For The Movement: An Ethnography of the National Urban League, Black Movement Communities, and the Black Middle Class

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While scholars have long explored the importance of civic engagement for a functioning democracy, this area of scholarship has several shortcomings related to race and social movements. Literature on civic engagement has made advances in showing how volunteerism impacts social life, but rarely discusses how it facilitates social change. Barring mention of paradigmatic cases such as the NAACP, Black organizations and the Black Middle Class have been overshadowed as contributors to civic engagement. Furthermore, the study of social movements prioritizes contentious politics, while footnoting the contributions of elite Black organizations. Taken together, research suggests that civic engagement contributes to democracy, but social change is assumed to primarily occur through protests. Where does this leave the Black Middle Class and Black Middle Class organizations? What is their role in social change processes?

To address these questions, I conducted an ethnographic study of the National Urban League (NUL), one of the nation's oldest Black civil rights organizations. I included 45 interviews from members of NUL, conducted participant observations totaling over 500 hours from 2015 to 2020, attended over 140 NUL, NUL Young Professionals, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, and Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh events. The analysis demonstrates the role that the Black Middle Class and NUL play during a time of threat and opportunity for antiracist organizing. Specifically, the data demonstrate that although the NUL is far from a radical antiracist organization, it is part of a Black Movement Community. As part of this community, the

NUL serves as an organizational "middleman," a connector that operates with, and brokers between, marginalized Black communities, the Black Middle Class, and predominantly white political and economic elites. In serving as a connector, NUL provides symbolic and literal space for social change-oriented activities to come together. In bringing individuals together, it provides opportunities for resource mobilization, lobbying, and community building. I find that Black Middle Class participation in NUL stems not just from individualistic advancement, but from moral, familial, and racialized obligations. I conclude by discussing the implications of this study for research on civic engagement, social movements, race, social class, and gender.

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List of Abbreviations

BGLOs	Black Greek Lettered Organizations
Guild	National Urban League Council of Guilds
GuildPgh	Urban League Guild of Greater Pittsburgh
HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
LPC	Legislative Policy Conference
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NDOE	National Day of Empowerment
NDOS	National Day of Service
NUL	National Urban League
NULYP	National Urban League Young Professionals
ULPgh	Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh
ULYPPgh	Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh

Dedication

To my Great Grandmother Hattie Pearl “Little Mama” Williams, Grandmother Shirley Green, Grandaddy John Howard, and all my ancestors who embodied resistance through their existence. You made it possible for me to be.

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1.0 Introduction

During the summer of 2020, ordinary people and militant activists protested police brutality by the thousands. Their actions were spurred by the deaths of two unarmed civilians—George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota and Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky—who were killed at the hands of police (Washington Post 2021). George Floyd was strangled to death over the course of nine minutes by a Minnesota police officer while pleading for his life. Breonna Taylor was killed in her home during a botched police raid. Despite white supremacist rhetoric condemning the protestors from then President Donald Trump and a dangerous global pandemic that was killing nearly 1,000 people a day in the summer of 2020—the COVID-19 virus, which is still ongoing at the time of this writing—everyday people confronted the danger and took to the streets. While wearing masks and working to social distance, protestors reminded the public of the hundreds of innocent Black and Brown people killed by police over the last decade (Washington Post 2021).

Officer-involved murders of unarmed Black people have occurred since the earliest incarnations of policing in America, yet the advent of social media has brought new attention to this grim reality. As a young Black woman millennial, Oscar Grant, Aiyana Stanley-Jones, and Trayvon Martin were the first names I became familiar with as an undergraduate and graduate student. Twenty-two-year-old Oscar Grant was murdered on New Year's Day in 2009 by a BART Police Officer in Oakland, California, while on his way home. Seven-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones was murdered by a police officer in Detroit, Michigan on May 16, 2010, while she slept. Seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin was murdered by a self-deputized neighborhood "watchman" in Sanford, Florida on February 26, 2012, while he was walking in his neighborhood. In each case,

the media focused on the backgrounds of the individuals murdered, blaming them for their mistreatment, rather than focusing on the murderers. This disparaging framing by the media was a practice to which I became accustomed, even though I was disgusted and criticized it privately. Even so, it was the death of Michael Brown, Jr. in Ferguson, Missouri on August 9, 2014, that brought the crisis of police-involved murders and the movement condemning them, #BlackLivesMatter, into sharp focus.

Michael Brown, Jr. was shot by a Ferguson police officer after he was accused of a local robbery. Following the shooting, Brown's body was left uncovered in the nearly 100-degree weather for hours. Brown was treated as an object left in the street rather than a person who deserved dignity even in death. As in the other cases, I soon encountered news articles that stated Brown was "no angel," as though he deserved to be murdered and mistreated. Furthermore, the articles questioned whether the Ferguson community, the St. Louis community, and its Black residents were "doing anything" to ensure that other children would not encounter the same fate as Brown (Eligon, 2014; Sanchez, 2014, Stewart 2014). In fact, it was not just Brown who was indicted; the whole neighborhood was put on trial under the assumption that the city was not doing enough for itself. This became deeply personal to me for two reasons.

First, as a St. Louis native, I grew up less than 11 miles from where Michael Brown, Jr. was murdered (see figure 1). I was familiar with the community organizing and the activities of Black St. Louisans. Over the course of my upbringing, I became intently aware of organizations like the HBCU Alumni Association, Black Greek Lettered Organizations, the Prince Hall Masonic Order, the NAACP, the National Urban League, and other organizations that my family and I were members of for decades. Many of these organizations, such as the National Urban League, NAACP, and Black Greek Lettered Organizations, had existed in St. Louis for over a century. I

knew firsthand that behind the headlines and beyond the hashtags, Black communities and their residents had been doing real organizing work. From community fundraisers to mentoring programs, I had previously observed their civic engagement for myself.

The second reason this was deeply personal was that I observed the events of 2014 through the lens of my master's degree research in sociology. Over the course of developing my thesis, I found that Black people were significantly more likely than their white counterparts to respond, "very important" to the questions "how important is helping other people in my community" and "how important is working to correct social and economic inequalities to you in your life?" (Robinson 2013). These quantitative findings only told a part of the story and did not elaborate what people were actually doing to correct inequalities and engage in civic improvement projects. The research provoked fresh interest for me in what Black communities were doing to help themselves generally and beyond the protests that drew media attention.

In September 2015, I began my doctoral studies at the University of Pittsburgh as Ferguson was preparing for what was called "Ferguson October," during which the city would conduct another wave of protests in October of that year. Also in September 2015, I attended my first Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh event in the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh headquarters. I did so because I was interested in getting to know other young Black professionals in the area and in furthering my research on the ways that members of the Black Middle Class get involved within Black communities. This event which took place in downtown Pittsburgh at 100 Wood Street (see figure 2), was entitled #BlackLivesMatter and featured a conversation with a man named Jasiri X, a local Pittsburgh rapper, entrepreneur, and participant in the Ferguson protests (see figure 3).

I walked into a room of approximately 40 young Black Professionals, both male and female presenting, dressed in business casual clothing. Attendees were friendly as they introduced themselves, their backgrounds of degrees and professional occupations, and what they had done for their summers. Some of the attendees had vacationed together, while others mentioned new job opportunities. One thing I noticed was that attendees continuously expressed interest in supporting "their" community, the Black community as a reason for why they were attending an Urban League event. As I sat at this event (see figure 4), I thought about the role of the Black organizations I grew up with and the role of Black professionals who wanted to contribute to social change, but not necessarily as protestors. This first meeting led me to develop an ethnographic research plan dedicated to understanding the relationship between members of the Black Middle Class and the fight for racial equality, which culminated in this dissertation. In assessing this topic, the rest of this introduction proceeds by engaging with the literature on the Black Middle Class in America, the relationship of social movements theories with Black Americans, and the role of civic engagement in racial equity.

Figure 1 Map of Greater St. Louis Area

Figure 2 Image of Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Headquarters 2015-2019

Photo Credit: https://crawl.trustarts.org/locations/urban-league-of-greater-pittsburgh

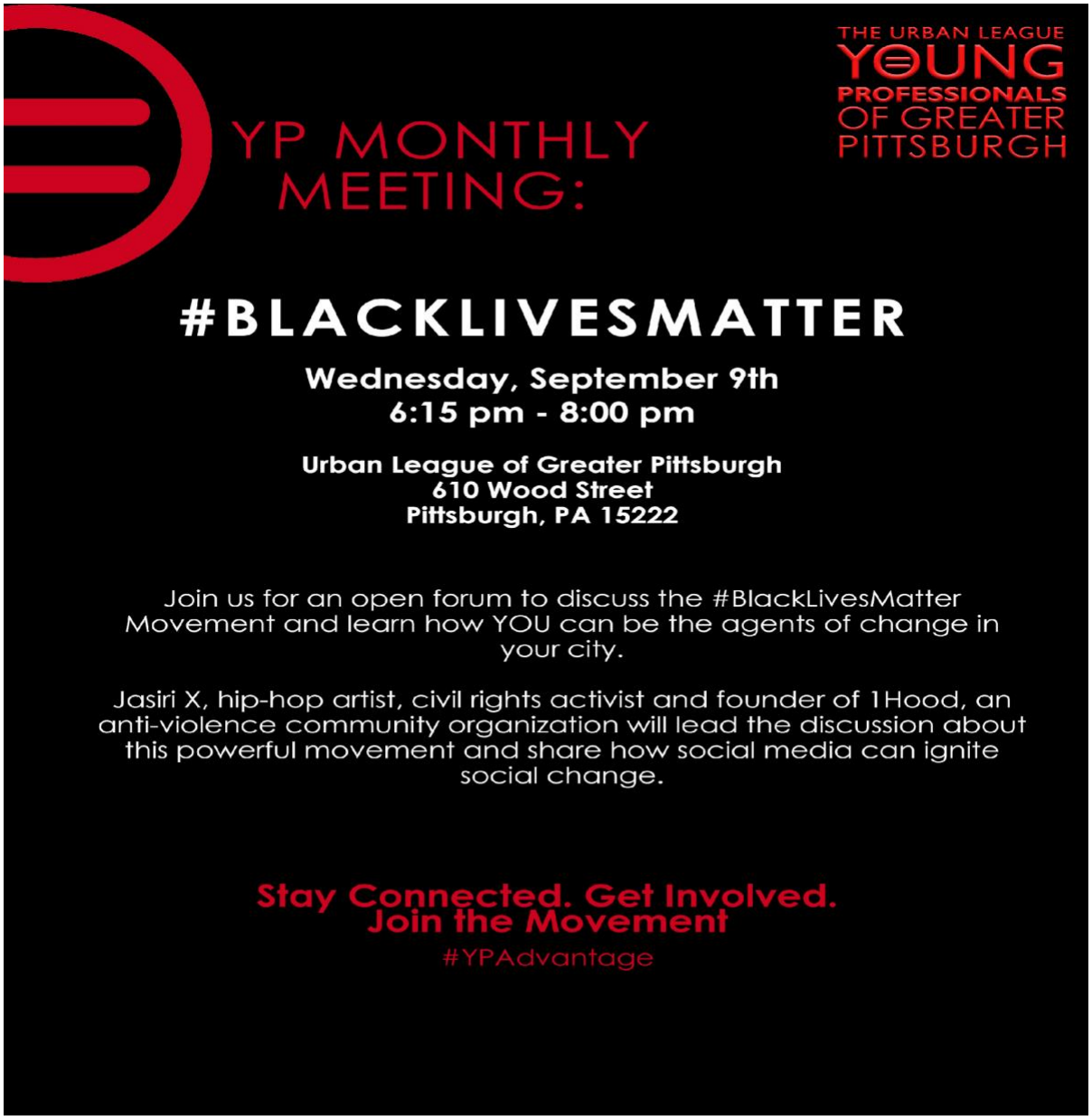

Figure 3 Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh Event Flyer

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/ULYPPGH

Figure 4 Image of Jasiri X Speaking at Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh Event "#BlackLivesMatter" on Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/ULYPPGH

1.1 Black Middle Class in America

Members of the Black Middle Class are brought together by their race and position as middle class. Their experiences are built through a collective racial identity informed by a history of slavery, segregation, and institutional racism (Omi and Winant 1986/2014; Winant 2015; Golash-Boza 2016). Additionally, their class is built through the measures of class identity that include the objective variables of education, earnings/income, occupation, wealth, and various subjective class measures of how people perceive themselves within the class structures, including

lifestyle[1] (Bourdieu 1986; Grusky and Weeden 2008; Hout 2008). The historical exclusion of Black Americans from social mobility opportunities reifies racial and class boundaries, leading to this particular combination category of Black Americans and Middle Class Americans. The variations of a combined race and class definition are guided by education, occupation, income, wealth, family background, and distinctive cultural boundaries, such as relationships to people within their race or their class (Jewell 2007; Lacy 2007). Defining the Black Middle Class is not only influenced by the measures outlined above, it is also impacted by dimensions of social and political change throughout history (Lacy 2007; Pattillo 2008; Landry and Marsh 2011).

The earliest sociological research on the Black Middle Class emerged from acclaimed sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois and subsequently the Atlanta School of Sociology (Wright II 2017). Notably, Du Bois's work on the experiences of Black Americans as they lived, worked, and experienced the United States included variations along class lines. Du Bois's book *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899) analyzed how Black people from all social standings and incomes supported one another in the Seventh Ward of Philadelphia. His study highlights the work of the "middle classes and above." Those elite Black Philadelphians volunteered their time and gave money to help others through church and social organizations in an effort to reach equality for all Black people.

> There is always a tendency on the part of the [white] community to consider the Negroes as composing one practically homogenous mass … And yet, if the foregoing statistics have emphasized any one fact it is that wide variations in

[1] Lifestyle and subjective class measures of status and cultural capital are discussed in the works of Weber (1946) and Bourdieu (1986) respectively.

> antecedents, wealth, intelligence and general efficiency have already been differentiated within this group. (Du Bois 1899:309)

While the *Philadelphia Negro* gave Du Bois an opportunity to systemically study the demographics of Black Americans, it was with *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903) that he outlined the debates about the expectations of the Black Middle Class in America. There, he confronted fellow highly educated and privileged contemporaries, such as Booker T. Washington, to discuss the myriad of ways that Black people could approach equality at the turn of the twentieth century. Du Bois argued that it was the duty of Black people to work together through various educational fields, culture, and scholarship for racial liberation and to ensure access to equity (Morris 2015: 15). Du Bois argued that Washington, as well as many other privileged Black Americans during this time, were not pushing enough for radical change to help all Black Americans gain equality (Du Bois 1903). While Washington spent most of his privilege and career working with white philanthropists for change, Du Bois used his scholarship to better explain the experiences of Black Americans to push for more sweeping change. Du Bois's scholar-activist research and commentary on all parts of the Black experience is foundational in analyzing racialization as a marker of inequality throughout the history of the United States that timelessly reverberates to contemporary scholarship on the subject. Furthermore, it provides an avenue to understand social dynamics of the Black Middle Class.

Moving into the mid-twentieth century, E. Franklin Frazier (1957) and William Julius Wilson (1978/2012) reignited and expanded debates on the responsibilities of the Black Middle Class rather than demographics to better understand their lives. Frazier (1957) dubbed members of the Black Middle Class, "the Black Bourgeoisie," and he outlined in his study the objective conditions of the Black Bourgeoisie through education, income, and occupations and the

subjective standards of behavior and values of this specific segment of Black Americans (Frazier 1957:23). According to Frazier, the Black Bourgeoisie have difficulty balancing their two identities of being Black and being of an elevated class position. Wilson's *The Declining Significance of Race* is a seminal sociological work that focuses more on the economic and labor market conditions surrounding class differences within the Black community. The book discusses the racial and class tensions of the Black Middle Class as they integrate into white communities. Wilson argues that as Black professionals move away from segregated Black neighborhoods into racially integrated neighborhoods, educational opportunities, and occupations, working class Blacks are left behind. Wilson and Frazier interrogate the lifestyles of the Black Middle Class in the mid-twentieth century. Wilson's purpose was to examine economic changes and Frazier analyzes the relationship between objective and subjective measures of class. Both works agreed that there was a change in the fabric of what a racialized and class position would mean in the second half of the twentieth century.

Following the response of Wilson's seminal work, *The Declining Significance of Race*, there was an increase in research that outlined the importance of race among Black Americans of all socioeconomic statuses. Research emerged on the Black Middle Class and their experiences through boundary and identity maintenance that are influenced by labor markets, neighborhoods, income and wealth inequality, and politics. As more people studied the Black Middle Class, many felt that the primary obstacle to the group's development and success was continued racism and discrimination; therefore, scholarship centered on the subject of institutionalized racial inequities (Landry and Marsh 2011; Thomas 2015). However, this scholarship needs to be expanded to account for their experiences related to their social location. For the purposes of this dissertation, I identify members of the Black Middle Class as those who identify as Black and have at minimum

a bachelor's degree or a professional occupation. Beyond this definition, I focus on the expectations and experiences of the Black Middle Class as it relates to social movements.

1.2 Social Movements and the Black Middle Class

Since the arrival of the White Lion ship, which brought an estimated 20 enslaved Africans to Virginia in 1520, Black Americans have fought for the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and the fulfillment of the American dream. In the 500 years since, Black people have engaged in a range of activities challenging racial inequities. Confrontational efforts have included slave rebellions,[2] participation in the Civil War, the iconic Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the Black Power Movement of the 1970s and 1980s, and the more recent Movement for Black Lives in the twenty-first century. In addition to these intensified instances of revolutionary collective action, Black Americans have fought for social change through the institutions that had long excluded them from membership and positions of power. These include court cases such as the Dred Scott Decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. The Board of Education*, advocacy for and against constitutional amendments (the Thirteenth Amendment, Fourteenth

[2] Eight of the most significant slave rebellions within the United States were the Servants Plot in Gloucester County, Virginia (1663), the Stono Rebellion in Stono, South Carolina (1739), the New York City Conspiracy (1741), Gabriel's Conspiracy in Virginia (1800), the German Coast Uprising (1811), Denmark Vesey's Revolt (1822), Nat Turner's Revolt (1831), and the Harper's Ferry Raid (1859) (Blakemore 2019; Gates and Yacovone 2016).

Amendment, and Fifteenth Amendment), and legislation (i.e., the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965). Institutional avenues for social change also included building Black communities in cities such as Wilmington, North Carolina; East St. Louis, Illinois; and Tulsa, Oklahoma, resulting in the massacres of Black people and the destruction of Black communities by white supremacist mobs and authorities (NAACP 1917; NAACP 1921; Zucchino 2020; Johnson 2021). Additionally, Black voluntary organizations have used their influence to meet the needs of the Black community before and long after moments of heightened civil unrest (Drake and Clayton 1945; Frazier 1957; Skocpol et al. 2006; Dagbovie 2015). Black Americans continue to fight with all tactics available to them to achieve racial equality in the face of backlash from individuals and government entities.

The study of collective behavior is a mainstay of sociological inquiry and is today dominated by research on protest events and grassroots social movements (Van Ness and Summers-Effler 2016: 528). A social movement is a specific type of collective behavior in which people come together through informal and formal groupings to promote social change (or react against it) and challenge established structures and authorities (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1217-1218; Moss and Snow 2016: 547). Since the growth of the social movements field in the 1970s, the most prominent theories explaining the emergence of social movements are resource mobilization and political process theory.

The theory of resource mobilization, originally articulated by John D. McCarthy and Mayer Zald (1973, 1977), argued that social movements were not the product of irrational group behavior or broad, class-based grievances but were facilitated by resources, including elite organizations, patronage, and civic structures. Accordingly, resource mobilization theory (RMT) innovated the study of collective action by accounting for the acquisition of resources that mobilize people for a

common cause. RMT argues that resources simulate a movement goal and sustain action-oriented campaigns, characterizing a social movement (McCarthy and Zald 1977).

The second major theory, political process theory (PPT), focuses on how changing political contexts expand movements' opportunities for protest (Meyer 2004). PPT focuses on the relationship between citizens and the political sphere. It argues that a social movement emerges when there is increased public access to political authorities, cleavages between power holders, the presence of allies, and relatively limited state repression (McAdam [1982] 2010). In short, PPT focuses on movements' changing relationships within power holding and the political sphere, which provide them with the possibility of waging peaceful insurgencies on the streets for equal rights. Doug McAdam's ([1982] 2010) seminal work on the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) demonstrates that a reduction in terrorist violence against Black people, elite cleavages in the political class, Black resources, and newfound "cognitive liberation" facilitated the emergence of the CRM during the 1950s and 1960s.

In the decades since these partial theories were introduced, scholars have expanded them to incorporate work on culture, emotions, ecological factors, identities, networks, and organizations that expand scholarship underneath the movement goals of racial equality and conservative, environmental, peace, transnational, and women's movements (Moss and Snow 2016). Based on newspaper data of contentious events, studies overwhelmingly center their analyses on "contentious politics," or times where organizations and ordinary people take their claims to the streets due to their inabilities to achieve change through the ballot box (McAdam et al. 2001; Earl 2004). Although these theories remain mainstays of the social movements' field, they have also been shown to have numerous shortcomings.

First, both RMT and PPT fail to recognize the leadership of these organizations by highly educated and professional Black Americans. Though resource mobilization theorists McCarthy and Zald (1977) use Civil Rights Movement organizations[3] for evidence of their theory, they do not account for the social class of the leaders that made them possible within the Black community. For example, SNCC was led primarily by highly educated Black students at HBCUs. Furthermore, Martin Luther King, Jr, a SCLC leader, was heavily influenced by his Black Middle Class upbringing as the child of a preacher[4] who attended Morehouse College, joined a historically Black Fraternity (Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.), received his PhD in systematic theology from Boston College, married a woman of similar social background in Coretta Scott, and had a professional occupation as a preacher.

Second, these theories do not analyze the relationships that are built between social movement leaders and the power holders and allies that make political opportunities and social change possible.[5] These theories also do not account for how protest movements are *built* in the decades preceding their emergence. For instance, contemporary historians argue that the difference between studying the Civil Rights Movement and the "Long" Civil Rights Movement, which accounts for the pre-CRM mobilizing activities of the 1930s (Hall 2005), is the challenge of

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[3] They particularly note SNCC, CORE, NAACP, and SCLC (McCarthy and Zald 1977: 1219).

[4] Preachers and ministers were considered a marker of the talented tenth at the beginning of the twentieth century by Du Bois (1903).

[5] Political process theory is a far more complex theory than I have outlined here; however, the opportunities available as related to people in power is the most unique aspect of the theory and is therefore often taken up by scholars in response to this theory.

accounting for the *longstanding* social networks that set the foundations for the more radical CRM to emerge later. And even though resource mobilization theorists McCarthy and Zald (1977) use Civil Rights Movement organizations for evidence of their theory, they do not account for the formation of networks that made the organizations possible within the Black community. As Aldon Morris's research demonstrates, the existence of Black mobilizing structures facilitates Black protest. However, Morris does not treat these mobilizing structures as vehicles for social change themselves, but instead as vessels to foster contentious politics. The insipid use of Black elite organizations suggests that Black elite organizations themselves—and particularly those that have been neglected in existing studies—should be investigated as agents of change, rather than empty structures waiting to be "filled" or activated by protesters.

1.3 Bringing in Civic Engagement to the Study of Social Movements

In addition to race and social class, I nuance social movement scholarship by pushing forward the incorporation of civic engagement as a key concept. Studies of civic engagement complement the study of social movements in many ways, but these two literatures often speak past one another. Civil society, broadly defined, is the structural component of society that subsumes the collective life of individuals comprised of obligations related to community and political affairs. Civic engagement is the mechanism that maintains civil society. Civil society and in turn civic engagement allow citizens to feel emboldened to engage in collective action in support or opposition of formal, institutionalized party politics. For example, civil society provides opportunities for ordinary people to get involved in their communities, whether local or national, through volunteering, attending public meetings with politicians, and registering to vote (Almond

and Verba 1963; Skocpol and Fiorina 1999; Putnam 2000; McLean et al. 2002; Zukin et al. 2006). Alexander (2006) argues that this kind of participatory democracy transitions into social movement activity because of friction within civil society. He states that social movements emerge within the civil sphere when citizens feel as though their civic engagement (involvement, work, and opinions) are no longer taken into consideration by those in power (Alexander 2006: 233). In other words, social movements are the outcome of civil society's failures to remedy collective concerns.

Social movement theorists such as Edward Walker (2008) and David Snow and his colleagues, (1980) explicitly incorporate the importance of civic engagement, voluntary associations, and social capital in their studies of social movement organizations. Their studies have shown that civil engagement, such as participating in voluntary associations, promote activism by providing channels of recruitment to social movements (Eliasoph 1998; Walker 2008). Members may not immediately identify as activists through their civic and professional associations, despite conducting work similar to that of activists (Eliasoph 1998; Walker 2008). At the same time, membership in their associations has the propensity to be a mediator for "unintentional mobilization." It can therefore promote explicit activist participation even when individuals do not identify as activists. Furthermore, those who identify as activists often discover social movement organizations (SMOs) through the occupational, neighborhood, and organizational networks provided by their civic engagement (Snow et al. 1980).

To both bridge the artificial divide between theories of social movements and civil engagement, as well as to address the aforementioned shortcomings in each, this study asks the following question: What do elite Black organizations do, and how do they play a role in social

change for racial equality? In order to address this query, I now turn to my case—the National Urban League—before summarizing the dissertation.

1.4 The National Urban League: A Brief History

In a 1965 interview with *Ebony Magazine*—one of the premier magazines for Black Americans—Whitney M. Young, Jr., executive director of the NUL from 1961-1971 introduces the NUL (Morrison 1965:170):

> You can holler, protest, march, picket, and demonstrate, but somebody must be able to sit in on the strategy conferences and plot a course. There must be strategists, the researchers, the professionals to carry out the program. That's our role.

In the quote, Young states, "That's our role." In so doing, he refers to the role of the NUL as a leader and supporter of individuals who participate in contentious political activities such as protests, riots, and marches. This reflects the fact that the NUL has long been a part of a community of organizations founded at the dawn of the twentieth century dedicated to bringing support and equality to Black communities. Originally named "The National League on Urban Conditions Among Colored People," the NUL was formally established on September 29, 1910, by Dr. Gregory Edmund Haynes and Ruth Standish Baldwin in New York City. This founding consolidated even older organizations, such as the Committee for the Improvement of Industrial Conditions Among Negroes in New York, the National League for the Protection of Colored Women, and the Committee on the Condition of Negroes. Their mission was broadly understood as *improving conditions for African Americans*, adopting the phrase "Not alms, but opportunity" (Dodson 1911; Reed 2009).

As Black people migrated from the South to Northern cities at the beginning of the twentieth century, philanthropists and Black Americans within Northern cities responded to the need for resources. Dr. George Edmund Haynes began developing the NUL through his experience as a Ph.D. graduate in sociology from Columbia University. His dissertation, “The Negro at Work in New York City: A Study in Economic Progress," provided a comprehensive analysis of the urban conditions of Black New Yorkers at the beginning of the twentieth century (Haynes 1912). During his data collection, Haynes stated he “felt a compelling need to use his training as a social worker to serve his people,” (Daniels 2003) a common theme that appears in my interview data from 2019-2020, as detailed chapter 5. He then began working with philanthropists and non-profit organizations to develop an organization for direct services and advocacy for Black people. Haynes partnered with Ruth Standish Baldwin, a widow and philanthropist with experience working with the National League for the Protection of Colored Women.[6] These two organizers carefully calculated how they saw their role in social change during this period. Building on both of their knowledge bases, Baldwin and Haynes addressed the primary concerns of quality of life for Black people within New York City by focusing on four main areas: education, jobs, housing, and healthcare.

Since 1910, the NUL has had eight Presidents and CEOs (formerly known as Executive Directors): George Edmund Haynes (1910-1918), Eugene Kinckle Jones (1918-1940), Lester

[6] National League for the Protection of Colored Women was founded in 1906 to address the needs of Black women moving into New York City at the turn of the twentieth century. The organization functioned as a social work organization. More information on this organization as precursor to the NUL can be found in work by Weiss (1974).

Blackwell Granger (1941-1961), Whitney M. Young (1961-1971), Vernon Jordan (1971-1981), John Jacob (1982-1994), Hugh Price (1994-2002), and Marc Morial (2003-Present). Under each of these men's leadership, the organization has evolved in ways that supported its ability to be adaptable and sustainable while staying true to its core mission. Haynes, Jones, and Granger established 49 of the 90 affiliate offices still in operation today. Affiliate offices are chapters in cities throughout the country that provide direct services. These services include, but are not limited to, registering voters, tutoring and mentoring, job training, rental assistance, home-ownership workshops, and health screenings. An interracial board of directors, affiliate President and CEO, and a paid staff run each affiliate office. Direct services continue to be part of the 90 affiliate offices that remain open despite the pandemic and local changes within cities, such as economic downturns. Granger also oversaw the establishment of an auxiliary group, the National Urban League Council of Guilds. This volunteer auxiliary was founded by Mollie Moon in New York City and quickly became an essential part of the broader Urban League movement as a resource for fundraising and volunteer support (Edmunds 1999; Ford 2021).

Young and Jordan directed the NUL's advocacy and social justice accomplishments. During the 1960s, the NUL had an active role in the Civil Rights Movement, assisting in the March on Washington and advocating for the key civil rights legislation of the decade. During this time, the NUL's Washington Bureau became an affiliate that focused on advocacy and built a direct relationship with the federal government in Washington, D.C. An annual report titled "The State of Black America" was initiated in 1976 to educate the public and leaders about Black Americans' collective status in economics, employment, education, health, housing, criminal justice, and civic participation. The report and its equality index serve as a resource to understand the progress of

Black Americans as Civil Rights leaders fighting for racial equality (The National Urban League 2020).

In the 1980s, the NUL affiliates realized the importance of training the next generation of leaders in the quest for parity in education, jobs, housing, and civil rights. Jacob's (1982-1994) and Price's leadership (1994-2002) oversaw the expansion of the NUL into an organization dedicated specifically to cultivating a more youthful membership. During this time, the NUL sustained the National Council of Urban League Guilds and created the National Urban League Young Professionals (NULYP) in 1999. The original young professionals auxiliaries were named Blue Monday (located in Detroit, Michigan), Metropolitan Board (located in Chicago, Illinois), Philadelphia Urban League Young Professionals (located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), and Thursday Network (located Washington, D.C.). In 1998, underneath the leadership of Price, the NULYP was formally organized to purposefully engage people ages 21 to 40 through volunteerism, philanthropy, and membership development in support of the NUL. Since 1998, membership has grown from the four young professional groups in Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., to 64 active chapters with 8,429 active members (2019 NULYP Report).

While Black Americans who have attained at least a bachelor's degree make up less than 25 percent of the population 25 years and older in the United States as of 2015 (Ryan and Bauman 2016), the NULYP serves as a valuable asset to young members of the Black Middle Class by bringing them together for professional, personal, and community services activities. Professionally, local chapters host training and mentorship events to assist young professionals in strengthening their career skills. Personally, they host health, wellness, and social events to allow young professionals to work on their mental and physical health. Additionally, they serve as a conduit for members to contribute to their communities as mentors and providers of other services.

Of their members, 91 percent identify as Black/African American, and 98 percent of the members have advanced degrees, making it an exemplar of an organization comprised primarily of members of the Black Middle Class.

Morial's presidency (2003-present) has seen the sustention and expansion of the NUL. At the time of this writing, there are 90 affiliates in 36 states and Washington, D.C. (see figure 5). Under his leadership, the Washington Bureau continues to inform the political advocacy work of the NUL and expanded the annual Legislative Policy Conference (LPC) founded in 2002. LPC annually brings together the affiliate president and CEOs, members of the Guild and NULYP, and interested community members to learn more about policies impacting Black America. During the conference, members of the NUL network meet with their local congresspeople to help the NUL lobby for policies that challenge inequalities. The NULYP and Guild notably assist the NUL with their mission through networking events (such as the annual National Day of Empowerment, the National Day of Service, and Join Week, which promotes membership), and participation in annual conferences (such as the NUL Conference and Whitney M. Young Leadership Conference). The NULYP and Guild local affiliates report their financial and voluntary impact on the local community to their local affiliates and national executive leadership teams. This well-coordinated relationship between the NUL and their auxiliary expands the reach of the NUL intergenerationally and spatially. Morial regularly notes how he relies on these auxiliary chapters to continue to fulfill the organization's mission.

With this history, the NUL provides an ideal case study for understanding the role of Black elite organizations and professionals in social change processes, specifically in the fight for racial equality. The NUL has a historical role of moving towards racial equality, albeit slowly and unobtrusively, reflecting the notion that the struggle for Black Americans' freedom will not occur

quickly (Edmunds 1999). While many organizations of the 1960s like the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), SNCC, SCLC, and the Black Panther Party have succumbed to historical obscurity or lost inertia, the NUL has increased its budget, volunteer numbers, membership, and affiliate offices to expand its work in achieving parity, power, and civil rights. The NUL, their local affiliates, the National Council of Guilds, the NULYP, and local affiliate extensions of the Guild and NULYP comprise the "Urban League Movement" (see figure 6). Today, the NUL's current mission statement reads as follows: "To help African-Americans and others in underserved communities achieve their highest true social parity, economic self- reliance, power, and civil rights. The League promotes economic empowerment through education and job training, housing and community development, workforce development, entrepreneurship, health, and quality of life," (nul.org 2021). The NUL continues to engage *strategists, researchers, and professionals to carry out the program* underneath the tagline "Empowering Communities. Changing Lives" (See figure 7).

