

LATINX

CO-OP

POWER*

in the U.S.

Report by Esther West of the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives and Dr. Jessica Gordon-Nembhard of the City University of New York.

Funded by the Cooperative Education Fund.

About this Study

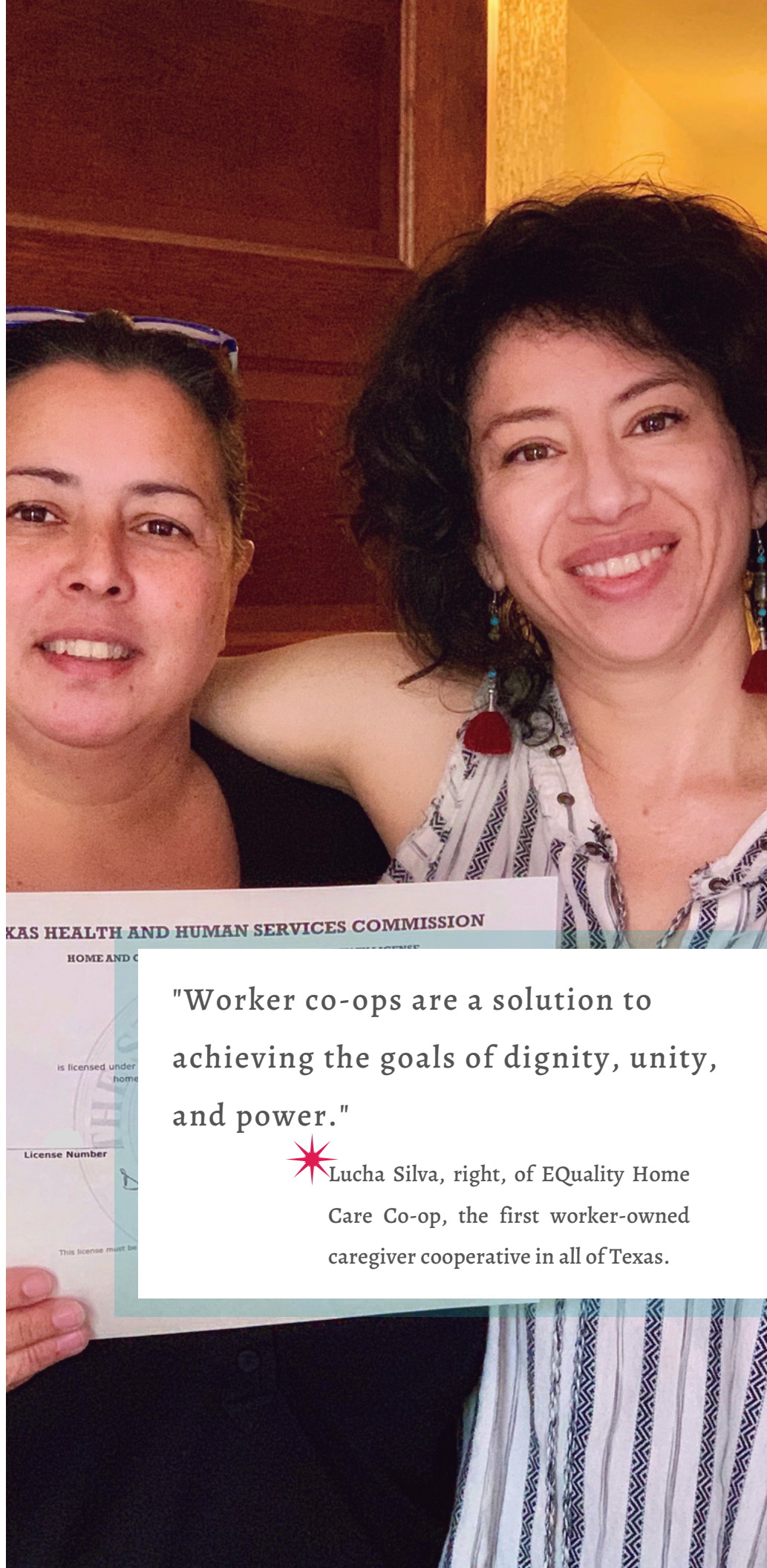
This research is the result of a collaboration between the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives (UWCC) and Dr. Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, professor at City University of New York and author of *Collective Courage*.

The Cooperative Education Fund, a project of the Cooperative Development Foundation, funded this research.


A version of this report in Spanish can be found at:
uwcc.wisc.edu/research/latinx-cooperative-research.

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"Worker co-ops are a solution to achieving the goals of dignity, unity, and power."

 Lucha Silva, right, of EQuality Home Care Co-op, the first worker-owned caregiver cooperative in all of Texas.

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Executive Summary

Latinx people have long been an influential and integral part of the U.S. cooperative movement. Several Latinx-led organizations, such as Prospera in Oakland and Green Worker Cooperatives in the Bronx, have strongly influenced activity and models of cooperatives in their own localities and nationally. Furthermore, individual cooperative members who identify as Latinx bring their own unique contributions to the cooperative movement.

The objective of this research is to recognize and better understand Latinx cooperatives in the United States today, as well as to begin contextualizing them within the broader Latinx socio-economic context in the United States. While far from being the only research involving Latinx businesses and cooperatives in the U.S., it is the first compilation of Latinx cooperatives of all co-op types and sectors in the U.S. Through a survey, research, and informal interviews, we have compiled an aggregate list of Latinx cooperatives and conducted basic analysis on this dataset.

The dataset of the 180 Latinx co-ops found through this research is small for statistical purposes. This is the first time this research is being conducted at this broad scope, so it is likely an undercount. While the dataset is statistically small and may be incomplete, it still provides insight into trends and characteristics of Latinx co-ops. For example, Latinx co-ops represent every membership type and a wide variety of sectors, but they have a particularly strong presence in the credit union and worker co-op categories. While most Latinx cooperatives are in urban or sub-urban areas, 13% are in rural areas. New York City has, by far, the largest concentration of Latinx co-ops. When looking at Latinx businesses in general, Latinas are the fastest-growing entrepreneurial demographic out of any demographic group, and Latinx businesses grapple with several of the same business issues as worker co-ops. There are many opportunities for continued growth and joint learning between non-co-op Latinx business communities and Latinx cooperative business and social justice communities.

Moving forward, we hope this research will enable Latinx cooperators to find and connect with one another, increase representation in the cooperative movement, and support and inform co-op development that supports Latinx cooperative members.

Thank you to all who participated in this research. We are excited to be one small part of a vibrant Latinx cooperative movement.

Thank you to the Cooperative Education Fund for funding this study.

"As we see an increase in cooperatives across different sectors, it is important we record the history of Latino/a/x cooperatives across the nation to build on their successes. This project serves as a great tool and resource for Latinos/as/xs both for current and future generations."

- Eduardo Eiffler, cooperative lawyer

Summary of Key Findings



Key findings of this preliminary research include the following:

1

Wide Array:

There is a wide array of Latinx co-ops in the U.S. They are not limited to one industry, membership type, or region of the U.S.

2

Patterns & Clusters:

Clusters of cooperative activity were identified in New York City and within the worker cooperative and credit union sectors.

3

Opportunities:

There are many potential opportunities for collaboration, joint learning, and mutual support between cooperative and non-cooperative U.S. Latinx communities.

Terminology: "Latinx"

The term "Latinx" in this survey includes anyone who self-identifies as Latinx. This includes all Latinx nationalities, cultures, citizenship statuses, etc., as well as both Latinas and Latinos. "Latinx" is used instead of "Latina" or "Latino" since it is a non-gendered term. The term "Hispanic" is not used in this study as "Latinx" refers more directly to people who were born and / or have heritage in Latin America or the Caribbean, rather than Spain. The survey was based on how individuals self-identify.

Background

Latinx Cooperatives

Latinx cooperators make significant and influential contributions to the broader cooperative movement and to their communities.

