



I JUST DON'T BELONG:

Examining the Experiences of Students of Color
at Loyola University Chicago

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BLACK OUT DAY

BOYCOTT CLASSES ON SEPT. 11TH, 2020.

In congruence with the *American Association of University Professors*, *OurStreetsLUC* will be holding a **BLACK OUT DAY** this *Friday, September 11th*.

Instead of attending classes, we ask you to join us at **3:00 PM** *on the West Quad* to listen to your fellow Black Loyola Students.

For those that cannot attend on campus, we will be livestreaming this event through the **@OurStreetsLUC** Instagram page.

 OurStreetsLUC@gmail.com

 [OurStreetsLUC](https://www.instagram.com/OurStreetsLUC)




AGENDA

- Share my Background and Why this Work
- Share Key Findings of the Report
- Discuss Findings and Experiences with Students
- Q&A Session with Audience



MY BACKGROUND

- Black Woman
- Photographer/Storyteller
- Master's in Public Policy
- 2nd Year PhD Student in Sociology



**LET'S
TAKE
A POLL!**

"IS DIVERSITY FOR WHITE PEOPLE? ON FEAR-MONGERING, PICTURE TAKING, AND AVOIDANCE BY JEFF CHANG (2016)

- 2000: U of Wisconsin scandal, photoshopped Black student, Diallo Shabazz into an admissions booklet
 - As if Diversity is an issue of appearance
 - Appearance over substance, appearance over experience
- Who are we doing it for? Who are the Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives for?
- Diversity has become many things
 - Diversity is exploited, “rendered meaningless”
 - Diversity is a commodity and corporate market strategy
 - Diversity is a much lower standard than equity

"RACIAL CAPITALISM" BY NANCY LEONG (2013)

- Definition:
 - “The process of deriving social or economic value from the racial identity of another person.” (p. 2153)
- Benefits White folks/institutions
- Harms POC/SOC
 - “Racial capitalism frequently does not benefit the nonwhite individuals whose identities are the source of capital” (p. 2156)
 - “Racial capitalism also forecloses progress on a practical level, both by inflicting identity harms on nonwhite individuals and by displacing substantive anti-discrimination reform” (p. 2156)