Figure 5 National Urban League Affiliate Office Map

Photo Credit: www.nul.org

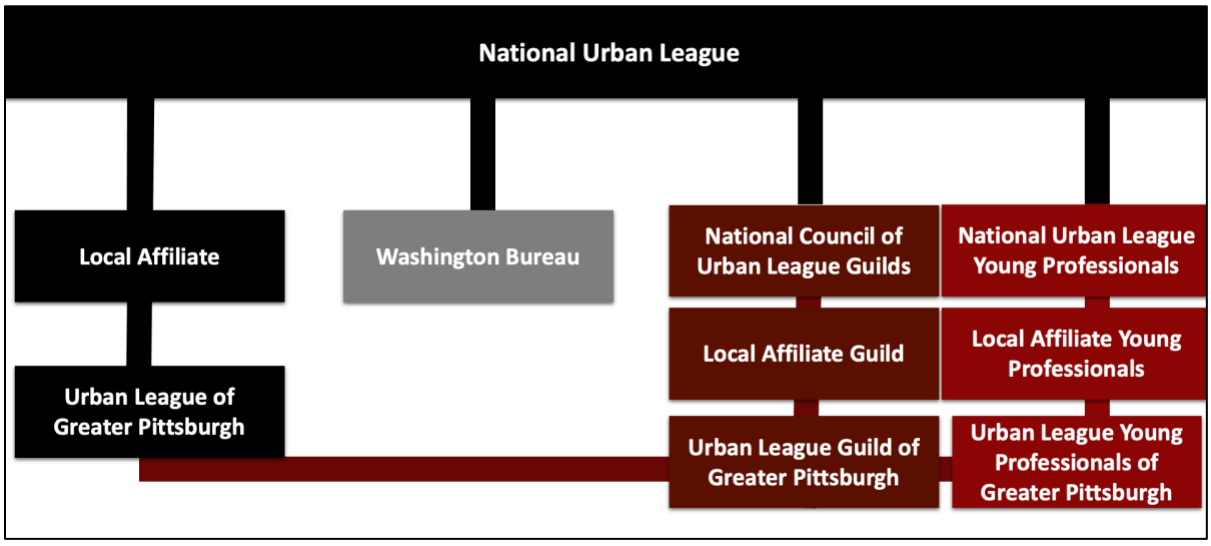


Figure 6 National Urban League Organizational Chart

Figure 7 National Urban League Logo with Tagline

Photo Credit: www.nul.org

1.5 The Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation uses ethnographic data on the National Urban League to explain the relationship between the Black Middle Class and social change. In each chapter, I bring together multidisciplinary research on race, class, civic engagement, and social movements to deconstruct the complicated concepts of race, class, and social movements. As I explain in more detail in the following chapter, data and quotes appear from 45 interviews and ethnographic fieldnotes from attending over 150 events sponsored by the NUL, National Urban League Young Professionals (NULYP), the affiliated Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh (ULPgh), and the Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh (ULYPPgh) and related organizations active from 2015 through 2020. Analysis of these data demonstrates that the NUL and its affiliates contribute to social change, albeit in specific and challenging ways. By broadening our conceptualizing of social change as stemming from a social movement community, which is a network of agents (individuals, organizations, movement centers, institutions) and events (cultural activities, campaigns, and initiatives) that work towards a movement goal, I argue that we can better understand the role that organizations like the NUL play. I then show how the organization acts as an organizational middleman, a key connector that operates with and brokers between

marginalized Black communities, the Black Middle Class, and predominantly white political and economic elites. In serving as a connector, the NUL contributes to the Black movement community by providing symbolic and literal space for individuals' separate social change-oriented activities to come together. In bringing individuals together, it provides opportunities for resource mobilization, lobbying, and community building. By promoting Black civic engagement, the NUL strengthens the activities contributing to racial equality. I also show that rather than being a self-interested organization for "bourgeoisie Blacks," members are committed to promoting social change through their familial, moral, and racial ties. The chapters, summarized below, substantiate these claims. Chapter Two outlines the methodological approaches used throughout the dissertation to center members of the Black Middle Class, including my methodological approaches regarding data triangulation, anonymity, and my positionality as a participant-researcher. I further discuss using the Urban League's Pittsburgh Chapter, ULPgh, as a case of an organizational affiliate for this project.

In Chapter Three, which is titled "Black Movement Communities," I build on the concept of social movement communities to introduce the concept of the Black movement community. Black movement communities link historical movements, activities, initiatives, individuals, protests, and organizations together for the goal of racial equality. Accordingly, the NUL should rightly be seen as a part of the anti-racist social movement community, rather than outside of social movements. As I describe, their actions—while uncontentious compared to Black Lives Matter, for example—complement the more radical politics of protest movements in many important ways. Furthermore, I discuss how the NUL organization 1) maintains longevity that helps situate it as a fixture within the movement community; 2) positions itself within a spectrum of radical, moderate, and conservative organizations locally and nationally; 3) stays relevant through strategic

flexibility with its memberships and initiatives; and 4) continues to have annual initiatives calling for equality. Throughout Chapter Three, I discuss how these characteristics and initiatives contribute to the ability of the NUL to support the broader movement family's goal of achieving racial equality in a deeply racist society, one that, during my fieldwork, was plunged into an abyss of white nationalism and racist mobilization under Donald Trump. This chapter brings the NUL more clearly into the conceptual and theoretical literature by showing how an organization within the Black movement community supports a broader movement goal that allows other organizations to build from it.

Chapter Four, "Brokering the Movement: the NUL as an Organizational Middleman," provides further details for the NUL's role within the Black movement community. I argue that the NUL serves as an organizational middleman between marginalized Black communities, the Black Middle Class, and predominantly white political and economic elites. This chapter highlights how the NUL facilitates the Black Middle Class's commitment to challenging racial inequality, an essential role in understanding the network of the Black Movement Community that moves towards the goal of racial equality. They have the added benefit of actively linking the Black Middle Class to these communities to achieve their goal of racial equality, a goal that places them within the Black movement community. The NUL provides an opportunity for white political and economic elites to show support to Black communities, for marginalized Black communities to gain access to their basic needs, and for the Black Middle Class to develop relationships with both groups. Additionally, the NUL links Black Middle Class individuals with one another.

In Chapter Five, "Supporting the Movement: The Black Middle Class's Civic Engagement," I highlight the individual experiences of NUL members within the Black Movement community. I argue that Black Middle Class members of NUL support the Black movement

community through civic engagement activities. I explore the activities of the 45 interviewees through three broad areas within civic engagement: political forms of engagement (voting, political affiliation, and other political activities), volunteering (childhood and recent volunteer activities), and group membership (the NUL, Black Greek Lettered Organizations, and other voluntary associations). I analyze how they frame their civic engagement motivations into three categories of obligation: moral, familial, and racial equality.

Finally, in Chapter Six, I provide insight into future direction for scholarship on the National Urban League, Black movement communities, and the Black Middle Class.

2.0 Methods and Data

This dissertation began as an exploration of the Black Middle Class and civic engagement. I was interested in the significant findings from my earlier research that found that Black respondents, when compared to white respondents, were more likely to respond, “very important” to the questions “how important is helping other people in my community?” and “how important is working to correct social and economic inequalities to you in your life?” in the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS: 2002) (Robinson 2013). Although these measures showed that Black people valued helping other and correcting inequalities, these findings appeared to be in opposition to race and civic engagement literature that argues that Black people are not involved in activities to combat inequalities and to help others (Putnam 2000; Wilson 2000). These results made me interested in developing a qualitative project that explored the relationship between the Black Middle Class and civic involvement.

As I was beginning this project in 2015, the United States saw particular political, social, and cultural moments that further propelled my interest in this topic. The end of the presidency of Barack Obama (2008-2016), the first Black United States President; the nomination of Hilary Clinton in 2016 as the Democratic Nominee for president, the first women to be nominated by a major party; the rise of the Trump presidency (2017-2021), which coincided with increased white supremacy actions in Charlottesville and other areas; the rapid turnover of the Supreme Court with the addition of three conservative judges (Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett); voting rights controversies; #BlackLivesMatter and related protests; and #MeToo—to name just a few developments. In the ethnographic tradition, I was dedicated to "observing and describing ways of life" beyond "'obvious' events and activities" (Emerson 2001). While

scholarship has begun to understand how the general public has responded to these moments (Wingfield and Feagin 2012; Bobo 2017; Ray et al. 2017; Amenta and Polletta 2019; Caren et al. 2020; Saguy and Rees 2021), I want to understand how explicitly members of the Black Middle Class respond to these moments, as their identities are impacted by both the success of their social class and the constraints of their racialization.[7]

2.1 Research Design

I found the "#BlackLivesMatter" event of Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh in September 2015 as I began graduate school in the city of Pittsburgh. I became interested in the stories the Black professional attendees shared as they introduced themselves. They mentioned wanting to find ways to support other Black people throughout the city, what they called the 'Black community,' in the face of increased instances of police brutality and protests. I continued to attend monthly meetings, fundraisers, happy hours, and public relations committee meetings, aiming to better understand the members, attendees, and the Black experiences in Pittsburgh. Between 2015 and 2016, I spent my time primarily as a classic ethnographer, observing actions during events that led to consistent themes and developing rapport with people. I used classic grounded theory approaches of simultaneous data collection, analysis, constant

[7] Throughout this dissertation, I use the term *racialized* defined by Omi and Winant (1986/2014). These concepts argue that race is not just a static concept, but a process that shifts based on different sociopolitical configuration and institutions.

comparison, and evolving my questions about the Black Middle Class's role in contemporary social movements (Charmaz 2014; Glaser and Strauss 1965/2017). I collected extensive data through ethnographic observations, informal conversations, newspaper articles, newsletters, blog posts, annual reports, email correspondence, social media posts, and interviews from 2015-2020.

I conducted in-depth interviews from January 2019 to January 2020 with 45 members of the Black Middle Class. The 45 interviewees were a combination of active members of the NUL network and individuals in Pittsburgh who occasionally attended the NUL events. I used interviews to gather data about individual Black Middle Class civic engagement experiences, individuals' perceptions of the NUL, and general perceptions of the Black experience in Pittsburgh. As I conducted my interviews, interviewees were excited to share their stories. The interviewees self-identified as Black or African American. I ascribed "Black Middle Class" status based on the objective characteristics of having at minimum a bachelor's degree or working in a professional occupation.[8] Four people (8%) had at minimum an associate degree or high school

[8] Defining parents as middle class based on education and occupation rather than income is due to the unique relationship that Black Americans have to social class. While Black people may be recipients of education's unique effects that provide advantageous resources across a lifetime, they are still more likely to have low income levels due to racial disparities. Other scholars on the Black Middle Class equally use a combination of measures such as education, occupation, and home ownership to account for higher class positions that may not appear via incomes. (Feagin 1991; Bollen, Glanville, and Stecklov 2001; Oliver and Shapiro 2006; Lacy 2008; Thomas 2015). An extensive discussion of the various approaches to defining class and "professionals" can be found in work by Lareau and Conley from 2008.

diploma; 18 people (40%) had at minimum a bachelor's degree; and 23 people (51%) had an advanced degree (master's and doctoral degrees). Additionally, I sampled 31 people who identified as women (70%) and 14 (30%) who identified as men. I completed the interview transcriptions using Otter.ai, a text transcription service that creates transcripts through artificial intelligence and machine learning. I also used Otter.ai to transcribe several meetings. I coded the event data and interview transcriptions with MaxQDA software based on the grounded case analysis method (Charmaz 2014; Glaser and Strauss 1965/2017). This ethnographic project will not yield a statistically significant claim of representativeness for all members of the Black Middle Class; however, with the observational and interview data coming from multiple sources, I will be able to give reliable results that are stable, consistent, and that contribute to theoretical generalizations.

The interviews shed light on the numerous organizations and activities Black Middle Class individuals engage with and in, highlighting how they are often networked. Through the interviews, I obtained demographic and organizational information about these individuals and the interviewees' interpretations of their civic engagement. Furthermore, interviews allowed me to understand what role the Urban League played in their development as professionals. Finally, the interviews provided an opportunity to broaden the definition of social movement activities for individuals who do not identify as activists.[9] I build on previous understandings of the ways members of the Black Middle Class feel as though they are helping themselves and contributing to social change (Pattillo-McCoy 1999).

[9] Further scholarship on the ways that individuals layer their identities as volunteers or activists as part of broader activity can be found in Downton and Wehr 1991; Eliasoph 2011; Blee 2012; and Han 2014.

Throughout my fieldwork, I moved between interest in the stories of individuals and pursuit of understanding the broader structure. As participant observation continued, I focused my study on the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh (ULPgh) affiliate and their associated auxiliaries, in which I engaged with ethnographic fieldnotes, secondary documents, and interviews. This extensive collection of data provides contextual data that contributes to theoretical generalizations. The ethnographic observations and informal conversations come from events organized by the NUL, the NULYP, ULPgh, and ULYPPgh, including conferences, meetings, fundraisers, professional development activities, and community service. The newsletters, annual reports, email correspondence, and social media posts also come from the network of Urban League affiliates and auxiliaries.

I selected ULYPPgh initially for convenience. Through the participant observation and interviews, I quickly learned the history of the organization at the local and national levels and observed the high number of engaged individuals and associated groups with which the NUL works. In learning about their long history of connection with Pittsburgh, active participation in national events, and continued high rankings, I found that ULPgh and ULYPPgh are the NUL and NULYP exemplars. This dissertation uses a combination of the NUL and NULYP activities on the national level with ULPgh and ULYPPgh activities on the local level to understand the dynamics of *Black movement communities* and *organizational middlemen.*

2.1.1 Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh

Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh is an exemplar of the NUL due to their longevity and continued work pushing for social change in a post-industrial city. ULPgh found its origins in 1915. The Pittsburgh Council for Social Service Among Negroes was organized by an interracial

group of Pittsburghers. Included in the members were Dr. Francis Tyson, a white Economics professor at the University of Pittsburgh; Walter A. May, a white President of the May Drug Company, and Samuel R. Morsell,[10] a Black director of the Centre Avenue YMCA in the Hill District. Morsell became the Chairman and Secretary of the council. The Pittsburghers came together to question the rapid social changes impacting Black people in Pittsburgh and to seek out avenues to help abolish inequalities.

Dr. Tyson wrote to the NUL Executive Director Eugene Kinckle Jones to ask him to send someone to assist the developing organization in 1917. The NUL sent John T. Clark from New York City to determine the needs of Black Pittsburghers. The findings from his study resulted in seven main points that he deemed necessary to expand the livelihoods of Black people in the Greater Pittsburgh Areas: travelers aid, housing, training, health, recreation, crime/delinquency, and charity organizations (Edmunds 1999:21). Following Clark's assessment, the Pittsburgh Council for Social Service wrote to the NUL again in September 1917 to request that Clark serve as executive secretary for an Urban League office in Pittsburgh. On January 15, 1918, they decided to rename their council the Urban League of Pittsburgh. On February 12, 1918, the Urban League

[10] Morsell had previously organized the "Association for the Improvement of Social Conditions in the Hill District of Pittsburgh" with Dr. Charles R. Zahniser, a white Presbyterian minister and executive secretary of the Pittsburgh Council of Churches, and Charles C. Cooper, a white social worker at the Kingsley Association (similar to Jane Addam's Hull House) organized in 1914. The president of that association was Black minister Reverend G. B. Howard of Central Baptist Church in the Hill District. Their goal was to intervene in problems related to "health and sanitation, temperance, vice suppression, civic action, education, and race relations" (Edmunds 1999).

of Pittsburgh officially opened on 505 Wylie Avenue in the Hill District neighborhood (Urban League of Pittsburgh 1968; Edmunds 1999), an area significant because nearly half of the Black Pittsburgh population lived in the Hill District at the time (Glasco 1989; Glasco 2004; Trotter and Day 2010). ULPgh is one of the oldest NUL affiliates. Like each NUL affiliate, ULPgh supports the national mission "to help African-Americans and others in underserved communities achieve their highest true social parity, economic self-reliance, power, and civil rights" (nul.org 2021).

The current President and CEO of ULPgh is Esther L. Bush (1994-present).[11] Under her leadership, ULPgh continues to be an exemplar of a NUL affiliate office. According to Bush, as quoted in their Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala program document in 2018, "For more than a decade, the Pittsburgh Urban League has been ranked '5 out of 5' in its Affiliate Performance Assessment conducted by National Urban League." The current logo is used in all the organization's correspondence and flyers. It is a derivative of the NUL logo for branding and uniformity (see figure 8). While ULPgh serves the Greater Pittsburgh areas, their target areas for support are Hazelwood, the Hill District, Homestead, Homewood, Northside, and those immediate surrounding areas, all predominantly Black areas (see highlighted in Figure 9).

Trotter (2020) recently created a comprehensive analysis of the contributions of ULPgh to Black life in Pittsburgh. His work provides a historical outline to understand critical movement contributions of ULPgh. These contributions include fighting for opportunities for Black workers in labor unions downtown department stores and equal access to public swimming pools in the

[11] At the time of this writing, Esther L. Bush was still the President and CEO; however, in June 2021, she announced that she would retire August 31 but stay on the job until her successor is found (Gannon 2021)

mid-twentieth century. This historical outline further supports the impact of ULPgh as a prime representation of a successful Black organization in Pittsburgh with national impact, making it a significant affiliate to study alongside previous studies in large cities such as Chicago and New York (Reed 2009). Keeping in mind this organization's past impact on challenging racist structures, this dissertation provides analysis for the activities of ULPgh from the early 2000s to now, including highlighting their auxiliary organization Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh.

Figure 8 Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Logo

Photo Credit: www.ulpgh.org

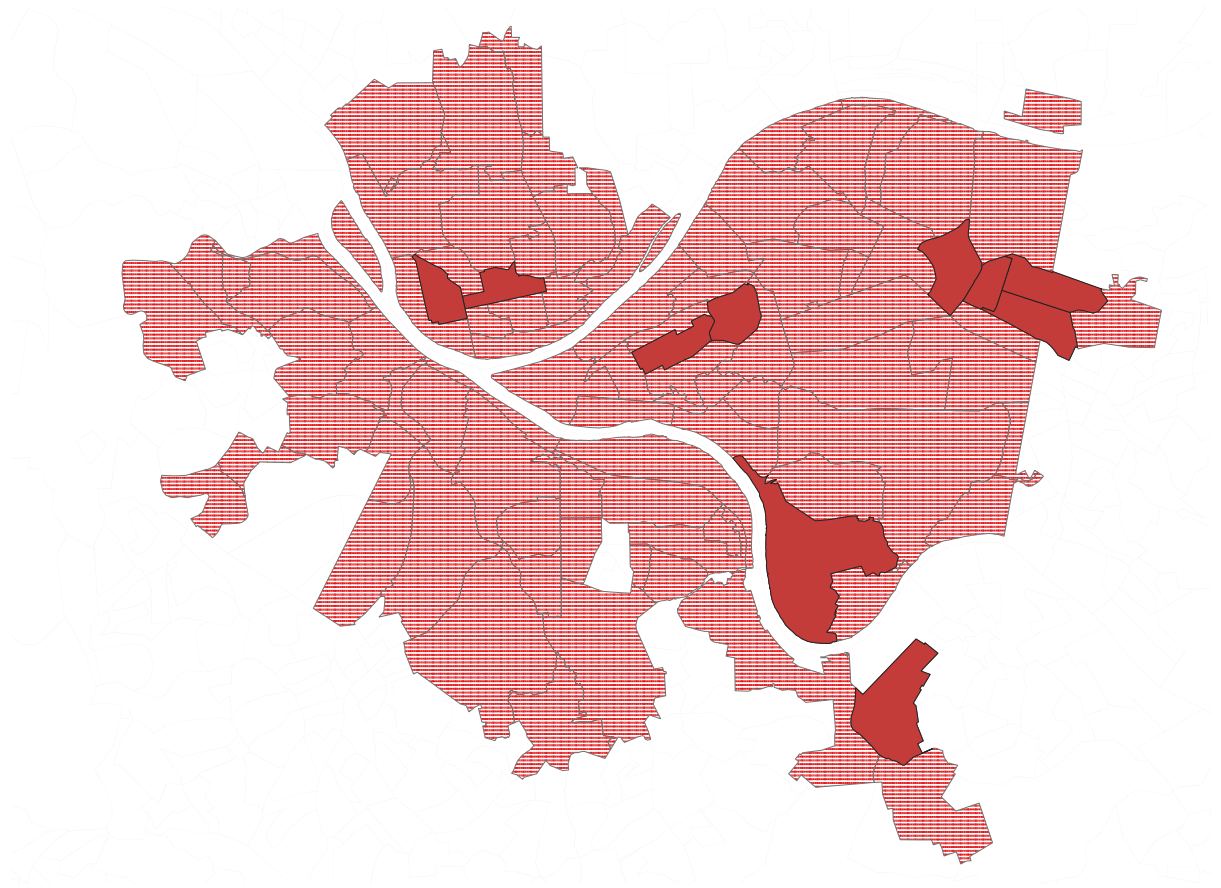


Figure 9 Map of the City of Pittsburgh with Highlighted Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Service Areas

2.1.2 Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh

ULPgh has two auxiliaries supporting their mission. Executive Director Alexander Allen developed the Urban League Guild of Greater Pittsburgh (GuildPgh) in the mid-1950s. The GuildPgh supported ULPgh through fundraising, building relationships with the community, and enlisting volunteer help for the staff. Throughout my fieldwork, I encountered members of the GuildPgh, people over the age of 40 who were longstanding supporters and volunteers for the ULPgh, during ULPgh events and as part of ULPgh delegations at national conferences; however, I never attended a Guild-sponsored event. The Guild's activities were usually in service to ULPgh,

and its independent events were often less frequent than those of the Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh (ULYPPgh). In addition to activities of ULPgh, the majority of my fieldwork was done with ULYPPgh.

ULYPPgh was established on February 20, 2002, as the young professionals affiliate of the ULPgh under the leadership of President and CEO Esther L. Bush (see logos in figures 10 and 11). Within the local context, founding members and past presidents of ULYPPgh have served the Pittsburgh region as professionals in business, non-profit, law, politics, and education sectors, to name a few. In chapter 5, previous ULYPPgh members of the Black Middle Class in Pittsburgh discuss how ULYP provided an opportunity to develop skills and networks that they can use throughout their careers. The networks are ones that they continue to use throughout their lives, and these previous members often serve as mentors for younger members.[12] Similar to the mission of the NULYP, ULYPPgh purposefully engages people ages 21-39[13] through volunteerism, philanthropy, and membership development in support of the local affiliate ULPgh.

ULYPPgh, as of June 2019, was comprised of 75 members. Of those, 67% identified as female; 94% Black/African American, 3% Asian, and 3% white; 15% professional licensure/certification. 38% bachelor's degree, 27% master's degree, 9% doctoral degree; 54%

[12] Included in Appendix Table 3 are several mentoring events. These invites bring together previous members of ULYPPgh (YP Alum), exemplifying the continuous involvement of members throughout their life

[13] The NULYP sets the age range to 21 to 40; however, some chapters, such as ULYPPgh, cut off at 39.

transplant, 46% native Pittsburghers[14] (ULYPPGH Annual Report 2018-2019). Members work in self-owned businesses, law firms, local universities, churches, non-profits, Fortune 500 companies, and as volunteers for local non-profits. In the interviews discussed in chapter five, the members consider their involvement in ULYPPgh as one example of their civic service.

ULYPPgh conducts business as set by the NUL, the NULYP, and ULPgh. For example, for the NUL, ULYPPgh members are encouraged to attend NUL Conference, LPC, and Whitney M. Young Jr Leadership Conferences, the three annual national conferences, and to support advocacy events, such as calling senators. In support of the NULYP, ULYPPgh participates in the annual Join Week, the National Day of Service (NDOS), and the National Day of Empowerment (NDOE), and they attend the Eastern Regional Conferences. For ULPgh, they fundraise, serve as hostesses, volunteers, and do miscellaneous tasks asked of them for Urban League Sunday, the State of Black Pittsburgh, the Thanksgiving Day Distribution, and the Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala. In 2019, they raised $1,875 for ULPgh and contributed 2,966 volunteer hours. In addition to the responsibilities for the NUL, the NULYP, and ULPgh, ULYPPgh bylaws require members to have at minimum one service event and one general body meeting every month. Between National and local events, ULYPPgh has no less than 40 events and initiatives that they are responsible for each year, in contrast to other young Black professional

[14] For comparison: the NULYP has 8,429 members. 63% identified as female and 37% Male; 91% Identified as African American, 4% white, 3% Hispanic, and 2% Asian; 52% had a bachelor's degree, 43% master's degree; and 3% doctoral degree.

organizations.[15] Given the number of events and their direct connection to the NUL, the NULYP, and ULPgh, most of my observations come from their events (see appendix for list of events).

Figure 10 Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh Logo 2015-2018

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/ulyppgh

[15] For example, based on an account of activities and events shared on their listserv in 2016, National Black MBA Association conducted less than 20 events. Subsequent years did not have consistent sharing of event data and updates.

Figure 11 Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh Logo 2018-2021

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/ulyppgh

2.2 Qualitative Reliability: Issues of Researcher Bias, Positionality, and Ethical Concerns

Many ethnographers discuss the difficulty of gaining access and trust in their research (Pattillo-McCoy 1999; Lacy 2007; Khan 2010; Hughey 2012). Similar to Kendall (2002), who found familiarity with her respondents due to her background, I found my respondents quickly became comfortable and familiar with me due to our similar demographic profiles and life

experiences. Although I share these commonalities with my subjects, my training as a researcher allowed me to place these experiences in context. In fact, my position as a Black woman from a middle-class family with an education from an elite historically Black university and membership in a Black Greek Lettered Organization (BGLO) allowed me to feel more comfortable within the space. Throughout this project, I reduced the possibility of researcher bias and positionality by workshopping portions of the project with other researchers and informants and basing my conclusions on multiple forms of data.

I used varying levels of publicly available data based on organizational reports and events. Paralleling the work of Khan (2010), I share the name of the organization. The details of my personal history and the importance of placing the organization in the context of others like it made it unreasonable not to do so. Additionally, considering the long history of the NUL and its affiliates, it was vital to not obscure the organization so that I could more honestly incorporate the history of the organization.

While gathering data, I gained additional access by being an active member and volunteer within the organization, including helping construct reports and conversations on race, class, and social movements. I was able to immerse myself in more private settings to ask in-depth questions about where members had been and their trajectory options to other opportunities within and beyond Pittsburgh. Ultimately, as an insider there was a trade-off between the potential of bias and my ability to get better data because of my position; however, to maintain a critical approach and ensure the validity of my work, I have incorporated several tactics to limit the biases that will appear. Through my fieldwork, I was confronted with the challenges of being a woman. On occasion, men I approached with questions or asked for an interview challenged my knowledge,

seemed to make assumptions about my interests in them, and were skeptical about why I was conducting my research.[16]

I chose my interviewees from a range of ages and involvement within the organization to account for the increasing variability in background represented within the organization, ensuring that my background in and experience with the organization did not cause me to miss possible theoretical implications. Similar to Pattillo-McCoy (1999: 221), I made conscious efforts early in my research to be involved in a wide range of activities and social networks, including attending events of partner organizations as a way to establish myself as part of this community. While no biases can be eradicated completely, my study dutifully took steps to mitigate them as much as possible. One difficulty with the research was that the Black Pittsburgh professional community is small. For example, several interviewees mentioned one another during interviews, with several turning out to be related, making it at times difficult to ensure the anonymity of interviewees. I am grateful that the respondents felt comfortable communicating with me. Due to their comfort, I feel a strong responsibility to share their stories accurately and fairly.

[16] Similar conversations about gendered interactions are explored in "Harassed: Gender, Bodies, and Ethnographic Research" by Rebecca Hanson and Patricia Richards (2019).

2.3 Data

2.3.1 Observational Data

As discussed in the introduction, I began exploratory data collection on this project in Fall 2015 and began formally collecting data in January 2016 through ULYPPgh. From 2015 to 2020, I attended between one and five public meetings or events each month within Pittsburgh and on the national level of the NUL. I quickly learned that I was joining the NUL and its subsidiaries at a significant period in its organizational culture. The 75th anniversary of the National Urban League Council of Guilds occurred in 2017, the 20th anniversary of the Urban League Young Professionals in 2019, and the 100th anniversary of 16 affiliates, including the local Greater Pittsburgh affiliate occurred between 2016 and 2020. These events in particular are important because they represent organizational milestones that show the longevity of not only the NUL, but also of their affiliates and auxiliaries. These events provided me insight into the history and significance of various aspects of the NUL because the NUL provided press releases and statements that reflected on the milestones. A list of all events and milestones, annual and routine, are in the appendix.

2.3.1.1 Local and National Events

I attended or obtained video or audio from 140 events in the 2015 to 2020 time frame. From these events, I have contextual data (such as public relations graphics and newspaper clippings), voice and video recordings, and fieldnotes with robust information about each of the events. The NUL organized 12 events, the NULYP organized two events, ULPgh organized 25 events, and ULYPPgh organized 101 events. Several of the events were annual events, while others were

unique (e.g. the 100th anniversary event for ULPGH) or inaugural (e.g. the Eastern Region NULYP Conference). The routine nature of many of these events is significant because it assisted with consistent data collection efforts to determine whether these events were unique or part of their consistent programming. There were four annual events sponsored by ULPgh: Urban League Sunday, which occurs the second Sunday in February at a Black church in the Pittsburgh area; the televised event State of Black Pittsburgh every first Thursday in June at WQED in the Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh; the Thanksgiving Distribution every third Saturday in November at the David Lawrence Convention Center; and the fundraising Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala every first Friday in December at a hotel downtown. Local Fortune 500 companies, universities, and organizations sponsored these events.[17] In 2018, the NUL President Marc Morial attended the State of Black Pittsburgh to celebrate the 100th anniversary of ULPgh. Morial typically does not visit local affiliates making his attendance at the 100th anniversary of ULPgh a signal of the significance of the affiliate's longevity. The events organized by ULYPPgh target their young professional membership and the network around them, including happy hours, mixers, professional development training in branding and speaking, and back-to-school cookouts.

[17] For example, 39 local companies and organizations sponsored the 2018 Gala, including Peoples Natural Gas, UPMC, Highmark, Howard Hannah Real Estate Services, Key Bank, Pitt-Ohio Express, PNC, Giant Eagle, Super Bakery, UPS, Dollar Bank, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, Koppers, Reed Smith, Wells Fargo, Allegheny Health Network, Allegheny Housing Rehabilitation Corporation, Carnegie Mellon, Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellot, First National Bank, Gateway Health Plan, Huntington Bank, Pittsburgh Foundation, Pittsburgh Mercy Health System, Rivers Casino, Tristate Capital, and the University of Pittsburgh.

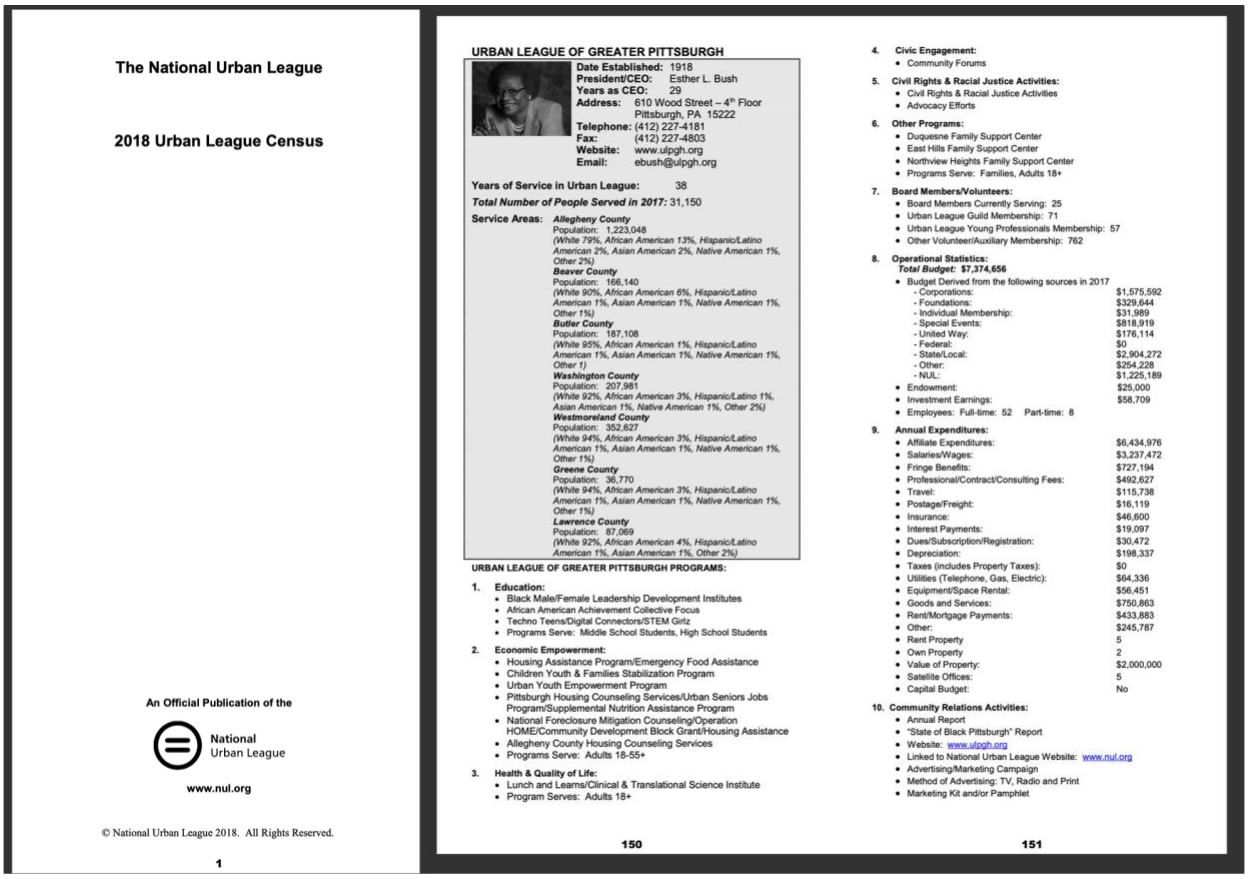
I attended 12 in-person events sponsored by the NUL and two from the NULYP. I attended the NUL Conference in 2017 and 2019. In 2017 the conference was in St. Louis, Missouri, and in 2019 the conference was in Indianapolis, Indiana. I was also able to attend several sessions of the 2018 NUL Conference virtually, including their Opening Ceremonies. I attended LPC in 2017, 2018, and 2019. The NUL canceled the in-person 2020 conference due to COVID-19; however, I attended the virtual Legislative Policy Conference. When in person, the conference was in Washington D.C. In 2018, I attended the Whitney M. Young Jr Leadership Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. In 2019, I attended the NULYP-organized Eastern Regional Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, hosted by the Next Philadelphia Chapter. In 2020, I virtually attended the NULYP organized Eastern Regional Conference, which was hosted by the Thursday Network Chapter in Washington, D.C. All my conference data and subsequent fieldnotes included notes from several days of meetings, sessions, happy hours, mixers, programs, and speeches.