In this light, it is worth better understanding current Latinx cooperative activity. Throughout this report are several highlights of cooperatives with substantial Latinx membership. They, along with many other Latinx cooperatives, have impacted the broader cooperative movement and their own communities. Latinx people are using the cooperative model as a tool to create better quality jobs and lives, often demonstrating innovative social entrepreneurship practices.

The Center for Family Life, for example, started training in cooperative economics and incubating worker co-ops to support the primarily Latinx people in their community in obtaining decent jobs. (SCO Family of Services, 2019). Several Latinx-led cooperatives have developed unique Latinx-led franchise models that leverage both scale and new technologies. For example, Brightly Co-op franchises throughout New York City utilize online booking applications in a way that supports stable jobs, in contrast to the manner in which the common “gig economy” uses them for profit concentration. Several Latinx co-ops are creating their own supportive networks, as well, such as Prospera’s recently launched Latina Entrepreneur Resiliency Fund, or New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives (NYC NOWC)’s extensive peer-to-peer network. During the coronavirus pandemic, NYC NOWC immigrant groups began a NYC Co-op Emergency Fund, provided bilingual Spanish-English support in filling out lending documents, and connected members to broader mutual aid networks. As Pablo Benson-Silva, Director of Membership & Communications of NYC NOWC, stated in an international solidarity webinar hosted by the USFWC, “All these skills that are innate in our movement have been activated.” These practices influence the development of co-ops nationally, particularly in the worker cooperative realm.

The U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives (USFWC) is another notable example of Latinx cooperators making influential contributions to the broader cooperative movement. Its Latinx members are actively engaged, and Latinx people are in major leadership and cooperative development roles within the organization. The USFWC has also helped advance national legislation and policies related to employee ownership. These examples are just a few of many Latinx cooperators making a positive difference.



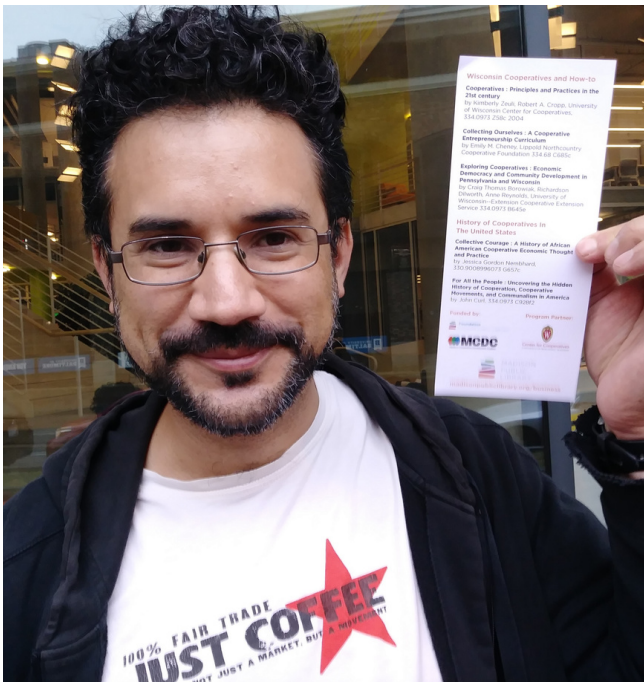
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Throughout this report, this symbol highlights a Latinx cooperative or cooperator.

Green Worker Co-ops

Green Worker Co-ops in the Bronx was one of the first worker co-op incubators in the New York City area. Their model has influenced cooperative development nationally. Over the past decade, their Co-op Academy has launched several successful worker-owned co-ops with substantial Latinx membership. Their own staff collective is comprised of an incredible array of mostly Latinx community activists.

Green Worker Co-ops' mission centers communities of color. It states: "Green Worker Cooperatives is based in the South Bronx and serves immigrants and communities of color. We build, grow, and sustain worker-owned green businesses to create a strong, local, and democratic economy rooted in racial and gender equity."



Martin Alvarado, Madison Public Library

Martin Alvarado is the Business and Technology Librarian at the Madison Public Library and a Latinx cooperator. He remarks: "Too often, books and resources about worker cooperatives are scattered throughout a library collection, if they are present at all. We often are not aware of the rich tradition of cooperation and mutual aid in our communities and see cooperatives as something other people do." Alvarado sees the library as a place for people to discover new ideas that lead to change, where cooperative resources are prominently featured alongside standard business offerings. He also facilitates the use of library space for cooperative-focused educational events in partnership with the Madison Cooperative Development Coalition (MCDC) and Madison Worker Cooperatives (MadWorC).

Broader Context

To better understand the information collected through this research, it is also useful to situate Latinx cooperative development within a broader Latinx context. Outside of the U.S., there have been expansive experiences and histories of cooperativism in Latinx countries, from Latinx people of many cultures and backgrounds. Cooperatives have been utilized as community and economic development tools for centuries in many countries. Examples include the Zapatistas of Mexico, worker take-overs of businesses in Argentina, and fair trade coffee cooperatives in Nicaragua.

In the U.S., Latinx people are a significant part of the overall population with extensive histories and many backgrounds. The diverse 59.9 million Latinx people in the United States constitute a growing 18.3% of the entire U.S. population (US Census Bureau, 2018) (Flores, Krogstad, & Lopez, 2019). However, Latinx people in the U.S. have faced and continue to face various issues around equity – from discriminatory hiring practices to significant wealth gaps. Latinas particularly face a massive wage gap – they are typically paid only 54 cents to every dollar paid to White, non-Hispanic men. This affects not only the individual, but also has repercussions for families and communities (Unidos US, 2018).

Within this U.S. context, Latinx people have actively found ways to take power over their lives. There are many organizations that focus on building stronger Latinx communities socially and economically. Examples today include Unidos US, the Stanford Latino Entrepreneurship Initiative, and the organization of Latino Chambers of Commerce across the county. Several farmworker justice organizations support Latinx farmworker rights, such as the long-standing United Farm Workers union. Some have begun incorporating the cooperative model as a tool for Latinx communities to strengthen, such as the organization Mijente.

Latinx entrepreneurship and business development are areas in which Latinx people are creating their own structures to find economic stability in the context of broader inequities. Latino-owned business growth outpaces the rate at which the Latinx population in the U.S. is growing (Dolan, 2018). The 1.3 million-plus U.S. Latino-owned businesses contribute over \$700 billion in sales annually to the U.S. economy, and one in four new businesses is Latino-owned (Stanford Graduate School of Business, 2019; Kramer et al., 2018). Latina entrepreneurs are the fastest-growing entrepreneurial demographic out of any demographic group. Between 2007-2012, the number of firms owned by Hispanic women grew an impressive 87%, compared to only 13% for White women and 27% for all women (The Nielsen Company, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).



Worker-owners of the Boston Cleaning Collective share the following about their cooperative:



"Everyone at Boston Cleaning cooperative is a member-owner. We continually challenge ourselves to learn new skills that support broad participation in running the business, and create job opportunity for others."



Methodology

Research methods for this project included a survey, research to compile aggregate data, and informal interviews that were used to gain further context of Latinx cooperatives and to gather datapoints for the aggregate dataset.

Survey

The survey was created in the Qualtrics survey program and made available in English and Spanish. Respondents could take the survey online, by phone, or using a paper copy. Major survey questions were asked in various formats. The survey included two optional open-ended questions at the end to gather input on the respondent's research interests and the survey instrument itself. Three questions attempted to understand if a co-op identifies as a "Latinx co-op" and what portion of the membership self-identifies as Latinx. The full survey text can be found in Appendix A.

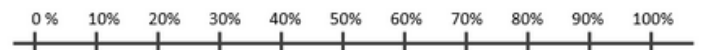
The survey was distributed via email to cooperatives and cooperative developers. At least five cooperative developers distributed the survey through their social media channels, listservs, and/or newsletters (the Center for Family Life, the New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives, ICA Group, the Cooperative Development Foundation, and Keystone Development Center). The survey was also made available on the UWCC's website and promoted via social medial channels and at conferences and workshops including at the 2019 Eastern Conference for Workplace Democracy in Baltimore.

