



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Ian Parkinson *Sheriff-Coroner*

9-24-2021

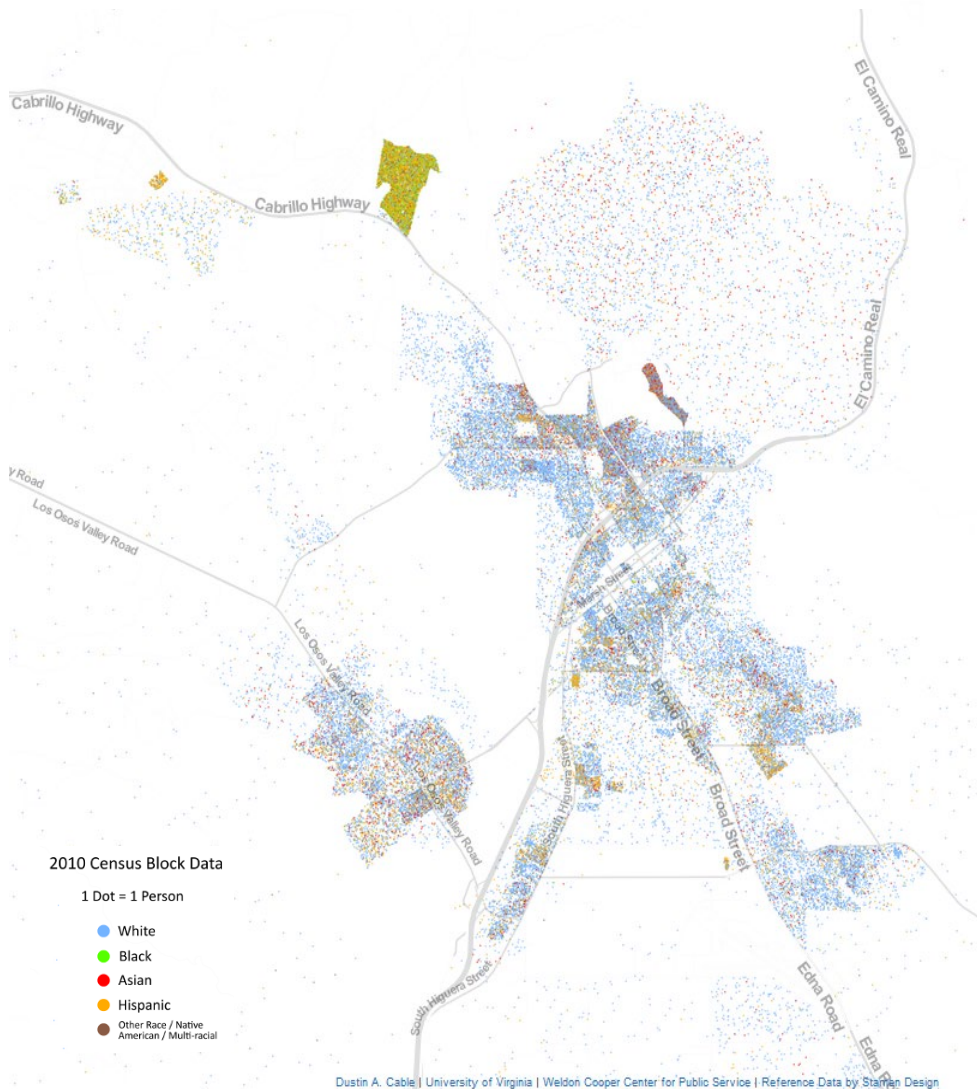
The Unity Committee was formed in September of 2020. The purpose of the committee was to unite a diverse group of people from the community and the Sheriff's Office to sit down and discuss experiences of systemic racism in San Luis Obispo County and to identify strategies to improve our community.

I am proud of the work that they have accomplished and their commitment to San Luis Obispo County. I support their work and I am committed to helping accomplish their goals of improving our community. All of us have come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. We cannot possibly understand what others have experienced in their life, but we should be willing to listen and care.

Within the conclusions of the report, I find very powerful indicators of systemic racism. The Unity Committee recognizes that we live in a diverse County and are committed to work to improve the community through productive action and strategies. I invite everyone to join us in improving and correcting our shortcomings to enhance inclusiveness of all.

- Sheriff Ian Parkinson, County of San Luis Obispo

Concentrations of citizens in San Luis Obispo by Race/Ethnicity



GUIDING QUESTIONS

How do we define systemic racism? Does systemic racism exist in SLO county? If so, what are some examples?

SYSTEMIC RACISM AND MICROAGGRESSIONS IN SAN LUIS OBISPO

September 2021

The Sheriff's Office Unity Committee (SOUC) was first created in September 2020 as an effort to help identify racial, gender, religious, and sexual orientation issues in law enforcement and in the community. The goal of the SOUC is to create and strengthen relationships between the Sheriff's Office and the community as well as develop strategies that will enable law enforcement to address concerns earlier and more effectively. Committee members are provided unique access to the Sheriff's department resources (data, information, trainings) to increase transparency and enable citizen representatives to provide constructive feedback to the Sheriff about community/departments relations. The SOUC is co-chaired by a representative from the community and the Sheriff's Office to ensure all voices are heard.

The committee is comprised of citizens from diverse social identities and backgrounds. The members vary in race, ethnicity, age, genders, sexual orientation, geographic location, faiths, and socio-economic class. Agencies represented are the NAACP, Gala Pride and Diversity Center, Congregation Beth David, Cal Poly, faith groups, Sheriff's Office personnel, and San Luis Obispo (SLO) county community members.

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Endorsed by Ian Parkinson, [SLO County Sheriff](#)

* We gratefully acknowledge, respect, and thank yak tit'yu tit'yu yak tiłhini, the Northern Chumash Tribe of San Luis Obispo County, in whose homelands we are guests.

Organizations which support the publication of this report

In alphabetical order:

[California Faculty Association - San Luis Obispo Chapter](#)

[Congregation Beth David](#)

[Diversity Coalition-San Luis Obispo County](#)

[GALA Pride and Diversity Center](#)

[Lumina Alliance \(previously RISE and Stand Strong\)](#)

[National Association for the Advancement of Colored People \(NAACP\) SLO Branch](#)

Public Safety, San Luis Obispo

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Systemic Racism: What is it?

Systemic Racism is a useful concept to explain why inequality exists and persists in the United States today. It describes how our history has influenced and shaped our institutions (education, health care, government, criminal justice, economic, etc.), our culture (beliefs, stereotypes, biases, norms, values, and behaviors), and our social structures (policies, laws, practices). In brief, the concept of systemic racism assists us in describing how the racial majority population benefit from institutions, culture, and structures, while racial and ethnic minority groups are unfairly disadvantaged in society.¹

Systemic, not Individual

When people hear the term systemic racism, they may assume that they are being called a racist. This is not the case. **Systemic** racism provides a macro-level view on how institutions, culture, and structures lead to advantages for some and, at the same time, disadvantage to others. No one can be privileged without another person being oppressed. People can live in a systemically racist society AND be good people.

Impact of Systemic Racism on the Individual

A personal example may clarify. I (Ryan) believe I am open-minded and am not racist. However, due to my upbringing, I see now that I did/do have racial bias.

- I grew up in San Luis Obispo county in the 1980s and 1990s (few African-Americans to interact with);
- I was educated about African-Americans by white teachers in a biased and negative way in school;
- I watched television (the show *Cops* that overrepresented African-Americans as criminals² and there were very few positive representations of African-Americans [exception-The Cosby Show]);
- I witnessed few African-Americans in positions of power (I had only one African-American teacher in my first sixteen years of education and no African-Americans held local political positions or high economic status);
- I was enculturated in SLO county to look down upon African-Americans by biased family members, friends, leaders, and teachers, and reminded about racial superiority with symbols like confederate flags and swastikas.

The consequence is clear--as a child I learned to have unconscious negative biases and stereotypes about African-Americans. I was afraid of Black people, I distrusted Black people, and I even thought that I was better than Black people. It was my socialization, through the institutions of education and the media, the local culture, my family, and the structures (who is in power), that led to my unintended but active bias.

Was I a racist? If I were to continue living without self-reflection, taking advantage of my privileges, not learning about the negative aspects of our society, and not working toward greater equality (even worse, promoting white superiority), then I think I could be called a racist because I did not understand the invisible yet profound impact of my beliefs and actions on others. Ignorance and inaction reinforce systemic racism. Now that I can see my bias more clearly, **it is my responsibility** to reprogram my beliefs about African-Americans and work to change my beliefs and actions, the institutions, culture, community, and structures that maintain racism.

This is not only true of my racial bias, but also about my biases toward women, the LGBTQIA+ community, undocumented immigrants, religious minorities, the unhoused, the incarcerated, and the many other marginalized and negatively-stereotyped groups in the United States.

Unfortunately, many of the majority culture are not aware of the larger forces (institutions, culture, and political and economic structures) that have shaped who we are as individuals and as a society. The concept of systemic racism

¹ See also, McArdle, M. (2020). "How to explain systemic racism to non-liberals like me." The Washington Post: Cambridge Dictionary. 2020. Systemic Racism; O'Dowd, M. 2020. Explainer: What is systemic racism and institutional racism. The Conversation. (<https://theconversation.com/explainer-what-is-systemic-racism-and-institutional-racism-131152>); Feagin, J. (2013). Systemic racism: A theory of oppression. Routledge.

² Prorise, T. O., & Johnson, A. (2004). Law enforcement and crime on cops and world's wildest police videos: Anecdotal form and the justification of racial profiling. *Western Journal of Communication (includes Communication Reports)*, 68(1), 72-91.

gives us the language to articulate why such racial inequality exists without relying on problematic tropes like meritocracy and the American Dream. David Foster Wallace in 2005 shared this parable:

There are these two young fish swimming along, and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, “Morning, boys. How’s the water?” And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes, “What the hell is water?”³

Scholars have noted that it can be challenging for a person in the majority to understand systemic racism because in most cases the system is set up for their benefit⁴. It is everywhere and therefore the “normal” functioning of society is based on the privileging of the majority at the expense of the minority as evidenced by the statistics below.

Another analogy is a one-hundred yard dash competition. Two groups of runners train and work hard for months to prepare to win. It is time for the race. One group steps forward to the starting line; another group steps forward to the twenty-five yard line. The gun goes off. Every runner moves at top speed toward the finish line. Yet, those who started at the twenty-five yard line finish first. Systemic racism is where white people, due to the history of our nation and world (e.g. colonialism), the maintenance of certain beliefs, the policies that have benefitted white people or harmed people of color (GI Bill⁵, standardized education tests⁶, redlining⁷, voting rights⁸, media representations⁹, criminal justice system¹⁰), start at the twenty-five yard line and may not realize they have this advantage.

Report Overview

For brevity, this report will not detail the origins of systemic racism, how systemic racism is maintained, or the many relevant concepts that are connected to systemic racism. Rather, it focuses solely on the definition and a few of the many local and national examples of the concept. These facts are gathered to show evidence that racial/ethnic inequality exists in San Luis Obispo county and in the United States. The synergistic effect of the following data is representative of systemic racism. The individual facts, when taken together, illustrate the multitude of challenges people of color face on a regular basis. While we likely know or can point to individuals escaping these negative impacts, they are the exception rather than the rule.

³ Krajewski, J. (2008). “This is Water.” The New Yorker. (<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/this-is-water>)

⁴ See: McIntosh, P. (1988). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack (<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED355141.pdf?utm#page=43>); Wise, T. (2003). Whites swim in racial preference. Alternet. (https://www.alternet.org/2003/02/whites_swim_in_racial_preference/)

⁵ Herbold, H. (1994). Never a level playing field: Blacks and the GI Bill. The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, (6), 104-108.

⁶ Jencks, C. (1998). “The Black-White test score gap” Racial Bias in Testing. Brookings Institution Press.

⁷ Aaronson, Daniel and Hartley, Daniel A. and Mazumder, Bhashkar, The Effects of the 1930s Holc 'Redlining' Maps (August 2020). FRB of Chicago Working Paper No. WP-2017-12, (<https://ssrn.com/abstract=3038733>)

⁸ African-Americans only obtained the right to vote in 1965, 56 years ago. See CNN (2021). America’s Long History of Black Voter Suppression. (<https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2021/05/politics/black-voting-rights-suppression-timeline/>) See also: Berman, A. (2015). Give us the ballot: The modern struggle for voting rights in America. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

⁹ Squires, C. (2009). African Americans and the Media. Cambridge: Polity Press.