2.3.1.2 Emails, Annual Reports, Artifacts

In addition to in-person observation, I used emails, annual reports, and miscellaneous artifacts to triangulate my data. I had the opportunity to be part of the virtual world of the NULYP through group chats, Facebook, and social media posts that supported the work. For the events I could not attend in person, I obtained recordings where available. For example, I could not attend the ULYPPgh-hosted Mayoral Forum in 2018 because I was at LPC, but I was able to listen to a recording of the event.

Thus far and throughout this dissertation, I use the "NUL Census" from 2008 to 2018 (see figure 12 for example), the NULYP Annual Reports from 2015 to 2020 (see figure 13 for example), the ULPgh Annual Reports from 2016 to 2020 (see figure 14 for example), and the ULYPPgh Annual Reports from 2016 to 2020 (see figure 15 for example) to pull additional data on budgets,

events, and membership numbers. These reports are publicly available data. The census and annual reports are submitted to the national office and include demographic information about local affiliates. The reports also include a list of events and their organizational partnerships. In the Appendix, there is also a partial list of organizational partnerships alongside a list of specific partners, ULYPPGH, NUL, ULPgh, or the NULYP in the appendix.



The National Urban League

2018 Urban League Census

An Official Publication of the

National Urban League

www.nul.org

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URBAN LEAGUE OF GREATER PITTSBURGH

Date Established: 1918
President/CEO: Esther L. Bush
Years as CEO: 29
Address: 610 Wood Street – 4th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Telephone: (412) 227-4181
Fax: (412) 227-4803
Website: www.ulpgh.org
Email: ebush@ulpgh.org

Years of Service in Urban League: 38

Total Number of People Served in 2017: 31,150

Service Areas:

Allegheny County
Population: 1,223,048
(White 79%, African American 13%, Hispanic/Latino American 2%, Asian American 2%, Native American 1%, Other 2%)

Beaver County
Population: 166,140
(White 90%, African American 6%, Hispanic/Latino American 1%, Asian American 1%, Native American 1%, Other 1%)

Butler County
Population: 187,108
(White 95%, African American 1%, Hispanic/Latino American 1%, Asian American 1%, Native American 1%, Other 1)

Washington County
Population: 207,981
(White 92%, African American 3%, Hispanic/Latino 1%, Asian American 1%, Native American 1%, Other 2%)

Westmoreland County
Population: 352,627
(White 94%, African American 3%, Hispanic/Latino American 1%, Asian American 1%, Native American 1%, Other 1%)

Greene County
Population: 36,770
(White 94%, African American 3%, Hispanic/Latino American 1%, Asian American 1%, Native American 1%, Other 1%)

Lawrence County
Population: 87,069
(White 92%, African American 4%, Hispanic/Latino American 1%, Asian American 1%, Other 2%)

URBAN LEAGUE OF GREATER PITTSBURGH PROGRAMS:

1. **Education:**
   - Black Male/Female Leadership Development Institutes
   - African American Achievement Collective Focus
   - Techno Teens/Digital Connectors/STEM Girlz
   - Programs Serve: Middle School Students, High School Students
2. **Economic Empowerment:**
   - Housing Assistance Program/Emergency Food Assistance
   - Children Youth & Families Stabilization Program
   - Urban Youth Empowerment Program
   - Pittsburgh Housing Counseling Services/Urban Seniors Jobs Program/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
   - National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling/Operation HOME/Community Development Block Grant/Housing Assistance
   - Allegheny County Housing Counseling Services
   - Programs Serve: Adults 18-55+
3. **Health & Quality of Life:**
   - Lunch and Learns/Clinical & Translational Science Institute
   - Program Serves: Adults 18+

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4. **Civic Engagement:**
   - Community Forums
5. **Civil Rights & Racial Justice Activities:**
   - Civil Rights & Racial Justice Activities
   - Advocacy Efforts
6. **Other Programs:**
   - Duquesne Family Support Center
   - East Hills Family Support Center
   - Northview Heights Family Support Center
   - Programs Serve: Families, Adults 18+
7. **Board Members/Volunteers:**
   - Board Members Currently Serving: 25
   - Urban League Guild Membership: 71
   - Urban League Young Professionals Membership: 57
   - Other Volunteer/Auxiliary Membership: 762
8. **Operational Statistics:**
   Total Budget: **$7,374,656**
   - Budget Derived from the following sources in 2017

- Corporations:	$1,575,592
- Foundations:	$329,644
- Individual Membership:	$31,989
- Special Events:	$818,919
- United Way:	$176,114
- Federal:	$0
- State/Local:	$2,904,272
- Other:	$254,228
- NUL:	$1,225,189
• Endowment:	$25,000
• Investment Earnings:	$58,709
• Employees: Full-time: 52 Part-time: 8	

9. **Annual Expenditures:**

• Affiliate Expenditures:	$6,434,976
• Salaries/Wages:	$3,237,472
• Fringe Benefits:	$727,194
• Professional/Contract/Consulting Fees:	$492,627
• Travel:	$115,738
• Postage/Freight:	$16,119
• Insurance:	$46,600
• Interest Payments:	$19,097
• Dues/Subscription/Registration:	$30,472
• Depreciation:	$198,337
• Taxes (includes Property Taxes):	$0
• Utilities (Telephone, Gas, Electric):	$64,336
• Equipment/Space Rental:	$56,451
• Goods and Services:	$750,863
• Rent/Mortgage Payments:	$433,883
• Other:	$245,787
• Rent Property	5
• Own Property	2
• Value of Property:	$2,000,000
• Satellite Offices:	5
• Capital Budget:	No

10. **Community Relations Activities:**
    - Annual Report
    - "State of Black Pittsburgh" Report
    - Website: www.ulpgh.org
    - Linked to National Urban League Website: www.nul.org
    - Advertising/Marketing Campaign
    - Method of Advertising: TV, Radio and Print
    - Marketing Kit and/or Pamphlet

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Figure 12 Example of the National Urban League Census Pages 2018

Figure 13 Cover of the National Urban League Young Professionals Annual Report 2015

Figure 14 Cover of the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Annual Report 2019-2020

Figure 15 Cover of the Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh Annual Report 2016-2017

2.3.2 Interview Data

I had the opportunity to have several informal conversations with each of the individuals who ultimately became my interviewees prior to interviewing them. I capitalized on their attendance and interaction with ULYPPgh to dig into how members of the Black Middle Class frame their membership within the NULYP and other organizations. My interview contacts were connections made through conducting ethnographic observations at ULYPPgh events. I selected interviewees who were active members of ULYPPgh and individuals who attended events but were not members.

I conducted 45 interviews across two years. I used purposive sampling of my interviewees. I approached people who served on the executive board of ULYPPgh and those who attended multiple ULYPPgh events across 2015 to 2020 to get a sense of both hyper involved and casually involved people. I invited individuals based on their level of engagement with events, which I discerned through my participant observation. Twenty-five of the interviewees attended more than one event over multiple months. Twenty of the interviewees attended less than one event a month. Several interviews were cancelled due to schedule conflicts and COVID-19. I conducted 20 interviews between January 2019 and April 2019 and 25 interviews between December 2019 and February 2020. I conducted 42 interviews in person and three interviews via Zoom due to geographical and timing constraints. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and two and a half hours. Most interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes. To create robust data, I continually refined my research questions, informant criteria, and interview guides.

My interviews focused on the oral history of respondents as they outlined their civic engagement experiences throughout their lifetimes, accompanied by interjected questions from me about their experiences. During the interview, interviewees also had an opportunity to discuss their

familial, racial, educational, and professional backgrounds. These findings appear in detail in Chapter Five.

In this dissertation, to protect anonymity, I disguise identifying characteristics of my interviewees. For example, I state that an interviewee was on the ULYPPgh Executive Board rather than naming a specific position. For those in political positions, I mention that they are involved in politics but not their specific occupation. I also use generic language, such as *social worker* for occupations. Anonymizing these specifics does not alter the general sense of the interviewees' identities. A list of my interviewees and sample questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

2.4 Conclusion

In subsequent chapters, I describe the broad movement community, discuss the explicit activity of the NUL and its role between communities within the movement community, and conclude with a discussion of individual experiences of the Black Middle Class. I contribute a broader scope of activism to account for additional perspectives of Black Americans in the quest for racial equality.

3.0 Black Movement Communities

The annual report from the Economist Intelligence Unit touted Pittsburgh as the second "most livable city"[18] in the United States and the 32nd most livable city in the world in 2018 (The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2018). It was ranked the third most livable city in the United States and 34th most livable in the world in 2019 (The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2019). Both local and national newspapers picked up the positive assessment of Pittsburgh as proof that the city is a desirable place to live as a way to encourage more transplants and natives to stay (Eberson 2018; Torrance 2019; Kolomatsky 2019). Unfortunately, they were missing a fuller story of the city.

Despite post-industrial Pittsburgh being one of America's "most livable cities," it is objectively one of the worst cities in America for Black people and, more specifically, Black women (Howell et al. 2019). It is also the place of two officer involved shootings of unarmed Black men in the last decade. A Pittsburgh police officer shot 19-year-old Leon Ford in 2012, leaving him paralyzed, and an East Pittsburgh police officer murdered 17-year-old Antwon Rose II in 2018. Each of these encounters highlights problems of hyper-policing and police brutality in the Greater Pittsburgh area. The median income for Black women in Pittsburgh is $20,082, compared to $21,636 for Black men, $29,393 for white women, and $37,504 for white men. Black women are five times more likely to live in poverty than white adult men. Black women are twice

[18] The Economist Intelligence Unit ranks cities based on five categories: Stability, Healthcare, Culture & Environment, Education, and Infrastructure.

as likely to have fetal deaths, with Black maternal mortality rates higher than 97 percent that of comparable cities. Black adult mortality rates are higher than that of 98 percent of similar cities. In addition to these statistics, discrimination, displacement through gentrification, food deserts, high crime rates, lack of access to resources, school closings, and segregation disproportionately affect predominantly Black Pittsburgh neighborhoods and Black Pittsburghers regardless of education and income level (Howell et al. 2019).

Predominantly white organizations, corporations, and the city government continue to introduce initiatives to constrain the disparities discussed above. Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto (2014-2021) created the 'My Brother's Keeper Initiative' in 2015 to identify strategies to achieve social and economic equity through community initiatives (City of Pittsburgh 2021). He also created the Office of Equity in 2019 as a means to achieve equity (Wimbley 2019). The City Council proposed an ordinance that no public official or city employee engage in 'hateful activity' in 2020. Local nonprofits, UPMC, Highmark Health, University of Pittsburgh, and Carnegie Mellon University contributed to OnePGH, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the life of all Pittsburghers[19] in 2021 to encourage cross-sector collaboration to achieve improved community health, well-being, and civic resilience (Potter and Doyle 2021).

While these predominantly white institutions continue to unveil new plans to support marginalized communities and combat the disparities discussed above, I encountered Black

[19] The ONEPGH Fund brings together local government, business, philanthropy, and the nonprofit sector to advance civic initiatives through coloration and partnerships to encourage measurable impact.

Pittsburghers already doing that work throughout my fieldwork. Within months of conducting my ethnographic research that started with the Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh (ULYPPgh), I discovered a broad network of individuals, groups, and organizations dedicated to racial equality. I found that "Black Pittsburgh" historically and contemporarily researched, wrote, mobilized, and fought for their equal rights in Pittsburgh to combat these disparities long before white institutions took note. Black people who live in Pittsburgh as natives and those who have recently moved to the city as transplants fight inequality through their businesses, careers, journalism, politics, organizations, and everyday activities. Kyra, a local Black woman business owner and one of my interviewees, spoke in 2018 to a predominantly Black crowd about the needs of Black residents in Pittsburgh. She said, “Pittsburgh is the perfect city to do something because it needs everything. It's not just the education of it. It's not just the business of it. It's not just the politics. It's all of it” (Fieldnotes April 2018). She encouraged other Black Pittsburghers to get involved, open businesses, run for political office, and contribute any way they can to address the disparities she and others observed long before the Racial, Gender, and Equity Report was released by Howell et al. in 2019.

Throughout this dissertation, the experiences discussed bear witness to Black Pittsburghers' work to fill the gaps left by inequality and increase resources available to one another in the city. The events I observed had an underlying mission to provide Black Pittsburghers with resources and networking to develop a stronger Black community across class lines. These events included professional development, community service, advocacy, and even social mixers, all of which were geared in subtle ways towards providing connections that would lead to greater opportunities for attendees. Each event was more than a social event; it was outreach to bring Black people together who were interested in making Pittsburgh a livable city for them.

Considering race as being embedded throughout society, I apply the concept of social movement communities to the network of Black people and predominantly Black organizations dedicated to racial equality I observed to conceptualize *Black movement communities*. Black movement communities link historical moments, activities, initiatives, individuals, and organizations that work for racial equality during protest mobilizations and times of abeyance (Taylor 1989). The Black movement community in Pittsburgh builds on the histories of the Great Migration and the heightened protest moments of the long Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement, as well as the current Movement for Black Lives. It builds on local organizations like the NAACP, ULPgh, and the University of Pittsburgh's Black Action Society. I operationalize the Black movement community through observations of ULPgh. I note that in connection with these histories, the broader Black Pittsburgh community, and more radical direct action organizations, the Greater Pittsburgh affiliate of the NUL coalesces underneath the goal of fighting for racial equality locally and nationally. Furthermore, it ties the missions of these movements and organizations together.

In analyzing ULPgh as part of the Black movement community, I discuss how the organization has 1) established longevity that helps situate it as a fixture within the movement community; 2) positioned itself within a spectrum of organizations locally and nationally; 3) stayed relevant by evolving from an organization providing direct services to a more vigorous advocacy and voluntary organization; and 4) maintained consistent initiatives across their three main organizational parts. I argue that these four points have contributed to the ability of the NUL and ULPgh to support the movement goal through political impact, large membership, and fundraising. This chapter gives a broad overview of the activities of just one organization in the Black movement community.

3.1 Defining a Black Movement Community

A social movement community is a network of agents (individuals, organizations, movement centers, institutions) and events (cultural activities, campaigns, and initiatives) that work towards a movement goal (Buechler 1990; Staggenborg 1998). As previously argued by Staggenborg (2013: 126), this area of research allows us to move from particular organizations or issues to a broader view of "how a range of mobilizing structures, including decentralized and informal structures as well as formal SMOs, affect the mobilization, collective identity, and strategies of social movements." The concept of a social movement community allows us to understand that there is a relationship between parts of movements that support the more aggressive forms of protest and the more institutionalized forms of engagement towards a movement goal. This includes the activities of individuals working to protect the rights of protestors.

Similar concepts that observe social movements at the meso and macro levels—social movement industries, social movement sectors, and social movement societies—only partially explain the phenomena I observed. Social movement industries comprise all social movement organizations—"a complex or formal organization which identifies its goal with the preferences of a social movement"—that have a similar movement goal (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Social movement sectors consist of all social movement industries regardless of the social movement goal (McCarthy and Zald 1977). The concept of a social movement society argues that protest is a perpetual part of modern life, that protest behavior broadens with diverse groups, and that institutionalization changes contentious politics (Meyer and Tarrow 1998). The concept of social movement communities enables looking beyond the relationships built through social movement

organizations to emphasize the disruption of particular norms that social movements contribute to without developing a social movement society.

The social movement community aims to observe relationships among the various temporal, social, political, economic, and cultural elements that come together under a movement goal (Hassan and Staggenborg 2015). For example, scholars who previously observed the women's movement noted how continued projects such as women's studies at universities, health centers, and particular issues like reproductive justice projects move forward the movement despite not encountering heightened forms of the movement (Buechler 1990). In addition to the Women's Movement, the concept of social movement communities has been applied to Transnational Movements and Middle Eastern Movements. Transnational movements benefit from social movement communities' perspective to observe horizontal and vertical linkages that occur between individuals, groups, and institutions. For example, there are conscience communities, grassroots communities, and professional communities within the transnational movement communities. Observing the locations, repertoires, and network ties within these communities allows an inductive approach to building movement communities (Aunio and Staggenborg 2011). Research in the Middle Eastern context allows for social movement communities to be observed in authoritarian governments. Authoritarian government styles force movement communities to emerge from "alternative community infrastructures." These include informal and online developments of communities (Hassan and Staggenborg 2015). The above scholarship pushes forward research on social movement communities, but no work has explicitly examined the communities devoted to the goal of racial justice.

While the global movement towards racial justice is beyond the scope of this research, I delve into the Black movement community in the United States during my fieldwork from 2015-

2020. The Black movement community concept creates a baseline for understanding the network of agents responsible for the tactics, events, and actions that have occurred and continue to occur in the long struggle for civil rights for Black people in the United States. The concept accounts for activities during heightened mobilizations, such as the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement, and the Movement for Black Lives, as well as those unnoticed ongoing efforts that occur (Hall 2005). By accounting for all activities, I can analyze the impact institutionalized organizations and events have on racial equity-related social change. It allows for the inclusion of social, political, cultural, and historical interpretation of actions taken to promote the movement goal. All agents and events come together through events that explicitly support the Black community in reaching parity.

Below, I discuss the various institutional, political, and cultural elements that exist to support and are part of the Black movement community. In understanding the Black experience in Pittsburgh, I observed temporal, social, political, economic, and cultural elements supporting the aim of racial justice through ULPgh and its subsidiary ULYPPgh. The statuses and positions of ULPgh and ULYPPgh allow sustained research on interactions among political and cultural elements that support the movement. Through this organization, we can see a community within a movement community. ULPgh, a subsidiary of the NUL, gives an example in particular of the formal organizational aspects, collective identity, strategies, decentralized, and informal structures. Furthermore, within the NUL—and therefore providing ULPgh access—some sub-movement communities have emerged, embodying the themes of direct services, advocacy, and volunteering. This research shows how Pittsburgh has become a microcosm of a Black movement community, and the ethnographic data gathered from my interviews supports the theory that each

individual involved in ULPgh is either knowingly or unwittingly working as part of a larger movement.

3.2 Longevity of the Black Movement Community 2015-2020

Starting this research at the end of Barack Obama's presidency, the end of the first and the beginning of the second mayoral term of Bill Peduto, the increase of Black people in politics in Western Pennsylvania, and the start of the Trump presidency all further presented situations where, in interviews and at events, people talked about the impact of historical, social, and political moments on their civic engagement. While my fieldwork data begins in 2015 following the emergence of protests for #BlackLivesMatter (Ferguson, Missouri; Baltimore, Maryland; and Cleveland, Ohio, to name a few), I was able to see trends that emerged from the last significant protest moments of the Black Power Movement as well as the "quiet" moments before mobilization for Black Lives Matter.

In understanding the Black movement community, I note the importance of the lives of Black Pittsburghers, the Black Pittsburgh experience, and a more extended history of relationships with ULPgh. During my interviews, people actively discussed how their families came to Pittsburgh in the Great Migration, experiences in Pittsburgh schools as high school students, and lifelong distrust of institutions. For example, Tina, a Pittsburgh native discussed how she attended the now closed Oliver High School:

> I went to Oliver. Oliver is closed now, they closed it in 2011 or 2012 when they closed like seven Pittsburgh High Schools. It’s a shame. When I was in high school (in the early 2000s), there were eleven city high schools. David B Oliver founded

> February 2, 1925, on Pittsburgh's Northside. It was like the high school on [the movie] *Lean on Me.* They systematically kept resources from certain schools. I used to be mad as hell.

Tina further shared the history of Black K-12 students at Pittsburgh with me. She also mentioned Schenley High School, another now-closed Pittsburgh high school that served Black students from the Hill District, a predominantly Black area of Pittsburgh. While Schenley and other schools closed prior to my arrival in Pittsburgh, interviewees brought those histories into their interviews.

Pittsburgh transplants also mentioned their understandings of the long history of distrust of institutions by Black Pittsburghers. When I asked Aretha, a Pittsburgh transplant, to expand on what she meant by the "Black community" in Pittsburgh, she mentioned what she called the "trauma of closing schools" as well as "the history of unions in Pittsburgh," as impacting the Black community in 2020 (the time of her interview) and the way people feel about getting involved. In these interviews, I was able to note that part of the Black movement community working towards Black equality was predicated on understanding the local and national histories that preceded them. This was true for both the natives and the transplants.

The basis of the Black movement community in Pittsburgh is the shared experience and long history of racial injustice in America and in the city of Pittsburgh for Black Americans, and there have been particular organizations and events that individuals coalesce around. One such organization is the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh. I asked all my interviewees how they came to know about the Urban League. Both transplants and natives, ages ranging 25 to 50, talked about the ways ULYPPgh entered their lives through a friend or family member, through an event, or when they were a recipient of its services, making it a landmark in the Black movement

community. The longevity and landmark nature of ULPgh is central in developing the conceptualization of the Black movement community in Pittsburgh.

3.2.1 Movement Centers and a Fixture Organization

Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh (ULPgh), founded in 1918, is an organization dedicated to ensuring parity power and civil rights for Black people within the United States in connection with the larger NUL movement.[20] The stability of ULPgh gave me an opportunity to map a Black movement community due to its longevity, which helps it serve in part as a movement center. Previous scholarship has discussed the importance of movement centers, and the locations of the NUL offices and their significance within cities are reminiscent of Morris's (1984) concept of *movement centers*, organizations that serve within the Black community and that can coordinate collective action towards a movement goal. His analysis focuses on the emergence of *local movement centers* within major southern cities during the Civil Rights Movement (Birmingham, Alabama; Tallahassee, Florida; and Montgomery, Alabama) and their interaction with larger organizations such as the NAACP. The NUL departs from this previous operationalization of the concept as being an organization that serves as a source of local centers and as a national center. With its national presence, the NUL is a movement center not solely dependent on local mobilizations, with an expansive presence within the North.

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[20] A discussion of Pittsburgh as a representative case study of the National Urban League can be found chapter 2

The longevity of ULPgh goes beyond the lifetimes of individuals I interacted with during my fieldwork; it stands as a *fixture* within the Black community—an organization that maintains its presence despite economic, social, and political change. While the NAACP[21] and other predominantly Black organizations and churches in Pittsburgh have a long history and presence, ULPgh has been more consistent in maintaining its presence, as exemplified through their annual voluntary programs: Urban League Sunday, State of Black Pittsburgh, A Thanksgiving Distribution, and the Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala,[22] which attract attention from local news. These larger events annually reach thousands of people. Equally impactful, ULPgh serves throughout the city as a landmark. One of the traditional fixtures within the Black community and Black movement communities are Black churches, which contribute a broad network nationally, locations within cities, and the variety of resources the church provides. ULPgh expands the community as a fixture that goes beyond religion and connects outward with other organizations through partnerships.

[21] The Pittsburgh NAACP as a name had a long standing presence but was disjointed during my fieldwork due to interruptions between their Executive Directors. They only had an Executive Director for several months in 2019 during my fieldwork.

[22] There is a list of their annual events in the Appendix

3.2.2 Network of Organizations in the Black Movement Community

As a movement center, ULPgh functions within a network of over 100 organizations and businesses and thousands of individuals locally and nationally[23] that are all moving towards racial equality. As exemplified through partnerships, ULPgh spans the spectrum of approaches to fighting for racial equality. One of my interviewees, Elijah, often volunteered with and donated to ULYPPgh. When asked about his choice of working towards racial equality, he described how it takes a network of individuals, perspectives, and approaches to get involved in pushing for social change:

> You can't have Martin Luther King without Malcolm X, like, sometimes you just need somebody that is radical sometimes you need the more calmer theory person.

[23] These businesses, corporations, and organizations include Big Brothers and Big Sisters, National Association of African American Human Resources (NAAAHR), National Black MBA Association (NBMBAA), National Society for Black Engineers (NSBE), New Voices for Reproductive Justice, Black Greek Lettered Organizations (BGLOs), National Pittsburgh Urban Magnet Program (PUMP), University of Pittsburgh Alumni Association, YMCA, and YWCA. Peoples Natural Gas, UPMC, Highmark, Howard Hannah Real Estate Services, Key Bank, Pitt-Ohio Express, PNC, Giant Eagle, Super Bakery, UPS, Dollar Bank, Enterprise Rent a Car, Koppers, Reed Smith, Wells Fargo, Allegheny Health Network, Allegheny Housing Rehabilitation Corporation, Carnegie Mellon, Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellot, First National Bank, Gateway Health Plan, Huntington Bank, Pittsburgh Foundation, Pittsburgh Mercy Health System, Rivers Casino, Tristate Capital, and the University of Pittsburgh.

> Like it's not necessarily you have to be like a certain way. There are different ways to react and not one way is necessarily the perfect or wrong way. I donate money. I can't do the whole protesting, activist, yelling at people thing.

As exemplified in this quote, Elijah reiterates that radicalism serves a utility in all movements and is part of numerous ways of getting involved. Elijah is not opposed to radicalism but subscribes to traditional notions of the concept *politics of respectability*. He and others echo the way Higginbotham (1994) outlines Black Baptist women's emphasis on "manners and morals while simultaneously asserting traditional forms of protest, such as petitions, boycotts, and verbal appeals to justice." Jonah, in talking about the ways Black Pittsburghers get involved, first talked about not getting involved to make sure he keeps his job. Then, he discussed the importance being aware of what people are protesting: "I'll continue to do whatever the fuck I want, but I am not going to jump in on a bandwagon when people are protesting a thing because that's now the only way (social change) works." Jonah acknowledged that people protest but insisted that is not the only way to get involved.

Aretha mentions that she does not join organizations, but is aware of them:

> I have a hesitancy to join organizations only because there is a hierarchy that comes with any organization, it just has to. And there's also a limit of what you can and cannot do as a member. I never want to be a person that silences myself, but I think organizations are great for community building and networking. I do a lot of volunteer support. Last night, I was helping some friends pack bags for the homeless. I've gone to the Urban League events, Urban League happy hours, volunteer events, BMe events, One Nation Mentoring events, SistersPgh Events. [I have helped] organize protests, gave people food, a place to stay, clothes, 'Know

> your rights' trainings, volunteer events, volunteering at the jail, doing prisons visits, teaching at Schuman [the Juvenile Detention Center], mostly criminal justice related. Also doing a lot of marches or parades.

While much scholarship presents social movement mobilizations and civic engagement activities as a dichotomy, I observed through my fieldwork and interviews that people within the Black movement community see it as a spectrum. I observed volunteers contributing where they believed they have the most impact. In doing so, volunteers felt that the work they conducted was, without a doubt, helping to fight for the community. As Aretha says, ULPgh is just one named organization in the network of organizations[24] she and others get involved with in the Black movement community.

While the NUL aims to achieve equality, it often uses institutionalized forms that replicate the status quo through its attempts to keep the same democratic structure. The NUL considers itself a civil rights organization dedicated to helping achieve parity. It has been a part of a network of organizations dedicated to Black Americans since its inception (Francis 2019):

> To address the rights of minorities, the Committee on Negro Work was formed and focused on three different types of organizations: (1) the effort to secure Negroes' civil and political rights; (2) the organization of social service work; and (3) the radical propaganda which seeks to unite white and Black labor in class-conscious, militant unions, and in a working-class political party. The NAACP represented the first type of Black organization and was described as "strong, militant, alert, solid."

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[24] I did not observe a difference between organizations with predominantly man memberships and predominantly women memberships.

> The National Urban League represented the second and a trio of organizations including A. Philip Randolph's literary magazine The Messenger, the African Blood Brotherhood, and Friends of Negro Freedom, represented the third category (1923).

At the time of this assessment in 1923, the NUL was part of a series of organizations dedicated to ensuring rights and equality for Black Americans. Following this early Committee on Negro Work and moving into the Civil Rights Movement, individuals continued to see the NUL and their leaders as only one part of a broader movement. “They said Martin was in the streets, Roy and Thurgood were in the courts, and Whitney was in the boardroom. One could not have been successful without the other.”[25] This quote by past NUL President and CEO Vernon Jordan and many other quotes about the Civil Rights Movement show a consistent understanding of the variety of roles that are necessary for the broader sense of creating movements. At their core, each of these individuals is working together to fight towards racial equality and all are part of the Black movement community.

In 1965, at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, NUL Executive Director Whitney M. Young, Jr. gave an interview to Ebony Magazine—one of the premier magazines for Black Americans. In this interview he explained how the NUL fit in conversation with more militant and progressive organizations. Many people viewed the NUL as the conservative Black organization

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[25] In this quote, Vernon Jordan, past President and CEO of the NUL, refers to the marching of Martin Luther King, Jr of Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC); Roy Wilkins and Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP, who were in the courts, and Whitney M. Young of National Urban League, who was in the boardroom.

dedicated to handouts and assimilation rather than the protests and goals of the "Negro revolution." Young responded to questions about the goals of racial equality, the role of the NUL, and the utility of everyday professionals. He emphasized the importance of using all methods available to achieve equality; in doing so he showed the NUL was not in opposition or against more radical organizations at the time. According to Young, the NUL supported militant demonstrations for racial equality with the tactics of a professional and welfare organization. Members of the NUL used their training as social workers to fight for improved conditions for Black people through direct services, community building, interracial alliances, advocacy, and versatility. Young went on to say in the interview that Urban League people "are not social workers in the case-work sense of the term, we are social actionists" (Morrison 1965:172).

The NUL's social location forces it to manifest differently from other related organizations such as the NAACP. It is the skepticism of the NUL, the unlikelihood of repression due to its moderate strategical approaches, its locations throughout the United States, its relation to political and economic elites, and its dedication to direct services in support of the United States welfare state that allow the NUL to continue to exist. The NUL can survive as a movement center locally and nationally due to its connections. While some movement communities and SMOs weaken over time, the interrelated and connected parts of the NUL and the Black movement community ensure that the movement continues. In helping the longevity of the movement community, the NUL connects to several key movement campaigns and initiatives that help build around the explicit movement goal and several collective identity elements.

On the local level, ULPgh collaborated with local civil rights organizations of the NAACP, the Black United Movement for Progress, Operation Dig, and the Black Construction coalition, among others, throughout the 1960s to serve as a foundation for current interests in advocacy and

civil rights (Trotter 2020). In addition to the collaboration of ULPgh, ULYPPgh creates an additional layer of partnerships beyond that of its affiliate. According to their annual reports, they were connected with over 70 business, corporations, and organizations. In order to not pull large-scale funders away from ULPgh events, ULYPPgh often partners with smaller businesses and receives in-kind donations from them, such as providing food at their meetings or a place to meet rather than a large donation. Members connect several of the businesses and organizations together as owners of their own businesses or members of other organizations. In this way, ULPgh and especially ULYPPgh serve as movement "halfway houses," organizations that are an established organization balanced between larger society and a movement (Morris 1984).

3.3 Collective Identity, Movement Campaigns, and Key Initiatives

One of the important questions in understanding a Black movement community is how movement communities and organizations within them stay relevant across time. The NUL has evolved throughout its history to stay relevant. By being a movement center and part of a network of organizations, as discussed above, the NUL has established legitimacy, and it developed its own network of subsidiaries to sustain itself as an organization. The power of the NUL is in its ability to transition from direct services to advocacy to a strong volunteer arm that has continued to keep its relevance.

Part of a movement community includes a collective identity. Lichterman (1995) notes the importance of ties within these communities. During one of my first observations, ULYPPgh members developed the hashtag *#TheMovementPgh* to bring together people on social media interested in the NUL and to promote joining during their Join Week in 2016. They have continued

to use this hashtag to bring people together through social media networks and as a means for members to feel connected to one another, the Pittsburgh movement, and the broader NUL movement. The social media aspect of Join Week and other activities lead to face-to-face interactions. The use of the rallying together hashtag continues up the organization ladder. Marc Morial, the current President and CEO of the NUL, consistently strengthens the identity by calling the NUL "the movement." Marc Morial recently used the term in the 2020 campaign slogan "The movement fights for you" to highlight the work that the NUL does on the ground in communities and to bring together all the activities conducted by the NUL into one network. While Black people generally come together due to racial identity and linked fate, the NUL ties together and strengthens its subsidiaries through a sub-identity within this collective identity that comes together around "the movement."