Interviews of cooperative developers actively working with Latinx cooperative networks were conducted in a snowball manner (i.e., one interview led to another connection in a network).

The survey included the following three questions to help us identify a cooperative as Latinx:

1. Does your co-op self-identify as a Latinx Co-op?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. What amount Latinx is your co-op's membership?
 - o All Latinx
 - o More than half Latinx
 - o Less than half Latinx
 - o No Latinx
3. Circle the percentage of your cooperative membership that identifies as Latinx.

% Latinx:



Aggregate Data

The aggregate dataset of 180 Latinx cooperatives was compiled from the following sources:

- The survey conducted as part of this study (n = 28).
- Professional knowledge based on engagements with Latinx cooperatives and cooperative developers who work with them.
- Cooperative developers in various sectors.
- Publicly available information on credit unions, including branch locations of the Latino Community Credit Union and credit unions certified by Inclusiv.

The co-ops in the aggregate dataset that did not take the survey were deemed Latinx through a few methods. The co-op may have publicly self-identified as Latinx, cooperative developers familiar with co-ops they directly work with identified the co-op as such, or this information was shared through informal interviews with an individual co-op. The Latinx cooperative dataset includes franchises and credit union branches. Each franchise and branch location is counted as a separate cooperative firm and thus contributes to the total number of cooperatives identified in this study. Analysis of survey and aggregate data was conducted through Excel spreadsheets, Piktochart chart visualization, and Esri GIS analytical mapping programs.

Limitations

Limitations of this research include:

- The dataset is likely an undercount since this is the first survey of its type.
- The survey dataset (for co-ops with any Latinx membership, n = 28) and the aggregate dataset (n = 180) are too small to conduct some types of analysis.
- Outside of worker cooperatives, most cooperative sectors lack demographic data on their membership. Therefore, when available, indicators were used as stand-ins for identifying cooperatives that likely have a significant Latinx membership.
- We were not authorized to conduct analysis on the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives co-op dataset, which is the only regularly updated dataset of worker cooperatives that includes data on Latinx membership.
- Survey respondents were asked a series of questions related to what proportion of their membership was Latinx without a clear technique with which to assess their membership, beyond requesting that it be by self-identification.
- Although the survey and email communications regarding the survey were available in Spanish and English, the online landing page was not available in Spanish. This may have reduced the number of survey respondents.

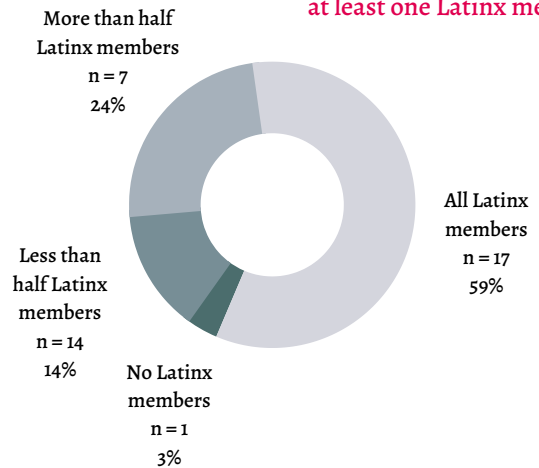
Data Observations

Analysis of the survey and the aggregate data is as follows.

Survey Data Observations

As the table below outlines, a total of 32 surveys were completed. Out of these 32 surveys, just over half were taken in Spanish, and the rest were taken in English. 29 surveys were taken through the online Qualtrics survey, and 3 were hand-written. Out of these 32 surveys, 3 were duplicates of the same co-op, meaning 29 individual co-ops took the survey. One survey respondent answered that its co-op had no Latinx members. This co-op's survey was removed from the sector, membership, geographic, and additional analysis, bringing the number of surveys assessed to 28. Co-ops with at least one Latinx member were left in the survey dataset for purposes of representation of those Latinx members. The survey dataset of 28 surveys is statistically small.

28 co-ops that took the survey have at least one Latinx member.



All Latinx members	+	More than half members	+	Less than half Latinx members	=	28 co-ops with at least one Latinx member who that took this survey
17 co-ops		7 co-ops		14 co-ops		

Survey Results

- 32 Total surveys taken (online + hand-written)
 - 32 { 18 Spanish
 - 14 English
- 3 Hand-written
- 32 { 29 Taken online (Qualtrics survey)
- 29 Total non-duplicate (of individual co-ops) surveys taken
 - 28 Co-ops with at least one Latinx members (this number includes co-ops that answered "All Latinx" and "Half or More Latinx"). These co-ops are included in the aggregate dataset, and are the only co-ops included in the membership, sector, geographic, and additional analysis.
 - 1 No Latinx members

The percentage of a co-op that identified as Latinx did not significantly affect its sector or membership type. Notably, 71% of co-ops with Latinx membership are worker co-ops, and every membership category offered in our survey is represented. The largest sector represented in the survey is cleaning services. Some of the cleaning co-ops that completed the survey are part of franchises that had more than one co-op respond. Manufacturing and construction are other prominent areas. Various other industries, such as health education and silk screening, are also represented. Two franchises have more than one co-op represented in the dataset. Respondents represented cooperatives from 11 states, 12 different sectors, and every membership type.

The survey results suggest that the number of Latinx cooperatives is growing, particularly worker cooperatives. Only two survey respondents incorporated prior to 2000 – both were established housing co-ops that began in the 1950s and 1970s. The remaining 26 survey respondents incorporated after 2005, with 19 of them incorporating between 2015 and 2019. Nearly all the survey respondents that incorporated in the last decade are worker cooperatives.

The survey included the following two open-ended, optional questions:

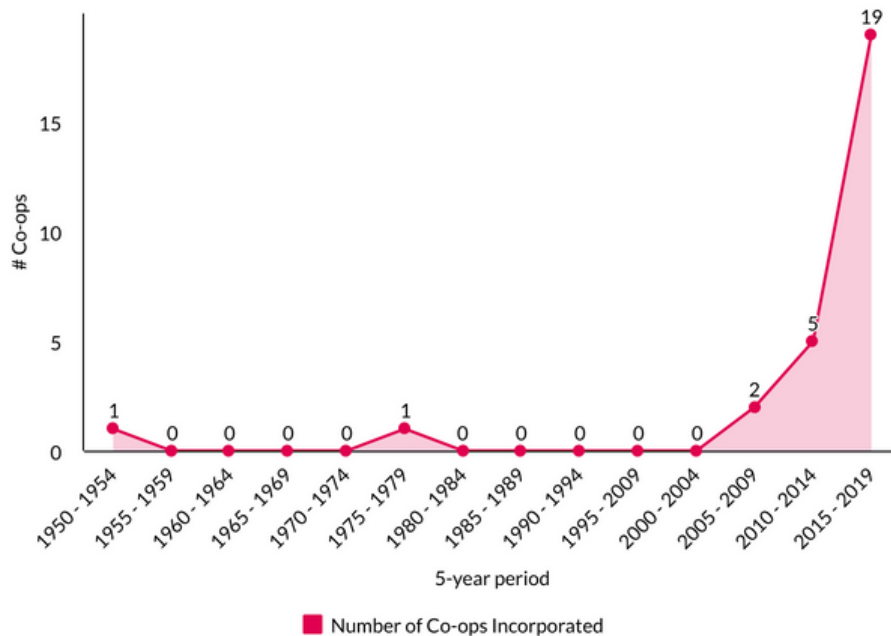
- Are there any topics related to Latinx co-ops that you're interested in learning more about? (14 answers)
- Do you have any feedback about this survey? (9 answers)

Below are the most common themes that emerged from the answers to these questions:

- A desire to find and support other Latinx co-ops.
- Further detail on the type of Latinx people represented in co-ops (i.e., regarding nationality; indigeneship; whether members are Afro-Latinx; generation of immigrant).
- Co-op and operational/sector-based trainings
- The broader history and context of Latinx co-ops, as well as case studies.