¹⁰ Alexander, M. (2020). The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness. United States: New Press.

Further resources:

Here are two useful videos to help us understand “systemic racism” and the “social construction of race”.

Act.TV. (2019). “Systemic Racism Explained” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrHIQIO_bdQ) 4 mins.

PBS. (2018). “The Origin of Race in the USA.” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVxAlmAPHec&t=1s>) 10 mins.

Definitions

The discussion of race and ethnicity can often be confusing as it changes over time and space. What is “Black” in one nation may not be “Black” in another and throughout history scholars, legislators, and people in power have changed the definition (e.g. the one-drop rule¹¹). A community or society can re-define both terms to fit political agendas and new science. To ensure clarity, this report will utilize the United States Census definitions of race and ethnicity. Please see the following website for more information about race (<https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html>). Additionally, the “white” race is partitioned between two ethnicities, white-Hispanic or Latino and white-Not Hispanic or Latino. Please see the following Census website for more information about the Hispanic ethnicity (<https://www.census.gov/topics/population/hispanic-origin/about.html>). For the purposes of this report, white [not Hispanic/Latino] will be referred to as “white” and white [Hispanic/Latino] will be referred to as “Hispanic.”

Furthermore, this report will not capitalize the term “white” when referring to a person or a group. According to the Associated Press, “We agree that white people’s skin color plays into systemic inequalities and injustices, and we want our journalism to robustly explore those problems. But capitalizing the term white, as is done by white supremacists, risks subtly conveying legitimacy to such beliefs.”¹² This report will follow this model.

For simplicity, this report will focus mostly on systemic racism as it relates to three racial/ethnic groups in SLO: whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics in SLO county. However, the experience of Asian/Pacific Islanders (API) and Native Americans is equally important and should be reviewed by future researchers.

Methods

There has been a good faith effort to review existing public websites and documents to create this report. In some cases, the main author (Dr. Alaniz) had to decipher a local person’s race and ethnicity based on their first and last name, photo (if available), density of racial populations at the time, and any other relevant information. There will likely be small errors in these deductions. If errors are found, please contact Dr. Alaniz directly (ralaniz@calpoly.edu) with the necessary evidence so the report can be updated. However, despite these efforts, the evidence is clear; systemic racism is deeply embedded in the culture, in positions of power, and in **every** institution—local to national politics, poverty, criminal justice, housing, education, health care, and many others throughout San Luis Obispo county.

Please note that this is only a small sampling of the many examples of systemic racism that exist today and likely thousands of microaggressions that occur every day in San Luis Obispo county. Indeed, these problems are so deeply embedded in the way we think, act, conduct business, and engage with one another that racism, discrimination, racial bias, and racial microaggressions, sadly, are the norm. It will take significant effort, by individuals, institutions, organizations, and the community broadly to create an atmosphere where people of all races and ethnicities feel welcome and where we can fulfill the great promise of the Declaration of Independence—“...all men [people] are created equal that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

¹¹ Khanna, N. (2007). “One Drop Rule.” The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology, 1-2.

¹² See the Associated Press (<https://blog.ap.org/announcements/why-we-will-lowercase-white>). See also the Columbia Journalism Review article for context (<https://www.cjr.org/analysis/capital-b-black-styleguide.php>).

Racial/Ethnic Diversity in SLO County Positions of Power

Current San Luis Obispo County Population (white [not Hispanic/Latino] 69.9%; white [Hispanic/Latino] 21.7%; Asian/Pacific Islander (API) 3.7%; Black 2%; American Indian 1.4%)¹³

In an equitable society positions of power match the percentage of population. In other words, in 2021 approximately thirty percent of the leadership would be people of color. This is not the case.

Contemporary overrepresentation of white people as recent San Luis Obispo Mayors, likely 100% white¹⁴
At least since 1961 only white people have been elected mayor. Before 1961, the race and ethnicity of the twenty-eight other mayors are not provided or easily found. However, based on the demographics of the community and the name of the mayor, one can deduce that *likely all SLO mayors* have been white.

Contemporary overrepresentation of white people as SLO county Board of Supervisors since 1950, 96% white¹⁵
It appears all, but one the forty-five supervisors elected since 1950 have been white. The two exception are K.H. ‘Katcho’ Achadjian [1999-2010], who is Armenian-American and therefore would be classified as Asian-American by the U.S. Census, and Dawn Ortiz-Legg [2020-present] [Hispanic] (who was not elected, but appointed). Before 1950, the race and ethnicity of the supervisors are not provided or easily found, although Joaquin Estrada [1852] is likely Hispanic applying contemporary definitions. Based on the demographics of the community and the last name of the supervisor, one can deduce that *most if not all other SLO supervisors* have been white.

Overrepresentation of white people as Recent SLO County District Attorney since 1979, 100% white¹⁶
Before 1979 information unavailable—however, it is likely that all or nearly all previous district attorneys were white. *Christopher Money (1979-1984); Barry LaBarbera (1984-1998); Gerald Shea (1998-2014); Dan Dow (2014-present)*

Overrepresentation of white people as current SLO County District Attorney Team, 100% white¹⁷

Overrepresentation of white people as SLO county Sheriff, 100% white since 1864¹⁸
Two of the earliest sheriffs were likely Mexican-American, at that time known as Californios, Francisco Castro (1856-1863) and Jose Munoz (1863-1864). Given that the territory was part of Mexico until 1848, it follows that the first Sheriffs would be of Hispanic descent.

¹³ US Census Bureau. (2021). “Quick Facts: San Luis Obispo, County”

(<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sanluisobispocountycalifornia,CA/PST045219>)

¹⁴ https://localwiki.org/slo/Mayors_of_San_Luis_Obispo

¹⁵ The Board of Supervisors of SLO county appears to be ~98% white since 1852. There are three exceptions: Joaquin Estrada [1852] [Hispanic], K.H. ‘Katcho’ Achadjian [1999-2010] is Armenian-American and therefore would be classified as Asian-American by the U.S. Census and Dawn Ortiz-Legg [2020-present] [Hispanic]. A list of 179 supervisors (except a few missing names between 1852-1909) was provided by SLO county Administrative Office. See also: (<https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Board-of-Supervisors.aspx>)

¹⁶ From 1979-2009 see Fountain, M. 2009. “Who is the DA? New Times (<https://www.newtimeslo.com/sanluisobispo/who-is-the-da/Content?oid=2942510>); Since 2009 the two DAs have been Gerald Shea and Dan Dow.

¹⁷ SLO County District Attorney. (2021). “Our Team” (<https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/District-Attorney/Our-Team.aspx>)

¹⁸ SLO Sheriff’s Office. 2021. “Historical Report.” (http://www.slosheriff.org/images/cms/files/historical_report.pdf); SLO City. (2021). “Department History.” <https://www.slocity.org/government/department-directory/police-department/department-history>;

Overrepresentation of white people as SLO County State Legislator since 1900, ~90% white¹⁹

It appears all thirty-four elected state legislators since 1900 have been white except for three: Pedro Nava [Hispanic]; Abel Maldonado [Hispanic]; Salud Carbajal [Hispanic]. Similar to the previous statistics, the race and ethnicity of the legislators are not provided or easily found. However, based on the demographics of the community and the name of the legislator, one can deduce that most if not all SLO legislators before 1900 have been white.

Overrepresentation of white people as Cal Poly Presidents, 100% white since the University's Founding²⁰

The footnoted educational blog about Cal Poly's history provides photos of previous presidents. Although not directly noting their race or ethnicity, based on the photo, the demographics of the university, and the last name, one can deduce that all Cal Poly presidents have been white.

Overrepresentation of white people as current (2021) city police chiefs and sheriff in SLO county, 90% white
San Luis Obispo County Sheriff-Ian Parkinson; San Luis Obispo-Rick Scott; Cal Poly-George Hughes; Cuesta College-David Millard; Paso Robles-Ty Lewis; Atascadero-Bob Masterson; Grover Beach-John Peters; Pismo Beach-Jeff Smith; Morro Bay-Jody Cox; Arroyo Grande-Michael Martinez

Overrepresentation of white people in current local leadership positions

Nipomo Community Services District Board of Directors-100% white²¹

Santa Margarita Area Advisory Council, Area Representatives-100% white²²

Oceano Advisory Council-84% white²³

Oceano Community Services District Board of Directors-80% white²⁴

Los Osos Community Services District Board of Directors-100% white²⁵

Cayucos Sanitary District Board of Directors-100% white²⁶

Cambria Community Services District Board of Directors-100% white²⁷

The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County, Board of Trustees-100% white²⁸

SLO County Integrated Waste Management Authority, Board of Directors-92% white²⁹

California Water Board—Central Coast R3, Regional Board-100% white³⁰

*No racial information was found on any of these representatives. The deduction was made based on names, public social media (e.g. LinkedIn), and photos (google search) of these public figures.

¹⁹ (<http://www.joincalifornia.com/advsearch?office=AD-35&outcome=Win>)

²⁰ (<https://calpolyhistoryblog.wordpress.com/category/cal-poly-history-timeline>)

²¹ (<https://ncsd.ca.gov/about-the-ncsd/board-of-directors/>)

²² Based on membership list (<https://smaaconline.org/members>) and previous attendance of SMAAC meeting by author.

²³ Oceano Advisory Council (2021). "Current Officers and Members." (<https://oceanoadvisorycouncil.org/about/#members>)

²⁴ Oceano Community Services District (2021). "Board of Directors." (<https://oceanocsd.org/about-us/board-of-directors/>)

²⁵ Los Osos Community Services District (2021). "Board of Directors" (<https://www.lososocsd.org/2021-board-of-directors>)

²⁶ Cayucos Sanitary District (2021). "Board of Directors." (<https://www.cayucossd.org/board>)

²⁷ Cambria Community Services District (2021). "Board of Directors." (<https://www.cayucossd.org/board>)

²⁸ Land Conservancy. (2021). "Board of Trustees" (<https://www.cuesta.edu/about/leadership/boardtrustees/index.html>)

²⁹ IWMA. (2021). "Board Members." (<https://www.iwma.com/about/board-of-directors/>)

³⁰ SLCUSD. (2021). "Staff Members." (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/about_us/board_members.html)

Overrepresentation of white people in education leadership or administration

San Luis Obispo County Board of Education-80% white³¹

Lucia Mar School District Board of Education-100% white³²

San Luis Coastal Unified School District, Staff and Trustees-100% white³³

Atascadero Unified School District, Board of Trustees-100% white³⁴

Paso Robles Unified School District, Board of Trustees-100% white³⁵

Pleasant Valley Joint Union Elementary School District, Board of Trustees-100% white³⁶

Templeton Unified School District, Board of Trustees-84% white³⁷

San Miguel Joint Union School District, Board Members-80% white³⁸

Shandon Joint Union School District, Board of Trustees-80% white³⁹

Cuesta College, Board of Trustees—84% white⁴⁰

Cal Poly Foundation Board Members-96% white⁴¹

*No racial information was found on these representatives. The deduction was made based on names, public social media (e.g. LinkedIn), and photos (google search) of these public figures.