In addition to establishing a collective identity, social movement communities engage in campaigns to continue advancing their movement goals (Staggenborg 2013). Similar to the multiple communities within the transnational movement communities, Black movement communities have subcommunities that combine their repertoires and particular network ties (Aunio and Staggenborg 2011). Campaigns advancing their movement goals appear through the three major threads of direct services, advocacy, and volunteering that help to continue their campaigns and key initiatives to create a foundation of individuals to mobilize (figure 16). I have briefly discussed how ULYPPgh and ULPgh are networked with hundreds of groups within Pittsburgh and a central force within the community; here I discuss how the NUL and its subsidiaries can maintain their movement center ability and how they are already doing so with their subcommunities that all coalesce around the NUL, all connecting back to the movement goal of racial equality. As seen in figure 17, these subcommunities work in connection with one another,

and while I distinguish between them, they often are all doing the same work. The NUL does their work with 90 affiliate chapters throughout the United States and a combined 12,000 members in their auxiliaries. The NUL's impact can be seen in part by the thousands of individuals who attend the NUL conferences and continue to help mobilize quickly. Additionally, I consider the subcommittees to be where the NUL advances their movement goals.

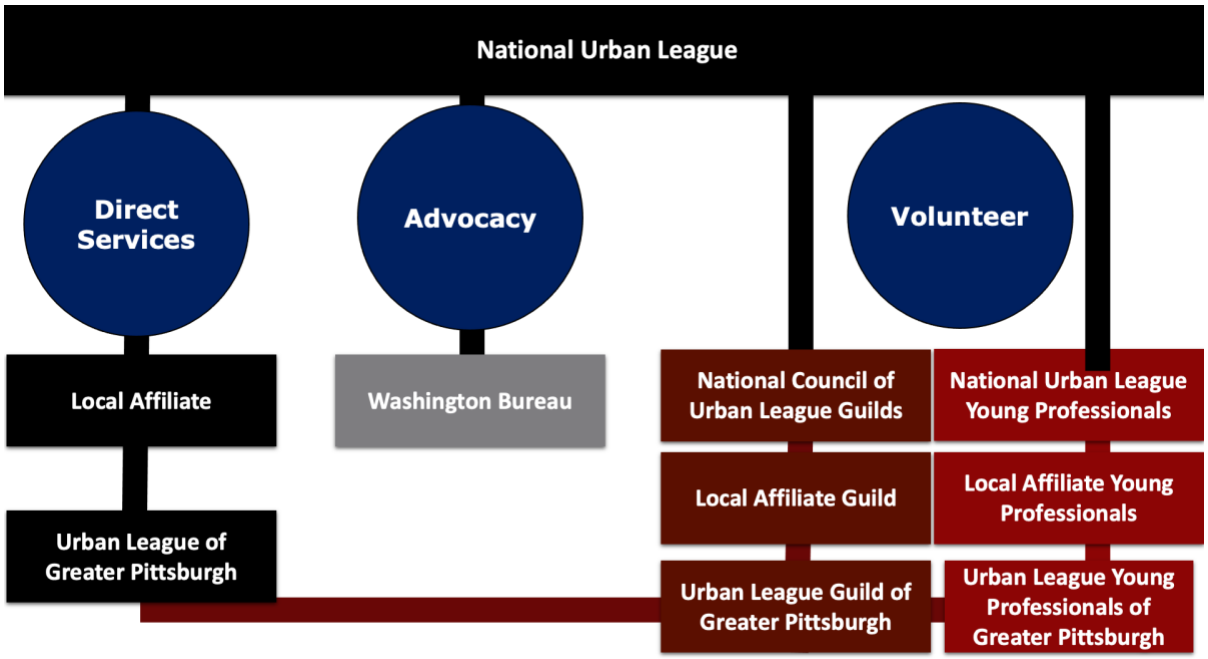

Figure 16 The National Urban League Organizational Chart with Communities

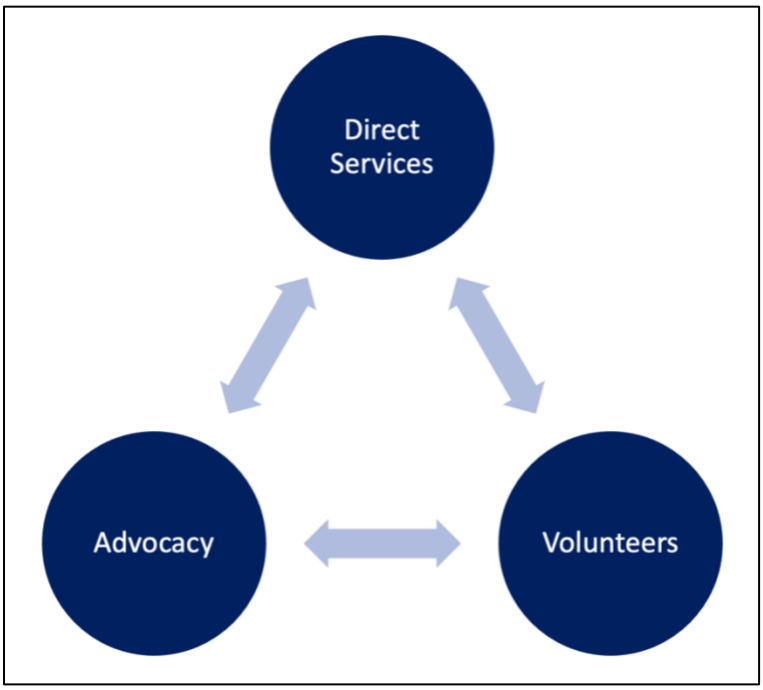

Figure 17 The National Urban League Communities Relationship

3.3.1 Direct Services

Direct services serve as the cornerstone of the work of NUL. In its founding, members were dedicated to the social work aspect of contributing to challenging inequality. While I have highlighted ULPgh events that are large-scale events, members also conduct daily activities to support the broader Pittsburgh community. These daily activities of providing information, such as how to sign up for government assistance, housing vouchers, and computer trainings, attempt to alleviate disparities in access to resources that disproportionately affect marginalized Black communities.

The NUL's local affiliates outline the impact they have annually through the NUL census. For many, the NUL giving Black communities basic necessities is not the most radical aspect of the social movement activity; however, the NUL continues to help ensure that there is a baseline

at which Black people can be successful. By helping to provide Black and marginalized communities with the basic needs of education, housing, healthcare, and job training, NUL believes that they give people the opportunity to fight inequalities.

The ULPgh's services include giving services to the community directly to combat inequalities. With a total budget of $7,374,656 in 2018, ULPgh created programs such as the Black Male Leadership Development Institute, Black Female Leadership Development Institutes, the African Americans Achievement Trust, and Techno Teens/Digital Connectors/STEM GirlZ. Local affiliates conduct programs that serve adults 18-55+ in the Housing Assistance Program/Emergency Food Assistance, the Children Youth & Families Stabilization Program, Pittsburgh Housing Counseling Services/Urban Seniors Jobs, the Program/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling/Operation, and HOME/Community Development Block Grant/Housing Assistance to push their mission of economic empowerment. For health services, they conducted Lunch and Learns and they partner with the "All of Us" program.

Related to the movement goal of supporting protests outlined by Whitney M. Young, Jr., NUL affiliates across the United States in 2020 were able to mobilize quickly to help people harmed by the COVID pandemic through weekly food pantries in cities like Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Indianapolis, Indiana; and St. Louis, Missouri. These events gave volunteers direct places to donate their money and time to support those in need. Marc Morial consistently discussed in his weekly Facebook Lives the ability of the NUL to transition quickly into preparing for the pandemic because of their experiences with Hurricane Sandy, when the headquarters in New York needed to close. Notably, in Minneapolis, after the protests and riots that emerged following the murder of George Floyd, the Urban League of the Twin Cities was able to ensure that Black people

directly affected by the destruction of the local Target and other places were still able to get their basic necessities. While not necessarily part of the contentious demonstrations, the NUL continues to stay relevant because they serve the role of getting people necessities to survive. Their adaptability while staying true to their mission continues to strengthen the NUL's campaigns.

3.3.2 Advocacy

Advocacy is where social movement scholars can "see" the fight towards the movement goal of racial equality, primarily through the NUL Washington Bureau, their affiliate in Washington, D.C. This role is manifested when the NUL conducts their Annual Legislative Policy Conference and when Marc Morial is asked to speak to congress. The NUL regularly conducts alerts to encourage members of the NUL movement to send messages to congress. These pushes often appear through email messages, texts, and calls from messaging sessions that the NUL regularly hosts. Their primary avenue of advocacy is politics and lobbying, similar to professional communities (Aunio and Staggenborg 2011). During my research, some of the action alerts included encouraging senators to vote no on Supreme Court Justice nominee Brett Kavanaugh; to vote no on Thomas Farr, nominee for U.S. District Court Judge in North Carolina; and to vote yes on the FUTURE (Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education) Act. Example emails sent to NUL members and supporters are in figure 18. In these action alerts and several speeches, NUL provides context for why it encourages senators to vote in a particular way. In doing this, NUL continues to ensure that the long history of inequality that continues and fuels its fight is not easily forgotten.

While the advocacy-related events typically emerge from and are led by the Washington Bureau, each affiliate and auxiliary gets involved with local politics to inform voters and their

constituents. Additionally, ULPgh members attend the NUL's annual Legislative Policy Conference to speak with the Pennsylvania Senators and Congressmen. Locally, they host the State of Black Pittsburgh to highlight the needs and advocacy work that they want Black Pittsburghers to focus on. For example, in 2019, the State of Black Pittsburgh featured Pennsylvania Representative Austin Davis of the 35th Legislative District, Pennsylvania Representative Summer Lee of the 34th Legislative District, Lindsay Powell, Assistant Chief of Staff to Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto and Tina Doose, the President of the Braddock Borough council, among others, to discuss how to empower people who need assistance in the Pittsburgh area. One such topic discussed at the State of Black Pittsburgh in 2019 was the results of the Racial and Gender Equity report and whether Pittsburgh is truly a "livable city." By interviewing local Black Pittsburghers, the event provides an opportunity for Black Pittsburghers to share their stories in a way that they may not have otherwise. Incorporating politicians also is a way to make sure the concerns are heard. Additionally, ULYPPgh conducts events that help situate it as both a movement halfway house and as part of the movement center. For example, it held the Mayoral Forum in 2017 and again in 2021, partnering with a local young professional organization dedicated to civic engagement entitled PUMP.

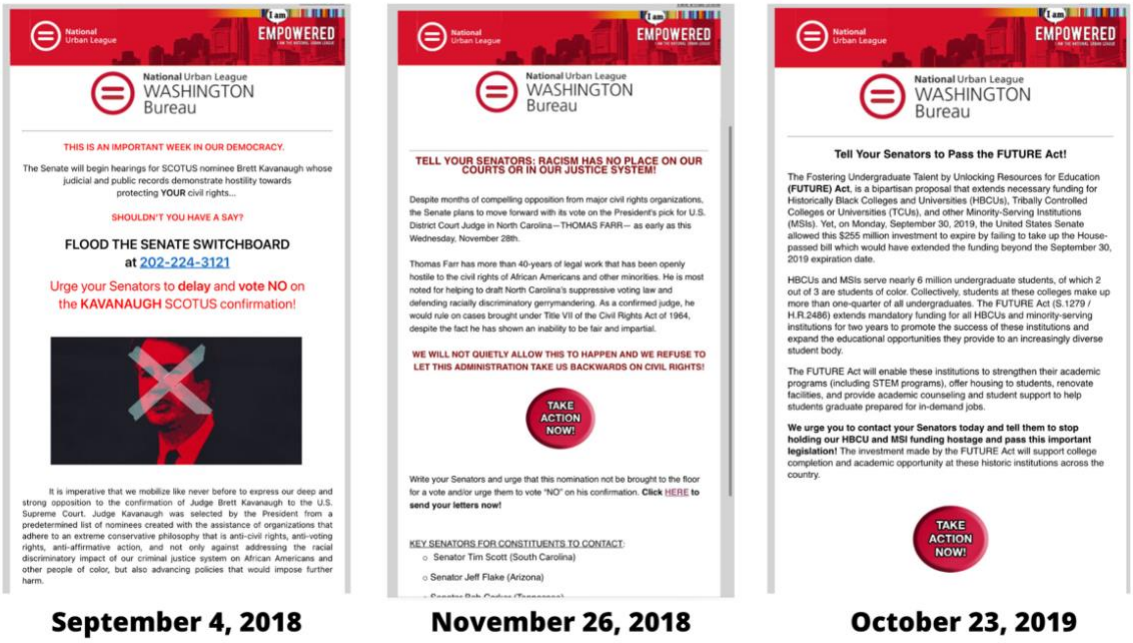

Figure 18 The National Urban League Washington Bureau Action Alerts from September 4, 2018, November 26, 2018, and October 23, 2019

3.3.3 Volunteering

The voluntary auxiliaries of the NUL and ULPgh are the Guild, the NULYP, the GuildPgh, and ULYPPgh. They conduct work in support of direct services and advocacy, and they additionally strengthen the cultural arm of the NUL as part of the movement community. While many of the initiatives of the NUL are about fighting for Black working class individuals and challenging racial inequality, the NUL also strengthens a particular Black Middle Class culture. Members of the Black Middle Class often have their basic necessities met within this movement community. While members may not readily "see" the movement goal of racial equality, by continuing to strengthen the cultural relationships within the movement community, they help to

sustain the movement community. NULYP members stated that they were often the "on the ground" individuals expected to share the activities of NUL with people within their networks in informal ways.

When I first began this research, I wondered what kind of people attended the NUL events and became part of its volunteer membership. People who were not active members stated that they did not attend the NUL events because they felt they did not dress appropriately, referring to the fact that men and women often wore business casual attire at meetings and events. While this attire correlates with many of the members attending events after their daytime jobs and thus not having time to change, it has become a part of the typical attire of Urban Leaguers that furthers their identity. Scholar Imani Perry (2018) defines *Black formalism* as embedded rituals, norms, codes, attire, and practices among the Black community. She applies this concept to the Negro National Anthem “Lift Ev’ry Voice,” but this type of Black formalism appears as part of the cultural and collective identity of the NUL. Such rituals also occur in how Urban Leaguers greet one another. For example, people use gendered the terms “Men of the Movement” and “Ladies of the League.”

The Guild, GuildPgh, NULYP, and ULYPPgh have three annual events that bring together members of the volunteer auxiliary annually. While the Guild and the NULYP encourage these events, it is up to the local organizations to conduct them. Figures 19-21 show the graphics for these three events created by the Guild and the NULYP. The national executive leadership teams of the Guild and the NULYP encourage local chapters to use the graphics for uniformity, branding, and a collective identity. Including these events contributes to "awards" local chapters can receive annually.

Join Week occurs at the end of January and into February to encourage chapters to get more members. More members equate to more fundraising dollars. The week is always full of events. In 2018, ULYPPgh used the national theme "Empowered to Lead" to create the events All Eyez on Me to assist with public speaking for Professional Development, Advocacy 101 to better inform members about local organizations and initiatives appearing on ballots, Membership 101 Brunch, and Networking 101 for a mixer. In 2019, the national theme was "Legacy of Leadership." The ULYPPgh utilized past members and supporters of the ULYPPgh to help the "next generation" of individuals.

During Join Week, local chapters are strongly encouraged to hold an event dedicated to the local affiliate and to include a membership orientation as part of their week. The event for the local affiliate is an attempt to bring together the intergenerational nature of ULYP, the Guild, and the staff of local affiliates. This event is meant to strengthen the ties created as members of the NUL. Membership orientation typically includes a history of NUL, the local affiliate, and the local YP chapter. Requiring and encouraging these orientations several times throughout the years, but especially during Join Week, assists in memory creation within the Black movement community. Not only are new members and established members expected to know current events of their local chapters, but they are also expected to become experts on previous executive board members of their local chapter and signature events. In part, ensuring that new members are aware of the long history of their chapters helps them make connections with past members to create further references of similarity.

The National Day of Service (NDOS) annually connects to the mission of serving the community through education. During my time with NUL, NDOS encouraged chapters to host events with children to teach them about science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. In 2018,

ULYPPgh hosted a workshop at Robert Morris University at which they created volcanoes for a K-12 fair. The National Day of Empowerment (NDOE) annually connects members to an effort to help bring attention to the "empowerment" mission of NUL. From 2016-2019, the empowerment focused on building wealth. ULYPPgh partnered with the Wyndham Hotel and local Black entrepreneurs to discuss how people could save money and invest it. These volunteer events became were expansive in their scope as a way for people to build community with one another while equally being dedicated to racial equality. These annual events allow members and constituents to continually gain understanding of the organization's history through the consistency of occurring every year. Inherent in the creation of NULYP is the belief of "carrying on tradition" that appears in the initiatives that the chapters regularly hold.

Figure 19 National Urban League Young Professionals Join Week 2018 Graphic

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/nulyp

Figure 20 National Urban League Young Professionals National Day of Service 2018 Graphic

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/nulyp

Figure 21 National Council of Urban League Guilds and National Urban League Young Professionals National Day of Empowerment 2018 Graphic

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/nulyp

3.4 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have discussed numerous themes that establish the foundational understandings of a Black movement community. I introduced the concept of Black movement communities to analyze how Black communities come together to push forward the goal of racial equality. I extend beyond previous conceptualizations of the social movement community. In doing so, I first add the social movement goal of racial equality to analyze Black community interactions within movement communities, expanding on previous use of the term in other social movements. In using the Black community, I also incorporate the importance of history and the longevity of the Black movement goal of racial equality, as repeatedly attested to by my respondents. I use the NUL and its subsidiaries as an example to illustrate a successful legacy of execution of these themes. The NUL continues to serve as a fixture within movement communities that allows stability throughout the Black movement community. The various subcommunities within the NUL as a Black movement community ensure that the movement goal and cultural repertoires have a legacy that continues, contributing to the importance of memory carried through members in the NULYP. In the next chapter, I talk more extensively about how the NUL serves in the middle of a variety of constituents, equally showing these three forms of their subcommittees that target three particular types of identities.

4.0 Brokering the Movement: The National Urban League as an Organizational Middleman

The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh hosts Urban League Sunday, an annual event in February in which Urban League reinforces its commitment to the Black Pittsburgh community and shares its activities by hosting services at a church with a predominantly Black congregation within a predominantly Black Pittsburgh neighborhood, a tradition that has occurred for the majority of their history. The February 2016 Urban League Sunday this was my first major Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh event. I arrived with not much information about the event besides that it was similar to a traditional Black American church service and to dress appropriately, meaning wearing business casual or church attire. In arriving to this event, there was a table where an Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh staffer passed out flyers and other information about their services in the lobby. When I walked into the church's sanctuary, I noticed that the Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh sat together to the right and towards the back of the church. I sat with their group, four women and one man. The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh board of directors and local political dignitaries, the mayor and congressman, walked in together for the start of the program. They sat in the first pew. As they walked into the event, I was surprised to see the Mayor of Pittsburgh, local councilmen, state representatives, leaders of Black organizations, church members, recipients of Urban League's services from throughout the year, and a host of other diverse groups of people. The program included musical selections,

> speeches, a sermon, and prayers. People were dressed in a range of clothing, from "Sunday's Best" to casual attire. At the conclusion of the event, there was a reception with food in the basement of the church. As people gathered to move to the basement, members of Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh encountered members of the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh board of directors and the Mayor of Pittsburgh. They took a picture together (see figure 22), with the Mayor and Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh board of director commenting that it is always a pleasure to encounter “the young professionals.” I particularly noted the casual conversations and comfortability that all members and the dignitaries had with one another. The space felt casual. We then parted ways with the Mayor leaving the church and the Urban League members going to the reception in the basement. I attended similar events again in 2017 and 2018; nothing changed except the church that hosted and location within the city (Fieldnotes February 13, 2016).

The NUL's official mission is "to enable and empower African Americans and others in underserved communities to achieve their highest human potential and secure economic self-reliance, parity, power, and civil rights. The NUL promotes economic empowerment through program areas that include education and job training, housing and community development, workforce development, entrepreneurship, health and quality of life" (nul.org). During my ethnographic research, the event Urban League Sunday, described above, exemplified the NUL's execution of its mission locally: an organization that meets at the intersection of several racialized and social class identities that work towards the goal of racial equality and has the ability to bring together groups who would not otherwise come together in a welcoming setting. ULPgh has Urban

League Sunday on the Second Sunday in February. Each year, they bring together the broad Pittsburgh community, comprised of Black and white Pittsburghers from across social class, to celebrate the Urban League's impact throughout the city. In observing the NUL's execution of their mission and the movement goal through events and initiatives, I have observed their appeal to diverse social identities.

This chapter argues that the NUL serves as an organizational "middleman" between predominantly white political and economic elites, marginalized Black communities, and the Black Middle Class. I outline the concept of the middleman through the work of Mary Pattillo. She defines the term "Black middlemen and middlewomen as a way to understand the workings of race and class in urban politics" (Pattillo 2008). I build on her work by conceptualizing the term *organizational middleman* to understand how Black Middle Class organizations facilitate racialized, class, and political relationships in Black movement communities. In doing this, I discuss how NUL is an organizational middleman that exists at the intersection of identities marked by race and class, marking itself as an organizational middleman through the facilitation it provides. Next, I discuss how its location and the types of events it hosts serve the purpose of sitting at the intersection of the groups mentioned above. I argue that in addition to sitting at the intersection of these communities, the NUL plays the role among the Black Middle Class of linking this population to other Black Middle Class individuals, to Black working class people, and to white political and economic elites. In linking the Black Middle Class, the NUL provides the group with more opportunities to help the Black working class and to develop relationships with political and economic elites. In situating the NUL as an organizational middleman within a Black Movement community, I discuss how its existence throughout the United States and strategically within cities ensures that its organizational middleman status exists and flourishes. I conclude with

a discussion of the impact of the NUL's position at the intersection of these communities in allowing otherwise separate communities to have commonality and in actively serving as an agent to pull members of the Black Middle Class into various communities that support social change efforts. The NUL facilitates the Black Middle Class's commitment to challenging racial inequality, playing an essential role in the network within the Black Movement Community that moves it towards the goal of racial equality.

Figure 22 Picture of Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh Members, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Board of Directors, and Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto at Urban League Sunday on February 12, 2016

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/ulyppgh

4.1 Defining The National Urban League as an Organizational Middleman

The NUL and its affiliates host events at the intersection of marginalized communities and elites. In this section, I outline the conceptualization of middlemen and extend the definition to include organizations like the NUL.

4.1.1 The Black Middle Class as Middlemen

Mary Pattillo (2008) introduced the concept of the middleman and middlewoman "as a way to understand the workings of race and class in urban politics." A middleman builds around several concepts that reflect on the ability of people to serve in the middle of racialized and social identities. In the application by Pattillo (2008), the term *middleman* centers on the Black Middle Class experiences she observed through her ethnographic study in Chicago. This term references members of the Black Middle Class's role between “the man" and the "littleman." *The man* refers to white people with political and economic power, while *littleman* references the Black working class and poor. Middlemen appear at the intersection of what E. Franklin Frazier calls the "Black bourgeoisie" and William Julius Wilson's concept of the "truly disadvantaged" (Frazier 1957; Wilson 1978/2012). At the core, this concept takes note of the unique experiences of members of the Black Middle Class torn between their racialized and social class identities.

Historically, the Black Middle Class came together based on their racialized identity as Black and classification as middle class. Black Americans have an enduring collective racial identity informed by a history of slavery, segregation, and institutional racism (Dawson 1995; Omi and Winant 1986/2014; Winant 2015; Golash-Boza 2016). The historical exclusion of Black Americans from social mobility opportunities reifies racial boundaries in which Black Americans

live separately from white Americans (Dollard 1939; Golash-Boza 2016). Within these racial boundaries, "class" for Black Americans has become a defining category of stratification. Measures of class include the objective variables of education, earnings/income, occupation, and wealth, along with various subjective class measures of how people perceive themselves within the class structures, including lifestyle (Bourdieu 1986; Grusky and Weeden 2008; Hout 2012). Education, occupation, income, wealth, family background, and distinctive cultural boundaries such as relationships with people within their race or class guide the variations of a combined race and class definition (Jewell 2007; Lacy 2007). Defining the Black Middle Class is influenced by the measures outlined above and is also impacted by dimensions of social and political change throughout history (Lacy 2007; Pattillo 2008; Landry and Marsh 2011). For many scholars of the Black Middle Class, the terms *talented tenth, Black bourgeoisie, the Black elite,* and similar others are insufficient to fully explain the nuances of what has become its own particular social identity (Pattillo 2008). Within this research and my interviews, I define the Black Middle Class as those who identify as Black and have at minimum a bachelor's degree or who work in a professional occupation.

The Black Middle Class are marked as middlemen due to their regular access to both a more privileged social class and a less privileged social class. Their degrees and occupations gain them access to "the man," predominantly white people in power through their careers and professional networks, while their racial identity maintains their access to the "littleman," the Black working class and poor people through their social networks that are influenced by race. It is important to note that their access to the littleman may also be due to growing up as working class and poor or being tied to the Black working class through family members. Their class experience and racial identity influence their entry into the Black Middle Class identity and

cultural group. Those who find themselves in the middle communicate with either of these audiences, though often not simultaneously. Echoing Pattillo (2008), I am not invested in denoting the morality of the communication or whether it is appropriate for those in the middle to align with one identity or another. In this chapter, I instead aim to understand the mechanisms by which the Black Middle Class exists. I move the term *middleman* from a micro-level understanding to a meso-level to posit Black Middle Class organizations as organizational middlemen who can serve at the intersection of not just the Black working class and white political and economic elite, but also as an additional link for individual members of the Black Middle Class.

4.1.2 Black Middle Class Organizations as Organizational Middlemen

Evidence of the Black Middle Class utilizing their access to resources (education and economic) to support working class Black communities is documented as early as the nineteenth century (Du Bois 1899). Despite the development of strict social and cultural boundaries to separate themselves from poor Black people, the Black Middle Class invested in organizations dedicated to helping all Black people (Dagbovie 2015, Freeman 2020). In *The Philadelphia Negro*, Du Bois (1899) finds that Black individuals who were members of the "middle classes and above" organized through missionary societies to help the Black "working people" and "the poor" receive necessities. Founding documents of organizations created by educated Black individuals at the turn of the twentieth century include mission statements that specify their role in developing social capital, cultural capital, and racial uplift (Skocpol et al. 2006; Freeman 2020). During the mid-twentieth century, Frazier (1957) echoes these findings. He argues in *Black Bourgeoisie* that the Black bourgeoisie does not hold any particular political power as a class within American society;

however, they attempt to come together to negotiate the economic and social needs of all Black people.

In this chapter, I explore the concept of organizational middlemen through the longstanding civil rights organization the NUL. The NUL is an organization that has relationships with many communities, run by individuals who fulfill the definition of Black Middle Class as outlined above. Notably, at all levels, the organization's dedication to social welfare is solidified by the high proportion of trained social workers within the organization (Frazier 1957; Armfield 2011). Their national presidents have all been men trained as PhDs, lawyers, politicians, or social work professionals. Marc Morial, current national President and CEO as of 2021, has a background from a political family, worked as a lawyer, and is the former mayor of New Orleans (1994-2002). The local affiliate presidents and CEOs have predominantly been Black professionals with advanced degrees and professional occupations before accepting their positions in the Urban League Movement. Esther L. Bush, current President and CEO of ULPgh, worked as a professional within the Urban League Movement for 14 years before leading the Greater Pittsburgh affiliate in 1994.

Leaders among the NUL's volunteer auxiliaries, the Guild and the NULYP, tend to have professional degrees, work in professional occupations, and have higher incomes than working class and poor Black individuals. The young professional auxiliary boasts an approximately 10,000-person membership, described below by President and CEO Marc Morial during a national call (Fieldnotes January 2019):

> I also want you to know that I think it is worth emphasizing that as a cohort, sixty-three percent of all young professionals are women, thirty-seven percent are men. Fifty-two percent of all young professionals have bachelor's degrees, and forty

percent have Master's degrees, two percent have Associate's degrees and three percent have doctoral degrees.

Considering this membership and leadership, I describe the NUL as a Black Middle Class organization. The high proportion of individuals that are part of the Black Middle Class carry the social, political, historical, and cultural elements and experiences of the Black Middle Class. As a Black Middle Class organization, the NUL maps on to things typically associated with the Black Middle Class. One such experience of the Black Middle Class is serving as middlemen, a space that functions between "white economic and political power and the needs of a down but not out Black neighborhood" (Pattillo 2008:3). Beyond simply existing, the NUL as an organizational middleman also provides events and locations in which the various communities come together.

As an organization, the NUL uses its history, social and political capital, and current members to bring the Black Middle Class, the Black working class, and white political and economic elites together. It was clear in my fieldwork that the NUL leaders see their role as sitting at the intersection between these communities. In short, they are serving as organizational middlemen. In further describing the background and impact of the young professional members, Morial explained that the membership is indicative of the Black Middle Class, also referred to as “the talented tenth,” further explicating the role and the guiding principles of the talented tenth:

> Indeed, in a significant way, the Urban League Young Professionals represent what WEB. Du Bois calls the talented tenth. And that talented tenth was not meant to suggest that, that 10 percent to be elitist. But that 10 percent, if you know Du Bois, have to provide leadership and the commitment service to the entire community. That's the essential purpose, the animated spirit, the guiding principle of the young professionals' movement.

While Morial described the contemporary manifestation of the NUL, my interview with Bernard, a former member of the young professional executive board, illuminated the historical role of the NUL serving in between a variety of communities:

> The reason why I like understood what the Urban League's ultimate mission was because of watching Whitney M. Young work during the 60s. Like that was at a point where it was, who was in office at the time, Nixon? No, it was Johnson after JFK got killed, and so this big country white boy did not want anything to do with Martin Luther King. Nothing! He thought he was a nuisance. He didn't like him, and there's pictures of them like arguing in the Oval Office, but Whitney M Young was able to do, and what I believe the purpose of the Urban League truly is, he was able to get seats at tables.

During this interview, we extensively discussed what he believed was the mission of the NUL. Above is the beginning of a story he outlined, in which Whitney M. Young, Executive Director of the NUL during the Civil Rights Movement, had a role in connecting the movement with President Johnson. The NUL, by proxy of Whitney M. Young's actions, was able to sit in the middle. Though Bernard talked about this manifesting in the past, I observed the NUL continue this history. In both of these quotes from Morial and Bernard, I see that through the NUL and their leadership as organizational middlemen (essentially brokers), the Black Middle Class can speak to the general Black community's interests with white political and economic elites, discussed more below.

4.2 The National Urban League Serving as a Broker

I drove from Pittsburgh to St. Louis (for the NUL Conference in 2017) with a former young professional executive board member who had attended the annual conference the previous year in Baltimore. The former board member emphasized to me the importance of attending the opening ceremony. Friendly Baptist Church in North St. Louis City hosted the opening ceremony. A predominantly Black church in an urban area of St. Louis. We parked in the parking lot that was nearly full. We walked in and were greeted by church ushers. We found seats on the right side of the building with other members of the National Urban League Young Professionals. As the program began and people introduced themselves, I learned that attendees included funders, city dignitaries, board members, recipients of Urban League services, and individuals from the Urban League movement, from old to young. Similar to the National Urban League Young Professionals, the National Urban League Council of Guilds had a section that they sat together in. Additionally, high school students that were part of a mentoring program the NUL hosted concurrently with the conference sat throughout the area. In the program, they stood up with signs that stated, “Stay Up,” implying the importance of being aware of what is happening (see figure 23). It instantly reminded me of Urban League Sunday in Pittsburgh, including a choir performing (see figure 24). In contrast to Urban League Sunday, noted that sponsors spoke about their commitments to the NUL. After the services, we went to Anheuser-Busch Brewery, where there was a reception with music, food, and networking (sees figures 25 and 26). When I attended the conference in 2019, I once again attended the Opening

Ceremonies, this time in Indianapolis at Eastern Star Baptist Church (see figure 27). This event was followed by a reception with music, food, and networking. The diversity in people represented the breadth, depth, and reach of the Urban League Movement (Fieldnotes August 1, 2017, and July 29, 2019).

As stated above, the NUL as an organizational middleman, does more than exist between these communities, it provides events and locations in which the various communities come together. Furthermore, it is clear from analyzing the NUL's role as an organizational middleman that it provides each of the groups that it brings together events that essentially target that particular population. These events focus on interests of "the man" (white political and economic elite), "the little man" (Black working class), or "the middleman" (Black Middle Class), while also linking the Black Middle Class to these groups at the events.

As discussed in the introduction, prominent annual events (e.g., opening ceremonies of the NUL Conference, ULPgh Urban League Sunday, and the ULPgh State of Black Pittsburgh) show the NUL and associated affiliates' diverse constituencies. Below, I will discuss the activities conducted in which the NUL serves at the intersection of identities. While there is overlap in these activities underneath the "Urban League Movement" umbrella, I note below how these activities target white political and economic elites, the Black working class and poor, and the Black Middle Class respectively. Notably, they facilitate conversations with each group as an organizational middleman in each of the activities outlined below.