DIVERSITY IS ABOUT THE **PEOPLE** YOU INVITE
AND THE **SPACES** YOU CREATE

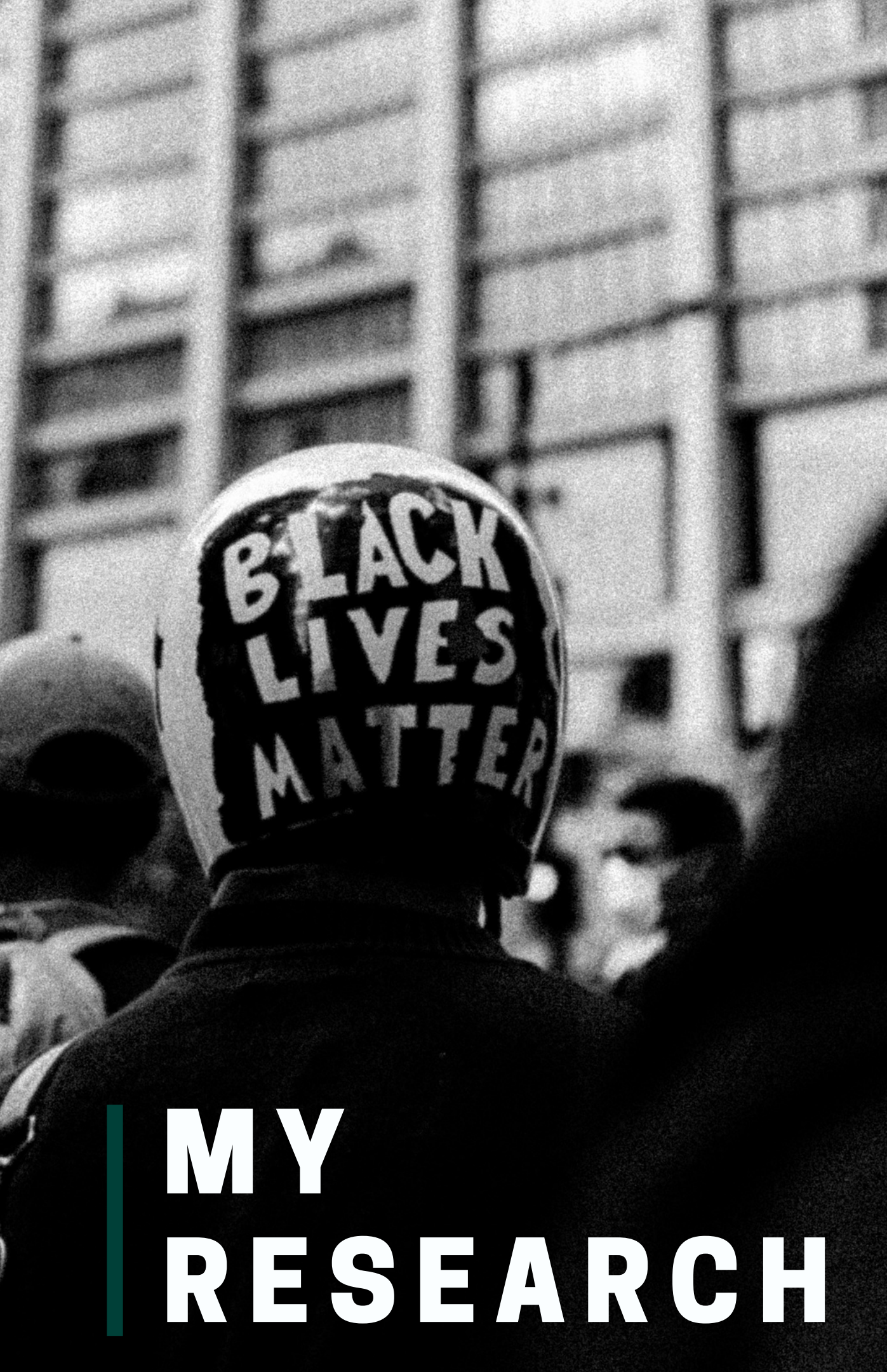


METRICS FOR DIVERSITY

- How are we measuring diversity?
- How might including the experiences of students in those metrics alter perspectives of diversity?
- How does the exclusion of student experiences in diversity metrics bolster racial capitalism and harm Loyola's SOC?
- The question is not how can we make Loyola a more diverse place, but rather how can we make Loyola a safer diverse space?



The Experiences of Students of Color at Loyola



MY RESEARCH

Methods

- Collected data for 2 weeks
- 13-Question Survey
- Used flyers, word-of-mouth, snowball-sampling, social networks
- Analysis: Coding, Text analysis & Statistics

Goals

- Better understand the experiences of SOC at Loyola
- Capture specific examples of the challenges faced by Loyola SOC
- Create solutions that consider the specific experiences/perspectives and needs of Loyola SOC
- Ultimately: Help create a more supportive and safe learning space for ALL Loyola students

DISCLAIMER

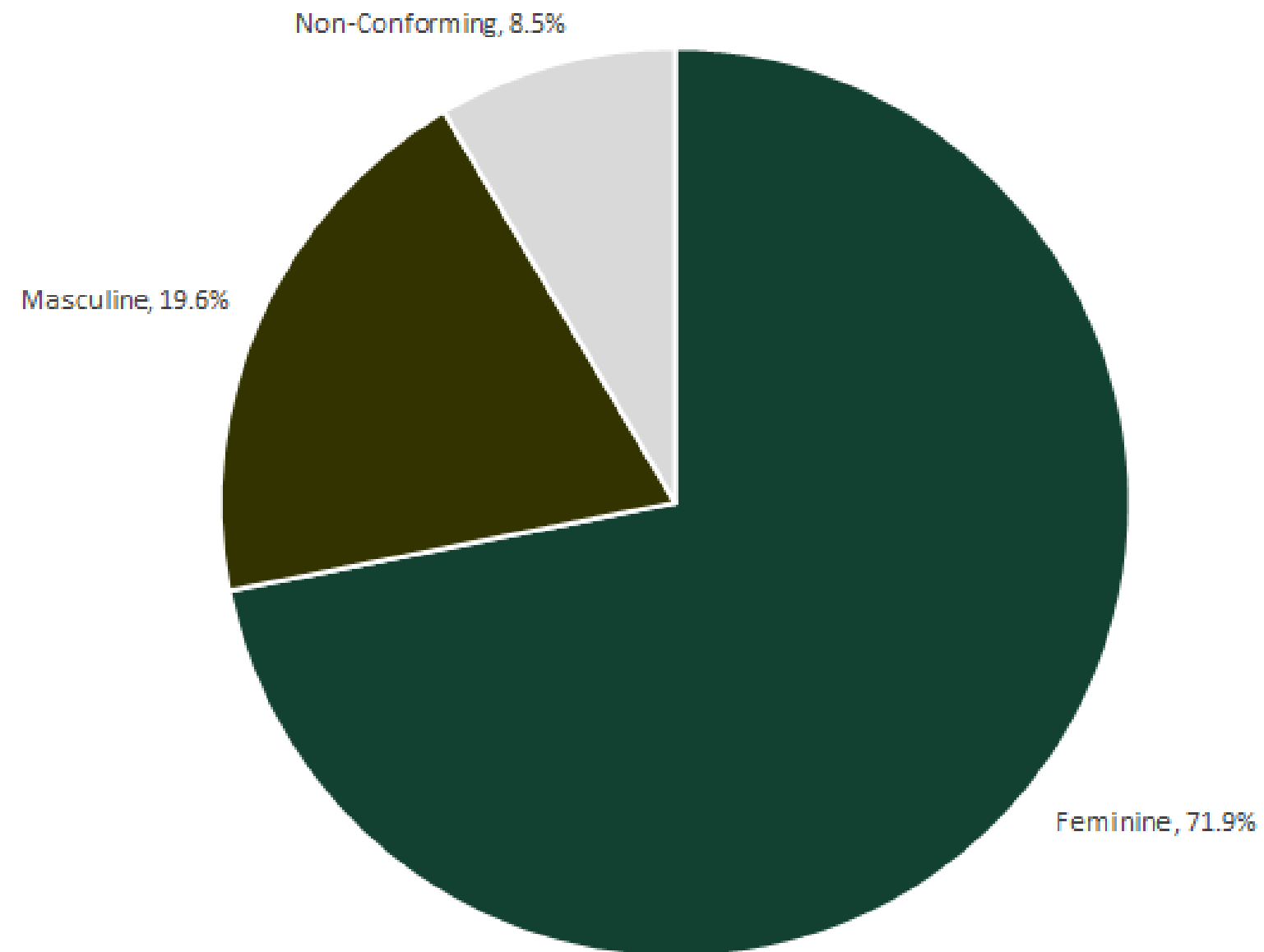
- “Student of Color” (SOC) or “Person of Color” (POC) is not always a helpful unit of analysis
 - Descriptive value, Solidarity value, low analytic value
 - Experiences of discrimination in this report are race-specific
- America/American institutions
 - Racist vs. anti-Black & anti-immigrant
- In the Report, I explore in more detail the race-specific experiences as well