Overrepresentation of white people as Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors 2020, 86% white⁴²

Overrepresentation of white people as Chamber of Commerce Leadership SLO 2020⁴³

Overrepresentation of white people as San Luis Obispo Superior Court Judges, ~90% white⁴⁴

³¹ SLOCOE. (2021). "Board of Education." (<https://www.slocoe.org/about/county-board-of-education/>)

³² LMUSD. (2021). "Board of Education." (https://www.luciamarschools.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=843915&type=d&pREC_ID=1214914)

³³ SLCUSD. (2021). "Staff Members." (<https://www.slcusd.org/departments/details.php?id=5>)

³⁴ AUSD. (2021). "Board of Trustees." (<https://atascaderousd.cyberschool.com/District/Department/1-School-Board>)

³⁵ PRJUSD. (2021). "Board Members." (<https://www.pasoschools.org/domain/22>)

³⁶ PVJUESD. (2021). "Board of Trustees." (<https://www.pleasant-valley-school.org/board>)

³⁷ TUSD. (2021). "Board of Trustees." (https://tUSD.ca.schoolloop.com/pf4/cms2/view_page?d=x&group_id=1530973354561&vdid=i19b2on351ee)

³⁸ SMJUSD. (2021). "Board Members." (<https://www.sanmiguelsschools.org/our-district/board-of-trustees>)

³⁹ SJUSD. (2021). "Board of Trustees." (<https://www.shandonschools.org/school-board>)

⁴⁰ Cuesta College (2021). "Board of Trustees." (<https://www.cuesta.edu/about/leadership/boardtrustees/index.html>)

⁴¹ Cal Poly Foundation (2021). "Board Membership." (https://foundation.calpoly.edu/content/foundation_board)

⁴² <https://slochamber.org/your-chamber/board-of-directors/>

⁴³ <https://slochamber.org/our-community/leadership-slo/>

⁴⁴ [https://ballotpedia.org/San_Luis_Obispo_County,_California_\(Judicial\)](https://ballotpedia.org/San_Luis_Obispo_County,_California_(Judicial))

Overrepresentation of white people as California Governors since 1851, 95% white⁴⁵

There have been thirty-nine governors. Romualdo Pacheco (Latino) and George Deukmejian (Armenian-American/API), are the only non-white governors.

**ARE THERE ANY POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP WHEREIN PEOPLE OF COLOR
ARE EQUALLY OR OVERREPRESENTED IN SLO COUNTY?**

NO.

Even with good intentions, diversity often looks like this⁴⁶:



**What does your company, organization, group, sports team, gym, club, business, social network, look like?
Who receives high honors or awards in your organization?**

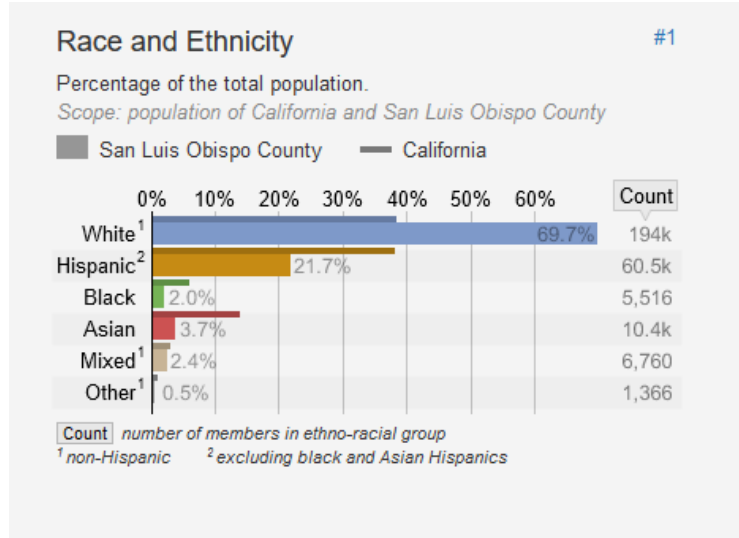
⁴⁵ <http://www.joincalifornia.com/advsearch?office=Governor&outcome=Win>

⁴⁶ K, Braveen. (2020). "Companies." Twitter post--@braveenk.

Local examples of institutional/systemic inequality and lack of representation

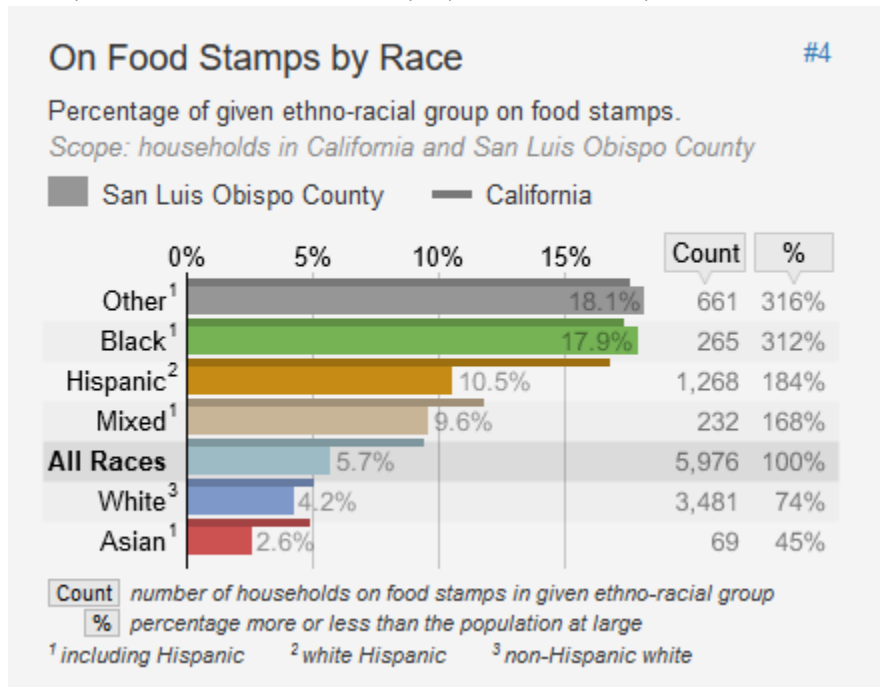
In an equitable society, those dealing with social problems would approximately match the local population demographics. In other words, since 70% of SLO county residents are white, white people should have a much higher rate of social issues. The opposite is true.

Current San Luis Obispo County Population (whites 69.7%; Hispanic 21.7%; Black 2.0%)⁴⁷



Overrepresentation of People of Color (POC) with social problems

Overrepresentation of People of Color on Food Stamps (white 42%; Hispanic 10.5%; Black 17.9%)⁴⁸



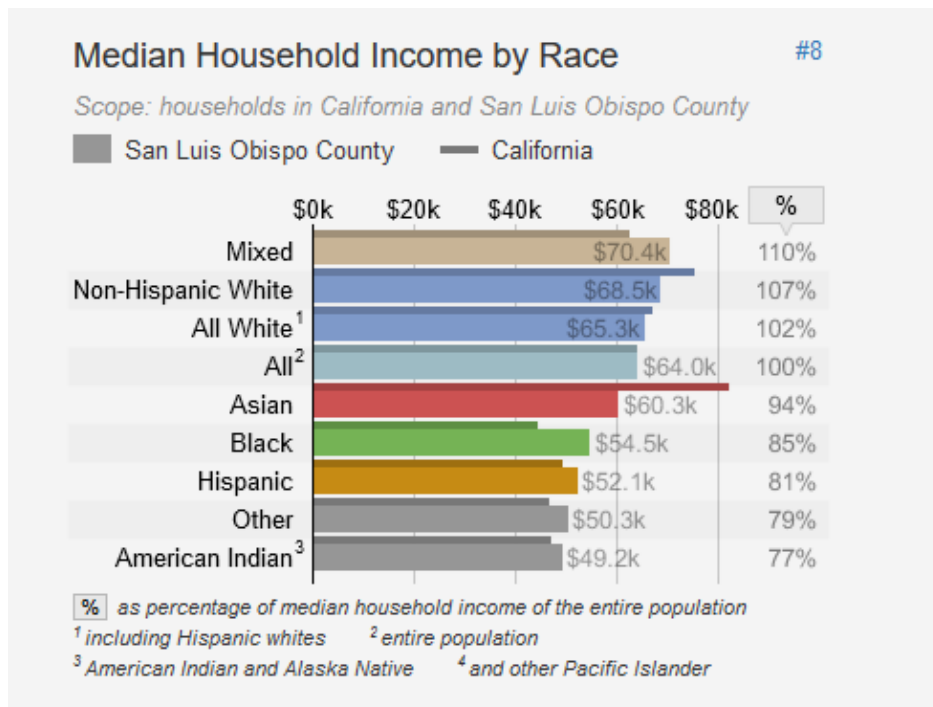
⁴⁷ <https://statisticalatlas.com/county/California/San-Luis-Obispo-County/Race-and-Ethnicity>

⁴⁸ <https://statisticalatlas.com/county/California/San-Luis-Obispo-County/Food-Stamps>

Overrepresentation of People of Color below poverty line (white 13%; Hispanic/Latino 21%; Black 23%)⁴⁹



Overrepresentation of PoC with lower household income (white \$69,000; Hispanic \$52,000; Black \$55,000)⁵⁰

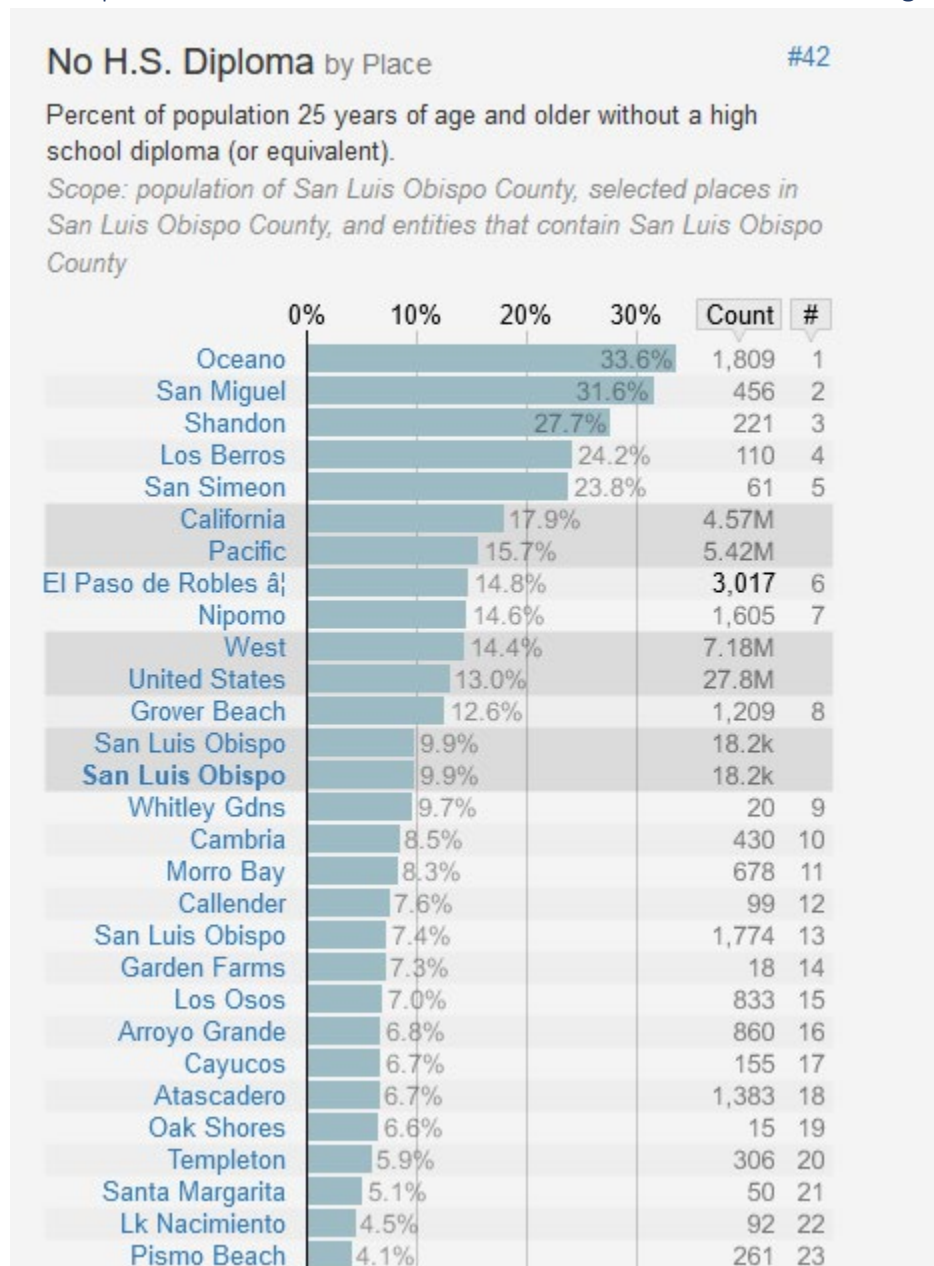


⁴⁹ <https://www.racecounts.org/county/san-luis-obispo/>

⁵⁰ <https://statisticalatlas.com/county/California/San-Luis-Obispo-County/Household-Income>