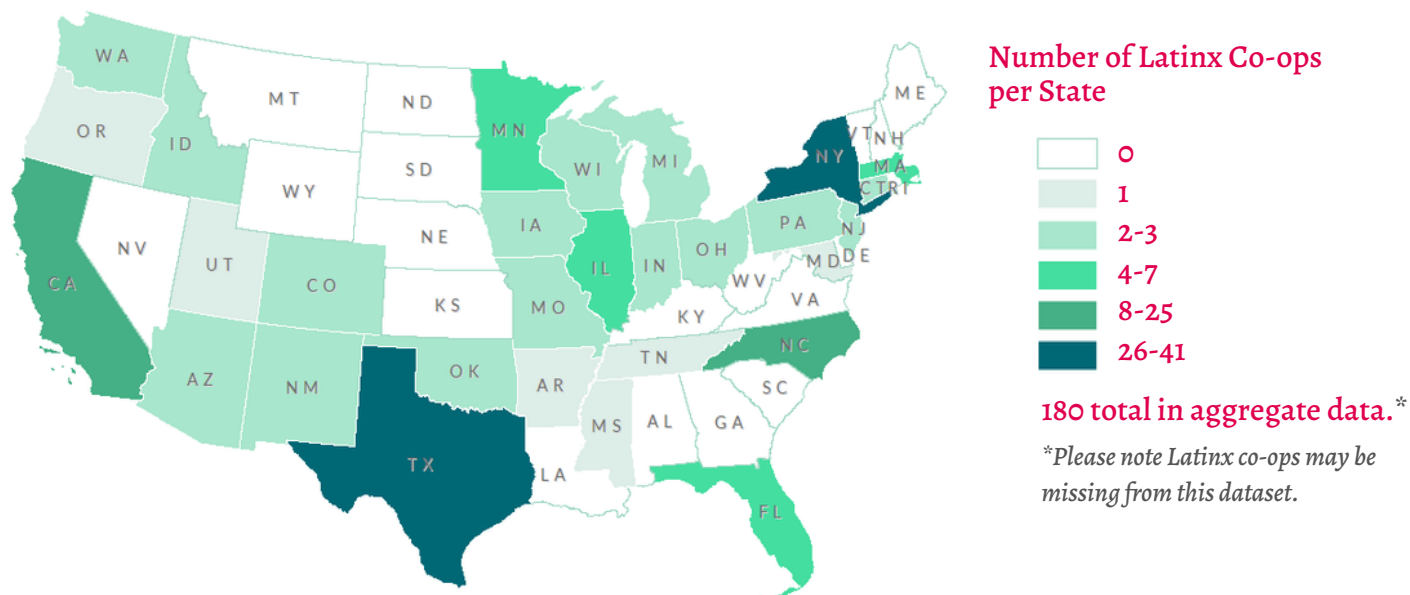
Full responses can be found in Appendix B.

Survey: Year of Incorporation



n = 28

Aggregate Data Observations



The aggregate dataset includes 180 Latinx cooperatives, including the 28 survey responses (de-duplicated) with any Latinx membership. When reviewing the aggregate data counts, it is crucial to keep in mind the limitations of this study. The number of co-ops in the aggregate dataset is likely a major undercount, particularly for those co-ops with any Latinx membership.

Regarding industry and membership types, at least 15 industries are seen in the aggregate dataset. Over 60% of the cooperatives in the aggregate dataset are credit unions. 100 of the credit unions in the aggregate dataset were included based on having a designation called “Juntos Avanzamos” via Inclusiv. This is a designation that demonstrates the credit union has received training and offers products tailored to Latinx communities. Home cleaning is the next most common sector with 5% or nine cooperatives. 65% of the cooperatives in the dataset are consumer owned (which include credit unions), and, following that, 30% are worker-owned.

Mapping the aggregate dataset (Appendix C) shows that Latinx co-ops are found throughout the United States with 31 states represented in the aggregate dataset (Puerto Rico is not included in this study.) We used Census data to review the “Population per Square Mile” of the co-op’s Zip Code. A substantial 87% of the cooperatives in the aggregate dataset are urban (with a population over 1,000 per square mile by zip code).

The New York City area has the largest number of Latinx cooperatives, with 79 in the NYC area (including the Bronx and Queens). However, that is likely an undercount. Most of the Latinx co-ops in our dataset are worker co-ops, which was also the second largest membership type in the aggregate dataset (30%).

31 states have at least one Latinx cooperative.

87% are in urban areas.

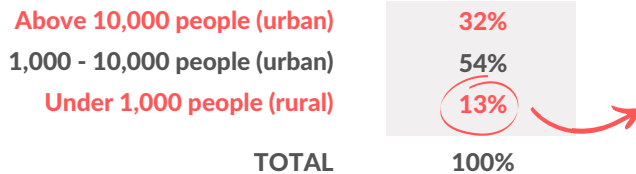
Membership	Survey: All Latinx		Survey: Half or More Latinx		Survey: Any Latinx		Aggregate	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
	Consumer	2	12%	2	8%	3	11%	117
Multi-stakeholder	2	12%	2	8%	2	7%	2	1%
Producer	1	6%	2	8%	2	7%	3	2%
Shared Services	1	6%	1	4%	1	4%	4	2%
Worker	11	65%	17	71%	20	71%	54	30%
TOTAL	17	100%	24	100%	28	100%	180	100%

Sector	Survey: All Latinx		Survey: Half or More Latinx		Survey: Any Latinx		Aggregate	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
	Agriculture	0	0%	1	4%	1	4%	4
Bookkeeping	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%	1	1%
Childcare	1	6%	2	8%	2	7%	2	1%
Cleaning	5	29%	6	25%	6	21%	9	5%
Credit Union	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	112	62%
Education	3	18%	3	13%	3	11%	3	2%
Food service or restaurant	3	18%	3	13%	3	11%	6	3%
Grocery: retail	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%
Healthcare	0	0%	1	4%	1	4%	1	1%
Homecare	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	2%
Housing	2	12%	2	8%	3	11%	4	2%
Interpretation	0	0%	1	4%	2	7%	2	1%
Landscaping	0	0%	1	4%	1	4%	1	1%
Manufacturing or construction	2	12%	2	8%	3	11%	3	2%
Silk screening & printing	1	6%	2	8%	2	7%	2	1%
Unknown	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	25	14%
TOTAL	17	100%	24	100%	28	100%	180	100%

Urban / Rural

% of Latinx Co-ops

Population per Square Mile by Zip Code

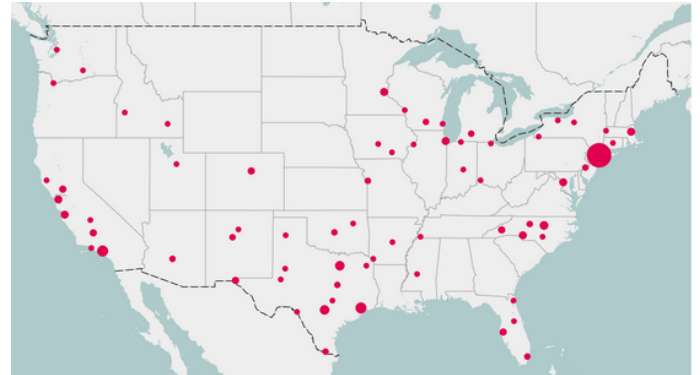


Key Findings



Wide Array: The Latinx cooperative community in the U.S. is diverse and not limited to one industry, membership type, or region.