LOYOLA STUDENTS

#2000

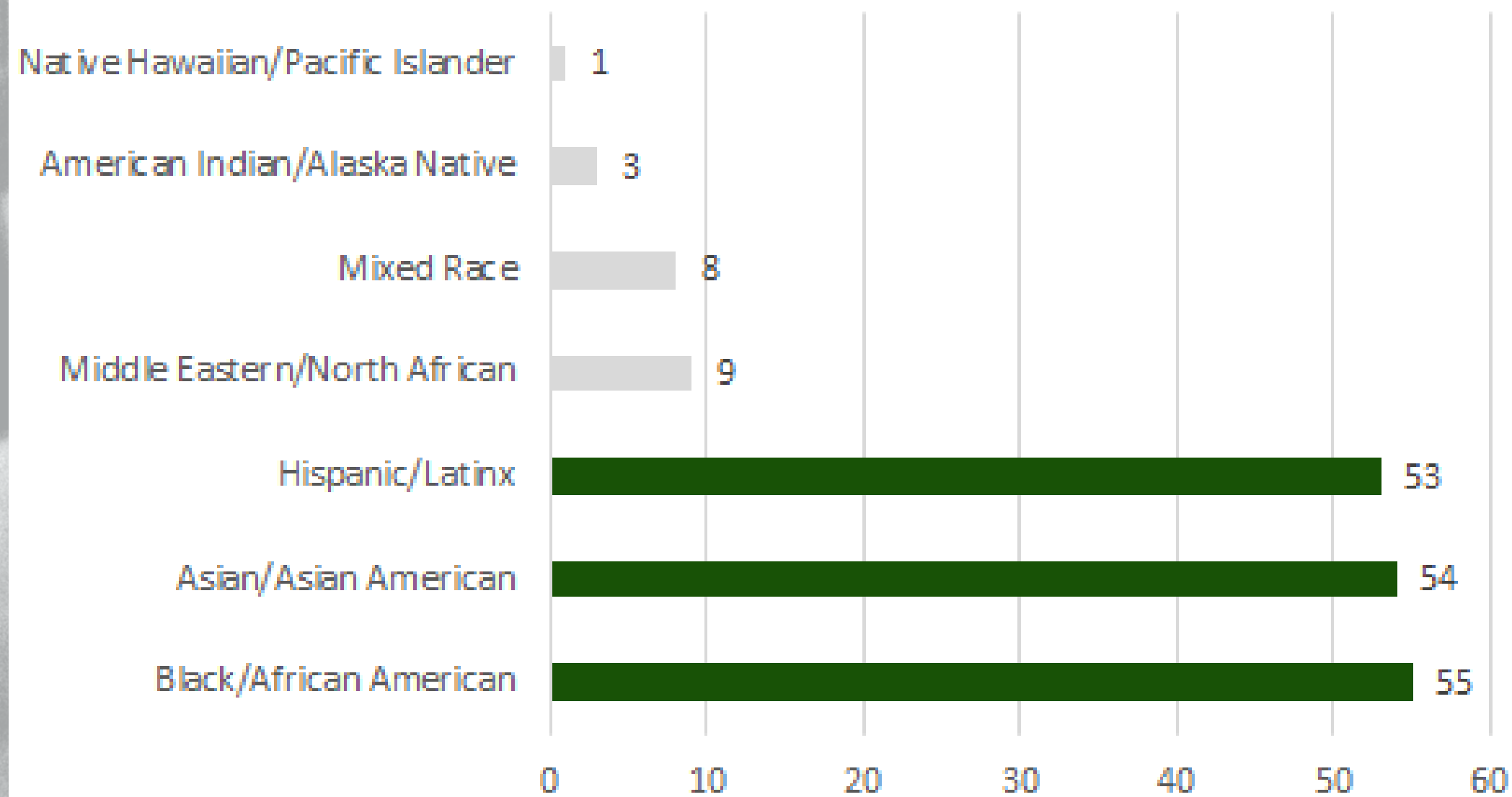
The Self-Identified Gender Expression of Students of Color
(Survey Respondents, 2020)