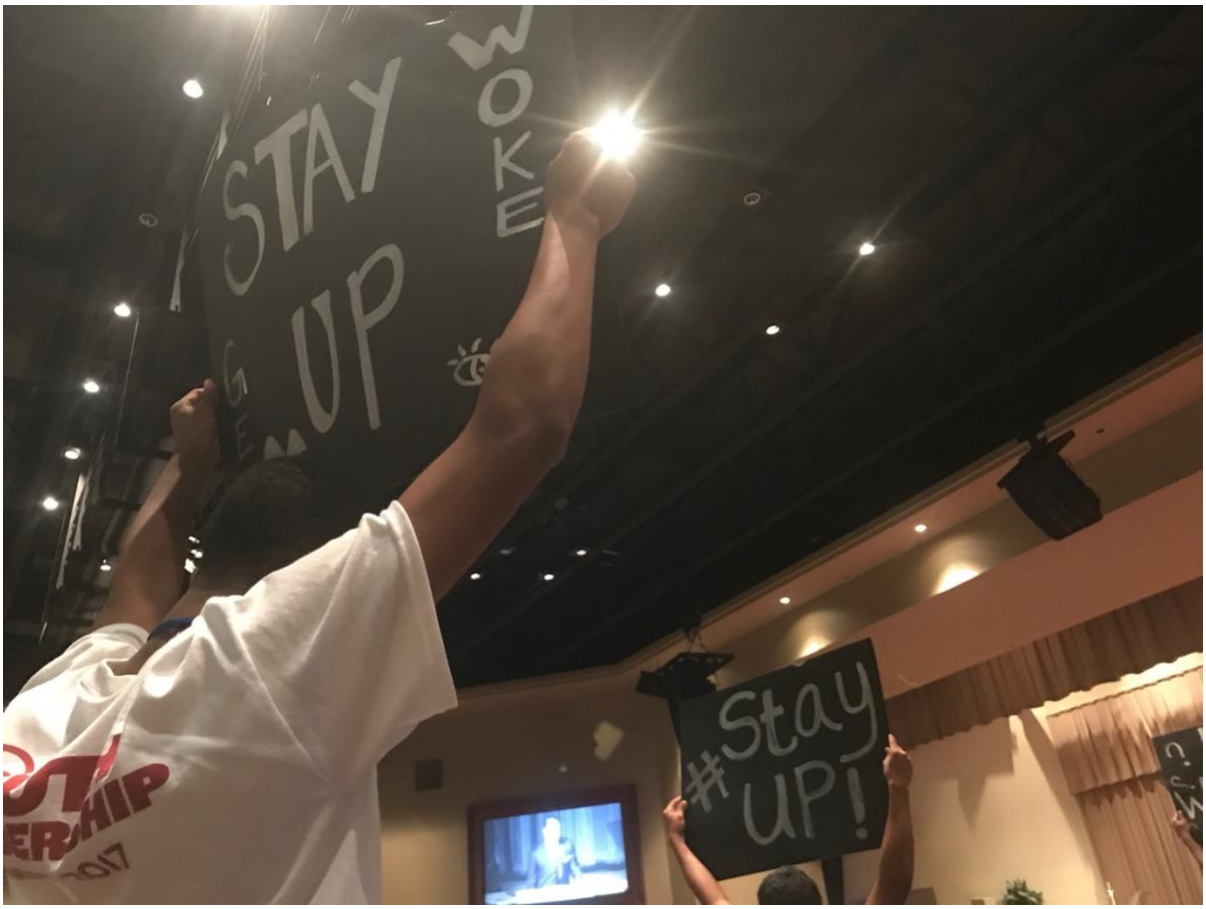

Figure 23 Students with Signs at the National Urban League Conference on July 24, 2017

Photo Credit: Candice C. Robinson (Fieldnotes July 24, 2017)

Figure 24 Choir Performing at the National Urban League Conference July 24, 2017

Photo Credit: Candice C. Robinson (Fieldnotes July 24, 2017)

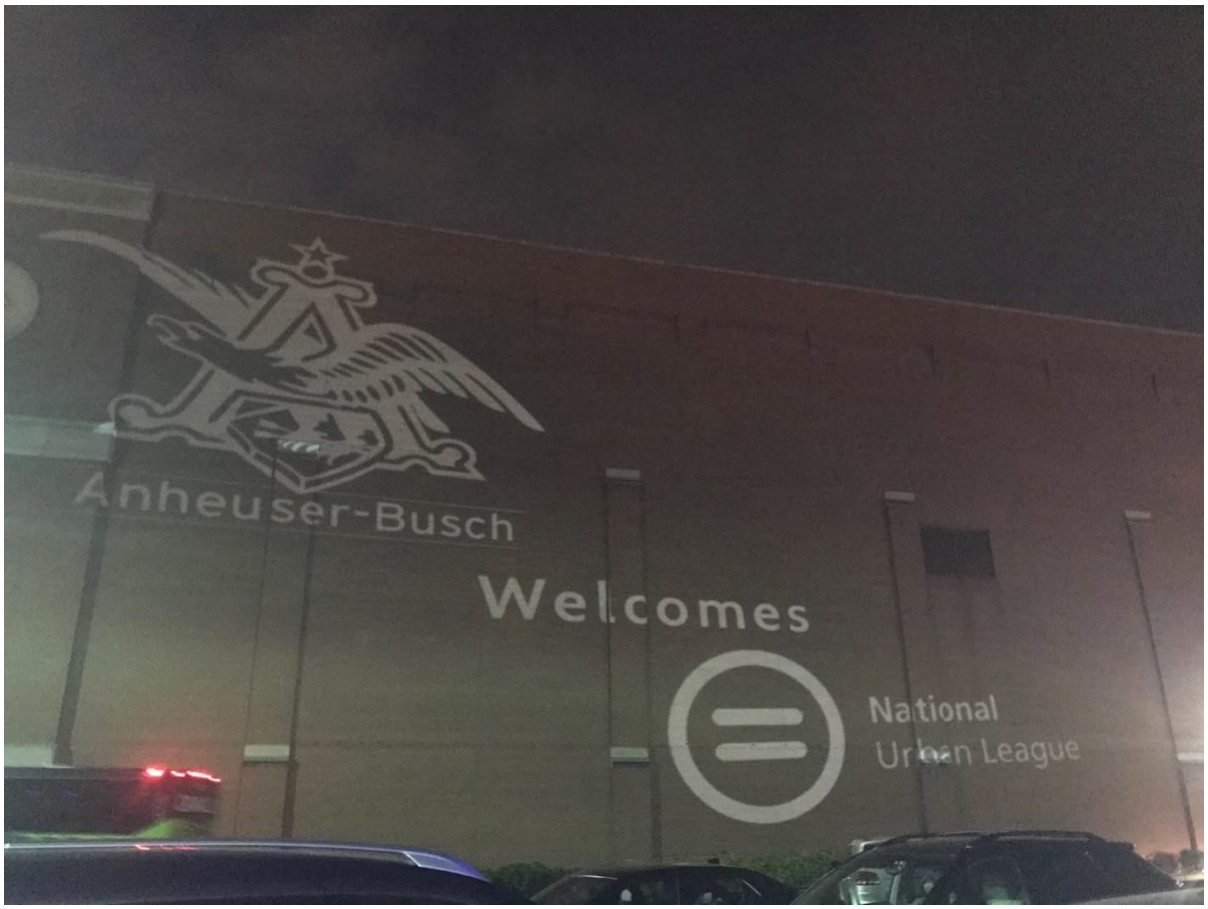

Figure 25 "Anheuser-Busch (with Logo) Welcomes National Urban League (with Logo)" Projected on Anheuser-Busch Building in St. Louis, Missouri

Photo Credit: Candice C. Robinson (Fieldnotes July 24, 2017)

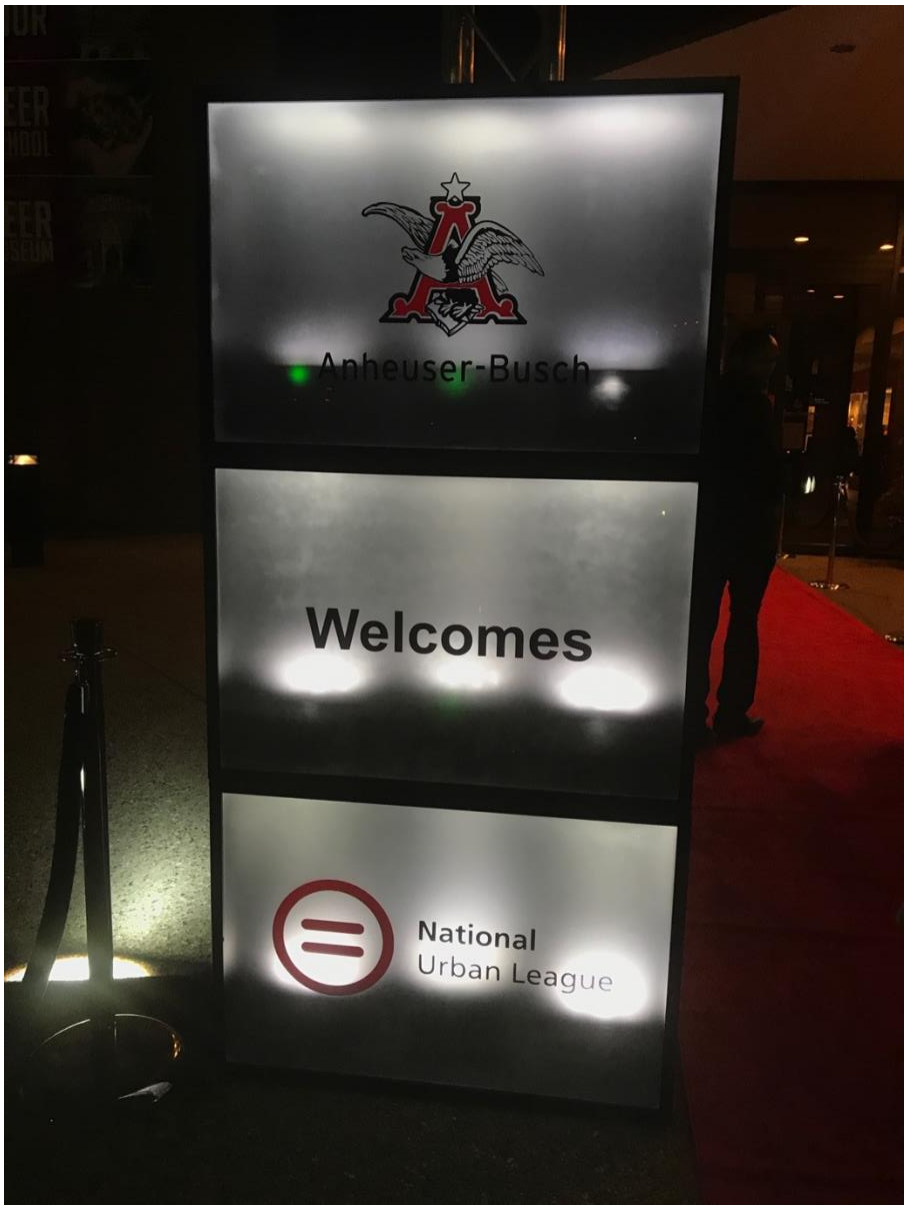

Figure 26 "Anheuser-Busch (with Logo) Welcomes National Urban League (with Logo)" Sign at the NUL Conference Reception in St. Louis, Missouri

Photo Credit: Candice C. Robinson (Fieldnotes July 24, 2017)

Figure 27 President and CEO of the NUL Marc Morial Speaking at the Eastern Star Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana at the NUL Conference Opening Ceremony on July 24, 2019

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/naturbanleague

4.2.1 White Political and Economic Elites

The NUL's history and geographic locations are two assets that facilitate its ability to have activities that serve at the intersection of many identities, as well as establishing its longstanding legitimacy among white political and economic elites. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Black people moved into Northern cities rapidly to obtain upward mobility opportunities that the industrial age seemed to promise. After its initial organization in New York City, the NUL's second Executive Director, Eugene Kinckle Jones (1918-1940), focused on expanding the NUL

throughout the United States. At the time, the NUL was able to bring white philanthropists and leaders within the Black community (primarily church leaders) together to provide space and opportunity for Black people within the newly industrialized cities. Jones' tenure, the first decade of the NUL, brought about the emergence of the NUL in places that requested help and those that appeared to need help in establishing interracial coalitions to fight racial inequality. In their expansion, the NUL intentionally focused on Northern cities. Taking into consideration the racial demographics in Northern cities at the beginning of the twentieth century, the NUL developed relationships with white political and economic elites within major cities to assist the development and success of these branches. In Pittsburgh, local organizers asked the NUL to help conduct a study to understand the Black and white racial inequality concerning jobs, education, healthcare, and housing, encouraged in part by professors at the University of Pittsburgh. These beginnings of the NUL showed a dedication to working actively with white political and economic elites to enact change.

By the dawn of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s, the NUL had existed and fought for racial equality, focusing on industrial cities in the North, for approximately 50 years. During the Civil Rights Movement, the media often centered Southern states as the focus for mobilization due to the more egregious and overtly racist policies. While this mobilization focused on the mobilization of Black communities, the NUL also explicitly worked on interracial mobilization with white political and economic elites in Northern cities. The NUL maintained this focus to eradicate inequalities in elite spaces, such as on corporation board. Whitney M. Young, during this time, is noted to have focused on working with white executives to ensure that Black workers were represented in professional occupations (Weiss 1989). While the NUL continues to have white employees and white membership on their local and national boards of directors, in my research I

most often saw white people during advocacy events and the national conferences in which the NUL was purposely seeking out advocates and when there were opportunities for white professionals to show their commitment to racial equality.

4.2.1.1 Garnering Attention from White Political and Economic Elites

The NUL as an organizational middleman provides avenues for NUL members, Black Middle Class people, to interact with white political and economic elites. I attended the NUL Legislative Policy Conferences (LPC) in 2017, 2018, and 2019. LPC was founded in 2002 to ensure that the NUL and the Washington Bureau gave affiliate offices from across the United States an opportunity to meet with their United States congressmen to lobby for their requests for legislative changes that support Black communities. As the only member of Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh who attended in 2017, I had an opportunity to attend Capitol Hill meetings in which those from Pittsburgh met with Senator Pat Toomey and the staff of Congressman Mike Doyle. The Washington Bureau Office of the NUL organized for each affiliate to be on the schedule of their congresspeople, which was done to bring to their attention the Urban League's requests related to issues concerning Black people.

Members of the Greater Pittsburgh affiliate and the Philadelphia Affiliate held a joint meeting with Republican Senator Pat Toomey. As this was the first LPC during the Donald Trump presidential administration, there was a sense of urgency amongst the president and CEOs to ensure that gains for Black people underneath the leadership of President Barack Obama were not lost with the Republican Trump presidency. During my fieldwork, this meeting was the first time I observed how Black leadership within the Urban League explicitly explained the experiences of poor Black people in the urban centers of Pennsylvania for white political and economic elites. Their explanations seemed to be translations of the voices of Black people into a format and

language that individuals with power could understand, citing the information from the 2017 State of Black America report that the NUL had released days prior. Both affiliate presidents, Black women, pushed Senator Toomey, a white man, on his goals for congress that year, reminding him of previous conversations and relationships from prior years in which the Urban League affiliate offices and Senator Toomey were able to work together for the success of Black communities. Senator Toomey generally answered with comments stating he would do his best to take actions in the best interest of all Pennsylvanians and Americans. Despite the gender and race differences, the NUL creating meetings during LPC helped to place all parties involved on an equal playing field.

With ULPgh President and CEO Esther L. Bush and a member of the GuildPgh, we went to Democratic Congressman Mike Doyle's office, but he was not in his office at the scheduled time. Instead, we met with one of his legislative aides. This conversation with his office focused on "updating" Congressman Doyle on the local activities of ULPgh. It was a casual conversation, with Esther Bush commenting that she knew that Congressman Doyle would continue to work in the interests of the communities that the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh served. She gave the legislative aides a copy of the 2017 State of Black America report that outlined the disparities for Black Americans related to education, jobs, housing, healthcare, and civic engagement. This meeting did not involve Esther Bush requesting more information about how the congressman planned to vote on legislation that supported Black communities in the way she and the Philadelphia Urban League President and CEO had asked of Senator Toomey.

The NUL's longstanding history, experience, and support through their State of Black America report helped members speak to those in advocacy power. The NUL’s legitimacy allows them to be an organizational middleman that provides Black Middle Class individuals access to

those in political power. In the case of the NUL, the Black Middle Class individuals work on behalf of the NUL. At the LPC events, I observed how the Black Middle Class leaders of the NUL translated the needs of challenging racial disparities for the Black Middle Class and Black working class in a way that would garner support from white political and economic elites. In essence, the NUL explained the everyday work that they did in a way that appeared digestible for white political and economic elites. For example, in the meeting with Toomey, Esther Bush mentioned the previous Urban League school that was in Pittsburgh, something that Senator Toomey was interested in. Once she mentioned something that they both seemed familiar with, she and the Philadelphia Urban League President and CEO were able to incrementally mention the continued racial disparities in topics such as education. Without the NUL serving as the middleman between politicians and individuals, access to politicians by members of the Black Middle Class, especially the young professionals, might not be possible. The activities that allow for this work to be conducted, like LPC, reach towards and bring together white and Black communities. Having the historical legacy of the NUL as a name served useful not only for members of the NUL, but also for young professionals, to be seen with some form of value. I never witnessed firsthand a guaranteed promises being made to vote in ways that the NUL wanted; however, I did observe instances in which white people appeared at the NUL events to show their commitments to Black communities and racial equality.

4.2.1.2 White Political and Economic Elites Providing Access and Showing Commitments

In addition to facilitating activities and locations where members of the NUL have access to white political and economic elites, the NUL also provides white political and economic elites space to speak to Black people. The NUL's role as a middleman allows opportunities for white political and economic elites, individuals, and organizations to show their commitments to issues

related to racial equality. At Urban League Sunday two years in a row, County Executive Rich Fitzgerald commented that Esther Bush, President and CEO of ULPgh, was his "favorite Bush." The reference was about her sharing the same last name as Republican Presidents George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush, a joke that seemed to attempt to be relatable and to show deference to a Black woman leader.

While members of the NUL actively conduct translational work for politicians at LPC, LPC and the NUL Annual Conference also provide opportunities for politicians to show their commitments to Black people through the organization. During LPC, the NUL invites leaders of congress to a congressional breakfast. In 2019, there were two days of Democratic presidential hopefuls that spoke at the NUL conference. During the conference, several NULYP members commented that they had previously attended the presidential presentations during the 2016 election cycle. These members enjoyed hearing what commitments white politicians were going to make to the Black community. As a nonpartisan organization, the NUL invites individuals from all political parties; however, not everyone always attends. In 2019, there was a diverse slate of Democratic presidential candidates in attendance: Cory Booker, Kamala Harris, Joe Biden (see figure 28), Amy Klobuchar, John Delaney, Tim Ryan, Kirsten Gillibrand, and Ami Horowitz. The Democratic candidates opened with a short speech outlining their missions. Congressman Ryan opened with the question "How do we rebuild our urban cores?" This choice of topic was indicative of the presidential hopeful's interest in using the NUL conference as an opportunity to present commitments to the Black community. For those candidates who did not focus their comments on topics historically relevant to Black audiences, the question and answer period with Marc Morial that followed included more detailed questions about the opportunities they would provide for the

Black community. None of the questions focused on intersections with gender or sexuality; they only focused on the general "Black community."

In addition to the politicians, predominantly white businesses such as Nationwide, Bank of America, Honda, Target, and others provided commercials during conference events in which they added "Sponsor Remarks." In the 2019 Opening Ceremonies of the NUL Conference, Rick Schostek, Executive Vice President of Honda North America Inc, highlighted Honda's dedication to the Black community as follows:

> Honda and the National Urban League have a longstanding relationship, and like all great and enduring relationships, the foundation is in our shared beliefs. We both believe strongly in the power of people. We're both committed to helping people fulfill their own potential. We both recognize that the type of innovation that is possible when a diverse group of people is empowered to pursue their own dreams.

The NUL is a social welfare organization dedicated to challenging racial inequalities. The NUL can also be seen as a "safe" organization to show commitments to the Black community. I never witnessed instances of confrontation towards the white political and economic elites. Presidential candidates and others were able to present their speeches without interruption. This is particularly notable in comparison to events where Presidential candidates Hilary Clinton and Bernie Sanders were interrupted by Black Lives Matter protestors at events in 2015 and 2016 (Brunner 2015, Feldman 2015, Scott 2016). The NUL continues to serve as a space where white political and business elite and predominantly white businesses can access the Black community and Black consumers. As the organizational middleman, the NUL allows this group to show their commitments to the Black community while also making cases for why they should continue to invest in the organization's work.

Figure 28 President and CEO of the NUL Marc Morial (Left) Talking to Presidential Candidate Joe Biden (Right) at the National Urban League Conference in July 2019

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/naturbanleague

4.2.2 Black Working Class

The NUL sees its role as a middleman to allow the Black working class to become empowered and to receive resources for which the NUL has often negotiated. Similar to the white political and economic elites, the NUL's history and geographic location make it possible for the NUL to host activities that attract the Black working class. Their relationship with the Black working class appears mainly through the direct services that the affiliate offices provide. In the words of Bernard, "We still need (the NUL) to be able to have seats at the table to get money from

these powerful companies in order to fund the affiliates so that affiliates can do the work." The NUL serves within a space in which government programs are not enough for the needs of the Black community. Bernard went on to say, "The local affiliates are the ones who pump blood and build those places in cities that don't get blood pumped into them. So, like our local affiliate does a lot for the poor people in Pittsburgh, poor Black people in Pittsburgh."

Considering the early segregation of cities, even Northern Cities, the NUL offices appeared in spaces convenient for Black people to garner their resources to help find jobs, access healthcare, and find places to live. The NUL has offices across the United States in cities where Black people live, work, and exist. Being within Black cities allows them to serve in this middle ground. Like other civic organizations, and specifically Black civic organizations, the NUL has a structure in which they have chapters that they call affiliates across the United States. The NUL ensures that their commitment to racial equality is not symbolic, as they diffuse their resources in areas where Black Americans live, work, and need support. The states with the largest number of NUL affiliates are Florida and Ohio (seven each), with a total Black population of 16.1 percent and 12.2 percent, respectively.

There are seven states with only one affiliate, with Nebraska having the smallest Black population (4.7 percent) and Louisiana having the largest Black population (32.1 percent) amongst these states. The Greater Pittsburgh affiliate is in a state with two other affiliate offices (Shenango Valley Urban League and Urban League of Philadelphia) in a 100-mile radius of four affiliates [Shenango Valley Urban League (Farrell, Pennsylvania), Greater Stark County Urban League (Canton, Ohio), Greater Warren-Youngstown Urban League (Warren, Ohio), and Akron Urban League (Akron, Ohio)].The NUL has a physical presence within those cities differently from what we see from other civic organizations, which generally have offices with PO Boxes and which

meet in public buildings. The NUL owns or rents buildings to maintain a consistent space in which work can be conducted.

Furthermore, within each of these cities, the NUL affiliates have physical buildings that ensure that their footprint is not limited to an individual, guaranteeing that there is a physical manifestation in which people can receive help. With a NUL logo located prominently, these buildings are essential because they are signals that the NUL is in the city when people drive by. Several city affiliates have one space that they rent out or own; others have multiple buildings and rental space to ensure that they are made available throughout the entire city. In my data collection, I found that in the city of St. Louis, the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis has 12. In a discussion of my research, a fellow scholar mentioned that "Urban League is everywhere, and specifically they are always in the hood." They were making the point that the NUL's target population to assist and work with are often in “the hood,” areas with high concentrations of poor Black individuals. This particular comment points out how the NUL ensures that they are accessible through their buildings in locations where Black people can quickly gain entry to their resources regardless of where they live in a city, further showing how they serve as the organizational middleman road.

Within Greater Pittsburgh, the first Urban League office was on Wiley Avenue in the historic Hill District neighborhood (Edmunds 1999). Over time, as Black populations have moved throughout the city, the ULPgh has also moved their spaces. The day-to-day operations of the Greater Pittsburgh affiliate occur physically within downtown Pittsburgh. At their Wood Street location during my fieldwork from 2015-2020, the ULPgh sat across the street from the T Station, a train and bus depot, and a few blocks from downtown's corporate centers. This location was considered a central location as an opportunity for individuals to come to conduct their work. In

the words of one of my interviewees, Sarah, a Pittsburgh native: "Bridges disconnect entire communities, people. There's a thing where people just don't cross bridges." The downtown space is neutral for people in a city in which communities are divided.

There are three brick-and-mortar sites in Pittsburgh to account for the sprawling of Black communities within the city. At the central location in Pittsburgh on 100 Wood Street, there are three floors on which they conduct their business. The site provides housing, food services, and a floor dedicated to training people to use computers and technology. At all of these sites, people have the opportunity to connect to the NUL's main pillars of education, jobs, healthcare, and housing. At the Family Support centers in Northview Heights, Easthills, and Duquesne, the ULPgh provides additional spaces in neighborhoods throughout Pittsburgh to support those most in need who may not have the opportunity to come to the downtown location. In addition to these buildings, the ULPgh has stated that their target areas for support are Hazelwood, the Hill District, Homestead, Homewood, and Northside (see figure 29). All of these are areas in Pittsburgh with high proportions of Black citizens.

The NUL holds physical space to accommodate the Black working class and poor people, those most in need of resources. Beyond holding space and existing, the NUL gives tangible resources and provides the network to gain access to resources related to education, jobs, housing, and healthcare through their direct services. ULPgh's largest direct services event is the Thanksgiving Distribution, held annually at the David Lawrence Convention Center. In 2015, ULPgh reported serving 937 families (ULPgh report 2015-2016). ULPgh gives predominantly Black families groceries for Thanksgiving meals at these distributions, and there is access to healthcare screenings (STI testing and vision care). This annual event is put on in addition to the daily food pantry, Hunger Services, which connects families to SNAP benefits; housing assistance,

which connects individuals to housing vouchers; and mature worker/senior job programs that provide seniors with assistance in finding jobs or receiving new job training.

These direct services are primarily highlighted through individual affiliates; however, an Annual Volunteer Zone prepares items to donate to the local working class and poor communities in the conference city during the conferences. During the 2017 conference in St. Louis, I assisted in filling bookbags on a Thursday (see figure 30). On the Saturday of the conference, the convention center was the location for hundreds of St. Louis families to receive bookbags for their children in preparation for the new school year. In the case of the Black working class and poor, the NUL has primarily a one-way relationship. This relationship in some ways is paternalistic, not allowing Black working class people to have more say in their interactions. On the other hand, the NUL gives without requiring reciprocity, unlike the relationships between white political and economic elites and the Black Middle Class.

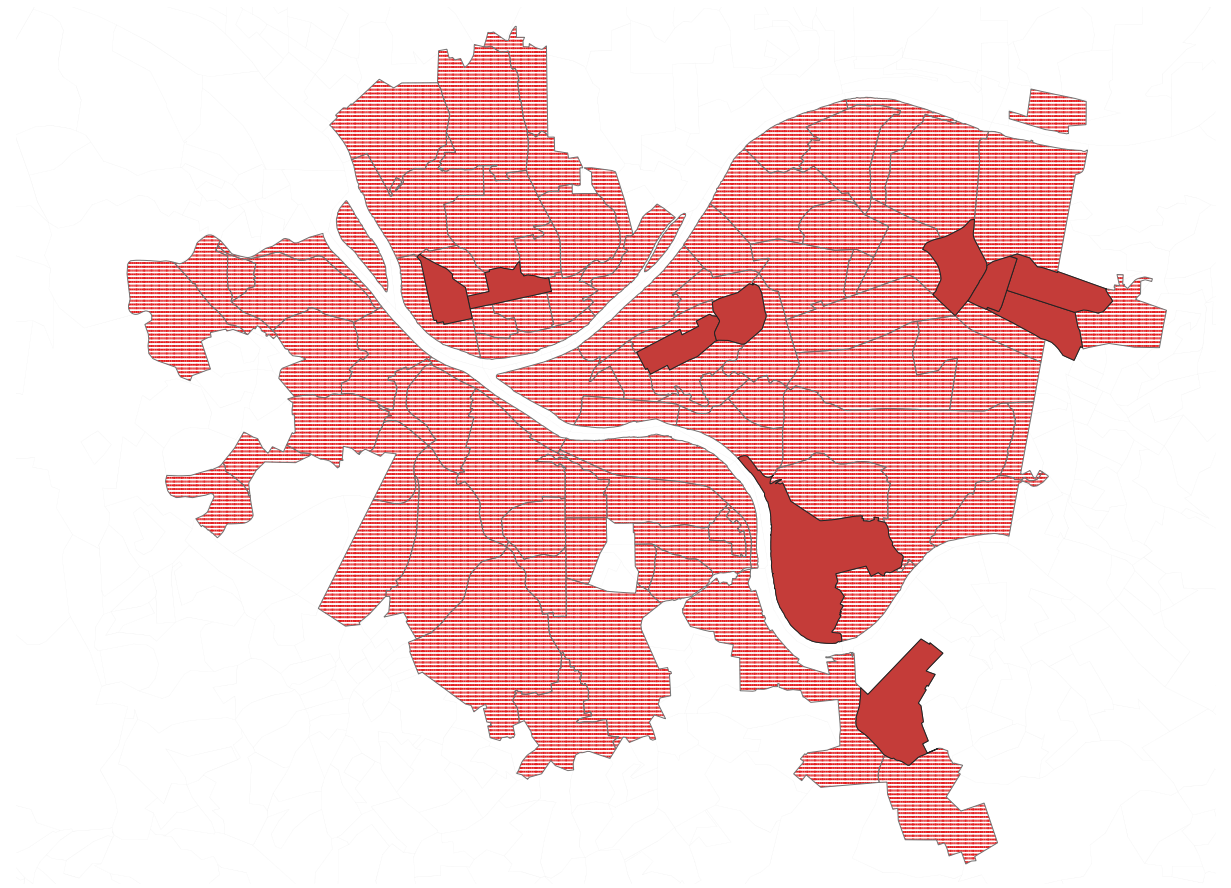

Figure 29 Map of the City of Pittsburgh with Highlighted Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh Service Areas

Figure 30 Members of National Urban League Young Professionals Posing in Front of the Volunteer Zone at the NUL Conference in July 2017

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/nulyp

4.2.3 Black Middle Class

As a Black Middle Class organization, the NUL's role among members of the Black Middle Class is to connect the Black Middle Class with the Black working class and white political elites, dedicated to the concerns of the Black Middle Class. With an individual middleman, the concept focuses on a Black Middle Class person serving in this role. In the organization's case, it is necessary to pay particular attention to how the organization brings in people who are Black Middle Class. I move the concept from a Black Middle Class middleman identity to a more collective stance of the Black Middle Class identity.

Something that consistently appeared in my interviews is that the NUL allows like-minded Black people and members of the Black Middle Class in general to come together. When I pushed interviewees to describe "like-minded," they often included Black people with professional occupations, higher education, and community dedication. Anna mentioned the transition from a predominantly Black city in the South to Pittsburgh:

> Another thing that fueled me to really do Urban League was because when I was just starting in Pittsburgh, everybody was just like, aw you know, Black Pittsburgh, it's rough here, and I was like, "Oh ok, but I'm sure there's some good Black people here somewhere." And I see the pictures [on the Urban League Website and would think] it looks like these people look like they got real jobs. I know somebody [in Pittsburgh] got jobs. And it was just like, there has to be Black people here doing good. When I went downtown, I can count maybe on the one hand, how many times I saw a well-dressed Black man or a well-dressed Black woman, and it's not that many. You go to Atlanta, you running out of hands. And I was like, this is a problem, but then we'd go to like these [Urban League] events, so I was like, this is where the hell y'all be.

In this quote, Anna explains that although it appeared classist, she actively looked for people with similar professional experiences as herself, with occupations that involved dressing professionally. She wanted the opportunity to engage with other individuals who had similar life experiences as her. She notes that it was through the local ULYPPgh website and at events that she decided that the NUL was the place where she would find 'similar-minded' Black professionals. As a starting place, the NUL holds spaces where the Black Middle Class can find other members of the Black Middle Class. Extending from the individual concept of the

middleman, the NUL as an organizational middleman also holds space for Black Middle Class people. Paying particular attention to the activities and actions targeting the Black Middle Class highlights the intraracial and intraclass dynamics expanded by understanding organizational middlemen. The NULYP and the Guild are the arms by which the NUL focuses on connecting the Black Middle Class to others.

4.2.3.1 Black Middle Class Link to White Political and Economic Elites

The NUL allowed members of the Black Middle Class to link to white political and economic elites and Black individuals who are also part of those circles. I discussed how Pennsylvania Urban Leaguers engaged with Pennsylvania Senator Pat Toomey above, and here an interviewee, Melissa, highlights her experience attending the Legislative Policy Conference (LPC) in previous years:

> LPC was just great because you got to speak to your legislative leaders. And so, you know, going into rooms that was- I want to say- probably my first experience walking into like walking on Capitol Hill and like getting to meet people and asking them questions and folks that didn't necessarily align with my political views about the things that were important about the League. So that was a good experience, and people were just so great. Going to the CBC (Congressional Black Caucus) reception (at LPC) and understanding like who they were and what they were about and seeing Marcia Fudge. I'm like, "Oh my God, you're a Delta; you're amazing. This is great, and you're a Black woman, and you're in charge of stuff this is great." I'm just seeing them in a different space. So, it's like you see them on CNN, and that's cool. But then you see them as like a human and like you get to talk to them

and so just having the opportunity to have access to was amazing and granted the whole time that I was involved.

In this quote, Melissa outlines her ability to engage with white political and economic elites, individuals who may not necessarily share her particular views or experiences. The NUL does not only provide the platform for this interaction to occur, but it also allowed for her to be a part of the democratic process and conversations. Melissa was able to participate in these conversations because she served on the ULYPPgh Executive Board. Attending LPC and being directly connected to those in power was not possible for non-members or Black working class constituents.

Equally important in this quote is that through the NUL developing an opportunity for her to connect to these people in power, Melissa was also able to connect with other members of the Black Middle Class who regularly encountered those people in power. She noted the ability of the Black Middle Class to gain access to other Black Middle Class individuals that they otherwise might not have access to. When mentioning Marcia Fudge, past president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, she expressed excitement about the access provided to her as a middleman.