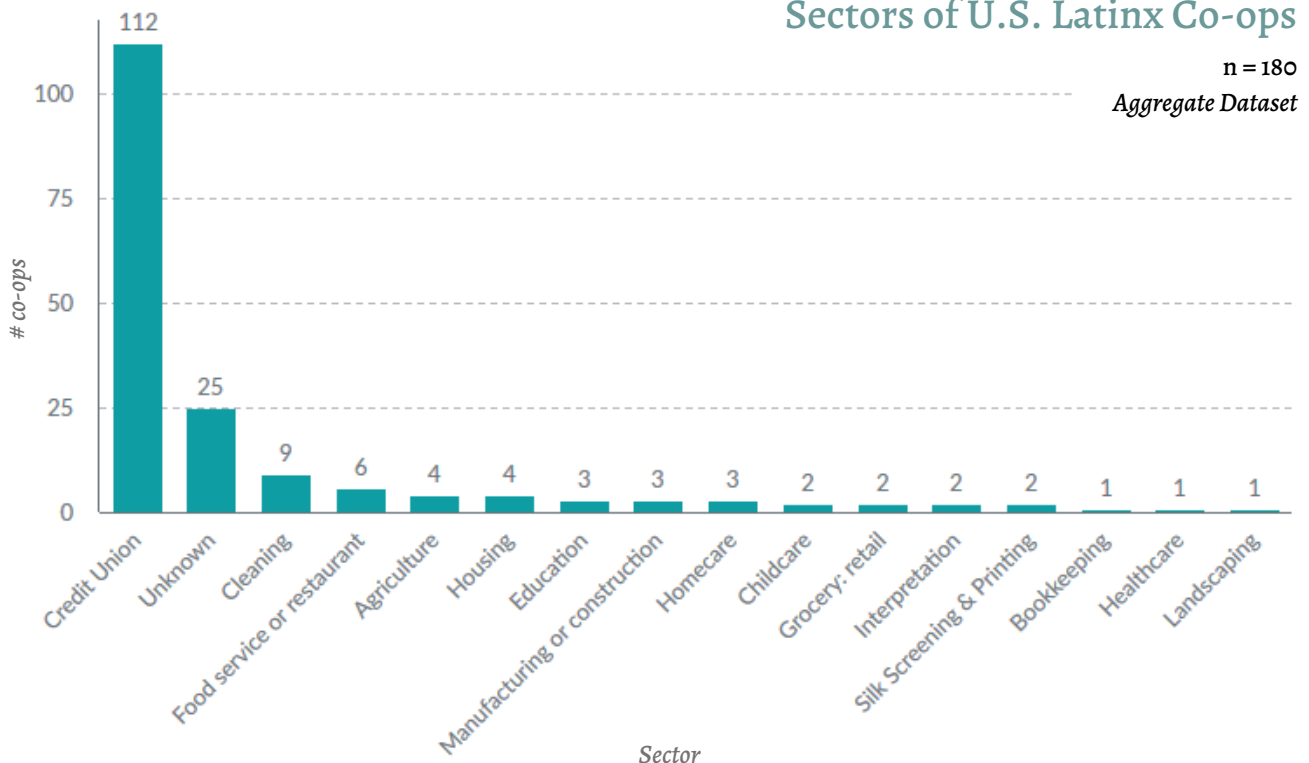
Our research sheds light on the broad array of cooperatives that have Latinx membership. In the aggregate data, Latinx cooperatives were identified in over 15 industries and in both urban and rural areas. It is promising to see that so many types of co-ops emerged from this relatively small and likely incomplete dataset. Further research may reveal other ways the co-op model is being used within Latinx communities.



A cluster map of the aggregate dataset of 180 Latinx co-ops in the U.S.

Appendix C has a full-page version of this map.

Note that the red dots represent the average location of one or more co-ops, not individual co-op locations.



Cooperative Home Care Associates

Cooperative Home Care Associates (CHCA), based in the Bronx, is not only the largest Latinx-majority co-op, it is the largest worker co-op out of all 450+ worker co-ops in the U.S. with 1,050 worker-owners to date. Pictured are just a few of the new worker-owners of 2019.



"One way we empower our workers is by allowing them to purchase a stock in the company, thus becoming a worker owner. Everyone is entitled to one share with the understanding that 1 share = 1 vote. Everyone is on the same level and cannot buy more than 1 share, no matter who they are.

Our stock costs \$1,000, and we know it can be a lot to ask for from our workers. So CHCA asks for a payment of \$50 upfront. It can be paid in multiple payments depending on what the worker can afford. (For example, 2 weekly payments of \$25 or 5 weekly payments of \$10.) Once the initial \$50 are paid, CHCA lends the worker the remaining \$950 (interest free) and the worker has deducted \$3.65 weekly for 5 years. In the event the worker leaves the company, CHCA will purchase the stock back from the worker. It really is a win-win."

- Juan Carlos Lopez, Executive Associate of Cooperative Home Care Associates



2 Patterns & Clusters: Emerging patterns and clusters are found in the data amongst credit unions, worker co-ops, and in the New York City area.

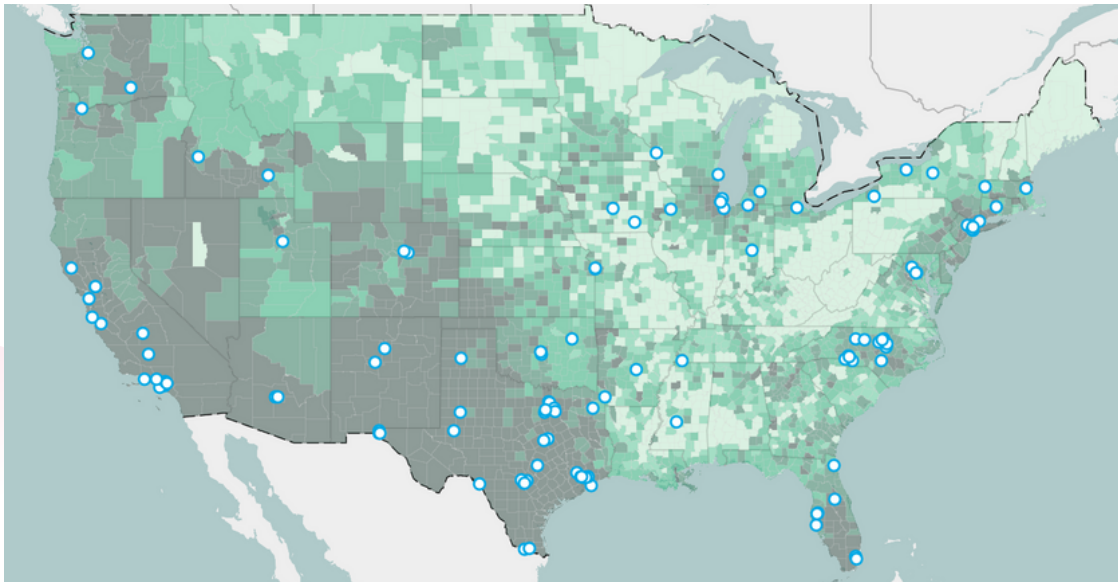
Patterns and clusters of Latinx co-ops emerge from this early research. These patterns and clusters include the credit union sector's strategic developments to meet Latinx community needs, worker co-ops being used as a tool for Latinx cooperative entrepreneurs, and regional clustering in areas such as New York City. More information about each is as follows.

2a. Credit Unions

Credit union organizations at the national scale are actively working to ensure Latinx communities have better access to financial services. Organizations conducting this work include Coopera Consulting, Inclusiv's "Juntos Avanzamos" designation, CUNA Mutual, and the Filene Research Institute. Using a mix of national organizational guidance and on-the-ground learning, credit unions are developing and testing new products centered around Latinx communities in an innovative manner. Examples include low-interest short-term loans and incorporating relational member engagement practices.