Overrepresentation of PoC who are homeless in SLO county (white 44%; Hispanic/Latino 28%; Black 6%)⁵¹

Overrepresentation of People of Color with low educational achievement in areas with higher % of POC⁵²



Two examples:

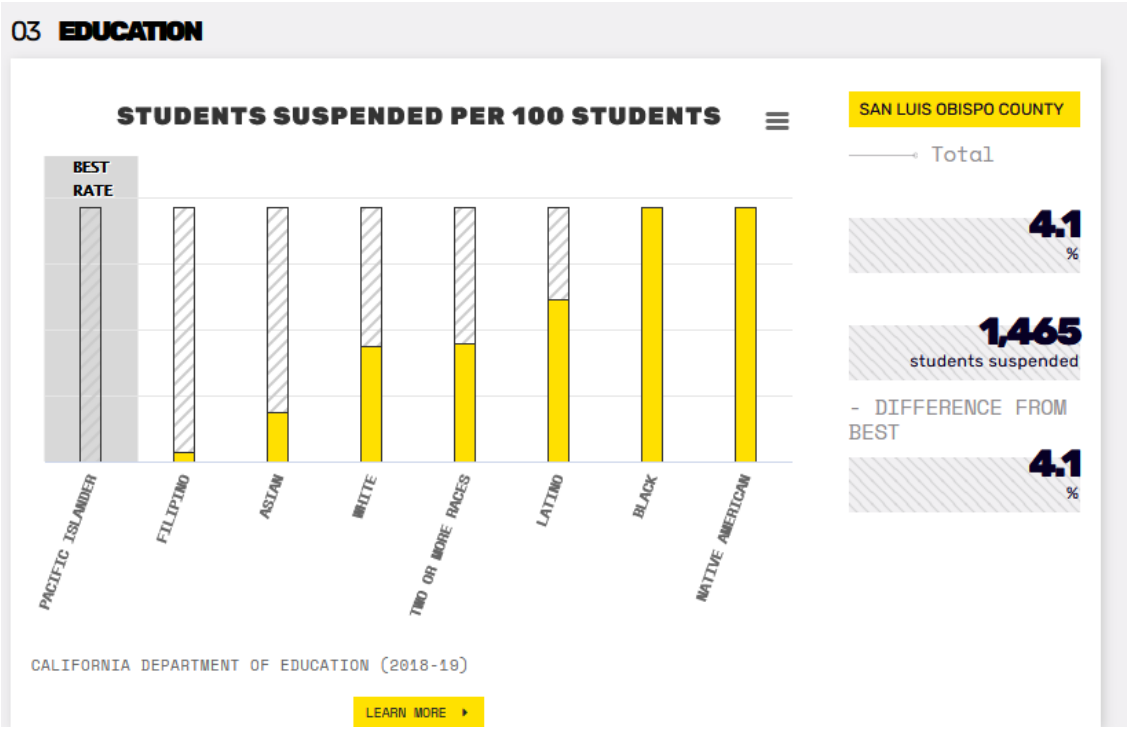
City/Town ⁵³	White	Hispanic	Black	High School Dropout Rate
Oceano	45%	45%	1%	34%
Pismo Beach	80%	12%	3%	4%

⁵¹ <https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/file/getfile/132362>

⁵² For educational attainment, please see: <https://statisticalatlas.com/county/California/San-Luis-Obispo-County/Educational-Attainment>; for racial/ethnic distribution, please see U.S. Census (2021). QuickFacts (<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts>)

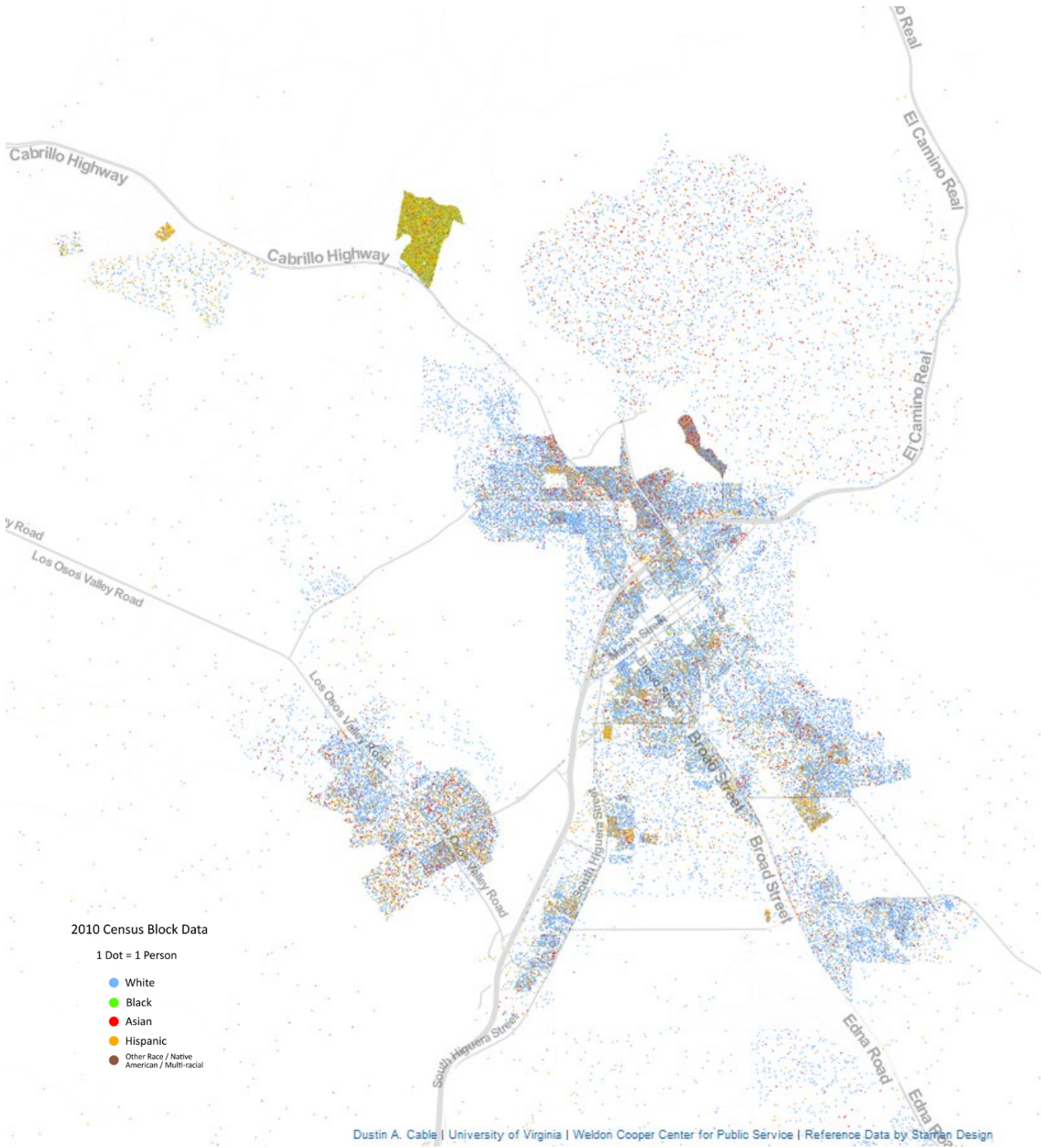
⁵³ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/pismobeachcitycalifornia,oceanocdpcalifornia/PST045219>

Overrepresentation of People of Color in School Suspensions (white 4%; Latino 5%; Black 8%)⁵⁴



⁵⁴ <https://www.racecounts.org/county/san-luis-obispo/>

Overrepresentation of People of Color in CMC State Prison and Low-Income Housing in SLO 2010
 People of Color (Hispanic and Black) are most densely concentrated in the CMC state prison and low-income housing⁵⁵.



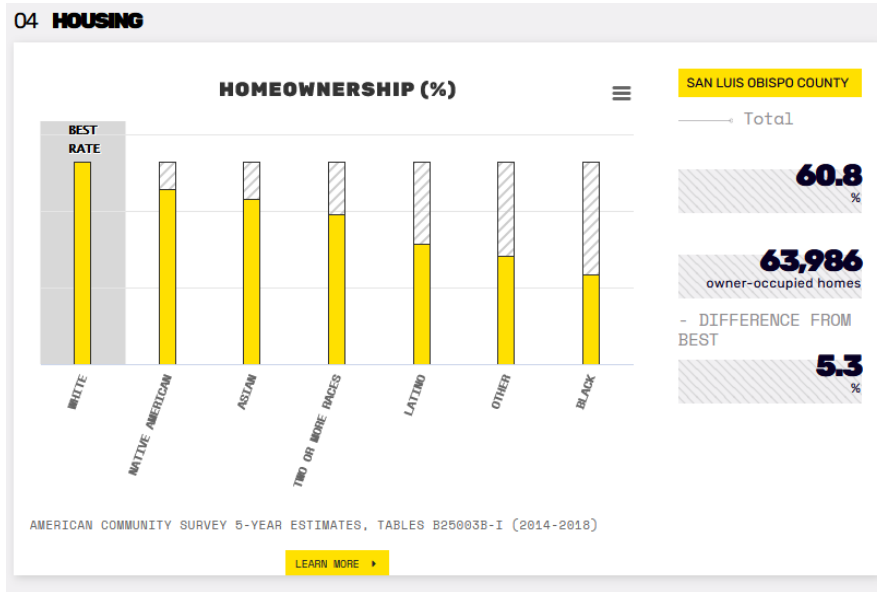
⁵⁵ For race demographics see: University of Virginia. (2010). The Racial Dot Map. (<http://racialdotmap.demographics.coopercenter.org/>) ; For income distribution in San Luis Obispo, see Opportunity Atlas (2021). San Luis Obispo (<https://www.opportunityatlas.org/>). However, the racial dot map is dated 2010 while the Opportunity Atlas is 2021. With increasing gentrification in San Luis Obispo, this may have changed the demographics in the last eleven years.

Underrepresentation of People of Color (POC) with access to opportunities

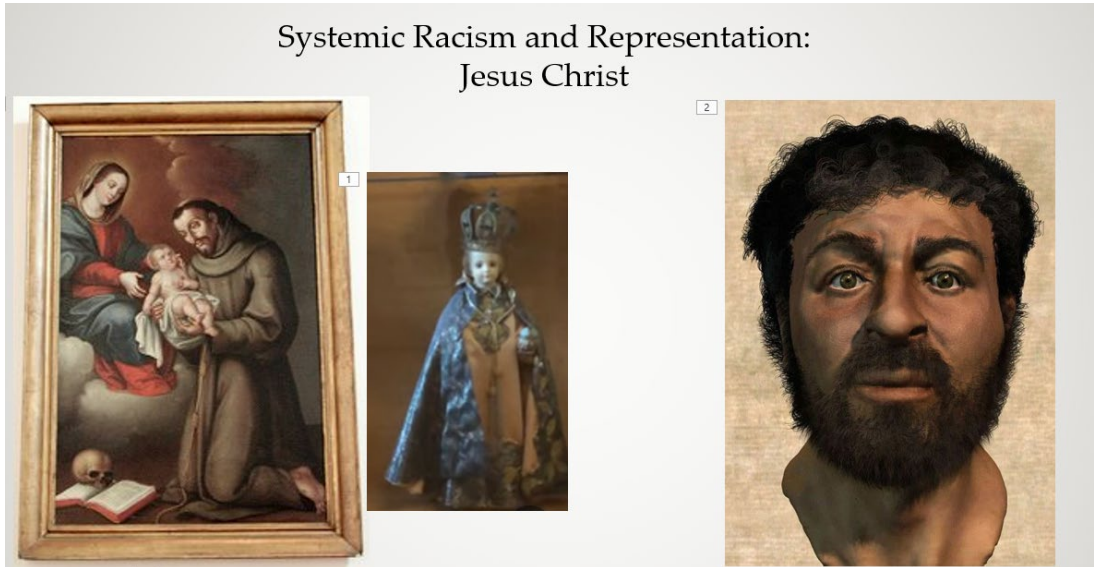
Underrepresentation of POC Cohort Graduates Meeting UC/CSU Requirements by Race/Ethnicity average 2016-19 (white ~45%; Latino ~27%; Black ~30%)⁵⁶

Underrepresentation of People of Color Home Ownership (white 61%; Latino 39%; Black 29%)

This is likely due to the generational wealth gap⁵⁷



Historically inaccurate representation of Jesus as white in SLO Old Mission



SLO mission representation in painting and statue-Jesus as white (left two pictures)⁵⁸

Popular Mechanics magazine, based on forensic anthropology, archeology (right picture)⁵⁹

⁵⁶ <https://www.ed-data.org/county/San-Luis-Obispo>

⁵⁷ <https://www.racecounts.org/county/san-luis-obispo/>

⁵⁸ Pictures taken by author, June 2020

⁵⁹ Fillon, M. 2020. The Real Face of Jesus. Popular Mechanics.