4.2.3.2 Black Middle Class Link to Black Working Class

The NUL provides essential space with the broader Black community because it ties together Black individuals who may not normally interact with each other because of their social class. During my research, I observed the NUL intentionally creating spaces during conferences and throughout their work annually, bringing members of the Black Middle Class to spaces of the Black Working Class. At times, this was in a volunteering approach, and it served as a way to bring together the individuals socially. At the annual NUL Conference, there was always a volunteer zone. At the 2017 conference, there were signups for local groups and attendees of the

conference to help fill backpacks with pencils, paper, and other necessities for students. The conference included a Back to School Fest and a community day, at which the NUL distributed the backpacks to over 10,000 students (King 2017; Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis 2018). The community day allowed national NUL members of the Black Middle Class, local members of the Black Middle Class, and the Black working class and poor to be in a space together, with the added benefit of providing the Black Middle Class an opportunity to be linked to and to help the Black working class.

Following the opening ceremonies at the NUL conference discussed above, there was a free reception at which all individuals were provided space to come together in a way that was not solely one group giving to another. Events like that brought Black people together, especially for members of the Black Middle Class, who often feel torn between the worlds of the middle- and upper-class white elites they work with and their Black family members who have not had the same opportunities.

The pairing of the Black Middle Class and the Black working class is not without tension. One interviewee, Aretha, noted that there had previously been tension and distrust because Black Middle Class and Black working class groups and individuals would fight for resources amongst themselves and between groups. She proposes a solution for this of working towards more collaborations:

> I think if we actually collaborate more, we would get people out of the house more; we'd have better community. I think that volunteering is great; it feeds the soul, it feeds the community, but we just need to do it more and with each other. I think that if the churches come together and work and partner with nonprofits. I think if like, Macedonia, the Urban League, and maybe like a sorority, like once a month,

did stuff together, I think you would be able to like support. I think people are trying now to do more things.

Here, Aretha emphasizes the importance of linking together Black Pittsburghers from various backgrounds to better the broader Black community and Black Pittsburgh. For her, organizations like the NUL can do the active linking work of bringing people together.

4.2.3.3 Black Middle Class Connections within the Black Middle Class

When observing how members of the Black Middle Class engaged with one another, I gave particular attention to the dynamic of some individuals gaining social capital while others expended it. One interviewee, Eric, stated: "I know when I talk to people in other cities or people who have—like my friends—who have moved to other cities, they know they will find an Urban League." When interviewing individuals about their involvement with Urban League, I was told by Jaime that people told them that it could be a nice place to meet people:

> I just felt like, where do you find all these Black people you're supposed to end up friends with like TV shows say, like where are you supposed to find these people, they're not just hanging out at the gas station like pumping gas like where do you find them? I always felt like attending Urban League events, like the couple happy hours I went to was like a family reunion of like a Black Pittsburgh.

Beyond holding space for people to meet one another, the NUL can bring together members of the Black Middle Class to get to know one another through its events and social mixers. An important point to note is that some people attend events to gain social capital. For example, during networking events, it is clear that some individuals attend with the intent of gaining access to “influential” individuals, while others join to share the social capital that they have with others. There is an established understanding that they are coming together to help one another. In doing

the networking, individuals have the ability to gain social capital as well as expand their existing capital.

Lastly, it provides an opportunity for people to date others in similar social classes. Jack and Bernard, members of ULYPPgh mentioned that they attended ULYPPgh events in part because they knew they would be able to find other Black professional women to date. The women I interviewed did not immediately reference meeting men as a reason for initially attending the NULYP events; however, they did mention dating or marrying men they met through the NUL. The NUL provided events, such as these mixers and volunteering, for people to meet to date. During my fieldwork, I witnessed three marriages of members of the NULYP. One of the couples met at the NUL Conference in St. Louis in July 2017. I only encountered stories of heterosexual relationships, which may suggest a conservative heteronormative expectation of the NUL. In bringing people together to date, the NUL reifies Black Middle Class expectations.

4.2.3.4 Black Middle Class Cultural Reification

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated, a historical Black Greek Lettered Organization, made this poignant point after they gave to both the NUL and NAACP in 1939: "The fraternity's involvement in these organizations was intended not only to support them but also to help inspire in the Negro pride and to move him to creative action" (Harris and Mitchell 2008: 153). The spaces created by the NUL provide the opportunity to do community building and support, but it is not achieved without the particular attention paid to the cultural elements that become familiar within the NUL.

It was typical, while at conferences, to see people highlighting connections with HBCUs and Black Greek Lettered Organizations (BGLOs). At the 2019 conference, the NULYP theme was Homecoming, as an homage to homecomings at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

This theme incorporated the 20th anniversary of the NULYP by encouraging past members to come "home" to the NULYP. Events included several concerts, marching band drum majors (see figure 31), a stroll competition[26] for BGLO members, and reunion sessions. The Black Middle Class continues to be drawn to social institutions to maintain their status. As noted above, they became known as the talented tenth and the black elite (Du Bois 1903; Graham 1999; Benjamin 2005). As BGLOs and HBCUs are part of a particular cultural element of the Black Middle Class, involvement in the NUL and NULYP similarly creates a sense of pride.

In 2017, the NUL televised their annual State of Black America report in conjunction with Roland Martin and TVOne during LPC. Rather than having this televised portion in Georgetown or Omni Shoreham Hotel, they instead held it at the historic Howard Theatre in the Northwest part of Washington, D.C., near the historically Black institution Howard University. Immediately after the event was a reception at the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC). Holding the event in the opening year of the NMAAHC, the African American Smithsonian Museum, they showed their investment in ensuring that they are visible not only within cities, but also in locations that hold significance for Black Americans and that can bring them together. In 2018, the NUL held their conference at Omni Shoreham Hotel again and had a

[26] Strolling is "a traditional dance or 'party walk' performed by members of Black fraternities or sororities in a line at social events" (Allen 2013). A competition involves members of the National Pan Hellenic Council of Nine Black Greek Lettered Fraternities and Sorority, the "Divine Nine" (Ross 2001), each performing their line dance to compete for bragging rights of the best dance and performers.

special reception highlighting the new Washington Bureau office, which was opening in a building owned by UNCF in Northwest D.C., near Howard University.

While at LPC in 2018 and 2019, Thursday Network—Washington, D.C.'s NULYP chapter—held several happy hour events at which they encouraged local members and members visiting for the conference to meet with one another and support Black-owned business, with a portion of the proceeds promised as a donation to a local nonprofit organization other than the NUL. Their events allowed the Black Middle Class members to engage with one another while also supporting Black cultural spaces.

Being an organizational middleman is not just about providing space to connect and serve at the intersection of these identities. As exemplified through the additional events of the LPC and NUL Conference, the NUL becomes a space in which cultural elements of Blackness are held together.

Figure 31 The NUL Marching Band Drum Majors Performing at the NUL Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana on July 25, 2019

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/naturbanleague

4.3 The Friction of Being an Organizational Middleman

Holding the attention of several communities does not occur without friction. A past ULYPPgh Executive Board member stated that she was skeptical about ULYPPgh's relationships with white political and economic elites. She wanted to make sure that those individuals and organizations were genuinely invested in the work of racial equality. She mentioned that it was vital for her as a leader of the organization to partner with organizations that showed dedication to being a part of the Black movement community. She consistently spoke of having accomplices in

the work towards racial equality, both for the organization and as something she strived for in her own life, as opposed to partnering with people who only occasionally cared for equality. As a leader of an organization that often serves as a middleman, it was vital for her to be aware of the ways individuals in power could exploit her position.

The NUL as an organizational middleman faces several criticisms. Similar to the reasons discussed above, the NUL's role as an organizational middleman can allow exploitation of Black communities, and they face exploitation themselves. This fear appeared in several of my interviews. The tension of balancing the interests of multiple communities can make it impossible to make everyone involved feel their interests are represented. Several interviewees stated that they respected the organization but that it did not fulfill the approaches they were interested in when helping other Black people. They were not interested in helping the Black community in the way that the NUL appeared to be. For Sarah, the NUL and the young professionals' network showed a “bougie” and elitist vibe that separated them from working class Black activities. When I asked her what she meant by that term, she said the following:

> Um, it's kind of like this vibe, I will say. So, bougie means to me like this upper echelon of Black Folk right who don't necessarily wallow, or you know don't go below their, what they perceive as their, their level, you know I'm saying like they don't partake in ratchet or ghetto. It's like the actual bougie folks.

To this interviewee, the organization's ability to interact with the Black Middle Class and white political and economic elites pairs with the experiences and effect of not being fully invested in the interests of Black communities. Sarah went on to say:

> I don't subscribe to any organization that likes to leave out a sect of Black people because you know like classism and Black capitalism does not work. So now it's

> like you're, you're making an active choice and not seclude yourself, but also keeping the integrity of your organization, and that's very important. That's an effective medium to make because you're supposed to be like Black people are supposed to be inclusive right like we are aware of what oppression feels like, so we shouldn't, you know, turn around. Try to replace oppressors within our community.

This experience of elitism and separation rooted in classism is one reason people are skeptical of an organization that serves in this middle space. This separation illuminates further the difference between the NUL and more grassroots progressive organizations like Black Lives Matter and BYP100. While the NUL does not discuss or directly challenge the perceptions of elitism, organizations like BYP100 explicitly promote the inclusion of all Black people "including but not limited to a diversity of: sex, gender, class, citizenship status, sexuality, physical ability, education experiences, and faith" in their core values (byp100.org/about). The example that Sarah talks about above appeared following a court case related to Antwon Rose. Antwon Rose was a 17-year-old Black Pittsburgher who was murdered by a local police officer in 2018. At the time, neither the NUL nor the ULPgh made any statements related to the case, even though one of their significant areas of interest is civil rights and concerns over increasing political brutality. The ULYPPgh Executive Board made a statement supporting the families and protestors but were verbally reprimanded for making a statement without the explicit approval of the NUL or ULPgh. ULPgh wanted to cultivate a response that was not controversial, not too radical, and that would not alienate their diverse constituency. In this case, it appeared to me that ULPgh was concerned about alienating politicians and those involved with the police force more than they were concerned about the Black working class, Black children marching, and the broader Black

community that was looking for remarks and support from a longstanding Black civil rights organization. The reaction seemed to be aware, with a focus on justice rather than complete condemnation of the accused officer.

4.4 Conclusion: The Impact of Organizational Middleman on the Black Movement Community

Figure 32 summarizes the relationships between the various groups that the NUL intermediates. The NUL has a reciprocal relationship with white political and economic elites in which the NUL provides events where they can lobby white political and economic elites. These are more often advocacy events. The white political and economic elites can give back with their funds and also receive opportunities to show their commitments to the Black community. In doing so, they often have a direct relationship with the Black Middle Class who are attending these events. The NUL has a one-way relationship with the Black working class, where the NUL gives their resources to support the community through direct services and volunteer events; however, they do not offer opportunities for the Black working class to provide the NUL, white political and economic elites, nor the Black Middle Class with their knowledge. Finally, the NUL has a reciprocal relationship with the Black Middle Class. This occurs through the voluntary auxiliaries. Additionally, through these events facilitated by the NUL, the Black Middle Class has direct access (called linking above) to white political and economic elites and other members of the Black Middle Class, to exchange ideas and, for the Black working class, in which they can "give back to their community."

Throughout this chapter, I have explicitly discussed the way the NUL serves as an organizational middleman. Through this position, they can work at the intersection of the white political and economic elites, the Black Middle Class, and the Black working class. They have the added benefit of actively linking the Black Middle Class to these communities to achieve their goal of racial equality, a goal that places them within the Black movement community.

The concept of a Black movement community that I discussed in chapter 3 creates a framework for understanding the network of agents responsible for the tactics, events, and actions that have occurred and continue to occur in the long struggle for civil rights for Black people in the United States. It also allows for the inclusion of the social, political, cultural, and historical interpretation of actions towards the movement goal. The concept of the Black movement community accounts for all activities conducted by Black people and organizations fighting for racial equality that occur during heightened mobilizations (such as the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement, Movement for Black Lives) as well as those during less contentious activities (Hall 2005). By accounting for various activities, I can analyze the impact institutionalized organizations and events have on racial equality-related social change.

During the 2017 NUL Conference, the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis unveiled the Ferguson Jobs Center. An early question of this dissertation was to find out in what ways NUL was able to raise the necessary funds to build this center on the site where a QuikTrip was burned during Ferguson protests in August 2014, less than three years prior. It is due to their participation in the Black Movement Community that they were able to mobilize to bring resources to the post-riot Ferguson. With the development of the NUL as an organizational middleman, I argue that they can mobilize quickly due to their ability to have a sense of the needs of the Black community while keeping relationships with individuals who have the economic and political power to make

impactful change. The NUL as an organization also facilitates the Black Middle Class' commitment to challenging racial equality, an essential role in the network that moves towards the goal of racial equality. The NUL has been able to do this throughout its history, as explored earlier in this dissertation.

The events, activities, and networks developed as an organizational middleman structurally help inform strategy for when things occur. In 2020 there were times when I saw the benefit of their organizational middleman status. The NUL was able to immediately deploy resources to Minneapolis after the death of George Floyd. Similar to arguments made by Gamson (1975) about formalized groups being able to organize quickly, I have noted that the NUL's ability to mobilize quickly allowed it to receive millions of dollars in donations in 2020. Following the protests in 2021 after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the NUL received donations from Bath and Body Works, State Farm, Beyoncé, and MacKenzie Scott. This mobilization of funds was made possible by their longstanding positioning as a middleman organization. They can show the work that they are doing in individual cities.

The NUL's presence and access to various communities, national and locally, allow people to create relationships. In assessing the NUL's position as an organizational middleman, this is a significant contribution to the Black movement community, as explored above. The organization mirrors the Black Middle Class through its ability to sit between multiple social identities. The accessibility of the NUL sustains their goals as a middleman. Serving in the middle is helpful for Black movement communities.

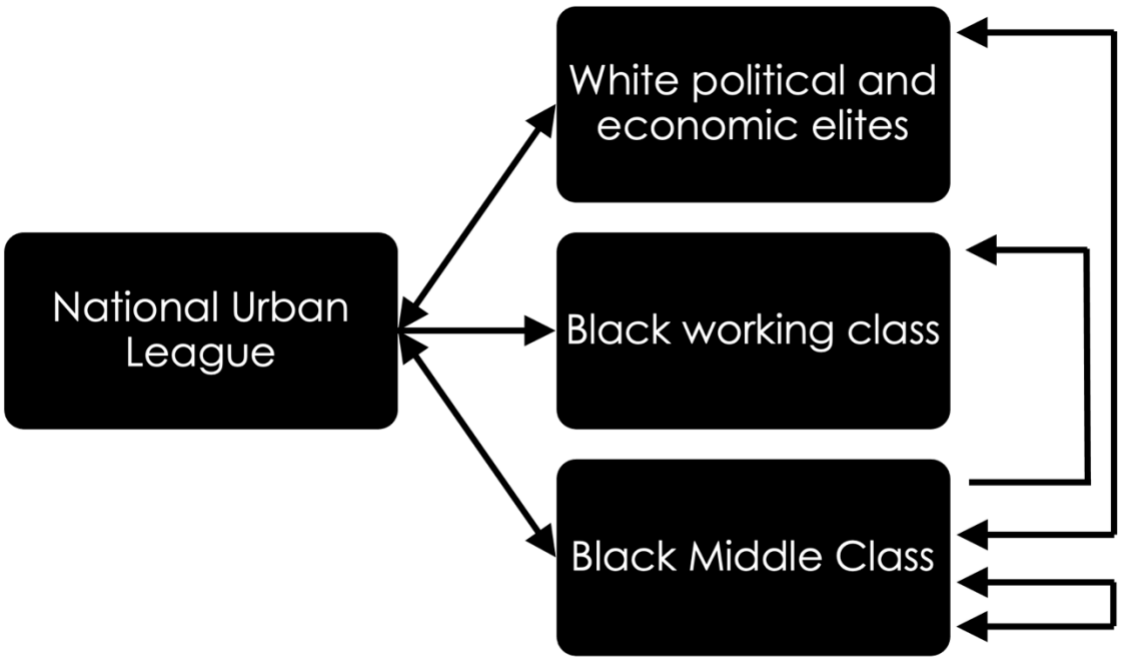

Figure 32 Organizational Middleman Relationship Between the National Urban League, White Political and Economic Elites, Black Working Class, and Black Middle Class

Figure 33 The National Urban League and Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis unveil the Ferguson Jobs Center at 2017 National Urban League Conference

Photo Credit: Richard Davis | https://townandstyle.com/new-century-urban-league-of-metropolitan-st-louis/, https://townandstyle.com/new-century-urban-league-of-metropolitan-st-louis/

5.0 Supporting the Movement: Black Middle Class Civic Engagement

> I kept getting this false narrative that we are really self-absorbed, not engaged in the community. I knew that was a farce. I knew that wasn't the truth; I knew [A],[27] I knew [M], I knew people who were engaged. I knew [S] and [L]. People who were *doing* things but weren't necessarily getting the recognition. So, I wanted to essentially be the antithesis to that type of concept and that belief. We are here, and we're active, and we're engaged.

In the above quote, I spoke with Arya, a Black woman Pittsburgh transplant[28] who was active in Urban League, her career in the education field, and many organizations throughout Pittsburgh. She was frustrated because she believed that she did not often see herself and people like her highlighted in conversations about Black Americans involved within their communities. Her civic work as a Black professional woman with an advanced degree was not for clout, attention, or career advancement, but for the Black community and in pursuit of a more equitable world. Arya speaks from her cross-cutting identities as a Black person, a professional, and a

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[27] Initials used for anonymity

[28] Transplant refers to someone who has moved to Pittsburgh. My respondents fall into the categories of Native, someone raised in Pittsburgh; Transplant >10 years, referring to respondents who moved to Pittsburgh and have lived there for over a decade; and Transplant <10 years, referring to respondents who have moved to Pittsburgh recently. 23 (51%) were natives, 11 (24%) were Transplant<10 years; and 11 (24%) were Transplants >10 years.

millennial[29] when she refers to the "false narrative that we are really self-absorbed." In this conversation, she mentioned that she was not doing the work alone. Instead, she knew a broader network of young Black millennial professionals actively engaged in their community. This chapter adds to previous civic engagement research to understand individuals' involvement. It pushes this scholarship further by highlighting how many Black Middle Class[30] individuals like Arya are active through civic engagement, though previous research does not center their identity. I argue that the Black Middle Class is motivated to conduct civic work based on moral, familial, and racial equality obligations.

Below, I discuss existing civic engagement literature, highlighting recent research on race-based civic engagement experiences. I push for scholars to further consider how social location impacts civic engagement, particularly within racialized identities. I then unpack the various civic

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[29]The "false narrative" that Arya refers to also includes the identity of being a millennial. Reporters often characterize millennials as not engaged in society and the cause of collapse for many industries (Allen et al. 2020). While her millennial identity impacts this perception, recent research has discussed how racial identity tempers millennial experiences. Racial identity is as important as a generational identity. For more on the subject of Black millennials, see Allen et al. 2020 and Robinson 2020a.

[30] My definition of the Black Middle Class is people who identify as Black and have at minimum a bachelor's degree or professional occupation, which incorporates my respondents who identify as "Black professionals." Further discussion on defining the Black Middle Class can be found in chapter 2.

engagement activities of 45 individuals[31] who were active in ULYPPgh, the NUL, and the Black movement community in Pittsburgh. I explore their activities through three broad areas within civic engagement: political forms of engagement (voting, political affiliation, and other political activities), volunteering (childhood activities and recent volunteer experience), and group membership (the NUL, Black Greek Lettered Organizations, and other voluntary associations). Next, I analyze how these individuals frame their civic engagement motivations. Their motivations fall into three categories of obligation: moral, familial, and racial equality. Keeping these three threads of obligations at the forefront, I reiterate how these individuals and their activities contribute to the Black movement community. I argue that the Black Middle Class supports the Black movement community through civic engagement activities. Social movement scholarship centers the work of explicitly named social movement mobilizations through organizations, protests, marches, and speeches, but I conclude with a discussion of how innocuous everyday activities of civic engagement contribute to social change. I add nuance to previous scholarship on the relationship of civil resistance, action, and volunteering in the pursuit of social change with Black Middle Class members' experiences (Eliasoph 2011; Blee 2012; Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014; Francis 2014; Chenoweth 2021). In centering the work on Black Americans' civic

[31] I do not explicitly discuss gender differences. Based on the NUL data, 65% of their members are women. Similarly, 65% of my interviews are women. While some research continues to see significant differences along gender lines (Nojan 2021), there is research support for there being no significant difference across gender lines, and in this particular study, I did not note any particular gender differences between the races based on activities and involvement (Jamal 2005; Read 2015; Barnes 2020).

engagement, I contribute to scholarship that observes how civic engagement occurs within, between, and beyond moments of heightened protest and political involvement that support Black movements. This chapter adds individual stories to the broader conversation on Black movement communities.

5.1 Black Civic Engagement

In its broadest definition, civic engagement is activities conducted in support of society; these activities can be political and nonpolitical (Putnam 2000; McLean et al. 2002; Skocpol and Fiorina 2004; Zukin et al. 2006; Barnes 2020). Civic engagement activities include helping people, volunteering in formal and informal ways, attending public forums, joining groups, voting, and in more recent operationalization, sharing resources on social media (Piatak and Mikkelsen 2021). Race, class, gender, religion, immigration status, and age impact civic engagement (Alexander 2006; Terriquez 2017; Robinson 2019, Robinson 2020b; Webster 2021; Nojan 2021). Our current analyses of civic engagement activities use these demographic characteristics as variables that influence the rate of civic engagement without accounting for the racial framing of civic engagement activities. Much of the current conceptualization of civic engagement is based on the experiences of white men. Scholars need to incorporate various identities and framings in conceptualizing and operationalizing civic engagement. This study's approach moves away from applying traditional notions of civic engagement to diverse populations to account for the different participation rates. Building on Bracey (2016) and Robinson (2019), I examine civic engagement from a race-critical approach that accounts for a Black perspective of civic engagement.

In this chapter, I build on recent work that notes the longstanding history of Black American civic life to account for respondents' activities and motivations (Robinson 2019, 2020; Barnes 2020; Webster 2021). My development of Black civic engagement mirrors the recent conceptualization of Black philanthropy: "a medley of beneficent acts and gifts that address someone's needs or larger social purposes that arise from a collective consciousness and shared experience" (Freeman 2020). Bringing these transdisciplinary concepts together while emphasizing this long tradition of civic engagement in Black communities places the phenomena I observed within a larger context of Black involvement in American civic life. Furthermore, I highlight the impact of the Black Middle Class in this trajectory to build on existing literature.

5.2 Black Middle Class Civic Engagement

Arya's comment that she wanted to challenge the notion that the Black Middle Class were not engaged provides context for the underlining tensions of the responsibilities of the Black Middle Class. The tensions include underlying assumptions from reports, including the Moynihan Report, that racial disparities continue because the Black community does not care for themselves (Moynihan 1965; Wilson 2009). It also assumes that those who have achieved despite disparities do not attempt to help others achieve despite their inequalities. The reality of Black Middle Class civic involvement deserves more historical and contemporary attention.

Black Americans have a longstanding collective racial identity due to marginalization through institutionalized racism (Dawson 1995; Hughes et al. 2015). The Black Middle Class emerged based on privilege from class stratifications based on categories that include education, occupation, income, social capital, and cultural capital (Weeden and Grusky 2005; Grusky and

Weeden 2008; Winant 2015; Golash-Boza 2016). Due to their social class, the Black Middle Class is often characterized as detached from the issues of the Black working class. This depiction skews perception about the Black Middle Class without including narratives from them.

Through the end of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, the Black Middle Class led the founding of hundreds of Black civic, philanthropic, and social organizations (Minkoff 1995; Mjagkij 2003). Black Middle Class organizations, individuals, and initiatives attempted to balance the government's lack of protection and resources for Black Americans. Through these organizations, members of the Black Middle Class used their economic, political, and social capital to fight for social, political, and economic equality (Francis 2014; Parks and Hughey 2020).

In his work *The Philadelphia Negro (1899)* and through the activities of "race men" such as Booker T. Washington at the turn of the twentieth century, Du Bois saw firsthand the activities constructed by the Black Middle Class to support the Black working class through the church, philanthropy, and civic engagement. Soon after, he introduced the concept of the *talented tenth*:

> The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst (Du Bois 1903).

The "Best of the race," talented tenth, Black Middle Class, and Black elite were Black Americans who were educated and had professional occupations, such as ministers, teachers, and entrepreneurs (Du Bois 1903). Du Bois discussed how the talented tenth could better uplift the race through liberal arts education in comparison to Booker T. Washington. Washington was considered the premiere race man of the time (Du Bois 1903). He helped develop the Tuskegee

Institute, which educated Black Americans in vocational educations and was known for his strength in fundraising from white political and economic elites. In the definition of the talented tenth, Du Bois conceptualized the responsibilities of "the Best of the race," to take care of "the Worst." In the concept of the talented tenth, there is an inherent assumption that there is an onus and responsibility on privileged Black people to lead, support, and help those without resources. Du Bois envisioned that these efforts could decrease racial inequality. In part, Black Middle Class individuals and organizations did not live up to the talented tenth vision (Dollard 1930; Frazier 1957). Furthermore, the twentieth century saw numerous instances of "the Worst" mobilizing for themselves to challenge racial inequality.[32] Nevertheless , the Black Middle Class continue to fight against racial disparities that often lead only to incremental social changes.

Following 1945, in the post-World War II period and the era of the Civil Rights Movement, economic and political changes increased the separation between the Black Middle Class and the Black working class (Wilson 1978/2012:88). Black Americans achieved unprecedented access to upward social class mobility through housing, education, and professional occupations that changed the composition and meaning of the Black Middle Class.[33] William Julius Wilson argued

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[32] Numerous scholars have discussed the mobilization of working class Black Americans to fight for racial equality. Notably Aldon Morris's *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (1984) and Robin D. G. Kelley's book *Hammer and Hoe* (1990/2015) discuss the "long Civil Rights movement" history of working class Black people mobilizing.

[33] This point is to not obscure the barriers that Black Americans encountered to achieve full parity. The unprecedented access met continued racial discrimination. For example, housing is a gateway

that the Black Middle Class also were the beneficiaries of policy changes, such as affirmative action, that did not have the same impact on the Black working class. Furthermore, he contended that as Black professionals moved away from Black neighborhoods in the 1960s and 1970s, the Black working class was "left behind" with less opportunity and access than the Black Middle Class provided when still living in their neighborhoods (Wilson 1978/2012). This argument further ingrained century-old beliefs from the Black community, scholars, and politicians that the Black Middle Class did not invest in Black communities. These beliefs supported a history and research trajectory that characterized the Black Middle Class as distant from the Black community and disengaged from civic engagement activities such as voting and volunteering (Frazier 1957; Musick et al., 2000; Putnam 2000; Dyson 2005; Price 2009).

The model proposed by Wilson and others neglects the various programs conducted by privileged Black Americans to support all Black people in achieving equality and receiving the necessities promised to them by the American dream. The Black Middle Class recognizes that their life chances and racial identity are indivisibly tied with that of the Black working class, a concept known as *linked fate* (Dawson 1995; Simien 2005). Linked fate ideology endures beyond perceptions, time, and sociopolitical context, resulting in Black Middle Class investment supporting the Black working class. The NUL, NAACP, leadership at HBCUs, Black Greek Lettered Organizations, and numerous associations, often led by Black Middle Class members, attempt to fill the gaps created by racial and economic inequality. In this chapter, I support work that explicitly highlights the contributions of the Black Middle Class's civic engagement and

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to wealth accumulation. Black individuals with the means to move into more affluent neighborhoods were blocked by redlining, altering the full extent of parity they aimed for.

efforts to challenge racial inequality (Cohen 2010; Shelton 2017; Freeman 2020). The individuals I interviewed mirror a long history of Black civic engagement from the Black working class and Black Middle Class.

Below, I explore my respondents' civic engagement activities through the lenses of political engagement, volunteering, and organizational involvement. Political engagement accounts for their political or lack of political affiliation; several of my interviewees were politically active at the time of the interview. Second, I broaden the idea of volunteering. I discuss both childhood activities and the types of voluntary activities they took on in their adult life. I note that they conduct activities that span the course of their lives. Finally, I discuss organizational involvement, highlighting general participation in organizations and specific spaces to account for the role the NUL played in developing the interviewees as discussed in their narratives.

5.2.1 Political Engagement

Institutionalized exclusion marks Black Americans' political involvement as a form of civic engagement. With the Thirteenth (1865), Fourteenth (1868), and Fifteenth (1870) Amendments, Black people received rights and protections afforded to them as United States citizens. Unfortunately, soon after gaining the rights to citizenship, voting, and political representation, Black Americans experienced a spectrum of setbacks from disenfranchisement to inconsistent formal political engagement from the end of the nineteenth century through the twentieth century. States established voting barriers to stop Black voters. Southern states instated poll taxes and reading requirements for voter registration with the knowledge that Black Americans were disproportionately impoverished and illiterate at the time, blocking them from voting. Northern States disenfranchised Black voters by manipulating legislative district lines, known as

gerrymandering, a practice continued today (Barker et al. 1999; Martis 2008; McGhee 2020; Robinson et al. Forthcoming). Examples of disenfranchisement range from the discouragement of political involvement to Jim Crow Laws and gerrymandering to massacres and lynchings. In 1898, in Wilmington, North Carolina, for example, white supremacists overthrew the predominantly Black government, murdering Black politicians and politically active citizens (Zucchino 2020). In 1901 Representative George Henry White of North Carolina left office, becoming the last Black American to serve in the United States Congress for decades until Representative Oscar De Priest of Illinois joined the United States Congress in 1929. The barriers and threat of death have an impact on Black voting behaviors today. Recent research shows a correlation between historically high voting repression and low contemporary voter turnout numbers (Williams 2017).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 added some protections for Black Americans against voting discrimination. Black American voter registration increased from 60.2 percent to 66.2 percent from 1966 to 1968 (Current Population Survey 2021). In the 1968 presidential election, 57.6 percent of Black voters turned out to vote, the highest numbers until the election of President Barack Obama. In 2008, 60.8% of Black Americans voted, more than the national average of 58.2% (Current Population Survey 2021). Throughout this long history of organizational involvement, volunteering, and political engagement impacts, members of the Black Middle Class have consistently been civically involved.

Within the concept of civic engagement are various forms of political engagement. When Americans perform their "civic duty," it typically refers exclusively to voting. I expand the notion of civic engagement to include various forms of political involvement and consider political engagement more broadly. I asked respondents not only about their voting patterns, but also about

their political affiliations, the politics within their households when they were children, and for some, their more formal roles in politics and political office.

Table 1 Reported Voting Rates 1968-2018

	1964[34]	1966	1968	1970	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
National Average	69.3%	55.4	67.8	54.6	58.2	41.8	56.5	38.5	56.0	49.0
Black Americans	58.5%	41.7	57.6	43.5	60.8	40.7	62.0	37.3	55.9	48.0
Citizens with Bachelor's Degree or More	87.5%	70.5	84.1	70.2	73.3	57.1	71.7	52.5	71	63.9

Source: Current Population Survey, Voting and Registration Supplements, Reported Voting by Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex and Age Groups: November 1964 to 2018 (Table A-1) and Reported Voting by Region, Educational Attainment and Labor Force Status for the Population 18 and Over: November 1964 to 2018 (Table A-2)

https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/voting-and-registration/voting-historical-time-series.html

5.2.1.1 Voting

Voting was a key topic throughout my ethnographic research and interviews. Black voter turnout declined in the 2016 and 2018 elections from the historic highs of 2008 and 2012. Black voter turnout was 55.9 percent and 48 percent, respectively. With the importance of voting and political engagement manifesting clearly in my fieldwork, I was not surprised that my interviewees were avid voters. My respondents were all part of the 55.9 and 48 percent who voted. They were also a part of the 71% and 63.9% of voters who have at minimum a bachelor's degree.[35]

[34] There is no formal data from the U.S. Census before 1964.

[35] U.S. Census Bureau does not provide voting rates based on race and education

When I asked about voting, my respondents sometimes would not let me finish the sentence or were surprised and exasperated by the question. They seemed to believe my question implied that they were not voters. Their responses included heavy sighing and immediate responses of "Yes" and "Absolutely" as though they thought I doubted their civic commitments. Ten respondents explicitly said that they remembered being at the voting booth with their parents or bring their own children to vote. Elizabeth, a 32-year-old woman with two children, stated, "Yes, I do vote every election. I'm trying to teach my children. So ever since I think maybe my son was four, I've taken him to every election that I voted in just for him to see the process." Elizabeth began a tradition with her children that many of my respondents mentioned was important in their political engagement development. Considering the rate and percentage of respondents who vote, I found that voting is the most consistent and impactful way my respondents are civically engaged. One hundred percent of my respondents stated that they voted in the 2016 and 2018 elections, with many commenting that they vote in all elections. There were no differences between men and women in responses to voting.

There is only one example of a respondent stating she missed an election:

> I do vote every election. There was a November 2019 special election that I missed. I was traveling back [to Pittsburgh] that day and [told myself] 'When you land from the airport, you have to go vote,' and then I landed, I forgot, and I went home. I will say that is the only time in any election; I always vote.

London had originally made a plan to vote but forgot after her travels. She admitted missing the November 5, 2019, election in Pittsburgh, a general election that included several referendums, City Council seats, and Superior Court seats, due to her travel schedule. My other respondents were equally adamant about not missing an election intentionally. The NUL strategized to help

limit the number of people who missed an election and encouraged people to "make a plan," as London mentioned.