Survey Respondents & Loyola's Diversity Report

- 71.9% Feminine-identifying students
- Loyola's Diversity Report (2018-2019):
 - 66% women and 34% men (Binary)
 - Does NOT include Gender Non-Conforming Students
- Think about how current metrics of diversity exclude some of our diversity and leads to erasure of our students

Racial Demographics of Respondents



Survey Respondents & Loyola's Diversity Report

- Loyola's Diversity Report (2018-2019):
 - 16.1% Hispanic, 12.3% Asian and 7.5% African American, 3.9% Mixed Race
 - The other three racial categories that my survey measured were not measured by Loyola's Report.
- Think about how current metrics of diversity exclude some of our diversity and leads to erasure of our students

BEING A *MINORITY* MINORITY STUDENT AT A MAJORITY WHITE SCHOOL

Erasure of the experiences of Middle Eastern/North African, American Indian/Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander is emblematic of their on-campus experiences. As one student shared:

"The school only cares about African Americans and South Asians, no other ethnic group has any representation." (Anna)

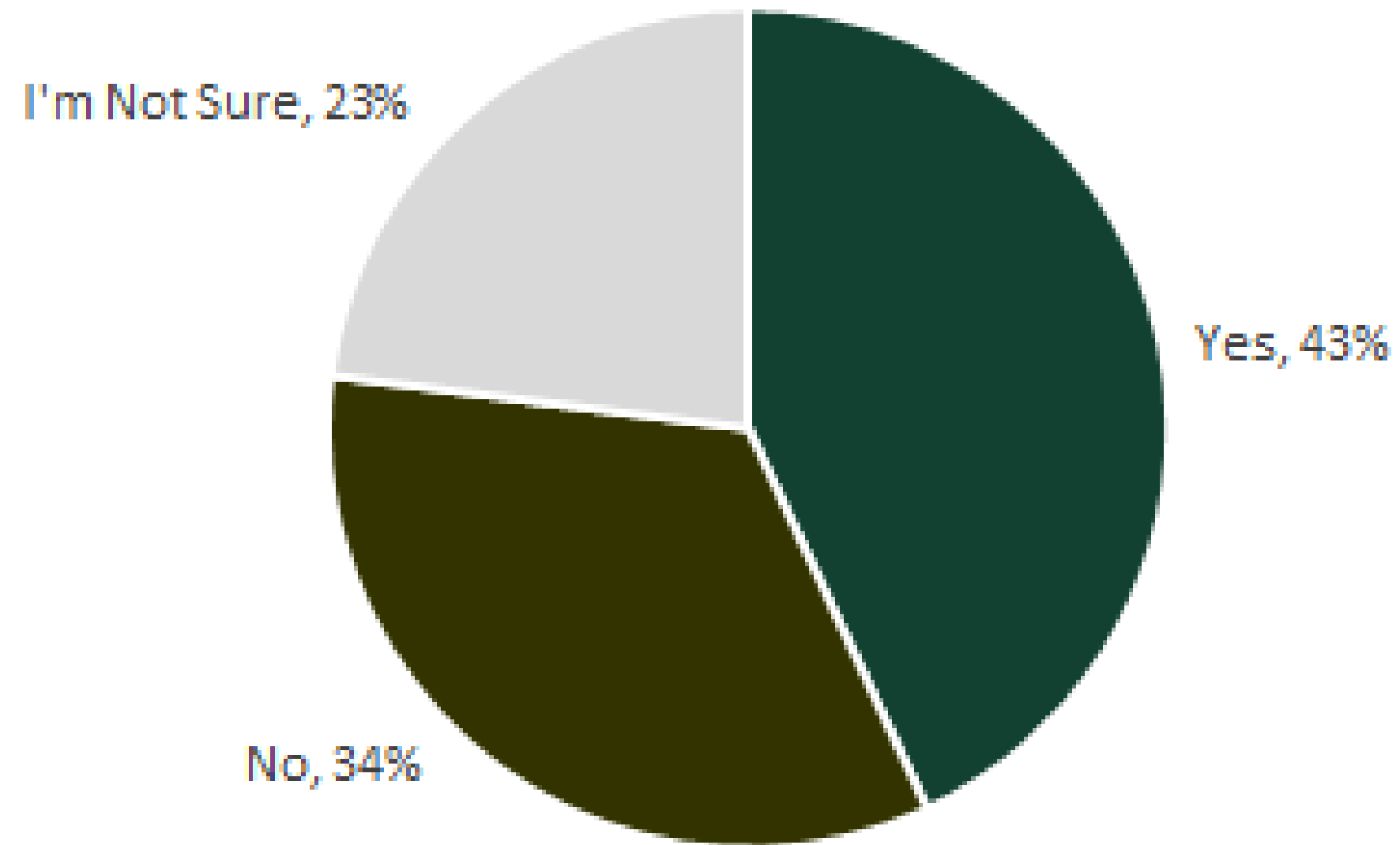
"Because of Loyola's connection to the Catholic Church, they are much more likely to support Zionism and Israeli-aligned organizations on campus, rather than those who support Palestine, such as SJP. It's hard for me to see Loyola as respectful of people of all ethnicities/backgrounds if they clearly support what is the product of over a century of war and erasure of my people." (Mila)