The following map overlays credit unions with the Inclusiv designation and the Latino Community Credit Union branches (all in North Carolina) over the Hispanic population. That they align quite well reflects the strategic, targeted outreach that Inclusiv and Coopera Consulting have been doing, as well as applications of research by the Filene Institute and the Latino Community Credit Union's development (Corro, Victor, Coopera Consulting, Interview, October 2019; Dionne, Paul, Filene Research Institute, Interview, October 2019; Hernandez, Edgar, Cuna Mutual Group, Interview, October 2019). See page 16 for more information about the efforts of these organizations.

Other cooperatives can learn from the credit union sector's strategic thinking about meeting Latinx communities where they are through gathering Latinx member feedback and direction, strategizing and coordinating efforts, and putting resources towards programs that bolster Latinx communities through cooperatives.



Credit unions (the dots in the map above) have thoughtfully planned and enacted Latinx-driven products & development at a national scale. The map below shows their conscious efforts towards meeting Latinx communities' financial needs, seeing as these credit unions align with the dark green portions of the county that represent higher percentages of Hispanic populations (population data from U.S. Census, 2019).



National Credit Union Highlights

Coopera Consulting

Coopera is an organization that consults with credit unions nationally in “reaching and serving the Hispanic market.” Founded in 2007, it has reached over 200 credit unions in over 30 U.S. states, reaching over 1 million Hispanic credit union consumers (Coopera Consulting, 2019).

They offer assessments for credit unions to use in improving their abilities to meet the needs of Latinx communities. These include assessments to design a strategic growth program for outreach to Hispanics, assessing existing membership to provide a baseline for future development, and developing recommendations based on a market analysis of a specific credit union's trade area. Several other resources are available online for members and credit unions.

Inclusiv's Juntos Avanzamos ("Together We Advance")

Founded in 1974, Inclusiv's mission is to "help low- and moderate-income people and communities achieve financial independence through credit unions." Their communications state: "At Inclusiv, we believe that true financial inclusion and empowerment is a fundamental right. We dedicate ourselves to closing the gaps and removing barriers to financial opportunities for people living in distressed and under-served communities. Inclusiv is a certified CDFI intermediary that transforms local progress into lasting national change. We provide capital, make connections, build capacity, develop innovative products and services and advocate for our member community development credit unions (CDCUs). Inclusiv members serve nearly 10 million residents of low-income urban, rural and reservation-based communities across the U.S. and hold over \$99 billion in community-controlled assets" (Inclusiv, 2019).

Inclusiv's Juntos Avanzamos-designated credit unions state that they are "here to help you learn how to navigate the U.S. financial system, and give you the tools you need to achieve your financial dreams and build a future for you and your family. Have you ever felt unwelcome in a traditional financial institution? You're always welcome at Juntos Avanzamos credit unions, which are committed to serving Spanish-speaking people regardless of immigration status" (Juntos Avanzamos, 2020).

Filene Research Institute

Filene is a national leader in credit union research and lending programs. In 2016 they founded a “Reaching Minority Households” Incubator project. This project begins addressing Hispanic household concerns that credit unions may be able to address through identifying, testing, and packaging credit union products and programs, such as small loans to individuals that aren't based on credit scores (Dasgupta et al., 2020; Filene Research Institute 2019). Another important program that has come from this incubator project is Individual Taxpayer Identification Number lending – an ITIN guide developed by the Filene, Coopera, Inclusiv, and PolicyWorks shares best practices that benefit member-lendees and lending institutions (Coopera Consulting, n.d.; Inclusiv, 2019; Filene Research Institute, 2019).

2b. Worker Cooperatives

Our research shows a strong use of worker co-ops by Latinx cooperators. According to our survey, approximately three-quarters of the Latinx cooperatives incorporated between 2014 and 2019 are worker owned. Worker cooperatives are also the second most common membership type found in our aggregate dataset. Several worker cooperative organizations, such as Green Worker Co-ops in the Bronx, the Latino Economic Development Center in Minnesota's Twin Cities, and the California Cooperative Development Center, also include leadership by Latinx people and incorporate practices and content by and for Latinx people.

The significant use of the worker co-op model by Latinx people is also seen in the 2019 Worker Cooperative State of the Sector Report, compiled by the USFWC and Democracy at Work Institute (DAWI). Of the 450-plus worker cooperatives in the U.S., approximately 38% of the membership is Latinx (2019 Worker Cooperative State of the Sector Report, 2019). This is over twice the percentage of the U.S. population that identifies as Hispanic.

The fuller context implies that Latinas are utilizing the worker co-op model as a tool for better workplaces and livelihoods. The 2019 Worker Cooperative State of the Sector Report shows that about two-thirds of worker co-op membership (of any race) are women. When coupled with co-op membership demographics, this indicates many worker-owners are likely Latinas (2019 Worker Cooperative State of the Sector Report, 2020). A recent example of Latina-specific activity in the worker co-op movement is Prospera's launch of a Latina Entrepreneur Resiliency Fund. This Latina worker-ownership parallels Latinas as the U.S.'s fastest growing entrepreneurial demographic. Worker co-ops are tools for Latinas to have ownership. Research by the Nielsen Company suggests that ownership is important to Latinas in that "...currently 7% of Hispanic women in the workforce are self-employed, while 77% agree that given the choice, they would be their own boss" (The Nielsen Company, 2017). Additionally, cooperatives often grow during periods of need. For U.S. Latinas starting their own businesses in general, "Latinas report more necessity-driven reasons for starting a business, such as greater work-life balance and flexible work arrangements, compared to men." (Graduate School of Stanford Business: Latino Entrepreneurship Initiative; Interrise, 2018). In this context, it is possible the worker co-op model offers advantages in these areas.

Latinx U.S. businesses, as well as worker co-ops with members of any demographic, both have faced hurdles in accessing capital (Stanford Graduate School of Business, 2019). Similar to many worker cooperatives, many U.S. Latinx businesses overall tend to be smaller scale and face challenges in scaling up. Latinx people may be using the worker co-op model as a collective tool to lower the capital barriers of starting a business and using franchise models as a way to grow (such as the Brightly Co-op franchise in New York City). Research on U.S. Latinx businesses in general, such as that by the Stanford Latino Entrepreneurship Initiative, may have relevant insights for Latinx cooperatives that face similar issues.

2c. New York City Area

Our aggregate dataset includes 79 Latinx cooperatives in the New York City area, making it the largest regional cluster in the country. The number of worker cooperatives in particular has grown substantially in the last five years, due in part to the strong city-wide co-op coalition and a major investment by the City of New York in the development of worker cooperatives. Many of the new worker cooperatives in New York City have Latinx members, and several have received support from Latinx cooperative developers. Besides city investment, long-term efforts by several worker co-op development programs and the presence of a strong Latinx population have also contributed to the robust, dynamic Latinx and non-Latinx cooperative ecosystems found in New York City. A mix of peer-to-peer and cooperative developer-driven resources abound in this ecosystem. Examples include New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives (nycworker.coop) and the New York City Government Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative (www1.nyc.gov/nycbusiness/article/worker-cooperatives).

Center for Family Life (CFL) Cooperative Development Program Mission Statement

Based in Brooklyn, New York, the CFL Cooperative Development Program (CDP) organizes community members to create worker-owned cooperative businesses with the mission of economic and social justice. Through CFL's holistic, neighborhood-rooted approach, CDP:

- Builds leadership and coaches cooperative members and community organizations,
- Cultivates relationships to strengthen the cooperative movement, and,
- Generates and shares best practices and models for cooperative growth.



Opportunities: There are many potential opportunities for collaboration, joint learning, and mutual support between cooperative and non-cooperative U.S. Latinx communities.

As outlined, U.S. Latinx businesses at large and U.S. Latinx cooperative businesses experience several similar trends. Because of these overlapping experiences, there very well may be opportunities to collaborate and learn together.

Innovative Latinx entrepreneurial activity – much of which is Latina-driven – can be another area for further collaboration and cross-inspiration. For example, several Latinx entrepreneurs utilize social media as a tool to support Latinx small businesses and as a way to connect culturally. Online Latinx marketplaces include Shop Latinx, Frida Friday ATX, We are Mitú, and several others. There may be opportunities for cooperation within these groups to grow themselves, such as through shared service models for common needs, or to build up a Latinx co-op supply chain.