In the 2016, 2018, and 2020 national elections, the NUL, its affiliates, and the auxiliaries were concerned about voter suppression impacting the election and about as ensuring that laws fighting racial inequality stayed on the forefront of congress' missions. To combat these concerns, there was annual lobbying. Furthermore, there were formal annual events related to political debates, candidate forums, voter registration drives, promoting the vote, and election night watch parties. In 2016, Urban League Young Professionals of Greater Pittsburgh (ULYPPgh) shared important dates for preparing to vote on their social media channels and via emails (see figure 34). This document highlighted the dates for the presidential and vice presidential debates, last day to register to vote in the state of Pennsylvania, the last day to request an absentee ballot in Pennsylvania, and election day. In addition to this image sent as a reminder to ULYPPgh members and their networks, National Urban League Young Professionals (NULYP) held virtual watch parties for each of the Presidential and Vice Presidential debates, in which they encouraged individuals to tweet their questions and concerns regarding the election. On November 8, 2016, members of the executive board of ULYPPgh, including three of my interviewees, called chapter members to remind them to vote, a phone tree tactic that mirrored strategies of the Civil Rights Movement.

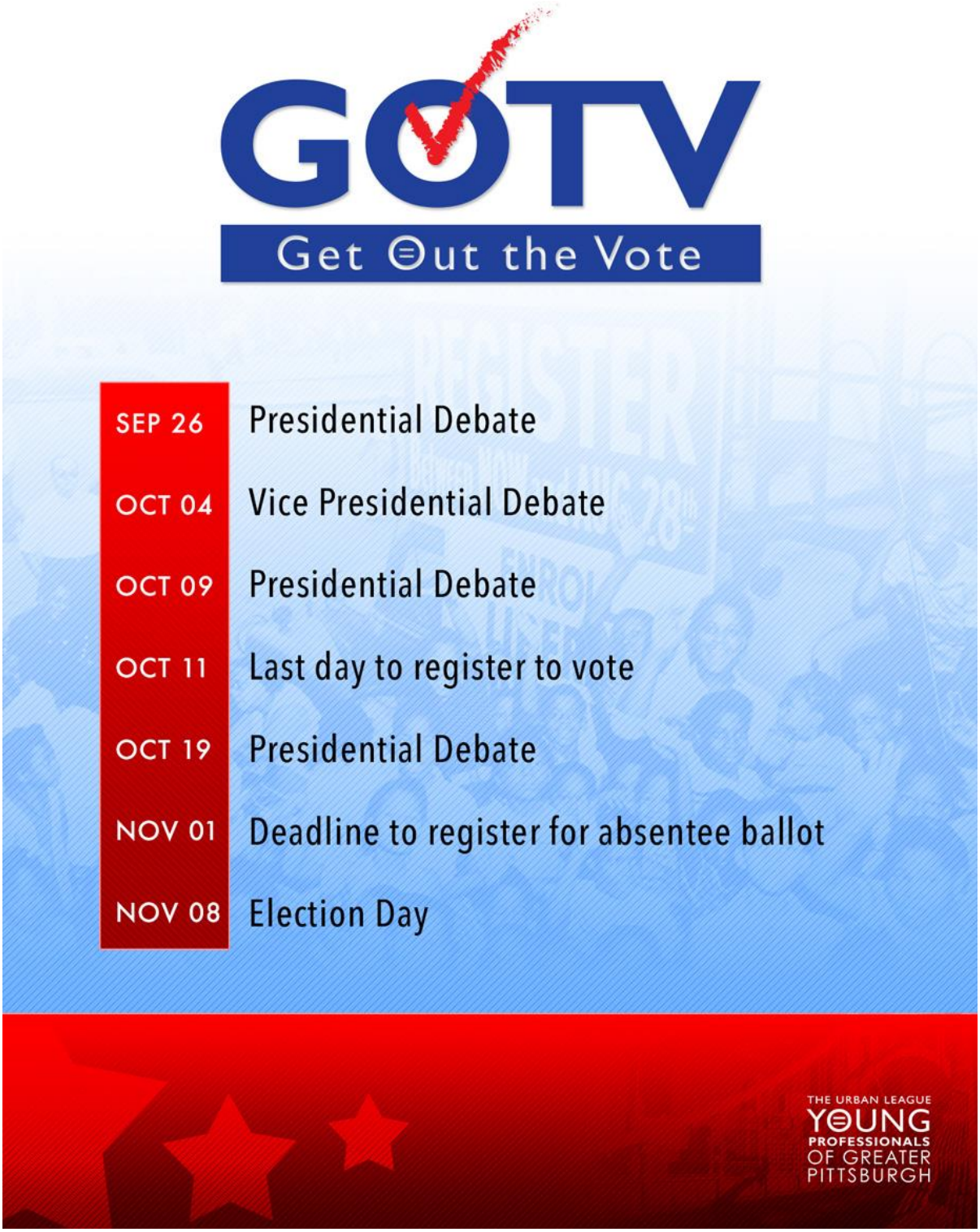

Figure 34 Urban League Young Professional of Greater Pittsburgh Get Out The Vote Document Sent via Email September 26, 2016

5.2.1.2 Political Affiliation

To account for their voting engagement, I asked my respondents about the type of households they grew up in and their political affiliations. They noted a range of childhood political experiences, including not talking about politics at all, having politically moderate parents, and having parents who were liberal. Tina stated that her parents did not talk about politics but that she remembers learning about it through cable shows targeted at children and in passive conversations:

> I remember George H. W. Bush being on Nickelodeon saying he doesn't like broccoli. I remember Bill Clinton play the saxophone and people and then the whole Monica Lewinsky thing because that was just everywhere. But other than that, and then by the time I got to high school, I could learn things on my own. But as a kid, we never talked about politics or politicians.

As respondents recalled their childhoods, I also asked them about their current political stances. They mostly fell into the categories of strongly Democrat or ambivalent Democrat. My interviewees who were Democrats did not elaborate on their decision to identify as Democrats. I did not note any differences between the men and women on whether they identified more strongly as Democrats or ambivalent. My interviewees who were "ambivalent Democrat," talked about registering as Democrats reluctantly. When I asked Kylie whether she belonged to a political party, she rolled her eyes and said, “I mean on paper, I'm Democrat, but I don't really trust any of them." This particular point shows that Kylie and no doubt others understand the utility of registering to vote and being part of a political party; however, they do not put their faith in politicians conducting policy in their interest. Amara more strongly identified as a Democrat, but she also mentioned hesitancy: “I'm not happy with any party really but I just focus on the issues.”

Black Americans have been overwhelmingly Democratic voters since the mid-twentieth century; therefore, I was surprised when talking to one respondent who was a registered Republican. Jack was my only respondent who identified as Republican. My physical reaction of shock led Jack to elaborate:

> Many people who are strongly Democratic want to have more power and influence on elections; I think they should actually register as Republicans. That's what I didn't realize as an Independent; you can only vote in the general elections. So, after that, I've been registered as a Republican because I was more dissatisfied with the overall selections of the Republican Party. I wanted to have more influence on who ended up in general.

Many Black Republicans are interested in diversifying the Republican party[36] (Fields 2016). In this case, Jack felt that he was helping Black people by registering as a Republican to encourage the party to select better party candidates. For him, no organization, NUL or the Republican party, is perfect; therefore, he could be selective in what parts of the organizations he would support. I noted similar sentiments when I attended other NUL events. I encountered a Black woman in her early thirties who ran as a Republican in her local city. She stated that, besides

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[36] In addition to Corey Fields's influential text *Black Elephants in the Room* (2016), see Gregory Davis's dissertation *Black Republican Support in the Trump Era: A Social Psychological Account* (2020) and Louis Prisock's book *African Americans in Conservative Movements: the Inescapability of Race (2018)* for more on the subject of Black Republicans' experiences in liberal spaces while having their own conservative ideas.

concerns related to race or gender, her economic and individual rights ideals fell along the lines of the Republican Party. She also noted that the Republicans were interested in diversifying their slate and supporting her specifically, whereas with the Democrats, she needed to “get in line" before they fully backed her. Awareness of political issues through political affiliation was just one way my respondents conducted civic engagement through political engagement. My only interviewees active in politics identified as Democrats.

5.2.1.3 Political Office

One particular event held by ULYPPgh was entitled "YPs in Politics." [37] Within a couple of years, one of those individuals was mayor of their borough, becoming one of four Black Western Pennsylvania state representatives. Well before they took office, they conducted civic engagement activities that led them to their careers. Most of my respondents engaged in politics during their free time, with eight of my respondents (17 percent), two men and six women, going into politics as a career. Renee mentioned talking to another Black woman about how she got into politics:

> One of the things she was sharing was like, well, I got connected to the Mayor because I started volunteering on the campaign. So, I was like, ‘Oh, that's interesting. Um, I didn't realize like, you could just go up and volunteer for like a political person.’ Like, let me just go and volunteer. So, when the Mayor was running for public office, that's what I did. I like ended up volunteering for his campaign early on. So, when he announced his candidacy, I was a volunteer for a whole year before he even won. That's honestly how I got connected to the Mayor.

[37] This was the formal name of the event. YP stands for Young Professionals.

> I walked up to him one day, and I said, 'You know, I want to help out with your campaign.' He said, 'Send me your resume.' I sent him my resume.

Renee worked for the mayor for a couple of years after that. She was civically engaged because of her interest in supporting the Pittsburgh community, but her civic engagement also became an avenue that provided her with a job. The majority of my respondents invested in supporting politics for their community. One of my respondents canvassed in a local borough immediately outside of Pittsburgh,[38] and she stated that some interactions also become civics lesson for the individuals she encountered. In one case, she introduced herself and her reason for canvassing, and the conversation with the man she talked to went as follows:

> He was like, "Oh yeah that's cute or whatever but I'm just concerned about getting Peduto in office." I was like, "But sir you can't, you live in a [borough of Pittsburgh] and Peduto's in Pittsburgh." and he's like, "Yeah I know so he'll be our mayor." I said, "No, we're in a [Borough of Pittsburgh] and we have our own people here who are running for public offices." And the deer in the headlights look, he really didn't know. And then I started finding out like, people really didn't know. So, it became a civic engagement lesson. Like this is what a council person does, this what a school board is. This is why it's important to vote. I was like, oh, this is dire because nobody knows anything about anything.

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[38] Self-governing municipalities surround Pittsburgh, known as boroughs and townships. Within Allegheny County, there are approximately 84 boroughs that have their own local government different from their adjacent city.

In this case, Amara found her work through politics also linking to broad engagement. She realized that while she received some money for the work conducted, her overwhelming motivation for continuing to do community, civic, and public service was to convinee citizens, especially Black citizens, that they need to become more informed.

5.2.2 Volunteering

Volunteering is generally a form of civic engagement and includes any activity where people give their time freely to benefit someone else (Wilson 2000; Eliasoph 2011; Gaby 2017). Scholarship in this area draws conclusions about volunteer rates, causes, and consequences in volunteering. Unfortunately, this research is often marred by limited samples of non-white participants, if they are included at all. Black Americans have lower volunteering rates than white people (Musick et al. 2000; Wilson 2000). However, when research controls for church involvement and social class, racial disparities are reversed or disappear (Chambré 2020). That is, Black Americans have higher volunteering rates when considering religious and church involvement (Musick et al. 2000; Chambré 2020). While many of my respondents were religious, their volunteer behaviors as children and adults went beyond the church.

Another perspective suggests that Black Americans have different pathways to volunteering than their white counterparts, leading to perceived racial disparities (Musick and Wilson 2007; Chambré 2020). Scholarship that accounts for social class finds conflicting results for volunteer rates. Some scholars find that income is not related to volunteering among African Americans (Musick et al. 2000), while others have found that socioeconomic status impacts volunteering (Sundeen et al. 2009). My research addresses these conflicting results by providing a more nuanced explanation of the experiences of the Black Middle Class who do volunteer. My

respondents were actively involved in volunteering through a long history of engagement beginning in childhood. Below I discuss their childhood memories of volunteering and their typical volunteer behaviors as adults.

5.2.2.1 Childhood Activities

I explicitly asked my respondents about their first memory of volunteering. Only one of my interviewees, a man, mentioned not volunteering as a child. The others recalled participating in reading clubs for younger students at school or volunteering with their families to feed the homeless on holidays. There were no gender differences in the type of early events in which interviewees participated. C.C. calculated the time he volunteered doing preparation for college applications. He found that he'd spent over 300 hours a year conducting volunteer work (Robinson 2020b). Most respondents did not keep track of their volunteer hours as children. Instead, they just remember spending much of their life volunteering. Natalie stated that she remembered volunteering in elementary school as part of a club:

> My first memory is of Red Cross Club. We just volunteered starting like third grade, we would go to the Ronald McDonald House to like play with the kids, and we did like you know, Christmas Caroling. We would go to the Senior Center around the corner from my school to visit with the elders. I don't even know how I got into Red Cross Club.

Natalie and many of my other respondents could not recall what led them to volunteer as a child; helping other people was merely an ever-present activity within their childhood. The Red Cross Club and my respondents' other early volunteering activities did not focus on racial justice.

5.2.2.2 Recent Volunteer Activity

Volunteer activities for my respondents as adults took a lot of time, went beyond their families, and was often related to racial justice. Several mentioned that they worked almost part-time jobs as volunteers. They called it working their "5 to 9" (Robinson 2020b). ULYPPgh has a predominantly woman membership;[39] however, for the men who were members and volunteered, I did not find a difference in the way the interviewees talked about the number of hours they worked. When I asked Charles about volunteering, he stated that he worked about 60 hours a week and, on average, would volunteer approximately 15 hours. As he named the various boards and activities he was involved in that added up to well over fifteen hours a week, he laughed and said, "I don't sleep."

Musick and Wilson (2007) argue that Black Americans do not volunteer at the same rates as their white counterparts; however, when Black Americans do volunteer, they often work more hours. Charles and my other interviewees' high rates of volunteer hours are in line with this research. London echoed the overwhelming nature that volunteering can have:

> I'll volunteer with my time or with my money. There are some boards that are working boards, which are really, really great because they get a lot done. However, that means that they're an all-volunteer capacity, and it requires a lot of your time and a volunteer role until you just get stretched thin because we all have [other things], we have jobs, we have friends, we have partners, we have families, we have other obligations in this world. We just have a lot of moving parts, and then you want to throw on like another 10 hours a week or less or more whatever depends

[39] As of June 2019, ULYPPgh was comprised of 75 members. Of those, 67% identified as female.

on whatever organization that you're in volunteering as a part of this board, and it can just be a lot sometimes.

Volunteering is something individuals actively do to give their energy, money, and time, but London acknowledges that it can often come at a cost. Kylie was one respondent who commented that she volunteered less than ten hours a week in the interview; however, I consistently saw her at events and sharing reports, showing that she might have been spending more time volunteering than she realized. Young, Black, educated, and professional interviewees felt pulled in many directions by many responsibilities. In addition to volunteering through various individual programs, most of my interviewees were part of multiple organizations where they conducted their volunteer behavior. The annual reports of ULYPPgh included names of other organizations members were a part of, such as National Black MBA Association, National Society of Black Engineers, and countless professional associations to show how well networked its members are. Furthermore, the inclusion of this information in the annual reports show that most members are volunteering a great extent.

5.2.3 Organizational Involvement

Civic engagement has been embedded in the activities of Black Americans throughout the history of the United States. There is a long thread of Black Americans' active involvement in civic engagement that mirrors the three broad operationalized areas of civic engagement: organizational involvement, volunteering, and political involvement. One such example appears through the Prince Hall Masons. Prince Hall, with the assistance of fourteen other Black men, founded Prince Hall Freemasonry in 1784. These fourteen Black men founded the Prince Hall Masonic order after the white-only Masonic order in Boston rejected their membership. The Prince

Hall Masonic Order is one of the oldest membership organizations for Black Americans in existence today (Brooks 2000; Révauger 2015). From the inception of the United States, free Black people ran parallel in their dedication to the ideals of liberty, equality, and peace despite often being excluded from other democratic activities. Civic engagement through organizational involvement continues today through membership-based organizations such as Black Greek Lettered Organizations (BGLOs), HBCU alumni groups, churches, and countless fraternal organizations. Through these hundreds of organizations over the centuries, Black Americans have continued to be civic-minded through their own within-group fundraising, social support, and, more broadly, volunteer activities (Du Bois 1899; Mjagkij 2003; Skocpol et al. 2006; Parks and Hughey 2020; Foreman et al. 2021).

My interviewees often joined organizations in college, including voluntary associations, Black Greek Letter Organization, Black student union, and other groups to keep themselves busy. Both men and women were active in multiple organizations. Aaliyah, for example, mentioned being a joiner in college. She said that whenever she saw a new organization or event, she would attend and join. She wanted to be a part of the community in college and take advantage of every opportunity afforded to her. While there were numerous organizations where my respondents overlapped in membership and involvement,[40] I focus here on my interviewees' relationship to the NUL.

[40] Some of the organizations my interviewees named were Big Brothers and Big Sisters, National Association of African American Human Resources (NAAAHR), National Black MBA Association (NBMBAA), National Society for Black Engineers (NSBE), New Voices for

5.2.3.1 Interviewees Relationship to the National Urban League

The NUL involvement was the primary form of civic engagement for several of my respondents. Natalie mentioned the NUL as part of her volunteering legacy:

> Growing up, my parents were members. I think my parents are still [members]. I just remember them going to events, Urban League Sunday, and Gala. I became involved probably in high school. I was in the Urban League for teenagers. And then, actually, I got a scholarship. The Pittsburgh Urban League sponsored me to go to Japan for the summer.

Natalie discussed the various ways that the NUL was part of her life. She mentioned her parents attending the annual events of Urban League Sunday and the Ron Brown Gala that the ULPgh hosts annually. As I discuss elsewhere, the NUL activities typically fall into three areas: direct services led by the local affiliates, advocacy, and volunteering led by auxiliary groups. Within each of these areas, the organization has built itself around activities and events focused on advocacy, networking, professional development, and volunteering. In the NUL, numerous opportunities are available to people of all ages, allowing it to perpetuate intergenerational dedication to challenging racial inequality.

Many of my respondents joined the Urban League Movement through ULYPPgh. London explained her choice of being a member for a time:

> The part of Pittsburgh that I lived in was actually predominantly white, and when I walked around campus at Pitt, I saw predominantly white folk, and I was just like,

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Reproductive Justice, BGLOs, National Pittsburgh Urban Magnet Program (PUMP), University of Pittsburgh Alumni Association, YMCA, and YWCA.

> there has got to be Black people. Are there Black people in Pittsburgh? I'm not sure, for real, for real. I joined (ULYPPgh) early because I was like, okay, here, I'm kind of like I needed, I was like, I need some like salt, some pepper, this place is bland. At first, I really, really hated Pittsburgh when I first moved here, and if it actually if it wasn't for Urban League, I probably wouldn't have stayed.

London and other ULYPPgh members stated that the organization provided them space to meet other Black individuals. For many, it was about the social and cultural capital that ULYPPgh provided for them. London was one of the members who joined to be part of the advocacy committee to conduct more volunteering through politics. After a couple of years, she attended less events, citing still being committed to the organization despite increased job and friendship responsibilities. For those who were not active members attending several events a month, they encountered the organization from time to time when it held events they were interested in and partnered with other professional organizations in the broader Black Movement Community. The organization provided an opportunity for individuals to build relationships, serving as a space for Black people to fight for racial justice without encountering the microaggressions they encountered in interactions within multiracial organizations or workplaces.

5.3 Civic Engagement Motivations

In addition to assessing the rates and variation of civic engagement, I was interested in understanding my interviewees' motivations. Scholars suggest that civic engagement is related to moral schemas, social ties, and racial identity (Beyerlein and Vaisey 2013; Beyerlein and Bergstrand 2016). Each of these factors appears in my interviews. Interviewees explicitly shared

stories related to moral obligations, familial obligations, and broader obligation to society and racial uplift.

5.3.1 Moral Motivations

Black civic life is often discussed in relation to the Black church (Musick and Wilson 2007). Historically, Black churches have played an essential role within Black communities, including encouraging and providing volunteering opportunities. My respondents followed trends in recent scholarship and studies that state Black Americans have a complicated relationship with religion and the church (Allen 2019; Pew Research Center 2021). Many of my respondents mentioned growing up religious or in the church and invoked religion by saying "God" or "the Lord," but most were not attending church weekly. These responses support work that states that unaffiliated Black Americans are often religiously engaged by believing in God or a higher power, praying several times a month, and attending religious services every so often throughout the year (Pew Research Center 2021). Moving beyond a religious identity, my respondents seemed to operate on a general moral lens instead of an explicitly religious one when talking about their civic engagement. Maria, for example, mentioned that she based her interests in civic engagement on a role model:

> [Civic engagement is] my calling. I always go by what Shirley Chisholm said, "That service is the rent we pay for living on this earth." So, I really don't know any other way. I just do it. I prayed about not doing it. Like Lord, if you just want me to have a clutch, you know, a job at like the U.S. Steel tower, let me know, direct my path, but he keeps directing back here.

Maria works in public service for the local government. She models her commitment to public service and civic engagement after Shirley Chisholm, a Black congresswoman who became the first Black major-party candidate to run for President of the United States and the first woman ever to run for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination in the 1972 U.S. presidential election. Maria included the ideas of Christianity despite this not being a central part of her identity, as she mentions activities that are motivated by her sense of a moral obligation that is broader than a religious responsibility and more tied to dedication to family and the broader Black community.

Amanda explicitly named her engagement as a moral obligation:

> I think back to that moral obligation that we feel to really just be in our communities and help and support, especially when we have, you know, achieved…. it's not really a moral imperative for [white people], it's more like a hobby.

As a Black person with privileges, Amanda sees it as her moral responsibility to help others and challenge inequality. Although respondents consistently situated their experiences as Black people and Black Pittsburghers in the context of their relationship with white people, Amanda was one of the few who explicitly compared her civic engagement experiences with those of white people. Others were engaged as part of a longer familial tradition.

5.3.2 Familial Motivations

My respondents' familial motivations for civic engagement ranged from close relationships with their parents or children to a broader story of dedication to their general Black family. These familial obligations appeared in discussions related to voting, volunteering, and group membership. Natalie mentioned joining a Black Greek-lettered sorority because of the tradition among the women in her family to join that organization. Other respondents discussed how their

first entry into civic engagement was when their parents took them to vote or to their first volunteering activities. They talked equally about their mothers' and fathers' impact on them. They continued these traditions based on support from their families. Aaliyah mentioned her mother explicitly motivating her and her siblings to get involved: "Everyone, including my mom, was always just like, you have to realize how many people fought and died for you to just be able to stand in line and cast the vote." While Aaliyah credits her family through her mother as encouraging her to get civically involved, in this case, through voting, there is an underlying belief system connected to racial equality.

Another respondent, Renee, stated, "So my dad's sister is someone that was super political. Her fight for all things Black people definitely rubbed off on me." Renee's aunt was the president of the NAACP in her hometown. Not only was her aunt very political, but she was also dedicated to engaging in activities dedicated to the broader Black community, which served as a seed for Renee's interests in civil rights and broader ideals of racial equality.

5.3.3 Racial Equality

In both moral and familial motivations is an underlying dedication to the Black community. The Black movement community's goal is racial equality, and many of my respondents mentioned that the reason they get involved is a desire to challenge racial inequalities. Rising from the collective consciousness of Black segregated communities, the rise of Black nongovernmental, voluntary association activities ranges from social clubs to social support. Even the organizations that lean more social have had an underlying goal of uplifting Black people through fundraising galas and outreach (Frazier 1954). These traditions that began at the turn of the twentieth century

continued through the twentieth and twenty first century, becoming embedded in Black community practices that I observed in my fieldwork and interviews.

As outlined in figure 35, moral and familial obligations related ultimately to dedication to racial equality, which anchored their moral beliefs and family background. For example, Elizabeth felt that it was her responsibility to make sure her son had an equitable education. She talked about the importance of being a Black mother for her son's school. “My son goes to a mainly white school, so [when I volunteer it’s] just like a lot of trying to implement things and the teacher is just being not interested in trying to change things." She explained that she was motivated to volunteer out of dedication to her family and her obligation as a Black mother; both of these ultimately led to her feeling that it was her obligation to pay attention to racial equality within the school.

For other respondents, the link to support racial equality was more explicit. Through their activities and organizations, the interviewees support racial equality to allow them and their families to have a better life. As Melissa stated, one of the reasons she joined ULYPPgh was because "everything about me is social justice.” She went on to say, "I was born into the movement; it's in my blood to empower my community and change lives. I've had the opportunity to be the voice of my community in many environments. As long as I can remember, I've always asked, 'How can I help?’” London echoed the sentiments of Melissa: "I've always had an interest in Black achievement and prosperity in the world." These two comments indicate that the respondents dedicate themselves explicitly to Black Americans' success.

When discussing joining Black organizations locally, Charles said, "I work to diversify the city a little bit more. I think those are things that interest people the most and I'm always looking for people to help me out with that.” For Charles, part of his commitment to the Black community and racial equality related to his job:

> I work at a Fortune 500 Company. I worked in a Data Analytics role, but now I'm the Diversity Specialists. So, it is actually good for a person with a data background to move into the D&I space to say, “These are the pitfalls and downfalls of like not having diversity, this is why we need it” You know some people in some cases are like “Oh, we got one, we're doing amazing,” it's like, “Well, that's one out of forty five, fifty hundred whatever the number may be." So, it's using the data piece to tell the story around what's going on. And knowing what's going on but like what do we need to work on where we have successes, how do we improve upon those successes, so it's all about using the data to tell the story.

In my work to understand the motivations of my respondents, I found that many were astounded by the amount of work they had conducted, while some discounted their engagement or mentioned feeling like they were not doing enough. At the end of her interview, Stephanie stated:

> Thank you for this because it is relaxing, getting this stuff out, even if it's just me talking about me or my life, or rehashing things that have gone on because I have been so laser-focused into things that are happening professionally that I don't take steps back to kind of look at where I've gone.

The respondents’ commitment to racial equality and Pittsburgh included tensions that Arya mentioned in the opening vignette. While most of my respondents grew up Black Middle Class and were Black Middle Class themselves, they often reached out to the Black working class and poor communities. Nevertheless, such outreach sometimes faces criticisms that mirrors those heard in the twentieth century. The Black Middle Class transplants mentioned wanting to help but not wanting to "take over" the work that Black working class people in Pittsburgh had worked towards for decades. Tina pushed back against such criticism of Black Middle Class engagement in

improving lives of the Black poor, stating that "Poor people can't help poor people.” In contrast, Brenda, who had been upwardly mobile and was a native, mentioned that while the help is needed, the recipients of help need to be a bigger part of the story. She is dedicated to racial equality but has been disappointed that the civic engagement activities of her peers did not acknowledge Black working class communities:

> If your service is in the projects and nobody in here is from the projects to me, there's a gap there, you know, so just, I think that's my chief complaint is better outreach. For more people who represent the service or the groups that you're attempting to service.

Black Middle Class individuals dedicate themselves to racial equality but often overlook their privileges as part of this system. When I asked Tina why many of her causes and passions involved racial equality, she said, "’Cause I'm Black.” This response does not acknowledge her class position but instead pulls from a linked fate ideology in which her racial identity is the most pervasive factor in her life rather than gender or class position. She went on to say:

> I personally have benefited from [service] and see how my life has been changing and rich because of it. So, I want that for other people. So, like, if you look on my Facebook, I'm always posting stuff about HBCU bands, even when it's not mine. Those are experiences, that exposure to people, places, and all kinds of things that you don't get if your whole life is spent in Northview. And unfortunately, especially for Pittsburgh, our kids, they just don't get that exposure. They just don't see how it connects to their bigger future.

Tina’s narrative, throughout her interview, followed figure 35. Regardless of the topic or the reasons for her volunteering, her motivation always lead back to a broader goal of supporting

racial equality. She saw her role as supporting and pushing for change through her experiences as a Black professional. This commitment to racial equality mirrors the social movement goal of racial equality in Black Movement Communities.

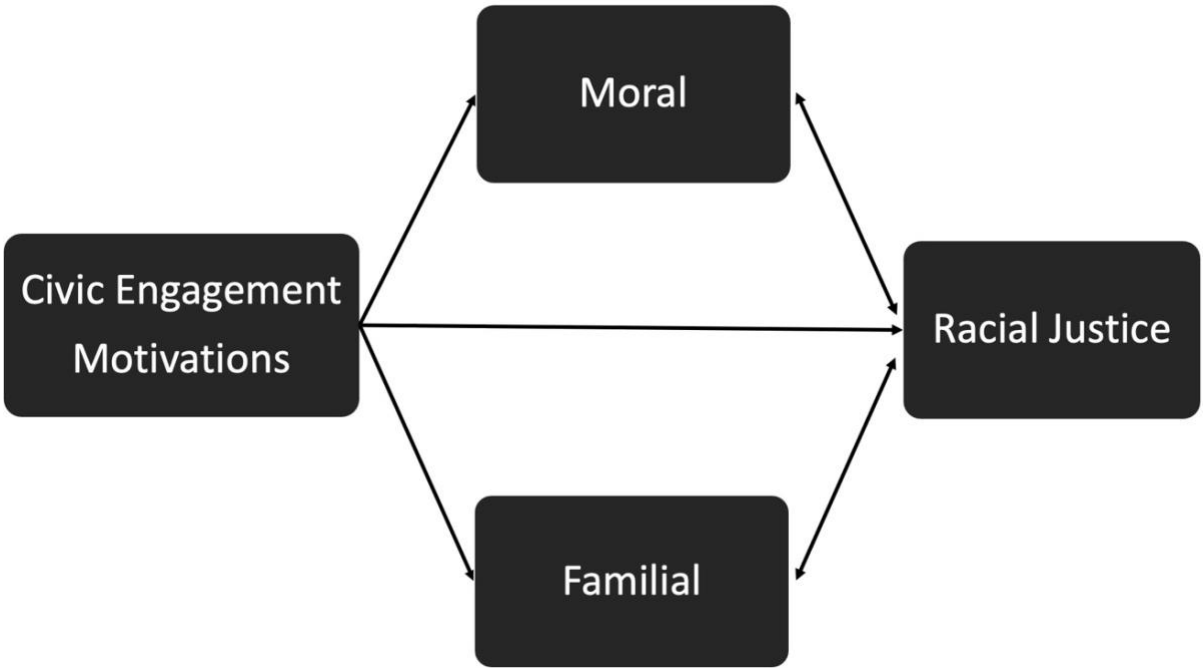

Figure 35 Relationship Between Civic Engagement Motivations

5.4 Civic Engagement and Black Movement Communities

Social movement scholarship on Black communities and issues often focuses on mobilization work that leads to heightened protests; however, in the case of Black movement communities, I argue that individual civic engagement work contributes to the movement goal of racial equality. In previous chapters, I discuss the role of the NUL, but here I have been able to explicitly present examples of individuals contributing to the social movement community with their everyday, seemingly innocuous work. Their voting, volunteering, and group membership

challenge a system of inequality supporting work that has occurred for over a century. By analyzing the respondents' explanations of their obligations, I observe how Black Middle Class individuals see their role in civic engagement as explicitly contributing to a goal of racial equality. The respondents were between 25 and 50 years old, with the majority of them between 25 and 32. Many of them were civically engaged long before the increase of social movement mobilizations in 2014 and the impact of the election of Donald Trump. In studying Ferguson uprisings of 2014, Andrea Boyles (2019) argues that the social ties created long before the mobilizations were essential in supporting the mobilizations. While many of the interviewees acknowledged the importance of protests, with several mentioning attending protests themselves, they were as interested in ensuring that their presence and activities supported less contentious forms of engagement. This finding shows that Black Middle Class members continue to fight for racial equality in moments of perceived abeyance and, in turn, can serve as a foundation for heightened protest.

Throughout this chapter, I have explicitly discussed the civic engagement of individuals that I interviewed and observed during my fieldwork. I add to a body of literature that suggests declines in civic engagement are overstated (Gaby 2017). I find that ~~underlying~~ the activities and motivations described above are significant contributions to the Black movement community beyond more contentious forms of involvement, such as protests. The individuals within the Black movement community are as important as an organization like the NUL. As discussed above, my respondents have been dedicated to civic engagement throughout their lives, to political engagement as they became adults, and to organizational involvement as they became professionals. Individuals run organizations such as the NUL, and in addition to their work within the organization and volunteering outside of them, the activities of my Black Middle Class

respondents uphold the organizations that serve as fixtures within the Black movement community.

6.0 Conclusion

This dissertation explores the role that the Black Middle Class and a Black Middle Class organization play during a time of heightened threat and opportunity for antiracist organizing in the United States from 2015 to 2020. I conducted an ethnographic study of the National Urban League (NUL), one of the nation's oldest Black organizations of its kind, and included 45 interviews from members of the Black Middle Class to show the continued contributions of these groups to the movement goal of racial equality. Race scholarship continues to expand our understandings of the Black experience; this dissertation contributes to that wide scholarship by centering the social class experiences of Black people in social movements. Social movements scholarship continues to expand our understandings of mobilizations throughout history; this dissertation contributes to that rich scholarship by centering the everyday experiences of the Black Middle Class in contributing to social movements. In summary, I push forward theoretical and empirical contributions using the concept *Black movement communities*, outlining Black Middle Class organizations as middlemen, and emphasizing Black Middle Class individuals' civic engagement. At the end of 2020 and into 2021, there are three news moments that stood out to me while writing as indicative of the importance of this dissertation project. The first concerns the Black upper class and social movements, the second concerns the continued role of civil rights organizations, and the third concerns the impact of Black Americans on American democracy. I discuss the contributions and limitations of this dissertation, while suggesting areas for future research through the articles discussed below.