Overall, these students expressed a collective frustration of not just discrimination, but overall underrepresentation and outright exclusion from narratives surrounding experiences and needs of students of color at Loyola.

ARE STUDENTS OF COLOR
EXPERIENCING DISCRIMINATION
AT LOYOLA?



Discrimination Experienced at Loyola



“I’m Not Sure”

“While there has not been overt discrimination, **I have experienced some small things that I would qualify as a centering of whiteness at Loyola:** A professor mixing up the names of women of color in a class of less than 10, another Loyola grad student feeling the need to explain to me, a 3rd generation Mexican-American, the importance and significance of Cinco de Mayo in Mexican American culture. **These are not examples of discrimination but of a dept. culture that would not be able to thrive if there was value and awareness of the experiences of all students.**”

“I'm unsure because I haven't had anyone be racist or prejudiced too me directly but **I've heard stories from people that have and hear microaggressions all the time.**”

“**Based on my religion, I’ve never felt properly welcomed** especially when it come to eating or celebrating specific religions, cultural traditions, etc.”

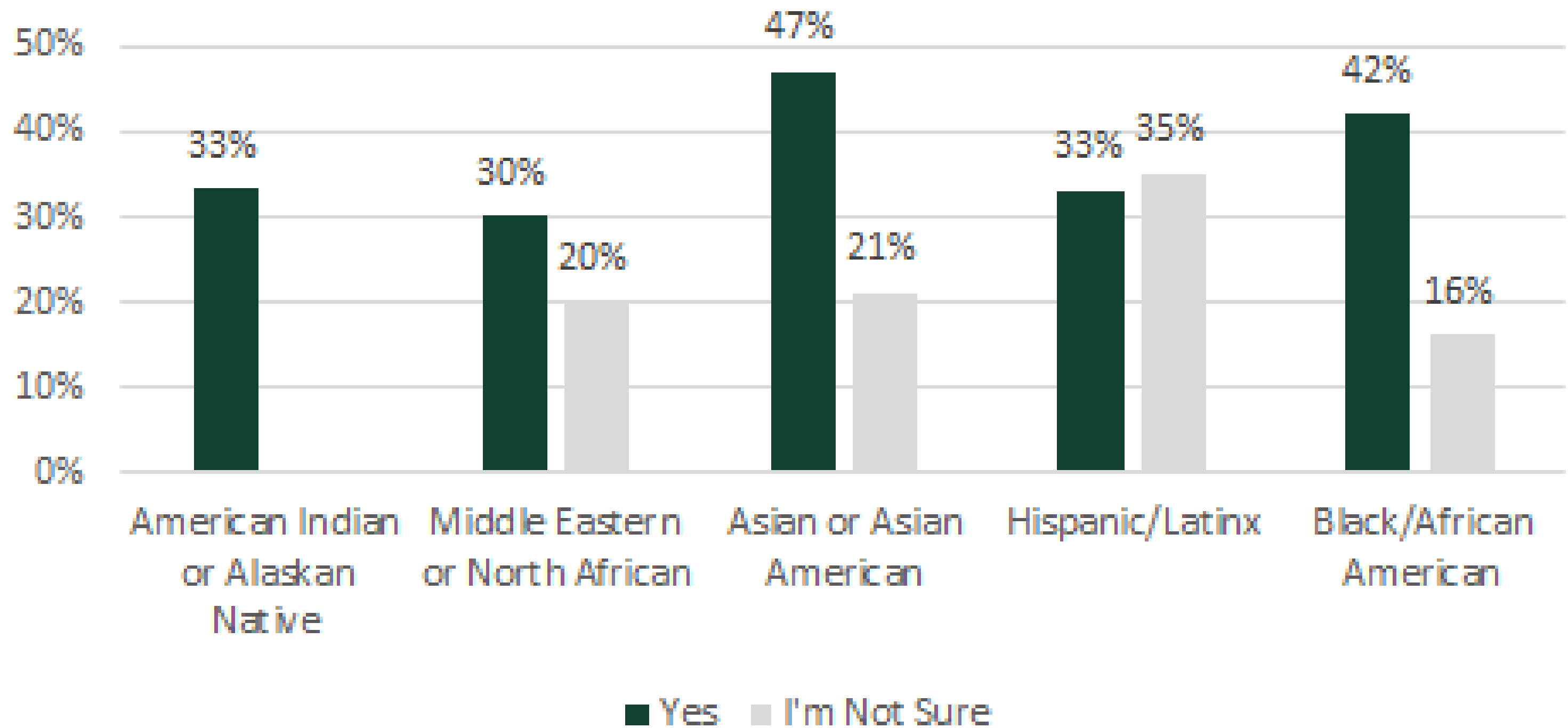
“Yes”

