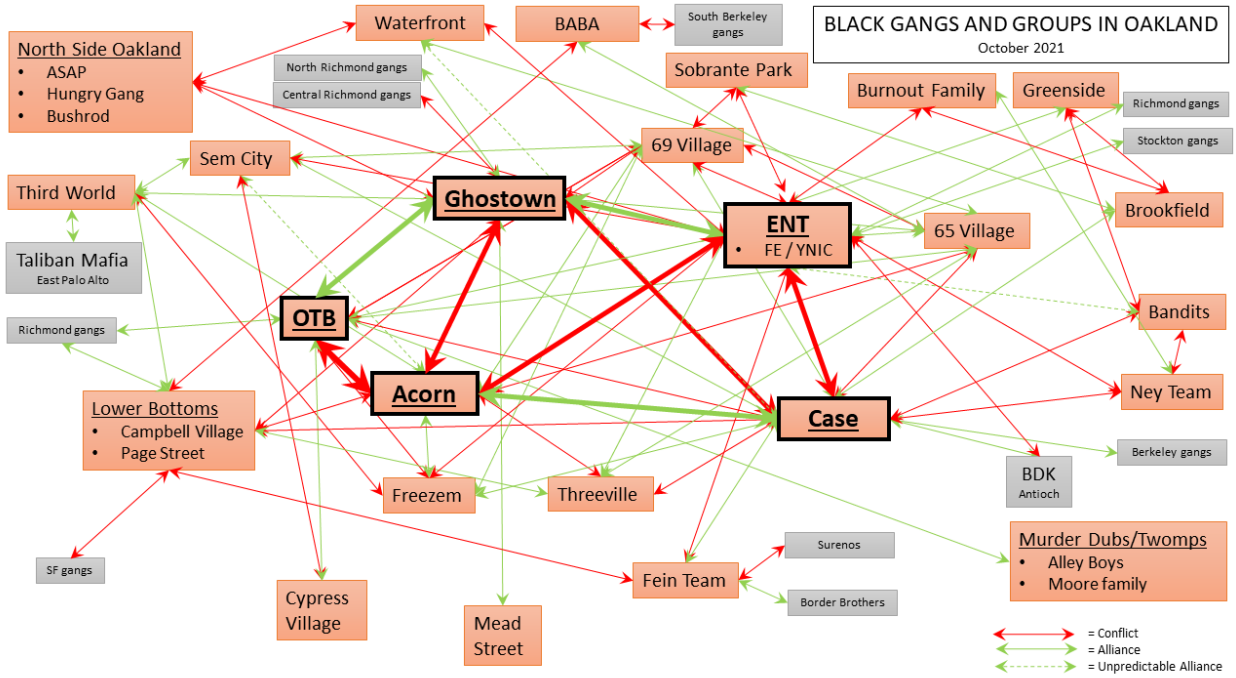


Figure 15: Network and dynamics among Black gangs in Oakland (Barao and Braga, 2022)

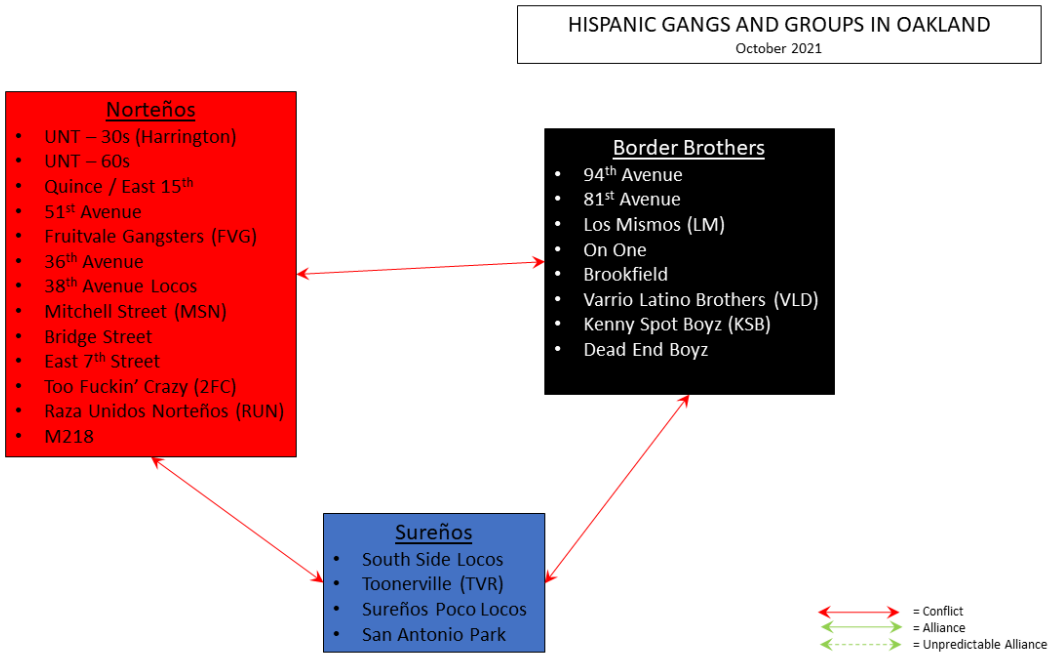


Figure 16: Network and dynamics among Hispanic gangs in Oakland (Barao and Braga, 2022)