(<https://www.popularmechanics.com/science/health/a234/1282186/>)

Lack of representation in Historical Buildings

“Of the city’s [192 Master List resources](#), none has been listed for association with a person of color except for the Ah Louis Store (which the council tried to tear down 70 years ago).” —James Papp, former Cultural Heritage Committee chair. The City Council will now revisit this list after 40 years.⁶⁰

Cal Poly: Examples of Systemic Racism

2008 Crops House Incident at Cal Poly--The Crops House is an on-campus house for student workers. The students held a racist party with confederate flags, a noose and signs that read No N*gg**s, No F*gs).⁶¹



In 2013, an off-campus fraternity and sorority party had the theme "**Colonial Bros and Nava-Hos.**"

In 2015, the Cal Poly College Republicans posted a **free speech wall**, on which students wrote Islamophobic, transphobic, racist, and sexist messages.

In 2016, the Cal Poly College Republicans put up another **free speech wall** with similar results. That year in Poly Canyon Village a **racial, homophobic slur was written on a student's door.**

In 2017, a photo of Alpha Gamma Rho members wearing **culturally appropriating outfits** circulated on Twitter.

In 2017, graffiti was drawn in Building 10 (Agriculture Building). The picture was of a **white Hooded person on a Mustang**. The Mustang had a **KKK** branded on it.⁶²

In 2018, **flyers with racial statements about African-Americans** regarding domestic violence, homicides, and assault were posted on campus.

⁶⁰ Papp, J. (2021). "[It's a \(minor\) miracle — city of SLO is finally updating its list of historic places](#)" San Luis Obispo Tribune, June 23.

⁶¹ <https://www.newtimeslo.com/sanluisobispo/sowing-hate/Content?oid=2947698>

⁶² Cal Poly Diversity Committee, 2017.

In 2018, Lambda Chi Alpha held a gangster-themed party where a member painted his **face black** and wore a black beanie and shirt. It was the same weekend as the university's Poly Cultural Weekend—an event for prospective students to explore academic, cultural, and social resources at the university⁶³

In 2018, another **noose** was found in the dorms.⁶⁴

In 2018, a SLO Tribune article was published entitled: “Cal Poly has a culture of racism”⁶⁵

In 2019, students dressed up for a party called “Cowboys vs. (Illegal) Aliens”⁶⁶

In 2019 “Cal Poly is ‘a hard place for non-whites’ and other diverse groups, data show”⁶⁷

In 2021, a student’s dorm was broken into and a note with racists slurs was left in the apartment⁶⁸

There is a dedicated website to Cal Poly racism (<https://calpolyracism.com/>). Click for MORE examples.

⁶³ <https://www.newtimeslo.com/sanluisobispo/a-campus-divided-cal-poly-attempts-to-address-racial-tension/Content?oid=5228488>

⁶⁴ <https://calcoasttimes.com/2018/11/16/bathrobe-tie-shaped-like-noose-sparks-latest-cal-poly-campus-concerns/>

⁶⁵ Arrona, B. (2018) “Cal Poly has a culture of racism.” (<https://www.sanluisobispo.com/opinion/readers-opinion/article209489104.html>)

⁶⁶ <https://www.thecollegefix.com/cal-poly-investigates-instagram-photo-mocking-illegal-immigrants/>

⁶⁷ Vaughn, M. 2019. “Cal Poly is ‘a hard place for non-whites’ and other diverse groups, data show” The SLO Tribune. (<https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/education/article236326343.html>)

⁶⁸ Holden, L. (2021). “Cal Poly investigates hate crime after student finds note with racial slur in apartment.” <https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/crime/article251766803.html>

Local Examples—Racial/Ethnic Microaggressions

Definition: "the brief and everyday slights, insults, indignities and denigrating messages sent to people of color by well-intentioned white people who are unaware of the hidden messages being communicated" (Sue and Rivera, 2010)⁶⁹

Examples: <https://www.microaggressions.com/>

A Few Stories About Living in SLO as a Person of Color

- Black and Latina Cal Poly students—Walking downtown, each wearing a Cal Poly sweatshirt. They were confronted by an older white woman who stated, "You are not a Cal Poly student. Take that sweatshirt off."
- Within the same hour at the same coffee shop: a white student requested a job application at a SLO downtown cafe and received a paper application, while a Latino student was told that there were no positions open.
- Confederate flags in SLO county feels like a reminder of racial social hierarchy and is intimidating to BIPOC.
- Black students experience being followed by management in stores throughout the county.
- Two students, a Black male and a white female, were walking downtown when a fight broke out at a bar on the other side of the street. Despite not being anywhere near the scene and the pleas of the white woman, the Black student was brought over to scene, told to sit down, and interrogated about the fight.
- To reduce suspicion (employees following them in stores, negative glances, etc.), Black male students often wear clothes that prominently display Cal Poly logos to illustrate that they "belong" on and off campus.
- Students of color have felt targeted for the types of cars they drive. Students, myself (Ryan Alaniz), and my brother have been pulled over for "looking suspicious." A SLO officer confirmed this bias: "We rarely pull over Priuses."
- Cal Poly professor to Asian-American student--"Wow, you speak really good English." Student-"I was born and raised in Berkeley."
- Students of color are often asked, "What are you?" This is not a common experience for white students.
- Black and Latino students have found difficulty finding businesses that support their culture—ingredients for certain foods, a hairdresser for Black women, music venues, etc.
- Paso residents, dismissing Commander Scott as an officer, looking to the white officer and asking "I want to talk to the person in charge." (Commander Keith Scott)
- "Hangman's nooses hung at SLO County shooting range for at least a decade — until now"⁷⁰
 - A noose is recognized as a symbol of lynching to many people of color.
- Downtown San Luis Obispo (lack of representation [invisibility])
 - How many signs are in Spanish downtown, despite 22% of the county being Hispanic or Latino?
 - How many advertising models in downtown windows are people of color?
 - Who does downtown cater to? Who feels welcome? Who does not?

Further Resources:

Fusion. 2016. "How microaggressions are like a mosquito bite." Two minutes.

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDd3bzA7450&ab_channel=FusionComedy)

Singletary, M. (2020). "Racial Microaggressions take a major toll on Black Americans." The Washington Post.

(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/12/04/racial-microaggressions-black-americans/?arc404=true>)

⁶⁹ Sue, Derald Wing (2010) *Microaggression in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. New York: Wiley.

⁷⁰ Shuman, M. (2021). "Hangman's nooses hung at SLO County shooting range for at least a decade — until now" *SLO Tribune*. (<https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/article251484478.html#storylink=cpy>)

UNITY Committee Examples of Systemic Racism and Microaggressions

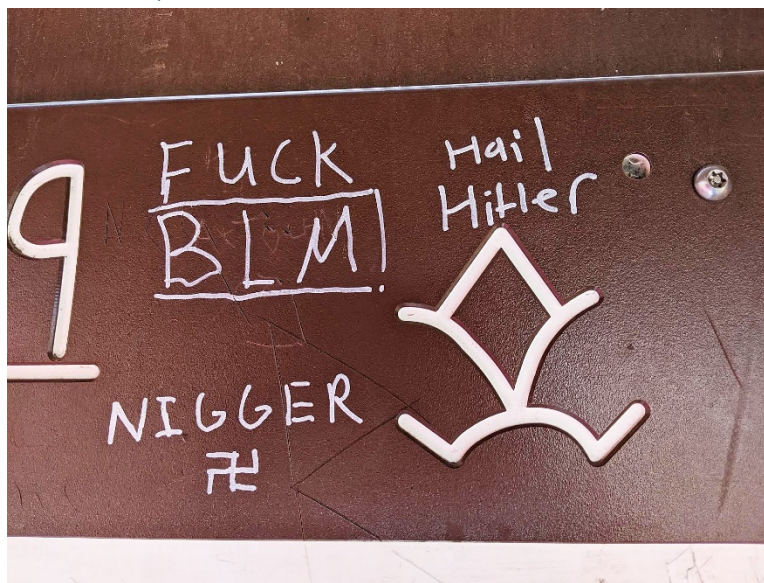
Due to time limitations, the following are only a few examples provided by the small UNITY Committee. If marginalized communities throughout the entire county were asked the same questions, undoubtedly many more stories would emerge.

Transcription of Phone Message (Edited for Unity Committee) Dec. 3, 2020

This phone message was left for the director of a SLO non-profit that works within the criminal justice system

“I’m calling to inform you that the reason I am not writing you a \$100 check that I was just about to send to you.... your support of Black Lives Matter which is an extremely racist, socialist, activist group. And I’m shocked and surprised! Gosh, and you are a Christian! God forbid. Gee whiz, I mean, really, too much. Unbelievable. You’re a partner of the devil is what you are. I’m certainly not going to support you or this racist, fascist organization. Ok? You can visit those who aren’t going the way of goodness, uh...hopefully you will make it through purgatory....I doubt it very much so.”

Racist graffiti in Santa Margarita Community Park indicates a larger issue of microaggressions and racism in the county, December 24, 2020⁷¹



SLO County sheriff arrests man suspected of hate crime, threatening to stab group (2021)⁷²

A suspect, white male, threatened to stab four Hispanics (including two juveniles) with a knife while yelling racial slurs.

⁷¹ <https://www.newtimeslo.com/sanluisobispo/local-naacp-branch-points-to-racist-graffiti-as-evidence-of-racism-in-slo-county/Content?oid=10476035>

⁷² Galvan, O. (2021). “SLO County sheriff arrests man suspected of hate crime, threatening to stab group.” SLO Tribune (<https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/crime/article252707008.html>)

Examples of Anti-Semitism Bias in SLO

As noted earlier, the focus of this report is on systemic racism as it impacts white, Black, and Hispanic residents. However, the committee also wanted to highlight that anti-Semitism is also rampant throughout the county. Below are a few examples.

- A Jewish student at a local high school was subjected to Heil Hitler salutes in class. It was felt by the student's family that the teacher (who witnessed the situation) did not address the issue properly.
- A student at SLOHS was subjected to Holocaust and anti-Semitic jokes in a locker room after a sporting event. The issue was reported to the school administration, who handled it accordingly with suspending the offender and removing the player from the team.
- A student in one of my son's grades wrote in an Internet chat that he should "Shut up, Jew". The student later apologized directly.
- At Congregation Beth David we have a history of receiving alarming or anti-Semitic mail and phone calls. When this occurs we inform both the Sheriff and the ADL.
- Congregants have had issues with not being excused from jury duty during the High Holy Days, overhearing or being addressed anti-Semitic remarks such as "Jewing that guy down" and "you're Jewish, are you as cheap?" and things of that nature.
- These are directed as tirades to an individual, usually our rabbi, or to a group, usually "the Jews" as a people and a religion. They often occur after a prominent incident happens in Israel, but not always. Some of these are incoherent ramblings. Some are signed or we can identify the source by other means. These incidents are referred to local law enforcement for follow-up.
- These types of incidents are usually in the form of swastikas or other messages spray painted. Congregation Beth David had one such incident at our old synagogue in Spring of 1989. More recently swastikas were spray painted on the pedestrian underpass at a local Junior High in 2019.
- A Planning Commissioner used hate symbols and Nazi analogies on Facebook posts. The resurgence of anti-Semitic incidents is fueled on social media by the overt use of hate symbols. The Anti-Defamation League, a leading national anti-hate organization that fights anti-Semitism, categorizes the swastika as one of the most notorious symbols of hatred. Any use of Nazi analogies and imagery, especially by a public official, is deeply offensive to all Jews and to the memory of those murdered by the Nazis.
- A high level of security is needed to protect our congregation. We hire armed security for our major High Holy Days religious services in the Fall. Our religious school campus maintains closed campus protocols at all times. Access to our facility is strictly monitored and is limited during office hours by a gated access point and our doors are locked. For normal weekly services, our doors are opened with trained security team greeters present before services and the doors are locked 15 minutes after the start of services. For large special events, unarmed professional security is employed to monitor the access points and the parking lot. A silent security system with motion sensors is armed when the building is unoccupied and monitored by a security firm.
- At a Local Middle School, an eighth-grade girl was told "I hate Jews" and continues to be bullied with teacher support. Another student commented "All Jews should burn in ovens."
- In high school students would frequently make derogatory comments about Holocaust, Hitler, Holocaust jokes, draw swastikas even though they have knowledge of Holocaust history. Their response when confronted was to say "It's just a joke, get over it."
- Jewish fraternity at Cal Poly vandalized with swastikas, anti-Semitic graffiti
<https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/education/article249071320.html>

Personal examples of microaggressions and system racism

I am a Black male, and I am 50+ years old. I grew up in Oakland California, attending elementary, middle, and high school in the other city by the bay. I experienced the onset of the Civil Rights Movement, and, as a child, was subject to clear and overt acts of segregation and racism. I have had multiple family members that have been sentenced to jail and prison. I have had multiple family members, including my immediate family, that had to reach out for public assistance in various forms. I lived, played, and grew up in a community of people trapped by the same circumstances as me.

However, I was fortunate to escape from that environment by deciding to attend college in San Luis Obispo, California. Whatever is in my DNA that drives me to use adversity as a fuel or, after having a ton of bricks dropped on me, to roll over and bench-press them to gain strength and forge forward, despite opposition, I do not know. But I am deeply thankful to God and to everyone that has been part of my triumphs and successes. I look back today and can remember how it was. I vividly remember my responses, the sounds and most of all, how much I would stare out of my bedroom window, towards the distant Berkeley hills, and believe in the hope I would one day leave for a better place. However, that is not true for a lot of my family, neighbors, and others that, until this day, are still cloaked in toxic and unyielding turns of events that seem to keep them held hostage and unable to achieve a better life. The question is, “Why?”

I am a Deputy Sheriff with the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff’s Office and currently hold the rank of Commander. I have been employed with the Sheriff’s Office for 31 years. In 1990 I was the first Penal Code 830.1(a) (fulltime) Black Deputy Sheriff with the agency. I have always and still enjoy being employed by the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff’s Office. I appreciate the communities that I serve, and those communities have shown much appreciation towards me. However, even within that group hug of appreciation, there has been sporadic instances where I have been called a “nigger”, asked if a “white Deputy” could respond and for me to leave, I have been ignored as a Commander and have heard citizens ask, “where the boss (supervisor)” is to my subordinates while I am standing in front of them in full uniform and with stars on my collar, and I have been referred to by the pet name of “Chocolate Cowboy.” These instances, although sporadic in San Luis Obispo County, do still occur even as we enter the third decade of the 21st Century.

In my private life I still experience a welcoming community in San Luis Obispo County. But I find it annoying that some people still divert their path from me as I am walking toward or around them, I am often mistaken as a grocery store clerk, a department store clerk and asked for assistance from those that have associated me with being a store worker. One of my most recent episodes of mistaken employee identity was this past Christmas (2020) at a Christmas Tree Lot. I was carrying a tree that my wife was considering buying and a female customer said, “Can you help me with my tree when you’re done?” I am a nice dresser no matter what the occasion and I do not wear clothes that even come close to looking like the required uniforms for those respective businesses. I can only assume it has something to do with them associating Blacks with those types of jobs. I am not saying those jobs are bad, but to consistently be summoned to serve in that capacity makes me question the worth and value people are assigning to me in their minds and hearts. I am blessed to have coping skills that help me not to become bogged down and overburdened by these transgressions. The synergistic effect created by these transgressions could impose an overwhelming feeling of always being surrounded by racism. I have an outlet which lends itself to me fostering a healthy self-worth. Many people of color may not be as fortunate as me and may feel hopeless because of the consistent occurrence of these racially driven transgressions, whether the acts are deliberately committed or unconsciously performed. Fifty-six years ago, Martin Luther King spoke and said, “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by their character.” Today, unfortunately, people of color are still regularly judged by the color of their skin and not their character.

Keith E. Scott, Commander (SLO Sheriff’s Office)

Historical and contemporary examples of racism against Asian-American in California and SLO

As noted earlier, the focus of this report is on systemic racism as it impacts white, Black, and Hispanic residents. However, it is important to note that Asian-American and Pacific Islanders have also experienced significant discrimination and microaggressions in San Luis Obispo. Below are a few examples.

“I wanted to mention my own observation of Californian history, with our love-hate relationship with the Asian community. With the gold rush, a lot of Asians came to the area, too, building the railroads, and doing a lot of menial jobs. We were barred immigration, and legally owning property and this was status quo through both World Wars where it was particularly bad, and unchanged till the 1960s. Even in the local area, we were impacted by the removal of the [Chinese population](#) at the threat of hanging and our local Chinatown (now a parking structure and the [Ah Louis store](#)) and the [removal of our Japanese citizens](#). I know there was a lot of racism experienced in California, post-Vietnam war. My mother had survived the killing fields of Cambodia, only to be mistaken for Vietnamese, and called all sorts of derogatory names, robbed twice, and not respected for not being “American enough” or having too deep an accent, despite speaking 7 languages fluently.

I arrived here in the summer of 2001. Having grown up in the Pasadena area, I was not accustomed to being the sole Asian, or as some would call me “token”. It was a culture shock. I eventually learned to brush it off or accept it jokingly, but comments can be insidious or backhanded. I was asked by classmates at Cal Poly if I was going to rush for “real sororities” or the Asian one. More recently I’ve seen plenty of posts on social media, locally and on a global scale about how Covid is the “China Flu” or how Asians ate the bat and now we’re all stuck in a pandemic, or “Kung Flu”. Asian hate crimes are on the rise and it really worries me to the point of not going to certain parts of the county, without my husband or friends.”--Myca Conway

Tommy Gong (county recorder) and anti-Asian bias⁷³

Tommy Gong, the native citizen and fifteen-year SLO county clerk recorder, was recently verbally attacked in a Board of Supervisors meeting. According to The Tribune, one caller even asked, “Is Tommy Gong in any way in relationship to the Chinese Communist Party?”

SLO County had state’s highest rate of anti-Asian hate crimes in 2020, California Attorney General says⁷⁴

2020 and 2021 have witnessed increasing Anti-Asian Hate Crimes in the United States (LA Times)⁷⁵

⁷³ Barabak, M. (2021). “Column: On California’s Central Coast, anti-Asian bias and the Big Lie” LA Times. (<https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2021-05-27/racism-trump-election-lie-california-central-coast>)

⁷⁴ Fountain, M. (2021). “SLO County had state’s highest reate of anti-Asian hate crimes in 2020, California AG Says” SLO Tribune. (<https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/crime/article252489023.html>)

⁷⁵ Smith, H. (2021). “Anti-Asian hate crimes have spiked in cities around the U.S., study finds.” LA Times (<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-05-04/anti-asian-hate-crimes-spike-us-cities-study-finds>)

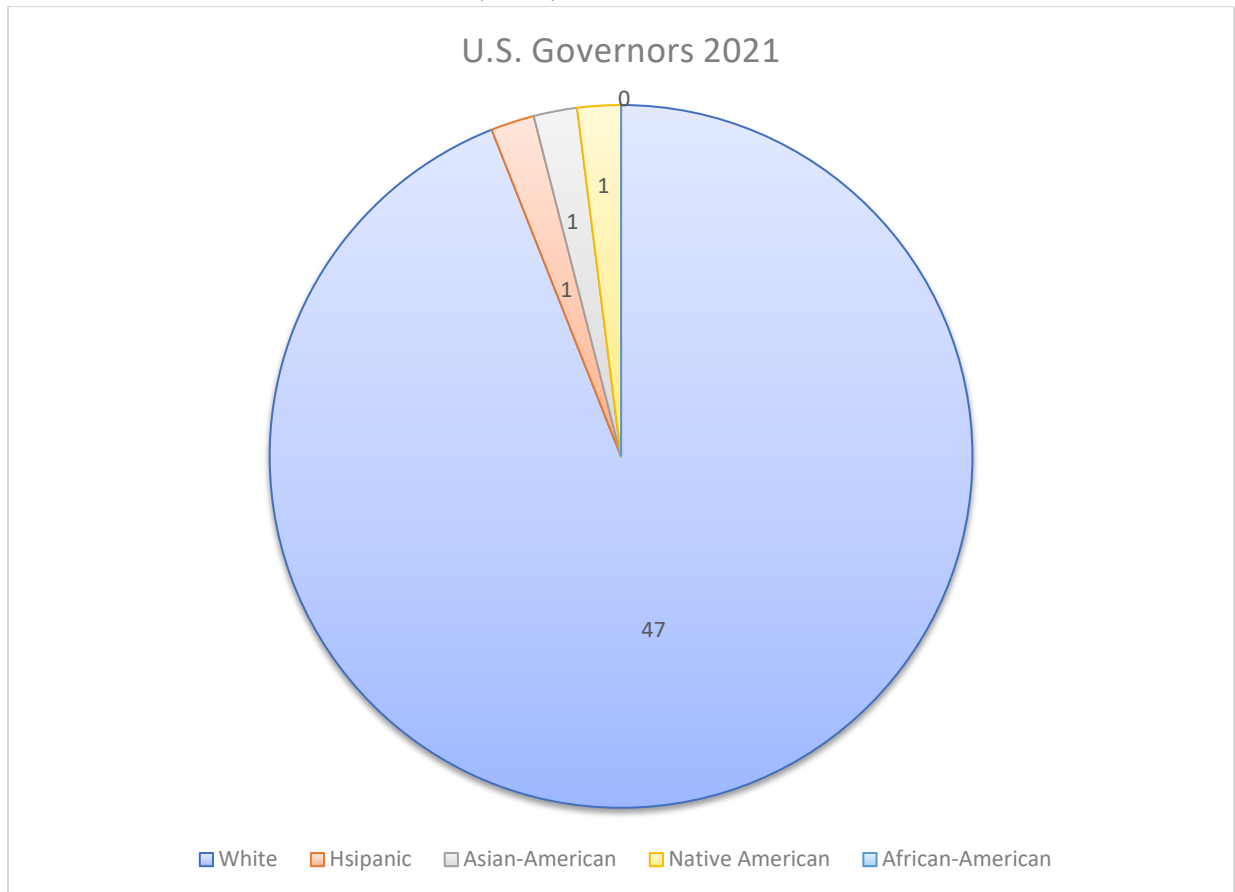
National Examples

In an equitable society, positions of power and social problems would approximately match the percentage of population. In other words, white people should have approximately 60% of the benefits and problems in society while POC have approximately 40%. This is not the case.