Social justice-oriented networks may find the cooperative model a useful tool. There are many justice-oriented Latinx organizations and networks active today, such as Mijente and Unidos US. Some have already shared the cooperative model as another tool in their community toolkit. For example, in April 2020, Mijente hosted a "Latinx in Cooperatives" webinar as part of their "Outside the State" webinars, and supported the development of a small worker-owned canvassing co-op in Georgia in 2018 called Colectiva Colibri. Collaborating in solidarity with organizations that are not Latino-driven, but whose missions overlap can further amplify collective efforts towards a more equitable economy. Black Lives Matter could be a potential organization to collaborate with, particularly as many Latinx people in the U.S. are Afro-Latinx. And, the Sustainable Economies Law Center is an example of an organization engaged in a wide variety of justice work both with cooperatives and other solidarity work at a national scale (Sustainable Economies Law Center, 2019).



The Sustainable Economies Law Center is an Oakland, CA-based organization that “cultivates a new legal landscape that supports community resilience and grassroots economic empowerment.” A focus-area is cooperatives, and they have a diverse staff that includes Latinx cooperators. Here, they celebrate working with A Slice of New York worker cooperative and Project Equity to promote worker cooperatives to the Santa Clara City Council.

“Latina women are currently the largest demographic starting businesses.

Mix that with our "comadre" culture, our strong influence in social media, and our community and familial energy, and you see an excellent opportunity for cooperatives to empower Latinas to start cooperatives.

It is in our blood, in our conversations, in our drive! Cooperatives are a tool that Latinas can arguably use best.”

 Kateri Gutierrez, a founder of Collective Avenue Coffee cooperative and Co-op L.A. in Los Angeles, CA (pictured).



Roots4Change

Roots4Change, based in Madison, WI, uses the cooperative model as a way to amplify the efforts of individual enterprises. Their logos are depicted.

"Roots4Change is owned by SIX independent social enterprises led by Latina and indigenous doulas and community health workers and doulas, who walk with families in their journeys of parenting (caregiving), childbirth, motherhood, womanhood. Our ultimate goal is to develop a community leadership from within."

-Mariela Quesada Centeno, MPH
Maternal & Child Health Community-Based Fellow
Centro Hispano of Dane County



MEMBER LLCs



Moving Forward

Recommendations for next steps

The following are recommendations for further Latinx co-op research and opportunities for cooperative development and movement-building based on this research.

Recommendations for future research:

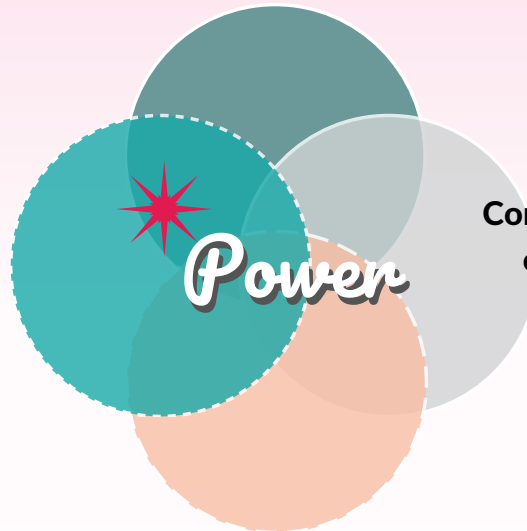
- For future surveys:
 - Continue developing the size and accuracy of the dataset through collaboration with cooperative and Latinx business networks, particularly those with existing datasets to support more accurate findings.
 - Add a question related to the backgrounds of Latinx respondents.
- Conduct case studies about the broader history and current context of Latinx cooperatives.
- Explore how Latinx cooperativism outside the U.S. may connect with U.S. co-op development.

Recommendations for cooperative development:

- As the number of Latinx cooperatives increases, so do opportunities for co-op to co-op connections, collaborations, and leveraging scale. Collaboration could take shape through peer-to-peer learning, supply chain development, and engagement with broader networks.
- Ensure Latinx co-ops are receiving desired resources. This may include funding, co-op education, sector-specific support, and business-focused trainings and support.
- Take advantage of opportunities with the non-co-op world.

Latinx entrepreneurship (non-co-op), including existing studies, innovative entrepreneurs.

Latinx co-ops already in action



Communities & Solidarity movements of Latinx and non-Latinx people (includes the existing co-op movement)

Existing patterns in Latinx co-op activity

Conclusion

Latinx people are an integral part of the U.S. cooperative movement. They own cooperatives throughout the United States, in many parts of the country and sectors of the economy. The clusters in credit unions, worker cooperatives, and New York City are examples of powerful Latinx leadership. There are opportunities to expand the cooperative model to existing Latinx entrepreneurs as a tool to support their businesses, and to learn from existing bodies of Latinx business research, as well as creative entrepreneurial and social justice activity already being done. There is power in Latinx people using the cooperative model to create stronger, more vibrant economies and communities.

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Appendix A:

Survey Instrument

Introduction

Thank you for being part of the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives (UWCC) national survey of Latinx cooperatives!

The UWCC will use the results of this survey to compile a national list and interactive map of Latinx co-ops in the U.S. Latinx co-ops can use the list and map to connect and cooperate with one another. The list and map will also be shared with Latinx organizations that can help spread the co-op model to new communities.

This survey is part of a larger initiative to better understand the collective role of Latinx cooperatives in the broader co-op community. The survey results will create a foundation for future research and connections.

This survey was made possible through a grant from the Cooperative Development Foundation Education Fund.

HOW TO TAKE THIS SURVEY:

- Please designate one person who is a member or employee of your co-op to take this survey.
- This survey refers to the membership of your co-op. We are not asking about your co-op's customer base, suppliers, partners, or others.
- Answer the questions based on how your co-op's members' self-identify. The term "Latinx" in this survey includes anyone who self-identifies as Latinx. This includes all Latinx nationalities, cultures, citizenship statuses, etc., as well as both Latinas and Latinos.

Please complete the survey by Friday, October 11.*

If you have any questions or prefer to take the survey by phone, contact Esther West at ejwest@wisc.edu or (608) 263-4775.

Thank you for participating in this project.

**Date was extended to December 2019.*

Your Information

1. Your name: _____

2. Your e-mail or telephone number: _____

3. Please indicate your relationship with this co-op. Check all that apply.

- Member
- Employee
- Other: _____

Your co-op's information

4. Name of Co-op: _____

5. Co-op Address

Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip Code: _____

6. Year co-op was incorporated: _____

7. Please select your co-op type:

- Consumer
- Producer (including farmer)
- Worker
- Shared services / purchasing: organizations buying goods or services together
- Multi-stakeholder: combining two or more of the above types of owners in one cooperative organization.

8. Please select your co-op sector:

- Agriculture: marketing, processing, farm supply
- Credit union
- Childcare
- Education
- Food service or restaurant
- Grocery: retail
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Manufacturing or construction
- Mutual insurance
- Transport
- Utilities: water, energy, telecommunications
- Other: _____

Latinx Questions

9. Does your co-op self-identify as a Latinx Co-op?

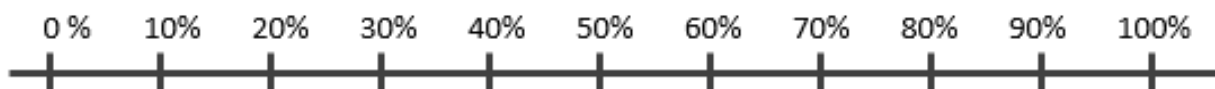
- Yes
- No

10. What amount Latinx is your co-op's membership?

- All Latinx
- More than Half Latinx
- Less than Half Latinx
- No Latinx

11. Circle the percentage of your cooperative membership that identifies as Latinx.

% Latinx:



Map & Listing

12. Would you like to be included in a public-facing list and interactive map of Latinx Co-ops?

--> If "yes," we will include your co-op in the public map and list so others can see your co-op.