- **66 Students** said yes, they have experienced discrimination at Loyola
- **48 Students** shared specific experiences of discrimination
- Types of Discrimination reported
 - In-classroom/Out-of-classroom microaggressions
 - Stereotyping
 - Racial profiling (esp. In residential halls)
 - Underplaying success because of race (“You got that because you’re not white”)
 - Racial slurs
 - Tokenization
 - Xenophobia
 - Disrespect by students, professors, program advisors
 - Unwelcoming environment/ostracism
 - White-centered/”colorblind” campus spaces (including classroom)
 - Lack of support to SOC



Both the Type and Extent of Discrimination are Race-Specific

Discrimination Experienced by Students of Color at Loyola by Race/Ethnicity



REPORTING OFFENSES

Students of color are far more likely to use "unofficial" channels to report and/or deal with experiences of discrimination because they do not trust that the institution or its system will support them



“While I found faculty and staff that I could connect with and express some of my concerns, I did not feel that I could make any larger changes within the departmental or university environment that concretely addressed harm that was happening to students of color constantly. **I think also hearing past stories of faculty not taking concerns of students of color seriously made it even harder for myself to act on such institutionalized practices.**”

YASHIR,
LOYOLA STUDENT



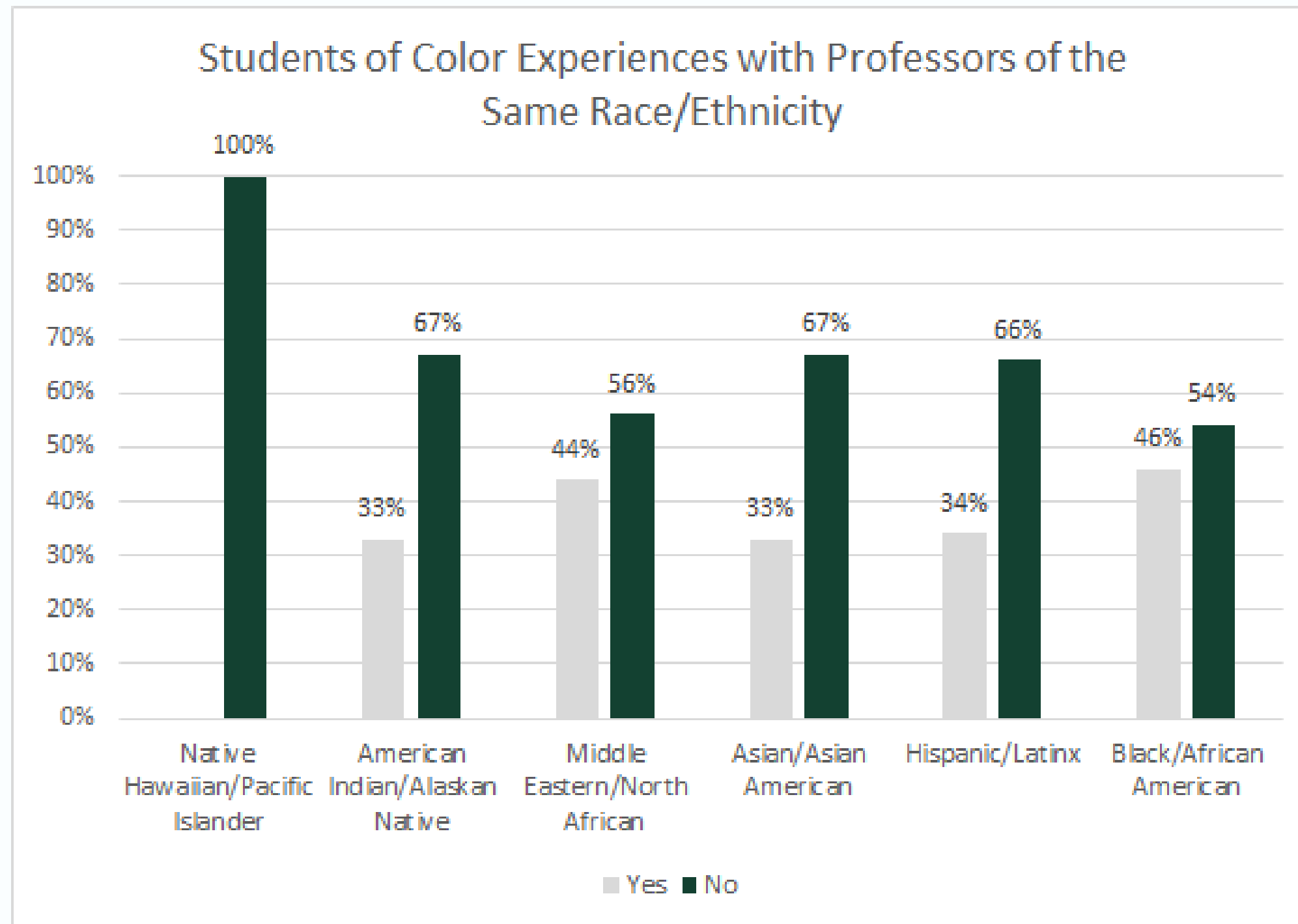
DISCRIMINATION & DIVERSITY

- Discrimination is structurally supported, but often occurs on the interpersonal level
 - Structural: Not having more POC in positions of power at Loyola (i.e. Faculty)
 - Interpersonal: SOC experience microaggressions and racism in the classroom
- Return to our idea about Diversity: people invited and spaces created
- **Can we mitigate negative interpersonal experiences encountered by SOC by making structural changes to the classroom?**
 - Faculty
 - Curriculum

“I often questioned what my professors and peers thought of me because all they seemed to know about Black people were negative things. It was exhausting having to discredit and bring “new” perspective to the classroom about things people should already know (aka contributions to research and academia by Black people, especially in Psychology). It’s a shame that we talk about race and inclusivity, but Janet Helms is never mentioned.”

- Sheila

PROFESSORS W/ SAME RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY



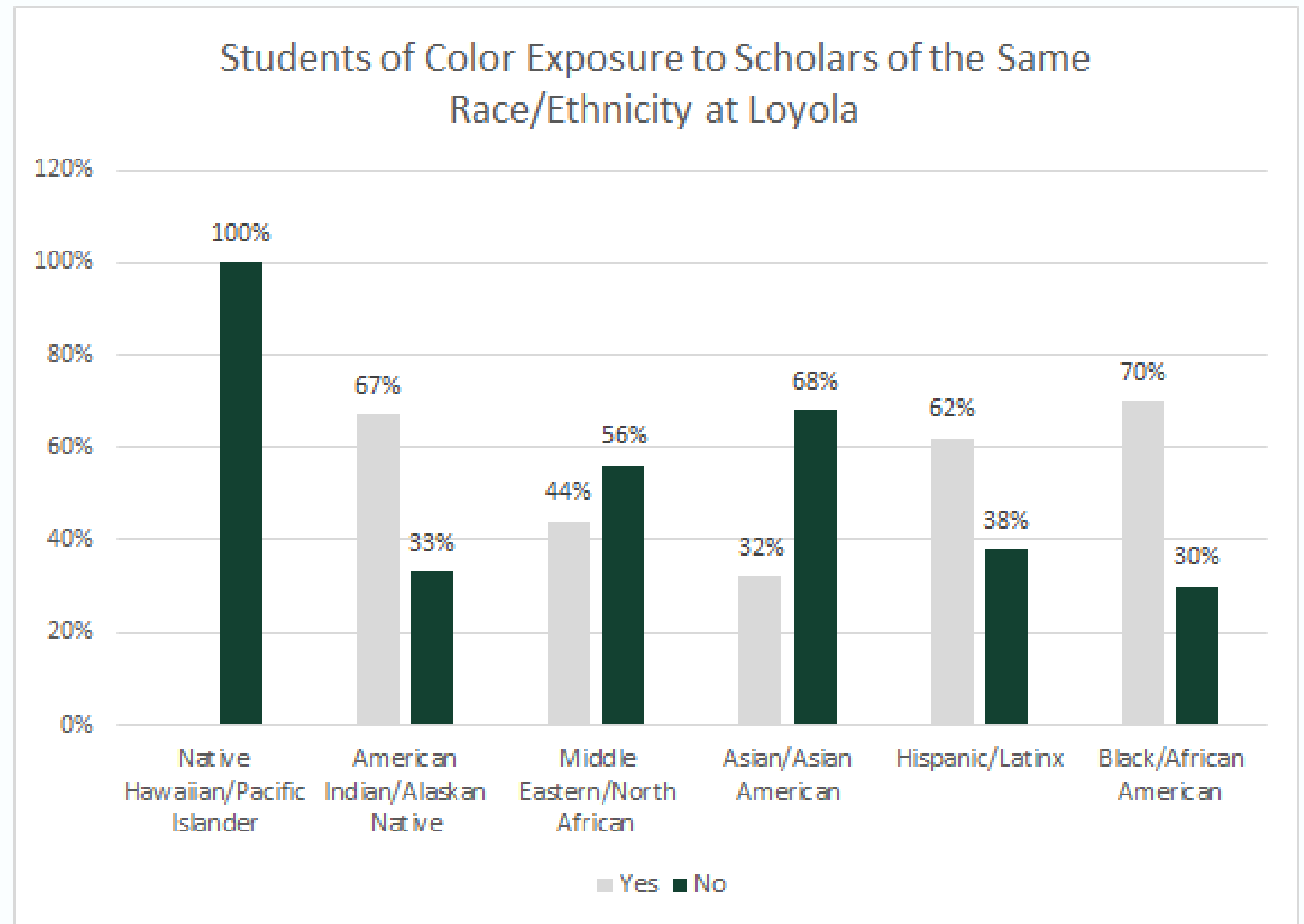
- Majority, across all races, of SOC had never had a Professor that shared their racial/ethnic identity
- 84% of SOC said they would like to have a Professor who shared their racial/ethnic identity
- A Graduate student shared with me recently:

