

Class as a factor in dismantling systemic racism in Indianapolis

To be sure, race/racism is the defining CICF issue. Still, along with culture, class and classism issues affects race. The Southeast Working-Class Task Force (SEW-CTF) recommends CICF add class (socioeconomic status [SES]) to the various factors of intersectionality used by the foundation to understand and solve local issues.

We have to appreciate the pecking order ranking(s) not just among and between social categories (race, gender, culture, etc), but the hierarchy within categories based on class. For example, within the African American culture are the rankings around “bougie” and “ghetto.” Within the dominant white culture, “white trash” are at the bottom. See Nancy Isenberg’s *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America*

<https://www.amazon.com/White-Trash-400-Year-History-America/dp/0143129678>

This is recommended because Indy must wake up to the fact our city is segregated not only by race, but social class. Although currently neo-colonialism (i.e., gentrification) is changing the demographics of Indy’s working-class neighborhoods, according to the 2010 census our city is one of the 21 most segregated in the US. See the census maps:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/most-segregated-cities-census-maps-2013-4>.

But, as SEW-CTF will emphasize, Indianapolis is not only segregated by race, but by class. See: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/walkingsf/5560477952/in/album-72157626354149574/> Note the low percentage of African Americans south of Washington St. on the map and consequently the high number of whites (red dots), and in this case mainly working-class whites.

A lot of Indy’s segregation is due to the history of our Southside and the relations between Indy’s working-class white and Indy’s African American populations.

To prove this assertion, just drive around our city looking for Confederate flags. You won’t find any north of Washington St; you will though traveling south.

As well, except for the Barrington neighborhood (southwest of Sherman and Raymond), and the Roney Terrace (1400 S. Emerson) and Laurelwood apartments (3300 Carson Ave), African American residences are spotty on the Southside. Today, historically Black neighborhoods on Hosbrook St. in the Fountain Square and around Shapiro’s south past Morris and west to West St. have been subject to the involuntary displacement of their original residents (b.k.a., gentrification).

A historical review shows many African American felt unwelcomed in Indy’s Southside . See [Rich local \(Southside Indy\) heritage lives on in forgotten areas](#).

Indy’s Race and Cultural Leadership Network (RCRLN) adds class as a factor

What validates the importance of class is SEW-CTF made a similar suggestion to Indy’s RCLN (<http://indygipc.org/initiatives/rcrln/>). See: [A proposal to enter social class into the RCRLN structure](#). The Network agreed and plans 4 presentations around the factor of class for the 2019 year.

IUPUI’s Division of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion does not add class as a factor

This level of acceptance did not take place with the IUPUI 2019 Social Justice Symposium. See

the SEW-CTF'S proposal which will help CICF further appreciate the idea of adding social class as a factor in successfully meeting the challenges of its 5 part strategic plan for Marion County.

- [IUPUI 2019 Social Justice Symposium Proposal: Advancing the scope of the IUPUI Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion by adding social class to its definition of diversity](#)
- [IUPUI 2019 Social Justice Symposium: How adding social class to campus definitions of diversity functions in relations to symposium themes](#)
- [IUPUI 2019 Social Justice Symposium Presentation Agenda](#)

Finally, I plan on continuing a conversation I started with IUPUI's Division of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (<https://diversity.iupui.edu/>) about adding class to their definition of diversity.

John Harris Loflin
Chair
Southeast Working-Class Task Force
317-998-1339

The Southeast Working-Class Task Force was established in early 2015 by the Southeast Congress and is an outcome of the Southeast Poverty Study Circle. The task force is dedicated to the following goals regarding our southeast neighborhoods: preserving its working-class history and culture, increasing the representation of low-income families in community affairs, and easing and eradicating poverty.