US CENSUS⁷⁶ 2019 Estimates (numbers do not equal 100 due to rounding)

white (non-Hispanic)	60%
Hispanic/Latino	19%
Black or African American	13%
Asian	6%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	1%
Two or More Races	3%

Overrepresentation of white U.S. Governors (2021) 94% white⁷⁷



⁷⁶ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>

⁷⁷ <https://governors.rutgers.edu/fast-facts-about-americas-governors/>

Overrepresentation of white people in high income/status occupations

Of the Nation's accountants and auditors (2020)	97% are white ⁷⁸
Of the Nation's elected prosecutor (2017)	95% are white ⁷⁹
Of the Nation's Chief Executive Officers (2020)	93% are white ⁸⁰
Of the Nation's architects (2018)	92% are white ⁸¹
Of the Nation's pilots (2014)	90% are white ⁸²
Of the Nation's police & detectives (2020)	89% are white ⁸³
Of the Nation's lawyers (2015)	88% are white ⁸⁴
Of the Nation's orchestra players (2018)	85% are white ⁸⁵
Of the Nation's Management Occupations (2020)	83% are white ⁸⁶
Of the Nation's school psychologists (2020)	83% are white ⁸⁷
Of the Nation's clergy (2020)	82% are white ⁸⁸
Of the Nation's Federal judges (2020)	81% are white ⁸⁹
Of the Nation's surgeons (2020)	80% are white ⁹⁰
Of the Nation's post-secondary teachers (2020)	79% are white ⁹¹
Of the Nation's dentists (2020)	79% are white ⁹²
Of the Nation's scientists and engineers (2015)	75% are white ⁹³
Of the Nation's judges and magistrates (2020)	74% are white ⁹⁴
Of the Nation's STEM PhD awardees (2018)	73% are white ⁹⁵

⁷⁸ <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

⁷⁹ <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2017/feb/8/study-95-percent-elected-prosecutors-are-white/>

⁸⁰ https://whorulesamerica.ucsc.edu/power/diversity_update_2020.html

⁸¹ <https://www.insightintodiversity.com/growth-in-racial-diversity-among-architects-is-slow-but-experts-say-the-conversation-continues/>

⁸² <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/transportation/218401-the-company-isnt-going-to-hire-black-pilots-anymore>

⁸³ <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

⁸⁴ https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/05/27/law-is-the-least-diverse-profession-in-the-nation-and-lawyers-arent-doing-enough-to-change-that/?utm_term=.ae8edf38990d

⁸⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/18/arts/music/symphony-orchestra-diversity.html>

⁸⁶ <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

⁸⁷ <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

⁸⁸ <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

⁸⁹ <https://www.fjc.gov/history/exhibits/graphs-and-maps/race-and-ethnicity>

⁹⁰ <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

⁹¹ <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

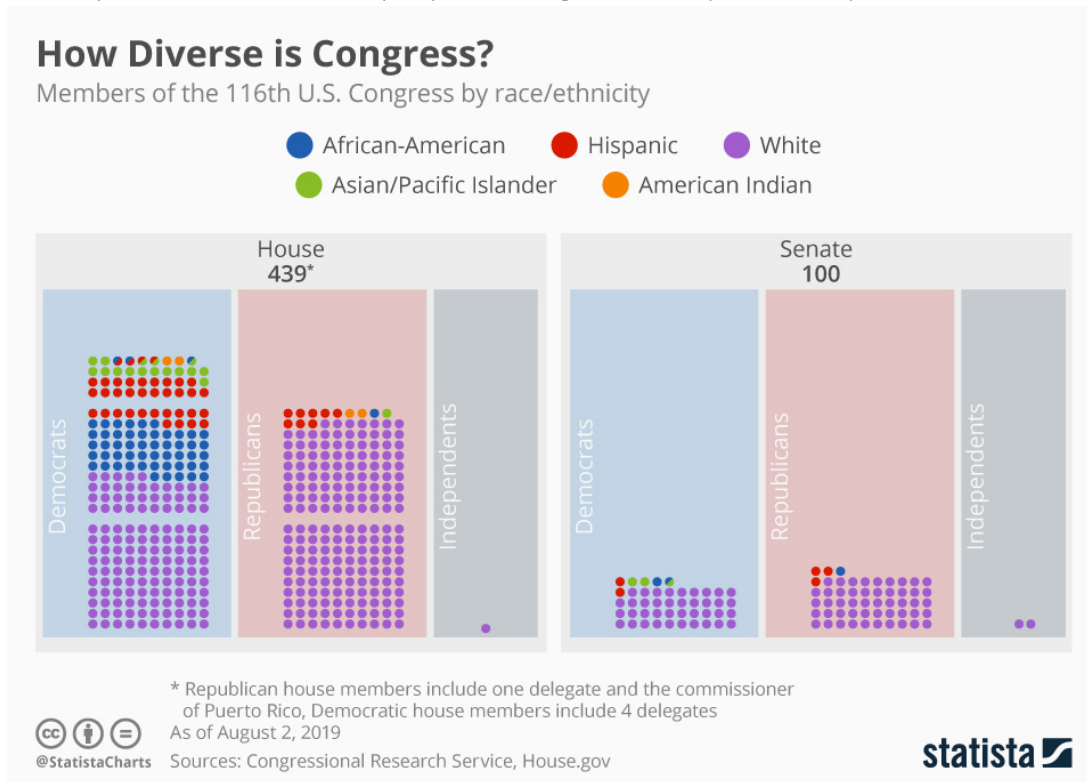
⁹² <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

⁹³ <https://nsf.gov/statistics/2017/nsf17310/digest/occupation/overall.cfm>

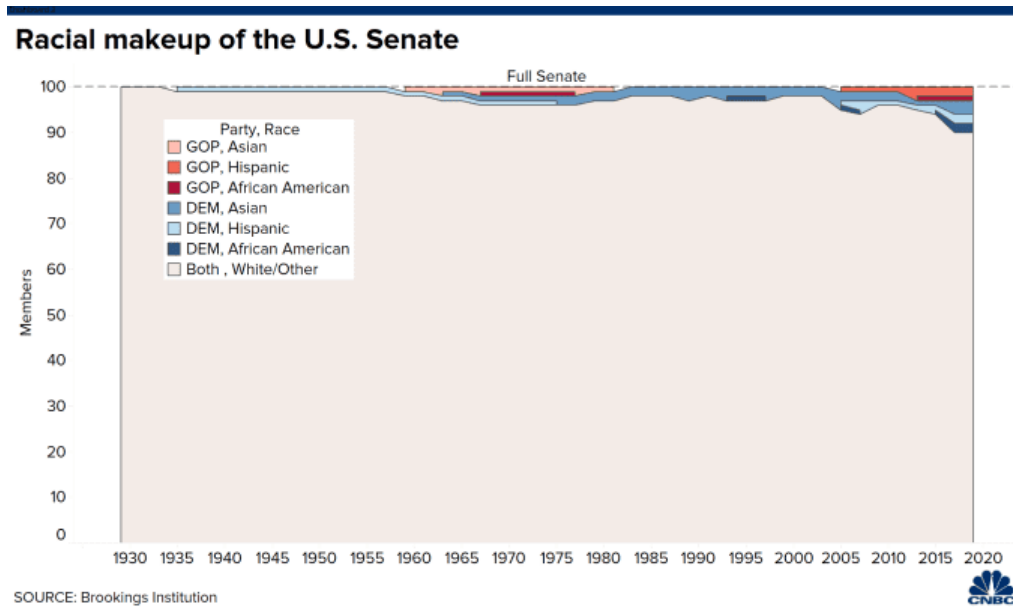
⁹⁴ <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>

⁹⁵ https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_318.45.asp

Overrepresentation of white people in Congress 2020 (79% white)⁹⁶



Historical and Recent Racial makeup of the U.S. Senate (in 2020, 90% white)⁹⁷
 Please note the overwhelming lack of diversity over time.



⁹⁶ <https://www.statista.com/chart/18905/us-congress-by-race-ethnicity/>

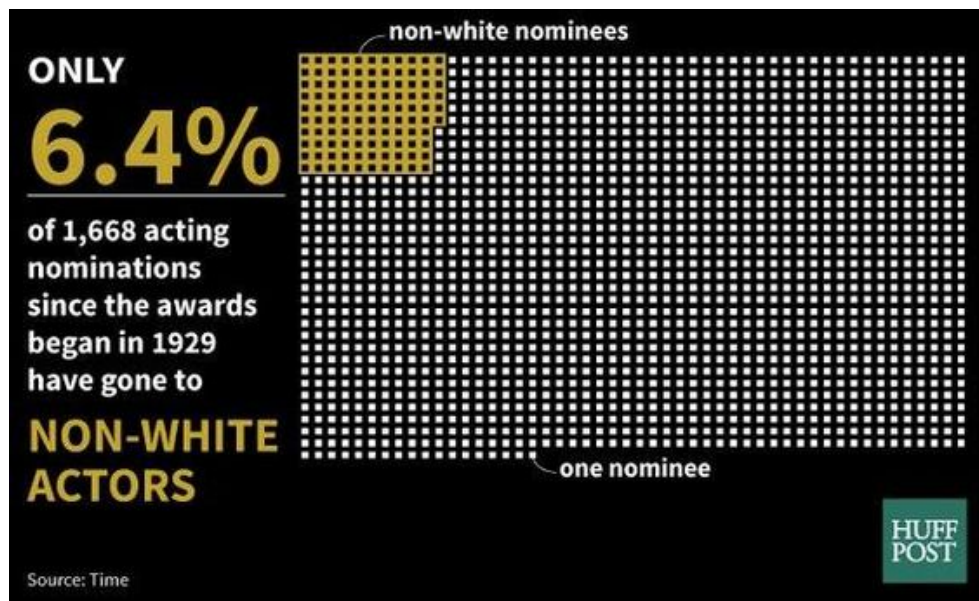
⁹⁷ <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/06/02/these-two-graphics-show-the-lack-of-diversity-in-the-house-and-senate.html>

Overrepresentation of white people in culture and media

Without representation in art and media, POC children have a lack of role models.

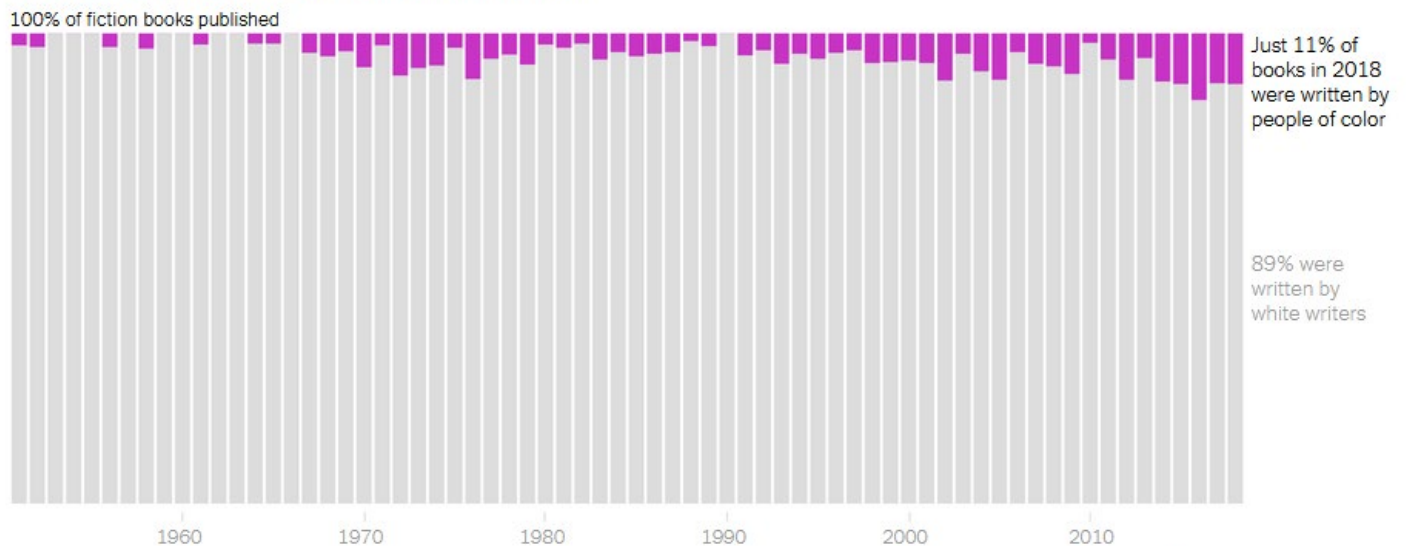
Historical and contemporary overrepresentation in white awardees for the Oscars (cultural impact)⁹⁸

#Oscarssowhite--In 2015 and 2016 **NO performers of color** were nominated for an Oscar



Historical and contemporary overrepresentation of white authors in literature⁹⁹

Want your book published? It helps to be white.