6.1 "America's Black Upper Class and Black Lives Matter"

The article entitled "America's Black upper class and Black Lives Matter" from August 2020 of *The Economist* overlaps with my research on the Black Middle Class and social movements. This article explicitly asks, "How do high-society African-Americans respond to upheavals from the covid-19 pandemic, killings by police, and BLM protests of recent months?" (The Economist 2020). Considering the findings from this dissertation, I was not surprised by the response of Danielle Brown, president of Jack and Jill of America—a historically Black elite organization—about the relationship between the Black middle and upper classes with Black Lives Matter:

> For Mrs. Brown BLM is 'representative of the civil-rights movement, with a new name.' She praises protesters for their 'vigilance' and for stirring public—including white—concern over matters that were previously ignored. But BLM, in her view, is just one of a 'wonderful plethora' of groups, clubs, sororities, voter-registration outfits and charities: 'We need different people doing different things' (The Economist 2020).

Discussed in chapter 3 on the Black movement community, Brown's response of recalling the civil rights movement reminds us that many Black people within Black movement communities are aware of the longstanding struggle of Black people in America; they are ready to recall the past, both the inequality and the fights against it, in order to understand their role to fight for a more just future. The discussion in the article acknowledges "concerns over matters that were previously ignored;" meaning that the protestors highlighted the continued racial inequality that Mrs. Brown and others of the Black Middle Classes were aware of. Her response echoes my interviewees and people I encountered throughout my fieldwork who felt that they needed to fight

racial inequality and had fought for equality in spaces that are not always seen. Furthermore, she highlights the importance of people using a variety of methods to fight for equality. Brown's response that there is a "wonderful plethora of groups" and that "we need different people doing different things" is a reminder that the Black movement community comes together in a variety of ways to contribute to the movement goal of racial equality, not in competition but in support of one another. It reminds us that there is a false dichotomy between Black Middle Class individuals and groups and more radical individuals and groups (see chapter 3). In actuality, the Black Middle Class intentionally and knowingly fulfill their roles in the long movement for equality for Black people. Future research needs to further discuss the relationship that these "plethora of groups" have with one another.

Later in the same article, wealthy Black Chicagoans Lerry and Farissa Knox, echo what I found in chapter 5, members of the Black Middle Class often are interested in getting involved through civic engagement. In the article it says that the couple

> prefer to invest their personal funds and time in local groups that educate Black residents on the benefits of completing census forms, sitting for jury duty and, especially, registering to vote. Structural changes, they say, will come from institutions, including the companies they lead, or from judicial reform and getting new people elected to office (The Economist 2020).

In essence, the article highlights that, while not a large portion of American society, the Black elite—what I call the Black Middle Class—do get involved.

My dissertation highlights the positive nature of the work that members of the Black Middle Class and their organizations engage in, but it does not discuss the extent to which members of the Black Middle Class find themselves isolated and replicating "bougie" sentiments. While I

attempt to highlight the positive contributions of the Black Middle Class and the necessity for these groups to exist for people to come together (see chapter 5), I do so without acknowledging that at times, the group is elitist. Invitation-only clubs that are predicated on family backgrounds, education, and wealth reproduce class inequalities in which the Black working class and poor do not have access to these opportunities. Similar to white philanthropic groups, their debutante balls and galas can appear tone deaf and a product of social reproduction despite their charity work (Kendall 2002; Sherman 2017; Guzman 2021). Recent scholarship on Madame CJ Walker has attempted to rectify the lines between elitism and social good among Black people (Freeman 2020); however, future scholarship should continue to take on this tension that the Black Middle Class experience as they align themselves with both Black aristocracy and protestors. This will in turn continue to expand the diversity in scholarship on elites writ large (Cousin et al. 2018). These small distinctions dealing with race, class, and contributions matter. Social change does not occur solely in the big moments, but instead across everyday activities and through incremental change, something that civil rights organizations often highlight.

6.2 "Seven civil rights groups want a meeting with Joe Biden"

The second media moment I noticed followed the November 2020 election of President Joseph R. Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. President Joseph R. Biden previously attended the NUL Conference in 2019 as a Democratic presidential nominee. Vice President Kamala Harris is a multiracial woman, the daughter of immigrants from Jamaica and India. Based on my definition in this dissertation, she is a member of the Black Middle Class. She obtained her bachelor's degree at Howard University, one of the premier historically Black universities in the

United States; has a law degree; and is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and the Links—both elite historically Black women's organizations. She was also a regular attendee of the National Urban League events during my fieldwork. The image in figure 36 is from the time Senator Harris was part of the community, seen having her picture taken with another member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and a member of the NULYP at the NUL's Legislative Policy Conference in 2018 as part of the Congressional Black Caucus. In the second image, she is slated as a speaker at the NUL's Conference in 2019 as a Democratic presidential nominee (see figures 36 and 37). President Biden is part of the network of people brought together by the NUL's middleman identity discussed in chapter 4. Vice President Harris is part of the broad community I discussed throughout this dissertation. Immediately following the election, members of civil rights organizations were concerned about whether the Biden-Harris administration would concretely support Black people by hiring them in positions of leadership despite Harris's background and Biden's past relationship with civil rights organizations. On December 1, 2020, there were a series of articles published in which members of longstanding civil rights organizations made it clear that they expected to be part of the conversation.

The Washington Post published an article with the headline, "Seven civil rights groups want a meeting with Joe Biden. The agenda: Appointing Black officials in top roles, not lower-ranking ones" (Linskey and Viser 2020). The article includes quotes from leaders of Black civil rights organizations, including President and CEO of the National Urban League, Marc Morial; NAACP President Derrick Johnson; and National Action Network founder, Reverend Al Sharpton. The article states "The NAACP's Johnson said it's a 'problem' that he and other civil rights leaders have not yet heard from Biden about setting a time for a meeting." In the same article, Morial states, "It's very important that this meeting with the historic civil rights leaders takes place."

Morial goes on to say, “We want to have the conversation and we want to establish the relationship — and a relationship is one where there will be times we will be supportive, and there may be times we have to object” (Linskey and Viser 2020).

NBC reported an article on the same day entitled, “Legacy civil rights groups feel left out of Biden transition” (Pettypiece and Bennett 2020). In this article, Marc Morial, President and CEO of the National Urban League, and Derrick Johnson, President of the NAACP, are quoted voicing concern that they had not yet had direct conversations with the Biden-Harris administration. Johnson is quoted saying, “Civil rights Leaders in the country should be on par if not more than other constituency groups he has met with” (Pettypiece and Bennett 2020). Morial is quoted saying “We aren’t asking for some kind of veto, we are asking for some kind of consultation” (Pettypiece and Bennett 2020). The subtext of these articles is that Black civil rights movement organizations continue to see themselves as serving an important role between Black citizens and people in power. The article goes so far as to say, “While once the titans of the civil rights movement, groups like the NAACP and Urban League are now two pieces in a larger network of groups representing Black voices” (Pettypiece and Bennett 2020).

Similar to the article discussed above on the Black Middle Class and Black Lives Matter, this dissertation speaks to these frustrations, specifically with the discussion of Black movement communities and Black Middle Class organizations as middlemen. In chapter 3, I give voice to the broader network of groups that represent Black voices and demonstrate the fact that the NUL is one of many contributing to the conversation, showing further that the organizations are all fighting for the goal of racial equality on a variety of interactions.

In chapter 4, I discuss how the NUL sits at the intersections of the Black Middle Class, Black working class, and white political and economic elites. While I note the way that it serves

as a voice for the Black community, media publicity such as the articles cited above highlights the potential entitlement that the NUL and other Black organizations have after serving as the voice of the Black community for years. Ultimately, the NUL and other organizations were able to meet with the Biden-Harris administration and give voice to the Black community, but future research needs to highlight what happens when these relationships break down. Furthermore, research should continue to expand our understandings of the National Urban League.

Figure 36 Image of Adrianne Slash, President of The Exchange, Indianapolis Urban League Young Professionals (Left) and Senator Kamala Harris (Right) at the National Urban League Legislative Policy

Conference 2018

Photo Credit: Adrianne Slash

Figure 37 Announcement of Presidential Candidate Kamala Harris as a Speaker at the 2019 National Urban League Conference

Photo Credit: www.facebook.com/naturbanleague

6.2.1 The National Urban League

During one of my presentations about this dissertation, I was asked about where I stand on the NUL. In this question is the concern of whether my project intends to only highlight the NUL in a positive light or whether I explored whether the NUL's work truly makes social change. Unfortunately, exact data on "changing lives" was difficult to attain. As social movements scholars are aware, assessing movement or organizational outcomes depends on a variety of factors. As I analyzed my data, I realized that I was less interested in exploring the morality of the NUL and more interested in sharing the information that I received. I often find myself sharing a myriad of facts about the NUL when I encounter individuals who have never heard of it, who thought it was no longer relevant, or who harbored negative feelings about the organization. As a 110-year-old multi-million dollar organization, I was not interested in fighting the NUL's battle for its reputation; I was interested in providing scholars and individuals with more accurate information concerning the organization and its members. In addition to providing this information, I analyzed my findings through relevant literatures from social movements and race scholarship. In doing this, I pull the NUL from the background of previous sociological literature.

In chapters 1 and 2, I provide a historical record of information about NUL. In chapter 3, I expand on its role in Black movement communities, shining light on its direct services, advocacy, and volunteering. In chapter 4, I highlight NUL's constituencies of white political and economic elites, the Black working class, and the Black Middle Class. By highlighting the events, activities, and locations that NUL uses to attract its constituencies, I provide future scholars with additional angles and tools to study the organization. I also provide an outline of how the Black Middle Class explicitly fits into the NUL. This project contributes to scholarship by 1) focusing on the

understudied NUL affiliate ULPgh, 2) observing the NUL in a contemporary way, and 3) incorporating the young professionals auxiliary.

In considering point two, observing the NUL in a contemporary way, I aim to fight stereotypes that members of the Black community are not fighting for themselves. As exemplified through the NUL, organizations continue to fight systems of inequality, and it is imperative that the government catch up. To further highlight point three, incorporating the young professionals auxiliary, scholars have observed #BlackLivesMatter as an influential movement in which Millennials and Generation Z are actively involved in a social movement; however, the 20-year history of the NULYP shows that Generation X and Millennials are really continuing a long fight for civil rights. As I further develop this project into a book and other forms of scholarship, I want to continue to highlight the engagement of "young people" in the NUL.

In addition to the contributions I make to the literature, my research begins to explore organizational dynamics that will assist the NUL. This project serves as an opportunity for the NUL and NULYP to look at how they could work more efficiently to use the support of young professionals. Young professionals give their free time and money to support the movement; however, the NUL and their affiliates may want to conduct studies to ensure that they are not exploiting or exhausting young professionals. As I have shared in conversations with members of the NULYP Leadership, Training, and Development committee, the NULYP has a number of chapters that are barely able to continue functioning, with membership of 20 people or less. Several of these groups do not have guidance on how to create a thriving chapter. In response to my recommendation, the Leadership, Training, and Development committee has thus far hosted additional sessions to assist smaller young professional chapters; however, more work internally with the organization needs to highlight the utility of the free labor provided.

6.3 "Black Americans saving democracy"

The last media moment that parallels the contributions of this dissertation is from November 2020 to January 2021. In two articles from the Brookings Institute entitled "How Black Americans saved Biden and American democracy" (Ray 2020) and "Last night in Georgia, Black Americans saved democracy" (Perry et al 2021), writers outline the ways that Black Americans voted in the November 2020 election and the January 2021 special election in Georgia. In both cases, Black Americans disproportionately voted for Democratic candidates, suggesting that they are a key reason that President Biden was elected. The extensive voting is reminiscent of my interviewee responses in chapter 5, who all voted in every election without question and discussed a long familial history of people coming together to make sure that they vote. Voting is a cornerstone of civic engagement and a cornerstone of Black American civic engagement. However, it is not without its own struggle. Ray (2020) outlines the history of voting in Georgia:

> Growing up in the Atlanta-metro area, I know the legacy and current realities of voter suppression, police brutality, racial segregation, and white supremacy. I share a collective memory with other Blacks of electoral tactics that kept the Black vote down and prevented Stacey Abrams from becoming governor just two years ago…. This is why the political mobilization of Stacey Abrams, civic organizations, and Black Lives Matter activists is so remarkable, both for the 2020 election and American democracy (Ray 2020).

In outlining the history of voter suppression, police brutality, racial segregation, and white supremacy, Ray also highlights the way that Black people come together to mobilize through organizations and as individual activist to fight these channels of racial inequality that people in the Black movement community fight against. This is why the discussion of not only the

movement community discussed in chapter 3 is important, but also the individuals who come together to support these efforts outlined in chapter 5. The article following the January runoff election in Georgia echoes the sentiments about the importance of organizing:

> In the 2020 presidential campaign, Black women's organizing led to tremendous voter turnout—repudiating the advancement of racist, anti-democratic practices under President Donald J. Trump as well as those that preceded him. Now, with Democrats sweeping the U.S. Senate runoff elections in Georgia, the power and potency of the Black electorate has resulted in a flipped chamber and vastly expanded potential for progressive policy goals. Turnout in Black precincts in the Georgia runoffs was approximately 93% of November's general election, compared with an 87% turnout in white, noncollege precincts, according to the New York Times writer Nate Cohn (Perry et al 2021).

Through this article, we see that there are concrete numbers and political movement associated with the impact of conducting everyday forms of social change. This and other articles highlight the work that Black people do every day to help uphold democracy, to get the vote out, and to ensure free and fair elections. This dissertation helps to develop a conversation about how these contributions do not appear as isolated incidents in one year but are part of a longer trajectory of organizing.

6.4 Conclusion: Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality, Nationality, and Generations

My research expanded from questions about the role of the Black Middle Class in the face of the deaths of Black people to broader conversations on Black Middle Class engagement and the

legacy of a civil rights organization, as exemplified through the above recent media moments. While these articles could be viewed as disjointed or unrelated, this dissertation brings them together to start answering the questions that are posed by journalists and Americans in a moment where democracy is under attack.[41]

This dissertation uses ethnographic data on the National Urban League to explain the relationship between the Black Middle Class and social change. In each chapter, I brought together multidisciplinary research on race, class, civic engagement, and social movements to deconstruct complicated concepts of race, class, and social movements. In bringing these concepts together, I expanded scholarship to encapsulate a broadened understanding about the relationships between the National Urban League, Black movement communities, and the Black Middle Class. I fill empirical gaps that currently erase the Black Middle Class and ignore their impact in the social world. Furthermore, this dissertation supports public understanding of what civic engagement and social change looks like even when it is not considered revolutionary. This involves supporting protests, volunteering, getting political engaged, and in general building a community. While this dissertation addresses both empirical and theoretical gaps within the sociological literature, it is not without its own areas that can be expanded upon. I briefly discuss further impact and potential expansion in the areas of race, class, gender, sexuality, and generations.

As a sociologist, I was aware of the levels of inequality that exist in a variety of social identities. While the majority of this project focused on the Black Middle Class, I am aware of the groups who are excluded when having these conversations. First, centering the Black Middle Class

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[41] Here, I am referencing the January 6, 2021, Insurrection on the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C.

led to the exclusion of understanding the impact that these groups had on the Black working class. Several of the people in my fieldwork and attendees of the volunteer events I attended were members of the Black working class, often recipients of the NUL's resources; however, I did not have the time or funds to conduct a research project that equally and accurately highlighted their voices in tandem with that of the NUL. Future research on the Black Middle Class needs to continue to understand and center the experiences of the Black Middle Cass as outlined in work by Benjamin (2005), Lacy (2007), and Pittman Claytor (2020). It also needs to understand the interaction of the Black Middle Class with the Black working class, as often discussed in the work of Mary Pattillo (1999; 2008). As scholars continue to expand on the work of the Black Middle Class, there are a myriad of other dynamics that cannot be ignored.

Undoubtedly, gender, sexuality, nationality, and generation effects are also social locations that impact experiences of individuals; however, I was unable to analyze all the ways that these identities affected my respondents. I did note in my fieldnotes that there were more women members of the NUL than men and that, nationally, men tended to be the formal leaders, but I found that Black women did not talk about gender in relation to the NUL. For many Black women, it appeared that their racial identity took precedence over their gender. Similar to Robnett's (1996) findings on the Civil Rights Movement, there were expectations of the role of men in leadership positions. While her scholarship argues that the gendered dynamics are a reflection of the time, I see similar patterns that suggest there are continued expectations that mirror Higginbotham's (1994) politics of respectability, including gendered expectations. As this dissertation sets an outline to start discussing Black Middle Class individuals' experiences supporting movements, future research is in a space to further study gendered dynamics. For example, there are awards for top NULYP presidents divided by top male president and top female president. Considering the

role that women play in the NULYP on the ground and as leaders, future research does need to engage with the impact of the women in these cases. In addition to expanding on gender, future research would equally benefit from discussion of sexuality. It was not until June 2021 (see figure 38) that the NULYP had a national event that engaged with conversations about LGBTQ rights and Pride month. While the organization is evolving, it is starkly cisgendered and heteronormative. My participants in fieldwork and interviews spent concertedly more energy on discussions of race, perhaps due to greater radicalization of white and Black spaces during the Trump Years. Future research on the NUL should push women, gender minorities, and sexual minorities in these groups to consider how gender is part and parcel of Black Middle Class identity.

Lastly, I want to mention nationality, because the NUL is starkly an organization that is connected to the Black American experience and conducts work in the United States; however, there are numerous members who are immigrants. Among my respondents, I had seven who were first generation immigrants and who talked about how even though they occasionally felt out place, they knew it was more important to focus on the general Black experience because of the movement goal of racial justice. Additionally, Williams-Pulfer (2018) previously discussed similar organizational dynamics in the Caribbean, suggesting that there are important comparisons that may suggest a global Black movement community.

In conclusion, this dissertation is in part named for the National Urban League podcast called “For the Movement,” in which the hosts and guests talk about issues dealing with Black America, some of which I have highlighted throughout this dissertation. Writing this dissertation during a pandemic and during a period of upheaval in America has been particularly difficult. I have felt that my attention is drawn in many different directions as someone who is interested in being aware of my scholar activism in tandem with telling an accurate story of my respondents

during this time. As scholars engage with this dissertation and my future work, I am interested in further uplifting the voices of individuals working to encourage our societal structures to understand that inequality will not be eradicated if we do not fight it. Part of the difficulty of this project was bringing voice to areas that are often disjointed in sociological literature. Regardless of where the next project takes me, my work between 2015 and 2020 on this project has become part of the NUL story, making it and me an Urban Leaguer. I look forward to continuing to expand on this organization in critical ways, as outlined above. As members of the NUL network say: "Once an urban leaguer, always an urban leaguer."

Figure 38 NULYP Event "PRIDE Celebration: A Virtual Roundtable with LGBTQ Activists" Event Flyer/Graphic on June 29, 2021 at 8pm

Photo Credit: www.facebook/com/nulyp

Appendix A Ethnographic Data

Appendix Table 1 The NUL and NULYP Hosted Events

Year	Month	Event	Organizer
2016	11	Whitney M Young	NUL
2016	8	The NUL Conference-Baltimore	NUL
2016	5	LPC	NUL
2017	5	LPC Events	NUL
2017	7	The NUL Conference-STL	NUL
2017	11	Whitney M Young	NUL
2018	5	LPC	NUL
2018	7	The NUL Conference - Columbus	NUL
2018	11	Whitney M Young	NUL
2019	5	LPC	NUL
2019	7	The NUL Conference-Indianapolis	NUL
2020	6	LPC - Virtual	NUL
2019	4	Eastern Regional Conference	NULYP
2020	6	Eastern Regional Conference - Virtual	NULYP

Appendix Table 2 ULPgh Hosted Events

Year	Month	Event	Organizer
2015	11	Thanksgiving Distribution	ULPgh
2015	12	Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala	ULPgh
2016	2	Urban League Sunday - Wesley Center AME Zion Church	ULPgh
2016	4	Comcast Cares Day	ULPgh
2016	6	State of Black Pittsburgh	ULPgh
2016	11	Thanksgiving Distribution	ULPgh
2016	12	Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala	ULPgh
2017	2	Urban League Sunday - Destiny of Faith Church	ULPgh
2017	4	Comcast Cares Day	ULPgh
2017	6	State of Black Pittsburgh	ULPgh
2017	11	Thanksgiving Distribution--Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh	ULPgh
2017	12	Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala	ULPgh
2018	2	Urban League Sunday - Central Baptist Church	ULPgh
2018	4	Comcast Cares Day	ULPgh
2018	6	State of Black Pittsburgh	ULPgh
2018	11	Thanksgiving Distribution w/ ULGP	ULPgh
2018	12	Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala	ULPgh
2019	2	Urban League Sunday - Ebenezer Baptist Church	ULPgh
2019	2	Centennial Celebration	ULPgh
2019	4	Comcast Cares Day	ULPgh
2019	6	State of Black Pittsburgh	ULPgh
2019	11	Thanksgiving Distribution w/ ULGP	ULPgh
2019	12	Ronald H. Brown Leadership Awards Gala	ULPgh
2020	2	Urban League Sunday-Mt Ararat Baptist Church	ULPgh
2020	6	State of Black Pittsburgh (Virtual)	ULPgh

Appendix Table 3 ULYPPgh Hosted Events

Year	Month	Event	Organizer
2015	8	ULYP Rep your Set Cookout	ULYPPgh
2015	9	#BlackivesMatter	ULYPPgh
2015	9	Life in the C- Suite	ULYPPgh
2015	9	Blessing Board	ULYPPgh
2015	10	Law Enforcement Panel	ULYPPgh
2015	10	Hazelwood Reads	ULYPPgh
2015	10	General Body Meeting	ULYPPgh
2015	11	Thanksgiving Day Distribution	ULYPPgh
2015	11	Wine Down Wednesday	ULYPPgh
2015	11	Membership Appreciation Dinner	ULYPPgh
2015	11	Membership Informational Webinar	ULYPPgh
2015	12	Save a Life: Learn Hands-Only CPR	ULYPPgh
2015	12	Christmas Dinner: The End of the Year Holiday Mixer	ULYPPgh
2015	12	YPs Get Fit	ULYPPgh
2016	1	January YP Monthly Meeting: Esther Bush	ULYPPgh
2016	2	Battle of the Sexes	ULYPPgh
2016	3	YP Monthly Meeting: Love & Intimacy	ULYPPgh
2016	3	Wrap it Up Pittsburgh	ULYPPgh
2016	3	Movie Night : Batman v Superman Dawn of Justice	ULYPPgh
2016	3	Post Movie Drinks	ULYPPgh
2016	4	New Membership Orientation	ULYPPgh
2016	4	Vantage Point	ULYPPgh
2016	4	National Day of Service: Full Steam Ahead	ULYPPgh
2016	4	Let's Make a Deal: How to Win the Game of Home Buying Real Estate	ULYPPgh
2016	5	Speak to Lead	ULYPPgh
2016	6	Exploring Black Arts and Culture in Pittsburgh	ULYPPgh
2016	7	Wine Down Wednesday	ULYPPgh
2016	7	Dealing With Emotional Trauma Call	ULYPPgh
2016	7	Meet the Board Happy Hour (July General Body Meeting)	ULYPPgh
2016	8	August YP Monthly Meeting - Meet the League	ULYPPgh
2016	8	Annual Back to School Cookout	ULYPPgh
2016	9	ULYP Monthly Meeting: Young Professionals in Politics	ULYPPgh
2016	9	What's Your Stance: A Policy Education Panel	ULYPPgh
2016	10	Young Professionals in Non-Profits	ULYPPgh
2016	10	Millennial Wealth Building	ULYPPgh
2016	11	Empowering Our Voices	ULYPPgh
2016	11	Thanksgiving Distribution-Nazarene Baptist	ULYPPgh
2016	11	National Day of Empowerment Pittsburgh Cash Mob	ULYPPgh
2016	12	ULYP's Holiday Survival Guide	ULYPPgh
2016	12	End of the Year Dinner	ULYPPgh
2016	12	Homewood Holiday Networking	ULYPPgh
2017	1	Creating Your Destiny: Mini Vision Board Party	ULYPPgh
2017	1	New Year New Me	ULYPPgh
2017	2	Rebuilding Black Wall street	ULYPPgh
2017	2	Join Week 2017 Happy Hour	ULYPPgh
2017	2	Notes of Wisdom-Lunch with an Urban Historian	ULYPPgh
2017	2	Membership Orientation: Join Week 2016 Edition	ULYPPgh
2017	4	General Body Meeting	ULYPPgh
2017	5	Mayoral Debate	ULYPPgh
2017	5	Produce to People - Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank	ULYPPgh
2017	6	Membership Orientation: June 2017	ULYPPgh

2017	6	Women in Action - A Discussion on The Role of the Strong Black Woman	ULYPPgh
2017	7	Meet the Board Happy Hour	ULYPPgh
2017	7	Homewood Urban Garden Project	ULYPPgh
2017	8	African American Heritage Day Parade	ULYPPgh
2017	8	Summer Mixer	ULYPPgh
2017	9	Sept General Body Meeting - Connecting to Movement	ULYPPgh
2017	9	With Fagan Harris	ULYPPgh
2017	9	Membership Orientation: September 2017	ULYPPgh
2017	9	Power Hour: Voter Registration Drive	ULYPPgh
2017	9	Impacting Students through Supplies	ULYPPgh
2017	10	Hella Black & Bougie	ULYPPgh
2017	10	Healthy Happy Hour	ULYPPgh
2017	10	Halloween Give-Back	ULYPPgh
2017	11	Thanksgiving Distribution-Nazarene Baptist	ULYPPgh
2017	12	ULYP Holiday Mixer & Membership Appreciation Dinner	ULYPPgh
2017	12	Taking Action for Winter Safety	ULYPPgh
2017	12	Coats for Care	ULYPPgh
2017	12	What the Health: Myths, Truths and Community Issues	ULYPPgh
2018	1	All EyeZ on Me	ULYPPgh
2018	1	Advocacy 101	ULYPPgh
2018	1	Membership 101: Brunch Edition	ULYPPgh
2018	1	Networking 101	ULYPPgh
2018	4	Fake News General Body Meeting	ULYPPgh
2018	7	We Love Brunch	ULYPPgh
2018	8	YP UP to Bat	ULYPPgh
2018	10	Today I got Time	ULYPPgh
2018	10	Pumpkinfest	ULYPPgh
2018	9	Greater Pittsburgh Foodbank	ULYPPgh
2018	8	African American parade	ULYPPgh
2018	8	Civic Engagement Event	ULYPPgh
2018	11	NDOE	ULYPPgh
2018	11	Me Like Being Black in the Workplace	ULYPPgh
2018	11	Thanksgiving Distribution-Nazarene Baptist	ULYPPgh
2019	3	Black Dollars Matter	ULYPPgh
2019	1	Red Table Talk	ULYPPgh
2019	2	Chapter Anniversary	ULYPPgh
2019	3	Free Story Wilkinsburg	ULYPPgh
2019	2	Black Bottom Film Festival	ULYPPgh
2019	12	Living With Stigma of Aids	ULYPPgh
2015	11	National Day of Empowerment	ULYPPgh
2017	11	NDOE	ULYPPgh
2019	1	Speed Mentoring	ULYPPgh
2019	1	Membership Orientation join week	ULYPPgh
2019	1	Hygiene Kits	ULYPPgh
2019	1	Trap Spin	ULYPPgh
2019	2	Cash Mob	ULYPPgh
2019	3	Elections	ULYPPgh
2019	4	National day of service: Full Steam Ahead	ULYPPgh
2019	5	Get Plugged Into the Movement	ULYPPgh

Appendix Table 4 ULYPPgh Partnerships and Member Organizations

Name
Academy of Pharmacy Practice and Management Education
ACPA-College Student Educators International
Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Allegheny County Men's Health Initiative
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
Amachi Pittsburgh
American Heart Association
American Pharmacist Association
Americans for the Arts
Arnold's Tea
BFLDI
Black Bottom Film Festival
Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers of Pittsburgh Co-Op
BlackteaBrownSugaNetwork
Blessing Board
BMLDI
Boom Concepts
Bowl of Life
Carnegie Library (East Liberty)
Carnegie Library (Homestead)
Carnegie Mellon University
City of Pittsburgh
Color Me Urban
Coro Pittsburgh
Covestro
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc
Drafting Dreams
Emerge PA
Everyday Café
Food Bank
Harambe Ujima
HerMovement
Innovation Works
KDKA
Kelly Strayhorn Theater
KnowingLuxe
MangosCoconuts
Naptural Beauty Supply
National Association of Black Accountants (NABA)
National Black MBA Association (NBMBAA)
National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE)
New Leaders Council
One Pittsburgh
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.
Pinchback Consulting
Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force/Allies for Health+Wellbeing
Pittsburgh Black Media Federation
Pittsburgh Pirates
Pittsburgh United
PUMP

Rivers Casino
Roux Orleans
Savoy
Smithfield United Church
Sweet Little Eats
The Education Partnership
Thermo Scientific
Threadbare
Thrift Out Loud
University of Pittsburgh
Urban League Charter School
VEEEM Pittsburgh
Vernard Alexander Inc
West Penn Children's Hospital
Women and Girls Foundation
Women Entrepreneurs of Pittsburgh
WTAE Project Bundle Up
YogaMotif
Young Alumni Council University of Pittsburgh
Young Black Professionals in Pittsburgh
Young Democrats of Allegheny County
Young Nonprofit Professionals Network
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc

Appendix Table 5 Interviewee Demographics

Name	Gender	Age	Transplant/Native	Highest Level of Education
Aaliyah	Woman	32	Native	Master's
Amanda	Woman	31	Native	Master's
Amara	Woman	33	Native	Master's
Ana	Woman	28	Transplant	Master's
Aretha	Woman	28	Transplant	JD
Arya	Woman	33	Transplant	Master's
Benjamin	Man	35	Transplant (>10)	Master's
Brenda	Woman	32	Native	JD
Bryce	Man	33	Native	Master's
C.C.	Man	31	Native	Master's
Charles	Man	36	Transplant	Bachelor's
Chloe	Woman	31	Transplant	Master's
Devon	Woman	36	Native	Bachelor's
Dylan	Woman	28	Transplant	Bachelor's
Elijah	Man	35	Transplant (>10)	Bachelor's
Elizabeth	Woman	33	Native	Bachelor's
Elle	Woman	36	Transplant (>10)	Bachelor's
Eric	Man	32	Transplant (>10)	Master's
Jack	Man	28	Transplant (>10)	Doctorate
Jaime	Woman	33	Transplant (>10)	Bachelor's
Jaleila	Woman	48	Native	JD
Jonah	Man	36	Transplant (>10)	Master's
Joshua	Man	32	Native	Master's
Kay	Woman	28	Native	High School
Kylie	Woman	28	Transplant	Master's
Kyra	Woman	32	Transplant (>10)	Bachelor's
Leonard	Man	34	Native	Doctorate
London	Woman	30	Transplant	Master's
Maria	Woman	26	Transplant	Bachelor's
Maya	Woman	33	Native	Bachelor's
Melissa	Woman	35	Transplant (>10)	Bachelor's
Naomi	Woman	33	Native	Bachelor's
Natalie	Woman	33	Native	Bachelor's
Renee	Woman	33	Transplant (>10)	Bachelor's
Riley	Woman	36	Transplant	Bachelor's
Robert	Man	33	Native	Master's
Ryan	Woman	25	Transplant	Bachelor's
Sarah	Woman	28	Native	Associate's
Shannon	Woman	32	Transplant (>10)	Master'
Stephanie	Woman	36	Native	Bachelor's
Tanner	Man	29	Native	High School
Tina	Woman	36	Native	Master's
Veronica	Woman	30	Native	Bachelor's
Victor	Man		Native	Master's
Xavier	Man	28	Native	Associate's

Appendix B Interview Guide

1) Age
2) Race/Ethnicity?
3) Religion?
4) Current Marital Status?
5) Do you have children?
6) Do you rent or own?
7) What do you do for work?
8) What is your highest level of education?
9) What are your parents' highest level of education?
10) Do you belong to a political party?
11) Did you vote in the 2016 presidential election?
12) Did you vote in the 2018 midterm elections?
13) Where are you from and what activities did you do growing up?
14) What is your first memory of volunteering?
15) Were your parents members of any voluntary organizations you can remember?
16) Politically, how would you consider your household growing up?
17) Did you attend a university?
    i) How did you select your undergraduate institution?
    ii) What organizations were you involved while at your undergraduate institution?
    iii) How did you get involved?
18) Where did you live after college?
    i) What brought you to Pittsburgh?
19) Tell me about your first Urban League Young Professionals experience?
    i) Was it an event or interactions with a person?
    ii) If event
        (i) Why did you attend this event?
        (ii) What do you remember from that event?
        (iii) What did you like about the event?
        (iv) How did you hear about the event?
        (v) Had you heard about ULYP prior?
        (vi) What were your expectations for that event?
20) What do you see as the goals of the organization?
21) Do any specific goals affect why you became a member? If so, which ones and why?
22) What would you say your role in Urban League is (was)?
    i) What kinds of things would you do with the group?
    ii) What committees were you u a member of?
    iii) How has ULYP changed since your first event?
23) What are some other events that are memorable for you?
24) What is your time commitment, in terms of time you spent with the group and time you may have spent independently working for the group?
25) How much time a week would you spend on ULYP?
26) Who are memorable people that you met through ULYP?
27) What would you say the strengths of ULYP is and what are the weakness if any?
28) How would you describe the average member of ULYP?
29) What other organizations (or voluntary activities) are you a member of?
30) Is there anything else you would like to add at this time?
31) What do you think it means to be a member of the Black Middle Class?
32) Did you identify with that? (Have you always identified with that?

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