5. Conclusions, recommendations, and further research

The main findings regarding risk and protective factors for the Latino population in Oakland are:

1. The growing Latino/Hispanic share of the Oakland population is spurred both by a younger population than the rest of the ethno-racial groups and by increases in numbers of Central American migrants. This has an important impact in demands for special school services catering to these students, since a significant number of these households only speak Spanish, as well as some indigenous languages, such as Mam.
2. Diversity within the City of Oakland presents challenges in terms of the potential for conflict and failures in cooperation, due to the fragmentation of ethno-racial groups. This is compounded with a shift towards majoritarian status of Hispanic groups that used to be minorities in some specific neighborhoods.
3. Recent Guatemalan and Honduran residents of Oakland are quite distinct in their risk and protective factors compared to other Latino groups. Among the Central American immigrants, Salvadoran origin residents are not as poor, with incomes similar to those of Mexican residents. The lowest human capital (in terms of schooling attainment) and income is observed among Guatemalan residents. And the youngest age profiles are observed among Hondurans.
4. The greatest vulnerability for Honduran residents is related to unaccompanied minors, as reflected in their very young age profile.
5. For the lowest income Guatemalan immigrants, income and employment support programs and policies should take into account that many of them do not speak Spanish, but are likely to be from indigenous Central American origins.
6. Recent Mexican immigrants appear to become integrated into existing networks of prior residents. When Mexican American/Chicano and new arrivals from Mexico are analyzed separately, these two groups do not appear to show significant differences in their poverty levels, schooling, or age profile.

The main recommendations that emerge from this study's findings are the following:

1. Consider the possibility of earmarked resources to alleviate the poverty gap of Central American families, particularly the Guatemalan indigenous ones.
2. Provide greater support to schools that have newcomer minorities and might not be providing the kind of comprehensive support, beyond English Learner instruction, that specialized schools provide.
3. Provide greater support to schools serving newcomers so they can offer the intense kind of mentoring services needed to remove barriers to education, remove students from dangerous situations, and support medical needs and working and training efforts. A new kind of needed service is boarding, to address the housing and commuting challenges for this population.
4. Train police officers and other service providers on the diversity of Central American migrants, and in particular the circumstances of youth who are English and Spanish learners and come from indigenous origins.
5. Recruit and hire more Latino police officers, social workers, teachers and health providers who may be more attuned to the changing demographics of the City of Oakland. These

new hires should include speakers of indigenous languages that are most common among Latino immigrants in Oakland, particularly Mam.

6. Invest in citywide efforts to better understand the way in which Latino gangs may be consolidating or fragmenting in cooperation or competition with existing criminal groups. This may involve greater police intelligence efforts aimed at this specific objective, or perhaps a better approach would involve connecting law enforcement with Latino community leaders and organizations.
7. Enhance the political voice and representation of Latino groups, and their diverse interests and needs, within the School District Board and the City Council. Continue studying and understanding the changing Latino landscape in Oakland, with the incorporation of best practices and the deep knowledge of community organizations and other local stakeholders.

There are some directions in which it could be useful to complement or advance this research on the Latino Landscape in Oakland further:

- The first one involves collecting targeted surveys of both Hispanic youth and caregivers, and specific subgroups of Central American origin individuals and families, to better understand the challenges these residents face, as distinct from other ethno-racial groups in the City. Such knowledge should be collected in collaboration with the many social and community organizations already working on the ground.
- There is a statistical challenge that emerges from the lack of individual-level knowledge of how crime affects specific ethnic groups, and Hispanics in particular. It could be possible to statistically estimate something that in technical terms is called the bounds of an ecological inference model, in which even though individual-level data is unknown, it is possible to know what correlation might plausibly exist between crime and ethnic composition).
- Further analysis should be done on how fragmentation along ethno-racial lines may produce conflict and violence. This could be particularly important for schools, where there is a large degree of variation in student body composition along ethno-racial lines.
- More detailed GIS analysis can be carried out with the data collected in this project. For example, geographically-weighted regression analysis can be done of the local correlates of violence and crime, based on fine grained census data at the block level. Or an analysis could be carried out of what is known as the Modifiable Unit Areal problem, in which the partition of the City of Oakland (into neighborhoods, police beats, Census tracts, or neighborhood school catchment areas) may determine the conclusions a study reaches regarding the correlates in protective or risk factors.

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