Note: Among a sample of more than 7,000 books published by Simon & Schuster, Penguin Random House, Doubleday, HarperCollins and Macmillan. - Source: "Redlining Culture" by Richard Jean So

⁹⁸ <https://www.vox.com/culture/2020/1/13/21063505/oscars-2020-nominations-nominees-so-white-oscarssowhite-diversity-greta-gerwig>

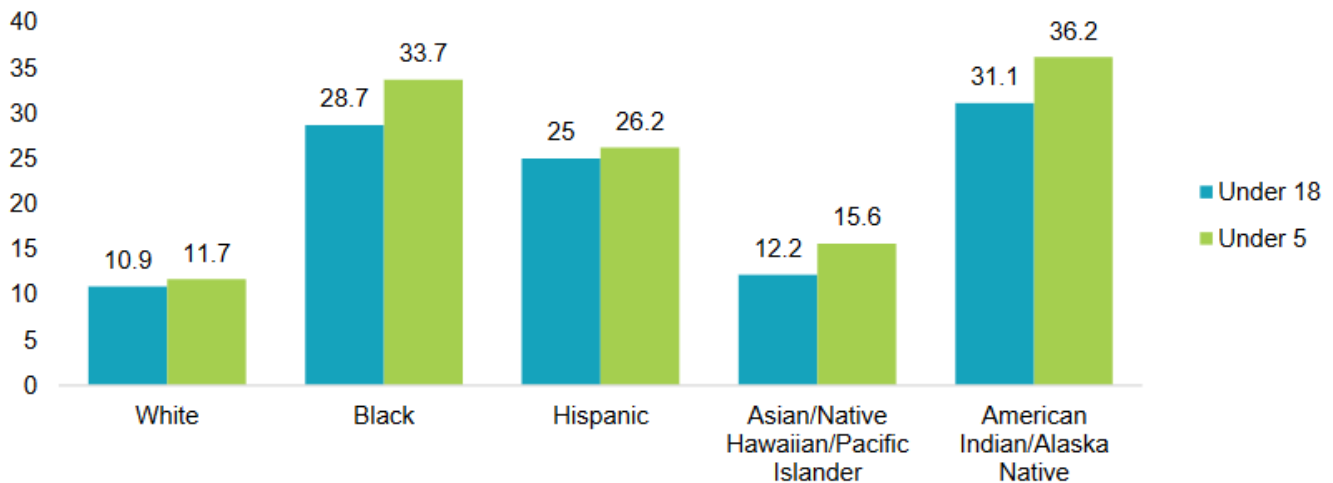
⁹⁹ So, R. J. and Wezerek. (2020). "Just how white is the book industry?" New York Times.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/12/11/opinion/culture/diversity-publishing-industry.html>)

Underrepresentation of white people with social problems

Underrepresentation of white children in poverty¹⁰⁰

Percent of Children in Poverty, by Age and Race/Ethnicity*, 2017



*All racial groups exclude Hispanic ethnicity.

Underrepresentation of white people on death row (white 42%; POC 58%)

“Of the 18 prisoners currently on federal death row, 16 are either African-American, Hispanic or Asian. From 1995-2000, 80% of all the federal capital cases recommended by U.S. Attorneys to the Attorney General seeking the death penalty involved people of color.”-ACLU (2021)¹⁰¹

Underrepresentation of POC who had health coverage in 2017¹⁰²

(white 93.7%; Black 89.4%; Hispanic 83.9%)

Underrepresentation of white people who are incarcerated (white 32%; POC 68%)¹⁰³

“Sentencing policies, implicit racial bias, and socioeconomic inequity contribute to racial disparities at every level of the criminal justice system. Today, people of color make up 37% of the U.S. population but 68% of the prison population. Overall, African Americans are more likely than white Americans to be arrested; once arrested, they are more likely to be convicted; and once convicted, they are more likely to face stiff sentences. Black men are six times as likely to be incarcerated as white men and Hispanic men are more than twice as likely to be incarcerated as non-Hispanic white men.”

¹⁰⁰ Annual Social and Economic Supplement of the U.S. Census Current Population Survey (2018) for year 2017.

¹⁰¹ ACLU. (2021). “Race and the Death Penalty.” (<https://www.aclu.org/other/race-and-death-penalty>)

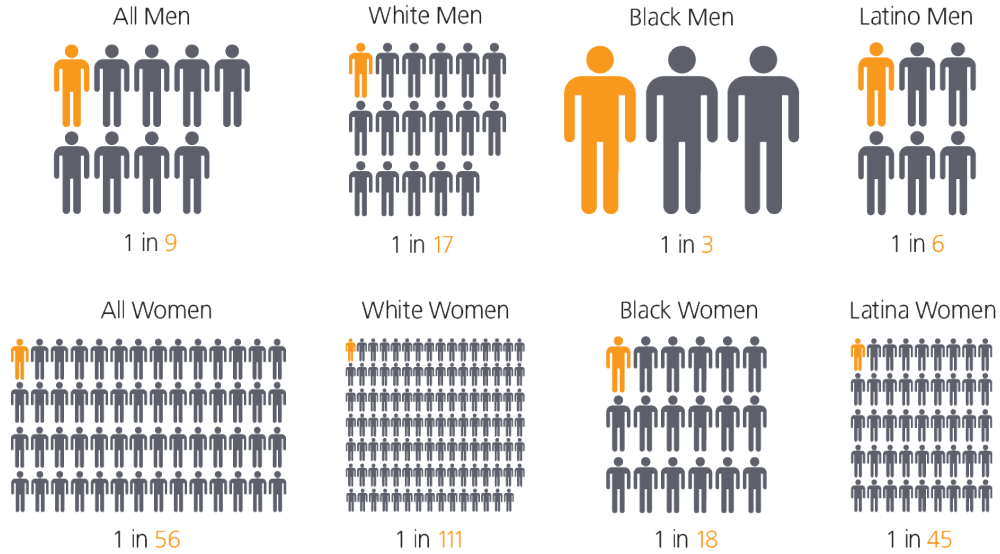
¹⁰² US Census 2017. Health Insurance Coverage in 2017.

(<https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-hi/hi-01.2017.html>)

¹⁰³ <https://www.sentencingproject.org/criminal-justice-facts/>; See also (<https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/#III.%20The%20Scale%20of%20Disparity>)

National Criminal Justice Facts

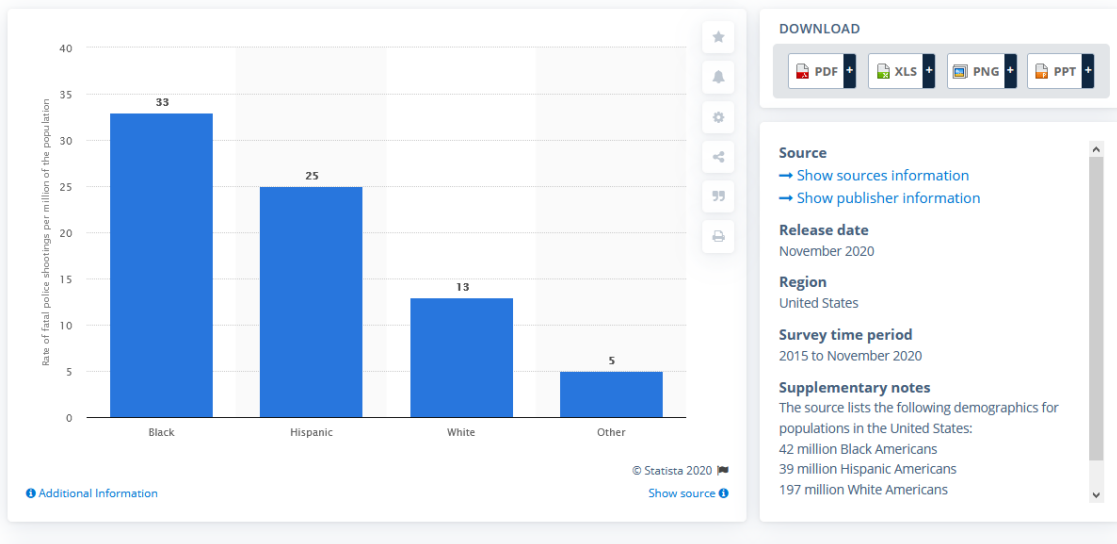
Lifetime Likelihood of Imprisonment for U.S. Residents Born in 2001¹⁰⁴



Fatal Police Shootings by race/ethnicity¹⁰⁵

Rate of fatal police shootings in the United States from 2015 to November 2020, by ethnicity

(per million of the population)



Rate of fatal police shootings by ethnicity U.S. 2015-2020

Published by Statista Research Department, Nov 30, 2020

¹⁰⁴ The Sentencing Project (2020). Racial Disparity in arrests and sentencing.

(<https://www.sentencingproject.org/issues/racial-disparity/>; <https://www.sentencingproject.org/criminal-justice-facts/>)

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1123070/police-shootings-rate-ethnicity-us/>

Further resources on inequity in the criminal justice system

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Criminal Justice Facts.

<https://www.naacp.org/criminal-justice-fact-sheet/>

Kalamazoo Police Department Recognition of Systemic Racism

Lamberth, J. 2013. *Traffic Stop Data Analysis Project*, City of Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety

http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/michigan/files/201309/KDPS_Racial_Profiling_Study.pdf.

Affecting Change

During a discussion about social change a colleague shared, “It takes us all.” Indeed, to tackle the deeply-embedded systemic racism in our institutions, culture, and social structures, we all need to work together toward a common goal of equity. This is both a blessing and a challenge. The blessing is that people in SLO county are decent people and want to do the right thing. Indeed, there are many committed individuals and organizations which have continued to make slow steady progress toward diversifying positions of power, educating employees and the community, and providing financial support to groups addressing racial justice issues. Yet, the challenge remains—systemic racism and racial (along with gender, religious, sexual orientation among others) microaggressions continue to pervade our county. ALL of us need to invest in making a difference if we hope to create a better county for our children and future residents.

There are two aspects to this change. First, we must admit that due to our socialization in this nation, this state, and this county, what we have learned about race has created implicit bias. We all have biases! Even the best of us slip into racial stereotypes that benefit one group while putting down another. The good news is that we can change our beliefs and our actions. Each day we must recommit to educating ourselves to recognize bias and discrimination. Here are a few places to start:

- Take a test to find out about your own implicit biases
 - Harvard’s Implicit Bias Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- Educate yourself
 - This google document hosts dozens of resources, podcasts, movies, books, articles, etc. to learn about anti-racism(<http://bit.ly/ANTIRACISMRESOURCES>)

Second, we must investigate how bias may be perpetuated in our systems, organizations, community culture, and institutions. Every system is built and maintained by humans and humans create and preserve biases. We must take a hard look at all the groups we participate in and ask challenging questions. Below are a few that may be relevant.

- Is racial injustice a topic of conversation within the company/institution/social group/organization?
- Do people of color have positions of power in our organization?
- Have we conducted an anonymous survey to hear how people feel within the organization as it applies to race/ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, etc.?
- How might our practices (advertising, language, [lack of] cultural competency training, etc.) impact how we serve constituents?
- Is our institution segregated (e.g. agriculture-Hispanics are overrepresented in fieldwork and white people most often own the farms)?
- Does our group believe racial justice matters? If so, why? And how do we show our support?

- Do we utilize our time, talent, and treasure to support local non-profits (NAACP¹⁰⁶, Diversity Coalition¹⁰⁷, Race Matters¹⁰⁸, Gala Pride and Diversity Center¹⁰⁹, etc.) working toward racial equity?
- Are our sports teams, churches, book clubs, community groups inclusive? Who has power in these groups?
- One way to understand an organization's priorities is how it utilizes its funds. How do our organizations and institutions distribute resources?

Despite the many challenges we face, SLO county residents do share values in common. We love where we live, we want to maintain a peaceful atmosphere and beautiful environment, we care about each other, and we embrace an optimism that our little corner of paradise can be improved. Let us engage in the necessary work to not only to strengthen our assets, but to also address our shortcomings. WEB DuBois, the first African-American to obtain a PhD from Harvard University and prestigious race scholar once noted, "I believe that all men—black, brown, and white—are brothers." Perhaps, if we are courageous enough to recognize the humanity in our neighbor and to struggle against systemic racism in our organizations and institutions, we will find a way to justice and equity in our community.

Sheriff's Office Unity Committee Goals

The Unity Committee has developed four broad initiatives and invites community members, organizations, and institutions to support our work with its time, talent, and treasure. The SOUC will act as a guiding umbrella organization that supports and connects citizens to work together on each of these areas.

1. Increase public exposure of People of Color in positions/careers of leadership and influence throughout San Luis Obispo County, providing positive examples and role models for youth.
2. Work to encourage, guide, and empower Youth of Color to pursue leadership positions throughout San Luis Obispo County.
3. Investigate and address recently increasing hate crimes toward racial and religious minorities in San Luis Obispo County.
4. Research and develop strategies to address the distrust of citizens (specifically migrant and non-native English speakers) and law enforcement in San Luis Obispo County.

¹⁰⁶ <http://naacpslocty.org/>

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.diversityslo.org/>

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.racemattersslo.org/>

¹⁰⁹ <https://galacc.org/>