"I almost cried...I felt so seen. Throughout my whole career in Sociology, I've never had a professor who looks like me/shares a journey similar to mine until now. This is the first time that a woman of color is teaching me, and holy f*ck does it matter"

SCHOLARS W/ SAME RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY

- Majority, across all races, of SOC had never been assigned a reading from a scholar that shared their race/ethnic identity
- 93% of SOC said they would like more exposure to scholars who shared their racial/ethnic identity
- A student from the study shared:

"I am in a seminar class where speakers are brought in and every speaker has been a white man except for one who was a Chinese man. Am I supposed to believe no women out there are making a contribution to the chemistry field? And only one person of color?" (Aran)





IS IT *JUST* A PREFERENCE?

01 HARM: WE DON'T BELONG HERE

"Not having resources allocated specially for people who hold my identities. **It is a very pointed way of saying that someone like me does not belong.**" (Prasanna)

"People don't really understand me, where I'm from, or even what Palestine is. There's a large amount of ignorance about the culture and even the locations of other countries, and I've had a lot of conversations with students on campus that include micro-aggressions against Palestinians and Arab people in general. **I feel sometimes like I just do not belong.**" (Nahid)

02 HARM: WE DON'T GET TO BE JUST STUDENTS

"In the classroom, too many professors have allowed just about anything to be said for the sake of "discussion." **My experience, and what I see lots of other students of color doing, is having to defend themselves/their communities or having to correct white students. It's maddening and tiring.**" (Lauren)

"I had one class with a professor that constantly expressed microaggressions against my Muslim identity. **Because I was the only one in the class, it was difficult for me to express my concerns or address the harm he was causing let alone correcting the insulting misinformation he spewed. It made it very difficult to absorb any of the material I learned while also causing much anxiety every week.** As it kept occurring every week and I shared the experience with close friends and colleagues, it sparked more conversation around how other professors have mistreated other students of color and students of diverse backgrounds." (Pranav)

03 HARM: WE CAN'T IMAGINE OURSELVES AS SCHOLARS

"I want to find a career in academia but **I don't see people like me there.**" (Mehtarab)

"I want to be able to see relatable role models in faculty and administration." (Maya)

It is not *just* a preference,
it is a **means of mitigating harm.**

A WAY FORWARD

- **Loyola Faculty and staff must do their OWN work:**
 - DO YOUR OWN WORK to produce safe and diverse learning spaces, which includes calling out discriminatory, microaggressive and ignorant comments in class
 - DO Research, google, ask experts, or participate in trainings/workshops when you have questions or are interested in unpacking your biases
 - Do NOT rely on students to tell you how to treat and teach them/their community
- **Loyola Departments must develop diverse curriculum that incorporates the critical work of Scholars of Color:**
 - NO syllabus should ever be ALL white or ALL male
 - NO syllabus should only include ONE non-white and non-male scholar
 - Loyola needs to integrate annual reviews of curricula/syllabi to stay apprised on diverse scholars and emerging work in the field.
- **We need to adapt the way we measure diversity at Loyola. Current metrics focus on the numbers, but eschew the disparate experiences of the diverse people we've invited to share the Loyola experience**



Universities are NOT utopias,
they are microcosms wherein America's
best and worst qualities are reproduced.

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#BLACKLIVESMATTER