--> If "no," your co-op will be included in confidential data, but it will not be identified in maps and lists available to the public.

- Yes
- No

13. What service or good does your co-op provide?

This will be used in marketing your co-op if you opt into the public-facing map.

(Open-ended question)

Optional Questions

15. Are there any topics related to Latinx co-ops that you're interested in learning more about?

(Open-ended question)

16. Do you have any feedback about this survey?

(Open-ended question)

Appendix B:

Survey Open-Ended Responses

Optional Question:

"Are there any topics related to Latinx co-ops that you're interested in learning more about?"

Responses:

Responses unedited, with the exception of translation and removal of identifying information as noted.

Translated responses are in italics.

1. *How to find support of other cooperatives.*
2. *What the other cooperatives said.*
3. *To know how these cooperatives have been formed and sustained. How have cooperatives Latinas (afrolainas, indigenous) been accommodated or incorporated in their corresponding ecosystems. What are their target customers?*
4. Popular education trainings to speak about the history of capitalism and cooperatives as part of the solidarity solution. *[IDENTIFYING INFORMATION REMOVED.]* We are currently working to create an incubator that can support many new cooperatives, as well as provide space for an industrial kitchen and other workshops.
5. Latinx as first gen second gen etc Industry in majority of latinx coops
6. *Services that can be useful to us.*
7. N/A
8. Real estate and construction.
9. *I would like to know how many Latina cooperatives there are in NY and which as the first Latina co-op legally registered in NY. WHAT WAS THE FIRST CO-OP HISPANIC LEGALLY REGISTERED IN NY.*
10. *Latinx, did you mean to say Latina cooperatives?*
11.
 - Budget
 - Shares
 - Ownership
 - Business plans
 - Bylaws
12. Todopat
13. Historic impact of coops on local, state, and national economies. Historical examples of coops around the world.
14. First and foremost, I'd like to know where they are located. Second, we would be interested in what are their needs and how can we support each other.
15. N/A
16. To have a better idea of the types of work of cooperatives that focus principally on Latinos.

Optional Question:

"Do you have any feedback about this survey?"

Responses:

Responses unedited, with the exception of translation and removal of identifying information as noted.

Translated responses are in italics.

1. Very good.

2. Couldn't put all the information on what we do.

3. *Latinx is a term with origins in the English language to denote systems of identification of non-binary gender.*

Although, the term Latinx is not used much by Latina communities that aren't millennials, immigrants predominantly Spanish, and evident in Latin America.

Also, the Latina community, is not homogenous in their ethnic membership neither culturally there are afroLatinos/as, indigenous of many origins, and many languages also of Spanish. So that although the term is politically correct in the United States, it is not ALL-inclusive.

I understand that for the motives of this report it is more convenient to encapsulate the term in one word, although - an idea that occurred to me (for future reports) is to use the nationality of the person / or nationality of their father and mother and predominant language. In this way, information can be compiled that more closely reflects the membership, that can reveal internal characteristics of a cooperative. A cooperative whose membership is made up of people of 2 or 3 generations of Latinos whose main language is English is not the same as a cooperative of immigrants whose main language is Spanish, their vision of the world and available resources, for each it will vary greatly.

4. N/A

5. *I don't have. // NO all is clear.*

6. *What will they do with the information and which services they provide?*

7. *I find it very interesting that this type of survey is done to unite cooperatives and in that way know and learn about other cooperatives*

8. *To know what the result is*

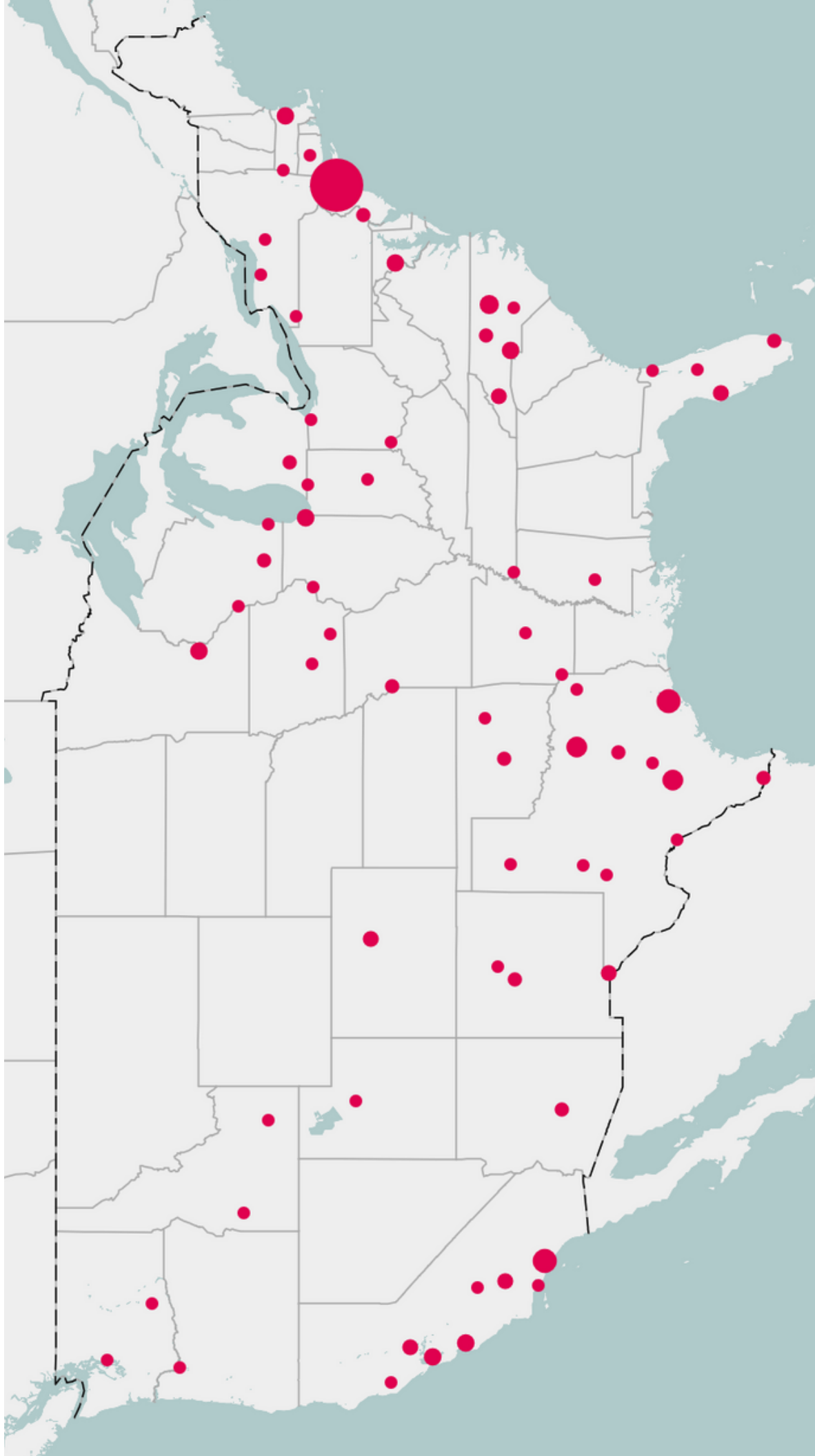
9. *I would have liked to have clicked on multiple options for what kind of coop are you section.*

10. *We have a member who does not identify as Latinx because she's from Spain but English is her second language.*

11. N/A

12. No

LATINX CO-OPS



LATINX CO-OP POWER: APPENDIX C

A cluster map of the aggregate dataset of 180 Latinx co-ops in the U.S.
Note that the red dots represent the average location of one or more co-ops, not individual co-op locations.



Center for Cooperatives
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON