Ventura County Community Foundation

APRIL 2025

Incidence of Violence in Ventura County

Looking into Its Demographic Profile in Search of Ways for Transformative Changes

Introduction

What is the root cause(s) of violence in our county? And how do we address it?

Our mission when we embarked upon this process in 2021 was clear, but where it would lead us was yet to be determined. While we sought to better understand the "why" behind gun violence in our county, it was our county's reporting data that determined the focus of this study to be one that examined violence through a broader lens of crime, encompassing not only gun violence data, but violent crime data on a more comprehensive scale. We sought to leave no stone unturned, to address this issue head on, transparently, and through many lenses of perspective.

After several years of data capturing in partnership with local law enforcement agencies, the Ventura County Community Foundation and its Incidence of Violence taskforce committee — a diverse group of county leaders from various sectors, including public safety and health care — turned over the data for analyses to the esteemed and well-renowned Dr. Jamshid Damooei, President of Damooei Global Research, Professor of Economics and Director of Economics Program, and Director of Center for Study of Economics of Social Issues (CESI) at California Lutheran University.

While the debate behind why humans commit acts of violence is complex, and often controversial, Dr. Damooei's approach in evaluating the socioeconomic factors — the socio-economic determinants of violence — through the creation of a robust Community Violence Risk Index (CVRI), has painted a comprehensive picture of the prevailing social and economic conditions that contribute to incidences of violence. The factors, when collectively reviewed, are the makeup behind one's socioeconomic status (SES) — the many social and economic indicators that impact the ability of people with a community to access resources for a successful and prosperous life.

What have we learned?

We've learned that there is a direct relationship between the occurrence of crimes, its reporting, the proportion of violent crimes, and the rate of violent gun-related crimes within the county based on the socio-economic condition of its residents. With this knowledge, and the CVRI, our county is equipped to move forward in advocating for, and investing in, action and initiatives to address the prevailing gaps in meeting the needs of our residents in locations throughout the county.

It is our hope that this study will pave the path for …

- Meaningful, data-backed solutions and initiatives focused on eliminating social and economic gaps
- Targeted solutions that take into account a community's risk index and collective social economic status
- Productive and collaborative partnerships with county partners across all sectors to develop a plan of action
- Deeper relationship building between public safety agencies and under-resourced communities

With a commitment to taking a public health approach to addressing violence, we believe it's time to bring everyone to the table to address opportunities and solutions that will collectively improve the access to a healthy, safe environment for each and every member of our county.

We share our deep gratitude to everyone who made this study possible:

Funding from California Wellness Foundation,

Taskforce Committee Members:

- Jennifer Bramlette, CAU Manager, Ventura County Sheriff's Office
- Vanessa Bechtel, President & CEO, Ventura County Community Foundation
- Dr. Thomas K. Duncan, Trauma Medical Director, Ventura County Medical Center; Medical Co-Director, Anacapa Surgical Associates
- Michael Jump, Chief Deputy District Attorney, Ventura County District Attorney
- Kelly Brown, Chief Information Officer, Interface Children & Family Services
- Jeff Miller, Commander, Special Services Division, Ventura County Sheriff's Office

Our stakeholder partners and local law enforcement agencies, and Dr. Jamshid Damooei.

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Contents

List of Tables

List of Maps

List of Exhibits

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Ventura County is located in southern California, along the east edge of the Pacific Ocean. The coastal portion occurs along the south and southwestern quarter of the county. Ventura County is bordered by Santa Barbara County on the west, Kern County on the north, Los Angeles County on the east and the Pacific Ocean generally on the south.

The July 2023 estimate puts the total population of Ventura County at 829,590, with a proportion of 21.6% under 18 years of age and 17.5% 65 years and older. Based on the latest information from the United States (US) Census, 44.5% of Ventura County is Hispanic or Latino, and 43.0% is White Alone. Ventura County has had the lowest crime rates over the last two decades among all the most populated counties in California.[1]

This study has two main components; the first part is focused on socioeconomic factors — the socioeconomic determinants/drivers of violence — contributing to the creation and spread of violence in a community based on prevailing social and economic conditions. These factors present a picture of where gaps are and how the existing shortcomings can be faced and reduced. The second part of this study looks at where acts of violence occurred and the demographic structure of the victims and perpetrators. This information is of essential significance in how a community should create the means of detecting, pursuing and mitigating acts of violence. The study indicates that the geographic spread of violence in both ways is not different. Still, we should also be aware that there may be good reasons to see some differences in the pattern of violence that may emerge from these two angles.

Socioeconomic status (SES) comprises many social and economic indicators that impact the ability of people within a community to access resources for a successful and prosperous life. Reaching a higher level of economic development enhances people's choices for a better life. SES includes educational attainment, financial security, social status and social class perceptions. SES can encompass quality-of-life attributes and the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within a society. Poverty is not a single factor; it has multi-physical and psychosocial stressors that characterize it. Furthermore, SES is a consistent and reliable predictor of many life outcomes, including physical and psychological health. Thus, SES is relevant to all behavioral and social science realms, including research, practice, education and advocacy.

[1] US Census QuickFacts Ventura County, California;

https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/venturacountycalifornia#

SES factors that will be analyzed in this report are broken down into the following categories: economic hardship and struggle; social isolation; neighborhood/geographic location; and access — or lack thereof — to social institutions.

This study took the following steps in measuring and interpreting the risk of violence within Ventura County using data from 2018-2022.

- Designed pertinent indexes for assessing the current level of violence within the county.
- Used the relevant indexes and depicted the SES of communities' vulnerability to violence.
- Created and calculated a composite index for measuring the level of risk of violence within the county, called the Community Violence Risk Index (CVRI).
- Processed all the available crime data from various law enforcement agencies to map the pattern of calls for services, violent crimes, gun-related crimes, distribution of victims of crimes and arrestees, and specific demographics of people involved in such incidences across various cities and ZIP Codes within the county.

The above steps helped the study to provide a complete analyses of findings and steps that can be taken to reduce the incidents of violence within the county and help those impacted. A summary of findings, together with its analyses, is captured below. A more detailed presentation and comments can be found in the study following this executive summary.

Crime Rates in Ventura County and Its Population Race/Ethnic Structure:

- The rate of violent crimes has declined in Ventura County since the turn of the century. The rate of crimes in 2022 was 2 per 1,000 people, close to the lowest rate of 1.9 per 1,000 in 2013. The trend of decline from the year 2000 can be seen in both property crimes and overall crime rates.
- The comparison between the 13 most populated counties in California shows that Ventura County has consistently had the lowest rate of crimes since the turn of the century.
- A similar conclusion is reached when we look at the rate of crimes among the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG).
- Ventura County has a diverse population, and the proportion of various races and ethnicities has changed over time.

Executive Summary

- The changes have been impacted by a combination of the population structure of multiple groups, the movement of people within California and the nation as a whole, and immigration over several decades.
- While knowing the construction of race and ethnicity is vital in understanding and making sense of the absolute number of people impacted by crimes as victims or perpetrators, the analyses is based on the proportion of various groups within each race or ethnicity. Paying attention to population size in each ZIP Code is also essential.
- White Alone and Hispanic or Latino (of any race) form the two highest proportions of the population within the county. The trend also shows that the proportion of Hispanics or Latinos (of any race) has risen.
- ZIP Codes with a majority Hispanic or Latino population are concentrated in the western part of the county. Their proportion is often large in the areas where they comprise most of the people. However, most ZIP Codes have a diverse population based on race and ethnicity.
- African Americans form a small proportion of the total population of Ventura County.

The Calls for Service, the Pattern of Uniform Crime Reporting Across Different Demographics Throughout Ventura County, the Pattern of Crimes (Arrestees and Victims)

Calls for Service

- The study calculates the number of calls for service across different geographic locations across the county's cities for each year between 2018-2022 and as a 5-year average.
- The ratios of violent crime calls to all calls were very low within the cities based on the average of the 5-year period (2018-2022).
- In most cases, the ratios are persistent over the five years of our observation. A deeper study of such patterns may help reach a more optimum level of policing among the cities.
- For the purposes of this report, "all calls for service" were used, meaning that a respondent call for police services, as well as for proactive policing — where calls for service are generated without a community member's call for police services — were factored in, without separation. While it is important to make the distinction between

the number of calls for service and the purpose behind the call, the lack of consistent data from all law enforcement offices did not enable us to make a clear distinction. What determines the number of calls, and how can such an indicator be meaningfully related to an optimum level of policing are essential questions that warrant further research in partnership with agencies' calling services department.

The Pattern of Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR)

- Between 2018 and 2022, the standard practice for comparing crime statistics in the US is via summary reporting through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) system, which is a nationwide, cooperative, statistical effort of more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies voluntarily reporting data on crimes brought to their attention.
- The crimes reported are either violent or property-related. Violent crimes include homicide, rape/criminal sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault. Property crimes include burglary, theft, theft of motor vehicles and arson. For the purposes of this study, only violent UCR reports were reviewed and analyzed.
- It is important to note that being a victim of crime, any crime for that matter, can be traumatic. However, in comparison to the State of California or other large counties within California, Ventura County's crime rate, and more specifically, its violent crime rate, is extremely low.
- Using violent UCR for the last five years (2018 to 2022), several ZIP Codes in West County appear to have had more violence in their neighborhood than in East County. ZIP Codes in Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Paula and Piru (the latter two of which are also considered part of the Santa Clara River Valley but for the purposes of this report will be referred to as part of West County) are among such geographical locations.
- On the other side of this comparison, ZIP Codes in East County, such as Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village, Moorpark, Newbury Park and Simi Valley, are among areas with a lower rate of violent crimes.
- Gun-related violence shows a similar pattern of occurrence across the county. ZIP Code 93033 City of Oxnard shows the highest rate of gun-related violence occurrence. Gun-related violence is also relatively high in other ZIP Codes in Oxnard, Santa Paula and Ventura.

Executive Summary

- Between 2018 and 2022, there were 7,378 violent crimes analyzed, and of those, 1,195 crimes involved a firearm (16%). One of the more curious findings from the distribution of violent and gun-related crimes in Ventura County, is the pattern of a significant portion of gun-related crime within several ZIP Codes which generally do not have a high rate of crimes according to the UCR. This includes Westlake Village, Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley. In some other ZIP Codes in Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Paula and Piru, the proportion of UCR-based crimes and gun-related violence, out of all crimes, is relatively high. This suggests that in some areas with a low occurrence of violent crimes, the probability of violent crimes being gun-related may be higher than in other places.
- Between 2018 and 2022, Ventura County reported 96 homicides and made 41 arrests for homicide/murder. Of those arrested for homicide, Hispanics represent the largest share of those arrested for murder (23 individuals).

Pattern of Crimes (Arrestees and Victims)

The Pattern of Arrests and Demographics of Arrestees

- An overall comparison over the last five years (2018 to 2022) suggests an increase in the number of crime locations since the start of COVID-19. Overall, the changes have been more significant in West County than in East County.
- The rate of violent crime arrests varies remarkably among ZIP Codes. If we are supposing that the rate of arrests for violent crimes can be considered a reasonable indicator of the occurrence of crimes in various places, the results — with some exceptions — support the close relationship between the event of crimes and the SES of those arrested for the crimes.
- In comparing the arrest rates and race to the Census data for Ventura County, African Americans present a much higher rate of being arrested as a proportion of their population in the county. However, it is also essential to re-state that we have a comparatively much smaller proportion of African Americans in the county than White Alone or Hispanic. This presents a small absolute number over the period of time and in every year reported. This observation has its importance and needs to be investigated much further.

The Pattern of Victims of Crimes

- In most cases, we can observe a similarity in this pattern compared with the distribution of crimes through UCR. However, this appears to be different in some places.

- In ZIP Codes 93041 Port Hueneme and 93060 Santa Paula, the rates of crimes are relatively much higher when compared with the frequency of reported victims. On the other side, in ZIP Codes 93012 Camarillo, 91361 Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Thousand Oaks, 91362 Thousand Oaks, 93063 Simi Valley and 93065 Simi Valley, the crime rate is much lower compared with their relative rate of reported victims of crimes. This may suggest some under-reporting of victims, which is conceivable for various economic or social reasons. Reasons may include the reluctance of victims to report — or come forth and ask for protection or compensation — due to social isolation or fear of consequences. While it should be added that fear may originate from a segment of the population's perception of their own social status, such as being undocumented immigrants, the connection between this fear and consequences is not based on survey of relevant population and is not supported by any concrete research. It should also be mentioned that services provided by law enforcement agencies are not based on one's immigration status.

- In the data reviewed for this study, there were 28,378 victims reported in Ventura County between 2018 and 2022. One of the essential ways of helping victims of crimes is to have a clear policy for protecting victims. This makes it necessary to follow a trauma-informed and victim-centered approach by creating procedures and modalities that prepare law enforcement personnel for such treatment of victims. Within Ventura County, multiple community-based organizations and law enforcement agencies use this approach. For example, this type of approach is seen within the implementation of the Family Justice Center and in human trafficking investigations conducted by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office. These agencies have adopted victim-centered and trauma-informed methods in serving their clients. More information is provided in the study.

- When reviewing victims and their race, African Americans account for 976 victims out of 28,379 (3.4%), while the ratio of African Americans in Ventura County is 1.7%. The findings of this study show that African Americans are heavily impacted and have fallen victim to violent crimes at a disproportionate rate compared to their proportion of the population in the county.

Neighborhoods With the Highest Risk of Violence and Types of Risk Factors Based on SES:

On Risk of Violence Due to Economic Hardship and Struggle

- Ventura County has a highly imbalanced economy with affluence and extreme

impoverishment in its various population centers. The areas are in close vicinity of each other. Some residents are under enormous hardship within the county, and others enjoy considerable comfort and affluence.

- Among the ZIP Codes facing these adverse economic conditions are 93023 Ojai, 93001 Ventura, 93030 Oxnard, 93036 Oxnard, 93041 Port Hueneme, 93060 Santa Paula, 93033 Oxnard and 93040 Piru, which are home to nearly 302,000 county residents, or 36% of its total county population, based 2021 data.

- Many working families and individuals in these areas present high levels of labor force participation but also suffer from short- and long-term unemployment. The rates of poverty in general and in families with children are high. Many families in these areas do not have health insurance. They suffer an increased risk of violence due to adverse economic conditions in these communities.

On Risk of Violence Due to Social Isolation

- ZIP Codes 93015 Fillmore, 93001 Ventura, 93041 Port Hueneme, 93033 Oxnard, 93030 Oxnard, 93060 Santa Paula and 93040 Piru face the highest risk of violence resulting from social isolation.

- The emerging map of the areas with the highest risk of violence due to social isolation includes many of the same as those with adverse economic conditions. More than 272,000 people live in these areas, or 32% of the total population of the entire county.

- Self-care is a common and widely observed problem in our county. Based on a prior study conducted for Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF), Ventura County is aging rapidly and it should not surprise anyone that lack of sufficient care within the county is and will continue to become a larger problem in the years ahead.[2] Unfortunately, the inability to care for oneself is profound and runs into several existing issues that stem from our society's shared work and life philosophy. At present, society does not adequately plan for long-term care for aging residents, especially within the family dynamic. Ventura County's population is coming of age, and this change brings its share of self-care and increased risk of violence.

- The dependency ratio is a demographic measure of the number of dependents to the total working-age population in a country or region. As the population gets older, this

[2] The Future of Caregiving for an Aging Population: Increasing Community and Economic Vitality in Ventura County, Commissioned by Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF), January 2019. https://vccf.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/vccf-ltc-final.pdf

ratio changes, which can be a good indicator of the needs of an aging population.

- Among the causes of social isolation, we need to mention English language isolation, the digital divide, problems faced by the foreign-born population and self-care difficulties.

On Risk of Violence Resulting from Neighborhood

- ZIP Codes 93060 Santa Paula, 93003 Ventura, 93004 Ventura, 93041 Port Hueneme, 93035 Oxnard, 93001 Ventura, 93036 Oxnard, 93030 Oxnard and 93033 Oxnard are home to 46% of the county's total population, or nearly 390,000 people.
- These areas face a high risk of violence due to problems among younger populations ranging from relatively higher school dropout and suspension rates, and teen birth rate.
- Some of these areas also experience a high eviction rate and homelessness. They also suffer from high rates of domestic violence and child abuse. The risk includes a high rate of property crimes and gun-related violence.

On Risk of Violence Resulting from Lack of Supportive Institutions

- 79% of Ventura County's population, in other words, approximately 664,000 of the county population, suffer from various risks as the result of lack of access to supportive institutions. The truth is that only a tiny fraction of the county population within a few ZIP Codes have the supportive institutions they need. We should think creatively on how to extend creation of supportive institutions across the county. One possible course of action is to promote social entrepreneurship through creation of nonprofits.
- It is essential to realize that some of the socio-economically challenged ZIP Codes are among the places with a higher index value and, therefore, at lesser risk of violence due to the lack of supportive social institutions.
- These areas show the importance of community building, pro-social places, and volunteering, which exist in some communities but not others.
- This is an important issue that brings attention to community togetherness. This requires a deeper study of how a sense of community can be created and strengthened.

On Overall Community Violence Risk (CVRI)

- Every ZIP Code within the county faces some risk of violence. However, this study shows

that ZIP Codes 93003 Ventura, 93041 Port Hueneme, 93040 Piru, 93036 Oxnard, 93060 Santa Paula, 93001 Ventura, 93030 Oxnard and 93033 Oxnard face a relatively higher level of risk of violence. These areas are home to some 333,560 people, 39% of the county's population. It should be emphasized that such categorization is based on a relative set of standards and does not present an overall lower or tolerable risk of violence in many other places.

This study established an unmistakable and unquestionable relationship between the occurrence of crimes, its reporting, the proportion of violent crimes, and the rate of violent gun-related crimes within the county based on the socioeconomic condition of its residents. The finding of this study does not present a relatively high rate of crimes in the county. However, it does identify some of the county's prevailing gaps in meeting the needs of its population in various geographic locations (ZIP Codes).

The question becomes, what can be done to reduce the risk of crimes for the county's residents through greater investment in all possible areas of economic development? The study raises some additional questions that can only be answered with more research and information and, therefore, refrains from speculating where the information is not complete.

The study lists what should be done and where the needs are more urgent and require greater attention from policymakers, nonprofits and existing government institutions. **For this summary, we list a few below and invite the readers to review the discussion of the recommendation from the relevant part of the study.**

- **Food insecurity should be addressed seriously**. The county's total rate of food stamps is 7.2% of families. The entire proportion of families entitled to food stamps in ZIP Codes 93001 Ventura, 93023 Ojai, 93030 Oxnard, 93033 Oxnard, 93040 Piru, 93041 Port Hueneme and 93060 Santa Paula together reach 53.6% of all families in need of food stamps. The same ZIP Codes form 49.2% of all food deserts in the county.
- **Lack of medical insurance in areas with more foreign-born residents.** These areas include 93030 Oxnard, with 34.1% foreign-born, 17.8% uninsured, and 93033 Oxnard, with 40.0% foreign-born with 21.3% uninsured; 93036 Oxnard, with 25.7% foreign-born with

10.3% of uninsured, 93036 Oxnard with 25.7% of foreign-born with 10.3% of uninsured, and Santa Paula with 27.5% of foreign-born with 11.4% of the uninsured population.

- **High poverty in households headed by single mothers.**
- **English language isolation.** While the overall percentage of the population with English language isolation in Ventura County is 13.5%, the share of English language isolation collectively in ZIP Codes 93001 Ventura, 93015 Fillmore, 93030 Oxnard, 93033 Oxnard, 93040 Piru, 93041 Port Hueneme and 93060 Santa Paula together account for 56.4% of all in the county.
- **Demographic dependency**
- **Self-care difficulty**
- **Homelessness**
- **Youth problems and challenges in schools**
- **Number and types of nonprofits established** (nonprofits are vital in helping to enfranchise the underserved within a society)
- **The number of pro-social places** (community associations, recreation centers, religious institutions, places of worship, etc.)
- **Community health centers**

Introduction: Roots of Violence in Individuals and Communities

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The prevalence of violence in human societies and throughout history is controversial. The question is, are humans biologically developed/evolved to be violent or is violence a byproduct of living together and going through economic, social and cultural changes? The idea of a biological imperative for violence received more attention in the 1970s with the emergence of a new discipline: sociobiology. While this debate is far from settled among biologists, anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists, credible evidence supports that violence may not be inscribed in our genes.

In 1986, David Adams, a neurophysiologist and psychologist at Wesleyan University, gathered a group of 20 scientists, including biologists, psychologists and neuroscientists, to issue what became known as the Seville Statement on Violence. It declared, among other things, that "it is scientifically incorrect to say that war or any other violent behavior is genetically programmed into our human nature." The statement was later adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an agency of the United Nations, that promotes international collaboration and peace. It was an effort to shake off the "biological pessimism" that had taken hold and clarify that peace is a realistic goal.[3] [4]

The necessary deduction from the studies of early human societies shows, that when faced with crises, a community is more resilient if it is based on cooperation and mutual support rather than individualism and competition. While violent behavior toward others is old, war has not always existed, and it should not be assumed as an inevitable part of our lives. The existing research suggests that the origins of violence appear to correlate with the development of the production economy, which, very early on, led to a radical change in social structures. Such understanding should lead us to the importance of individuals' and families' socioeconomic status (SES) for tracing the causes of violence within our communities. This should also bring us together to look further into what measures should be taken to protect our communities against violence. Finally, the most important takeaway from this introduction is that community violence is a preventable social, economic, cultural and natural phenomenon. Our communities can, and do, come together with a complex set of existing socioeconomic differences. Therefore, any intervention for creating resilience toward violence has two distinct dimensions.

- First, helping those impacted by the debilitating consequences of violence. This is an essential short-term measure.
- Second, bringing about systematic changes that can alter the social and economic

[3] Josh Gabbatiss (2017) Nasty, Brutish and Short: Are Humans DNA-Wired to Kill? Scientific Americans Stories by Sapiens, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/nasty-brutish-and-short-are-humans-dna-wired-to-kill/

[4] UNESCO Courier (n.d.) Building Peace in the Minds of Men and Women, https://en.unesco.org/courier/2020-1/origins-violence

influence of people over one another within a community, resulting in greater power-sharing, cooperation, understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Such transformation needs a much deeper look into the socioeconomic structure of the population in a society or community. The observation must lead to planning for change. Such planning needs long-term investment in people and the creation of institutions that can enhance their ability and capability to choose a peaceful path toward coexistence with others.

There is a distinction between individual and community violence. Violence is often considered a form of abuse. It is viewed as a pattern of behavior intended to establish and maintain power over others within a family or other social environment. While violent offenders are most often known to their victims, acts of violence and abuse may also be committed by strangers.[5]

Violence and abuse may occur only once or continue and escalate for much longer. In any form, violence and abuse profoundly affect individual health and well-being. The roots of all forms of violence are founded in the many types of inequality that continue to exist and grow in society. Violence is a choice, and it is preventable. There are various forms of violence within a community, such as physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, cultural, verbal and financial, including neglect.[6] Each type of violence can manifest itself in many forms.

There is also a belief that no single definition of personal violence exists. Notions of individual violence are socially constructed. Thus, different people understand personal violence differently, with the interpretation of violence affected by social location. For some, personal violence includes harassment, physical, emotional and sexual abuse, fighting, hitting, and threats. For others, personal violence is any behavior that triggers fear in another.[7]

Community violence is exposure to interpersonal violence committed in public by individuals unrelated to the victim. Common types of community violence that affect youth include individual and group conflicts (e.g., bullying, fights among gangs and other groups, shootings in public areas such as schools and communities, civil wars in foreign countries, or "war-like" conditions in the United States cities, and spontaneous or terrorist attacks).8 Community violence can happen suddenly and without warning. Consequently, youth and families who have experienced community violence often have heightened fears that harm could come at any time and experience the world as unsafe and terrifying. In addition, although some types of trauma are inadvertent, community violence is an intentional attempt to hurt one or more people. It includes homicides, sexual assaults, robberies and weapons attacks (e.g., bats, knives, guns).[9]

The impact of community violence is often ignored, but the consequences remain within society and show themselves in many forms. It is correct to say that not measuring the

[5] Defining Violence and Abuse, Violence Prevention Initiative; https://www.gov.nl.ca/vpi/about/defining-violence-and-abuse/

[6] Ibid.

[7] Kimberly M. Williams (2005)., Chapter 1: The Important Role of Personal Violence at WANTS. Vol. 281, Socially Constructed School Violence: Lessons from the Field (2005), pp. 37-51 (15 pages).

[8] Community Violence; The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/community-violence

[9] Ibid.

Introduction: Roots of Violence in Individuals and Communities

negative impacts does not mean that individuals and groups do not suffer the consequences. Youth who grow up in communities historically encountering structural inequalities and marginalization often experience several stressors that negatively impact their development.[10]

A recent study found that 35% of adolescents experienced at least one form of community violence in their lifetime. These rates are higher among adolescents of color residing in urban, historically underserved neighborhoods (54% for Black youth and 43% for Latinx youth) than White adolescents (22%) and adolescents growing up in suburban or rural settings. Adolescents exposed to community violence have a high risk of internalizing symptoms, experiencing emotional problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, and engaging in antisocial behavior such as aggression, fighting and delinquency. Moreover, the emotional and behavioral effects of exposure to community violence can lead to negative consequences, such as persistent mental illness, perpetration of violence, criminal activity, and poor school performance or school failure.[11]

Violence can have much deeper roots in our culture and history. It is essential to be clear about these, untangle the mystery and look for solutions. Solutions always start by revisiting the past, finding the root(s) of violence, and working toward reconciliation and peace.[12]

Knowing that community violence exposure is far greater among urban and marginalized adolescents is essential. Although there is strong evidence that community violence exposure is associated with negative consequences, prior studies and theories suggest that these associations may differ due to specific exposure characteristics. Sara K. Pittman and Albert D. Farrell (2022) studied a group of people and divided them into five subgroups who reported distinct patterns of violence exposure: limited exposure; witnessed less severe violence, not victimized; witnessed extreme violence, not victimized; witnessed less severe violence, some victimization; and high violence exposure. The "witnessed less severe violence, some victimization" and "high violence exposure" subgroups reported the highest frequency of physical aggression and anxiety levels compared to all other subgroups. The limited exposure subgroup reported the lowest frequencies of physical aggression. The findings suggest that the form of exposure (witnessing or victimization) is an essential distinction in examining associations with adolescent adjustment. Limited support was found for differences related to familiarity with the victim and the severity of the violence.[13] The policy implication of such findings is critical in learning about violence and exposure of victims to the severity of violence and its consequences for the victims.

[10] Foster, H., & Brooks‐Gunn, J. (2009). Toward a stress process model of Children's exposure to physical family and community violence. Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 12(2), 71–94. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-009-0049-0

[11] Sarah K. Pittman and Albert D. Farrell (2022), Patterns of community violence exposure among urban adolescents and their associations with adjustment, Society for Community Action Research; https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/ajcp.12598

[12] Howard Smead (2020). Why Americans are So Violent, Warrior Nation: The Historical Roots of American Violence, http://www.howardsmead.com/

[13] Sarah K Pittman and Albert D Farrell (2022), Patterns of community violence exposure among urban adolescents and their associations with adjustment, National Library of Medicine (NIH)

A good example of intervention that addresses some of these findings is the creation of Camp HOPE America. It is the first evidence-based camping and mentoring program for children exposed to trauma in the United States. The goal is to give children and teens their childhood back and help them find a "Pathway to HOPE." The vision of such a program is to break the generational cycle of family violence by offering healing and hope to children and adults who have witnessed and been impacted by family violence. The Ventura County Family Justice Center (VCFJC) has been a pioneer in establishing and following this program for years.

An essential argument about determinants/drivers of violence beyond adverse socioeconomic factors, is the relationship between mental health and violence. There are three critical questions to ask about mental illness and violence. Are the mentally ill violent? Are the mentally ill at increased risk of experiencing or perpetrating violence? Is the public at risk?[14] The study by Heather Stuart (2003) shows that mental disorders are neither necessary nor sufficient causes of violence. The study argues that significant determinants of violence continue to be socio-demographic and economic factors. Substance abuse is a substantial determinant/driver of violence, whether in the context of a concurrent mental illness or not.[15]

In brief, the relationship between mental illness and violent behavior has profound implications from a public health perspective. Since current evidence does not suggest that severe mental illness can independently predict violent behavior, public efforts are required to deal with discriminatory attitudes toward patients with mental illness as potential violent offenders. The role of medication in controlling violent behavior and the target symptoms needs to be further clarified. Also, individual and contextual factors in mediating violence must be explored further, and appropriate intervention strategies must be formulated.[16]

This study has two main components; the first part is focused on socioeconomic factors — the socioeconomic determinants/drivers of violence — contributing to the creation and spread of violence in a community based on prevailing social and economic conditions. These factors present a picture of where gaps are and how the existing shortcomings can be faced and reduced. The second part of this study looks at where acts of violence occurred and the demographic structure of the victims and perpetrators. This information is of essential significance in how a community should create the means of detecting, pursuing and mitigating acts of violence. The study indicates that the geographic spread of violence in both ways is not different. Still, we should also be aware that there may be good reasons to see some differences in the pattern of violence that may emerge from these two angles.

[14] Heather Stuart (2003). Violence and mental illness: an overview, NIH, National Library of Me Medicine, Center for Biotechnology Information; https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1525086/

[15] Ibid.

[16] Mohit Varshney, Ananya Mahapatra, Vijay Krishnan, Rishab Gupta, Koushik Sinha Deb (2016)., Violence and mental illness: what is the true story? Journal of Epistemology and Community Health, BMJ Journals, https://jech.bmj.com/content/jech/70/3/223.full.pdf

1. Socioeconomic Determinants/Drivers of Violence

1. Socioeconomic Determinants/Drivers of Violence

One of the most essential elements of any anti-violence effort in a society is preventing violence before its development and possible later escalation. This can be seen in the CDC's Social-Ecological Model.[17]

Source: Center for Disease Control (CDC) Violence Prevention.

The above model indicates a rather complex interaction between individual, relationship between people, community and societal factors. It helps to understand and analyze various factors contributing to forming and escalating violence within communities. It allows us to know how such developments can create risk for violence and what steps can be taken to control the conditions and protect people from experiencing or perpetrating violence.

Socioeconomic status (SES) comprises many social and economic indicators that impact the ability of people within a community to access resources for a successful and prosperous life. Reaching a higher level of economic development enhances people's choices for a better life. SES includes educational attainment, financial security, subjective social status and social class perceptions. SES can encompass quality-of-life attributes and the opportunities and privileges afforded to people within a society.[18] Poverty is not a single factor; it has multi-physical and psychosocial stressors that characterize it. Furthermore, SES is a consistent and reliable predictor of many life outcomes, including physical and psychological health. Thus, SES is relevant to all behavioral and social science realms, including research, practice, education and advocacy.[19]

[17] The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention; http://medbox.iiab.me/modules/en-cdc/www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html

[18] American Psychological Association (n.d.) Violence & Socioeconomic Status, https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/violence

[19] Ibid

Violence can be divided into two categories to form a better understanding of the causes of violence and develop relevant mitigation policies.

- **Interpersonal Violence:** Violence is not solely defined and considered to be fully explained by SES. Exposure to violence transcends age and SES, affecting all income levels, education and occupation. This category of violence can be divided into the following types:
  - Childhood
  - Adolescents
  - Adults
  - Older Adults

- **Community Violence:** Community-level risk factors for violence are much broader and include a wide spectrum of social, economic and cultural factors. They can be listed as follows and extended further.[20]
  - Increased level of unemployment
  - Poverty and its breakdown as short-term/transitory, long-term/lasting and chronic
  - The emerging conditions that impact social mobility and opportunity to escape chronic poverty
  - Decreased levels of economic opportunity and community participation
  - Poor housing conditions
  - Gang activities
  - Emotional distress and a lack of access to services
  - Existence or lack of community arrangements to buffer individuals and communities from risks of community violence
  - Protection and other social and economic arrangements in communities include:
    - Stable economy
    - Positive social norms
    - Abundancy or scarcity of resources
    - Levels of social cohesion
    - Family support and rewards for pro-social community involvement
    - Effectiveness of prevailing laws and access to law enforcement resources

[20] Ibid

2. Measuring the Risk of Violence Based on Its Various Components

2. Measuring the Risk of Violence Based on Its Various Components

This study took the following steps in measuring and interpreting the risk of violence within a community.

- Designed a pertinent database to assess the current level of violence within the county.
- Created an extensive database to depict the SES of communities' vulnerability to violence.
- Created and calculated a composite index — a Community Violence Risk Index (CVRI) — for measuring the level of risk of violence within the county.
- Provided an analysis of the findings that can support a series of relevant recommendations/policy implementation.

This section of the study brings all possible SES factors based on the existing literature, which can be argued as contributing toward the creation and escalation of risk of violence in communities. These factors include a wide range of indicators, which need to be categorized and broken down into their relevant separate categories. The ultimate objective is to combine the following indices to achieve the CVRI goal.

- Risk of Violence Resulting from Adverse Economic Conditions
- Risk of Violence Resulting from Social Isolation
- Risk of Violence Resulting from Neighborhood
- Risk of Violence Resulting from Vacuum in Supportive Social Institutions

Following the above plan — but noting there were some barriers in access to certain data sets — we developed a detailed picture of all contributing factors toward the risk of violence in each neighborhood within ZIP Codes and across the county that we were able to analyze.

While more detailed information makes the recommendations more relevant and geographically accurate, some indicators and data were only available at the city or school district levels, making it difficult to reach a high level of detailed information consistently. We therefore decided to use the following structure for data gathering and processing.

- We produced risk of violence in its various segments in areas where data was, and is, available based on ZIP Codes.
- For areas where information was unavailable on ZIP Code basis, city patterns were used for every indicator.

- Because school districts have a different geographic distribution of population, we used a corresponding map of fitting ZIP Codes, noting that there are often splits in matching, and that some ZIP Codes extend into two adjacent districts.

Every indicator has its units of measurement as percentages indicating the prevailing conditions. The direction of change can be in either of the two sides: high value, which shows resilience, or the very opposite, which is indicated as a lower value. For example, a lower poverty rate means the area is better, whereas a higher unemployment rate indicates economic strife. In addition, the range of numerical values may have unclear impacts on how we measure the index.

Therefore, we then took the following steps to prepare our indicators for the creation of a composite index:

- Finding Outliers: We took a series of actions to find the outliers in our data series.
- Normalization of Data Without Outliers: We adjusted outliers by manually replacing values more than 100 with 100 and less than 0 with 0. We then took the minimum and maximum of our data and used the following formula to normalize each value: x (x-new min)/(new max-new min), multiplied by 100. By employing these steps, we arranged all indicators within the 0 to 100 range.
- Uniformity of Values and Color Coding of the Data: In order to transform the data where low values uniformly indicate higher risk and high values indicate a lower risk for every ZIP Code, we changed each data value with the opposite implication to (100-x), where x represents the observed value showing a direct relationship with higher risk. These made all of our values show a higher level of risk if the value was low, whereas a high value indicates the risk was low. We then added the following color-coding system:
  - Values between 0 and 20 are **Red**
  - Values between 20.1 and 40 are **Orange**
  - Values between 40.1 and 60 are **Yellow**
  - Values between 60.1 and 80 are **Light Green**
  - Values between 80.1 and 100 are **Dark Green**

These numerical values within their appropriate color codes provide a precise visual and quantitative measure of risk in each risk category.

2. Measuring the Risk of Violence Based on Its Various Components

2.1. Risk of Violence Resulting from Adverse Economic Conditions

This is broken down into the following indicators:

1. Rate of unemployment
2. Rate of long-term unemployment
3. Proportion of labor participation of people older than 65 years of age in the labor market by age structure
4. Educational attainment (high school diploma or lower)
5. Rate of poverty
6. Rate of poverty in families with related children under 18 years of age
7. Women-headed households in poverty
8. Gender difference in pay
9. Food stamps
10. Food deserts
11. Lack of medical insurance

Following the explained procedure, we gathered the data and arrived at the following breakdown of individual indicators and the index of risk of violence due to adverse economic conditions.

Table 1: Risk of Violence Resulting from Adverse Economic Conditions

	Index Risk of Violence Resulting from Adverse Economic Conditions	Rate of Unemployment	Rate of Long-term Unemployment	Proportion of Labor Participation of People Older than 65 Years of Age in the Labor Market by Age Structure	Educational Attainment (High School Diploma or Lower)	Rate of Poverty	Rate of Poverty in Families with Related Children under 18 Years of Age	Women Headed Households in Poverty	Gender Difference in Pay	Food Stamps	Food Deserts	Lack of Medical Insurance
91377 Agoura Hills, Oak Park	87.5	65.9	100.0	45.7	100.0	86.0	97.0	100.0	94.6	100.0	72.9	100.0
91361 Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village	84.7	73.5	100.0	19.0	93.6	100.0	100.0	82.8	81.2	98.2	94.3	89.4
91320 Newbury Park	80.4	76.5	100.0	49.0	82.3	84.2	78.4	60.7	100.0	83.3	88.7	80.8
91362 Thousand Oaks	78.3	61.4	100.0	44.8	82.7	77.2	89.2	61.4	88.2	92.3	74.3	90.1
91360 Thousand Oaks	76.6	58.3	100.0	67.6	76.8	71.1	96.4	66.3	70.4	79.8	78.8	77.5
93065 Simi Valley	71.8	59.8	80.0	79.6	69.8	70.2	70.7	60.4	73.4	75.6	71.0	79.5
93063 Simi Valley	71.6	56.8	80.0	70.7	58.1	68.4	72.5	73.4	64.6	74.4	81.4	87.4
93021 Moorpark	71.1	43.2	80.0	76.1	71.2	93.9	93.4	62.0	24.1	85.7	72.6	80.2
93010 Camarillo	70.5	47.7	80.0	53.0	74.2	78.1	86.2	66.9	54.4	76.8	76.8	80.8
93012 Camarillo	69.1	38.6	80.0	61.8	81.6	70.2	63.5	33.5	88.0	89.9	60.9	92.1
93022 Oak View	66.9	100.0	40.0	82.4	58.4	84.2	85.0	83.5	51.2	75.6	20.4	55.7
93004 Ventura	62.9	49.2	40.0	79.8	67.2	81.6	96.4	96.8	30.0	64.3	6.1	80.8
93003 Ventura	62.4	41.7	40.0	54.1	71.8	57.9	84.4	75.0	35.9	55.4	88.5	82.1
93035 Oxnard	60.1	50.8	0.0	66.6	59.3	81.6	86.2	91.6	25.0	67.9	75.3	57.0
93015 Fillmore	55.2	72.0	40.0	81.7	33.6	73.7	79.6	71.1	27.1	3.0	61.0	64.3
93066 Somis	54.1	68.9	40.0	0.0	61.7	56.1	32.3	63.0	34.2	94.0	56.7	88.1
93023 Ojai	50.1	34.1	40.0	13.8	69.0	64.0	43.7	43.6	94.2	75.0	0.0	73.6
93001 Ventura	42.5	47.7	40.0	53.8	59.3	15.8	30.5	29.6	50.5	38.7	56.7	44.5
93030 Oxnard	41.2	56.8	0.0	95.8	17.7	47.4	50.9	59.1	1.5	24.4	100.0	0.0
93036 Oxnard	35.4	12.9	0.0	100.0	31.7	42.1	48.5	44.5	22.1	33.3	9.1	45.1
93041 Point Mogu Nawc	34.2	26.5	0.0	76.9	36.0	30.7	37.1	46.5	35.0	45.2	0.0	41.8
93060 Santa Paula	27.9	31.1	40.0	90.5	16.3	0.0	4.8	11.8	59.1	15.5	0.0	37.9
93033 Oxnard	27.0	17.4	0.0	98.8	0.0	19.3	25.1	40.3	0.0	0.0	96.3	0.0
93040 Piru	26.3	0.0	0.0	27.5	10.7	43.9	0.0	0.0	74.7	23.8	56.7	51.7

Source: US Census American Community Survey[21], PUMS (Public Use Microdata Sample)[22], Health Matters in Ventura County, and author's calculation.

The gap between affluent and deprived areas is very significant. The only issue that may bring additional complexity is the age structure in calculating the labor force participation rate among a population of 65 and older. The reason for including this indicator was to show the impact of the need to work at older age among various communities. However, when a community has a young population, the indicators become lower, and it does not necessarily present the need for the community to work at an old age since a much lower proportion of the community is in a relatively younger generation. Setting aside this complexity, findings from this index are significant in explaining the roots of violence.

[21] US Census American Community Survey; https://data.census.gov/advanced:
– Rate of Unemployment – S2301;
– Proportion of Labor Participation of People Older than 65 Years of Age in the Labor Market by Age Structure – S2301, S0101;
– Educational Attainment – S1501;
– Rate of Poverty – S1701;
– Rate of Poverty in Families with Related Children under 18 Years of Age – S1702;
– Women-Headed Households in Poverty – S1702;
– Gender Difference in Pay – S2001;
– Food Stamps – S2201;
– Lack of Medical Insurance – S2701.

[22] PUMS (Public Use Microdata Sample); https://data.census.gov/mdat/#/search?ds=ACSPUMS5Y2021&cv=WKW&rv=ucgid,ESR&wt=PWGTP&g=7950000US0611101,0611102,0611103,0611104,0611105,0611106

2. Measuring the Risk of Violence Based on Its Various Components

Social and Economic Issues to Pay Close Attention

- Long-term unemployment creates a dividing line between the affluent and the deprived.[23] Unemployment and crimes or propensity to commit crimes is well established in the existing literature. Martin Nordin and Daniel Almén (2017) investigated the relationship between unemployment and crime. The study focuses on the effects of long-term unemployment on crime. Their research finding shows that long-term unemployment is strongly associated with violent crime, an impact more significant than total unemployment on property crime in this and most previous studies.

- Long-term unemployment underlines a relatively higher propensity for committing a crime (particularly violent crime) than total unemployment. The duration of unemployment plausibly increases the strain that fosters violence.[24]

- Educational attainment is another critical indicator of community violence. Economic, social and criminological studies all point out the same findings that higher education is likely to reduce the incidence of crimes.[25]

- Poverty, in general, and in families with children, is an essential determinant of violence.[26]

- The gender pay gap is an essential factor that, combined with becoming a single mother and head of household in poverty, creates a desperate socioeconomic problem in many of our deprived communities. The escalation of such conditions in many communities supports the arguments for a debilitating pain that many families suffer from, and it is known as the prevalence of feminization of poverty in our communities.[27]

- Being low-income results in food insecurity and a lack of necessary medical care for a large group of people in Ventura County, which creates a breeding ground for violence in our communities.[28]

[23] Long term unemployment is unemployment that extends to longer than 27 weeks or six months. Long term unemployment presents one of the most debilitating social and economic adverse development in the life of people and their families. For more information see https://www.onlinemswprograms.com/resources/long-term-unemployment/#:~:text=Term%20Unemployed%20People-,What%20Is%20Long%2DTerm%20Unemployment%3F,actively%20looking%20for%20a%20job.

[24] Nordin, M., Almén, D. Long-term unemployment and violent crime. Empir Econ 52, 1–29 (2017). https://doi.org/10.1007/s00181-016-1068-6

[25] Daniel Rivkin (2022), Public school investment reduces adult crime, study shows, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan; https://record.umich.edu/articles/public-school-investment-reduces-adult-crime-study-shows/

[26] Ibid

[27] Marjorie E. Starrels (1994), The Feminization of Poverty in the United States: Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Family Factors, Journal of Family Issues, Sage Pulcations.

[28] Miller, K.R., Jones, C.M., McClave, S.A. et al. (2021), Food Access, Food Insecurity, and Gun Violence: Examining a Complex Relationship, Gastroenterology, Critical Care, and Lifestyle Medicine; https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13668-021-00378-w

2.2. Risk of Violence Resulting from Social Isolation

This is broken down into the following indicators:

1. English language isolation
2. Digital divide
3. Lack of transportation
4. Foreign-born population
5. Demographic dependency
6. Self-care difficulty
7. Veteran population

Using the same method for processing and normalizing the data for each indicator and color-coding them accordingly, we arrived at the following exhibit to explain how each indicator alone shows the degree of problems faced in every specific area across all the ZIP Codes in Ventura County. The overall values of the index and its components present an alarming picture across different zip codes within the county.

Table 2: Risk of Violence Resulting from Social Isolation

	Index Risk of Violence Resulting from Social Isolation	English Language Isolation	Digital Divide	Lack of Trans-portation	Foreign-born Population	Demographic Dependency	Self-care Difficulty	Veteran Population
93022 Oak View	77.2	91.2	78.4	91.4	100.0	99.3	60.0	20.0
93021 Moorpark	73.5	77.7	93.0	60.0	75.6	85.2	68.0	54.7
93065 Simi Valley	73.4	83.6	71.0	80.0	70.7	87.5	48.0	73.3
91361 Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village	69.4	99.6	76.1	68.6	88.7	17.0	100.0	36.0
93012 Camarillo	69.3	100.0	87.1	71.4	82.4	68.3	40.0	36.0
91362 Thousand Oaks	69.2	88.8	60.6	94.3	59.4	65.3	48.0	68.0
93003 Ventura	67.3	92.8	68.1	42.9	92.8	66.4	64.0	44.0
93063 Simi Valley	67.1	78.9	69.5	62.9	64.4	94.5	24.0	76.0
91377 Agoura Hills, Oak Park	66.9	96.4	86.0	65.7	51.3	50.6	28.0	90.7
93066 Somis	66.5	80.9	100.0	65.7	83.3	17.0	72.0	46.7
91360 Thousand Oaks	66.0	85.6	57.6	77.1	75.6	67.2	32.0	66.7
91320 Newbury Park	64.8	89.2	94.6	42.9	63.5	39.5	64.0	60.0
93035 Oxnard	58.5	55.3	86.4	68.6	51.3	84.1	32.0	32.0
93036 Oxnard	57.2	39.0	53.1	57.1	31.4	100.0	52.0	68.0
93004 Ventura	56.8	88.0	56.8	17.1	91.0	76.4	68.0	0.0
93010 Camarillo	56.3	92.8	85.4	40.0	86.5	37.6	40.0	12.0
93023 Ojai	55.4	86.4	62.8	68.6	77.0	26.2	20.0	46.7
93015 Fillmore	50.8	56.5	0.0	60.0	58.9	65.3	56.0	58.7
93001 Ventura	48.9	70.1	38.4	0.0	63.0	95.9	20.0	54.7
93041 Point Mogu Nawc	48.2	49.4	72.6	40.0	44.5	75.3	4.0	52.0
93033 Oxnard	39.8	0.0	17.5	71.4	0.0	73.8	16.0	100.0
93030 Oxnard	38.0	0.0	20.7	45.7	0.0	91.5	28.0	80.0
93060 Santa Paula	32.4	12.3	3.3	40.0	23.3	46.9	12.0	89.3
93040 Piru	27.4	1.1	8.1	100.0	25.1	0.0	0.0	57.3

Source: US Census American Community Survey[29] and author's calculation

[29] US Census American Community Survey; https://data.census.gov/advanced:
- English Language Isolation – S1601;
- Digital Divide – B28003;
- Lack of Transportation – B08141;
- Foreign-born Population – DP02;
- Demographic Dependencies – S0101;
- Self-care Difficulty – S1801;
- Veteran Population – S2101.

2. Measuring the Risk of Violence Based on Its Various Components

Social and Economic Issues to Pay Close Attention

- Self-care is a common and widely observed problem in our community. This should not surprise anyone as we have an aging population and lack sufficient care within the county.[30]
- Self-care means taking care of yourself so that you can be healthy, be well, do your job, help and care for others, and do all the things you need to and want to accomplish in a day. Unfortunately, the inability to care for oneself is profound and runs into several existing issues that stem from our society's shared work and life philosophy. At present, society does not adequately plan for long-term care for aging residents, especially within the family dynamic.
- Feeling lonely and being under stress have psychological roots, which are not in the purview of this study. However, social and economic reasons can contribute to such issues, and they are in the purview of this study.[31]
- Veteran population is an important indicator of social isolation based on the likelihood of veterans being subject to the hardship of serving in military forces and the possibility of doing so during the war. In a study involving veterans, more specifically veterans with co-occurring PTSD and alcohol misuse associated with an increase in violence toward others in the community, it has been identified as a significant problem for a subset of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.[32]
- The dependency ratio is a demographic measure of the number of dependents to the total working-age population in a country or region. As the population gets older, this ratio changes, which can be a good indicator of the needs of an aging population.
- The digital divide is an essential factor in social and economic isolation. The impact of digital isolation became far more apparent during the pandemic. However, the digital divide profoundly impacts many aspects of life in modern communities. Its occurrence across various socioeconomic groups within Ventura County is significant. It can be traced based on income, gender and other factors impacting a region's infrastructural investment.

[30] The Future of Caregiving for an Aging Population: Increasing Community and Economic Vitality in Ventura County, Commissioned by Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF), January 2019. https://vccf.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/vccf-ltc-final.pdf

[31] Norma Jean Profitt (2008), WHO CARES FOR US? Opening Paths to a Critical, Collective Notion of Self-care, Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE); https://www.jstor.org/stable/41669891.

[32] Eric B. Elbogen (2018), Violent behavior and post-traumatic stress disorder in US Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, Published online by Cambridge University Press; https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/the-british-journal-of-psychiatry/article/violent-behaviour-and-posttraumatic-stress-disorder-in-us-iraq-and-afghanistan-veterans/0BD1BF978EABC173FB29CCFBE1575460

2.3. Risk of Violence Resulting from Neighborhood

A neighborhood is an area where people live and interact with one another. They are usually mentioned in terms of big cities, but suburban or rural areas also have neighborhoods. Suburban neighborhoods tend to have larger homes and more families than urban neighborhoods. Neighborhood residents generally have similar incomes and social characteristics such as education level, housing preference and sense of public order. However, being socially and economically similar is not an inseparable neighborhood feature.

Neighborhoods often have geographic boundaries with blurred lines, so sometimes, it takes time to tell where one starts and another ends. Major streets often act as logical boundaries, but people usually define a neighborhood by its characteristics.

The risk of violence resulting from the neighborhood is broken into the following indicators:

1. Percentage of youth gang membership
2. Percentage of gun-related violence among violent crimes
3. Overcrowded housing
4. Rate of eviction
5. Homelessness
6. School suspension rate
7. Percentage of adults who reported binge drinking at least once during the 30 days before the survey
8. High school dropout rates
9. Mothers under 18 years old
10. Violent crime rate
11. Property crime rate
12. Child abuse
13. Domestic violence

We used the same method of processing data and ranked each indicator's risk level and the aggregate level of risk due to violence in the neighborhood across all the ZIP Codes within the county.

It is important to note that we faced some complexity in converting all the information from the reported geographic locations into their relevant ZIP Codes in this section. This occurred in the following specific cases:

2. Measuring the Risk of Violence Based on Its Various Components

- Youth gang membership is reported for school districts, and we have converted school district locations into respective ZIP Codes. This information is taken from survey of students and therefore self-reported.[33]
- Domestic violence is reported in cities.
- Eviction rates are reported in cities.
- Child abuse is reported in cities.

The following chart presents the breakdown of the risk of violence resulting from the neighborhood.

[33] Data can be found from Kisdata, which is based on the estimated percentage of public-school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who consider themselves gang members by level of school connectedness (e.g., in 2017-2019, 10.4% of California students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs with low levels of school connectedness considered themselves gang members). Data Source: Wrested, California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) & Biennial State CHKS. California Dept. of Education (Aug. 2020). California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) & Biennial State CHKS. California Dept. of Education (Aug. 2020).

Table 3: Risk of Violence Resulting from Neighborhood

	Index Risk of Violence Resulting from Neighbor-hood	Percent-age of Youth Gang Member-ship	Gun-re-lated Violence	Over-crowded Housing	Rate of Eviction	Homeless-ness	Suspen-sion Rate	Adults who Binge a Drink: Last 30 days	High School Dropout Rates	Teen Birth Rate	Violent Crime Rate	Property Crime Rate	Child Abuse	Domestic Violence
91377 Agoura Hills, Oak Park	80.6	31.4	85.5	92.5	100.0	74.4	100.0	33.3	100.0	94.7	92.0	67.9	78.9	96.8
91361 Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village	75.7	37.5	40.9	85.0	73.1	74.4	63.6	100.0	71.1	94.7	100.0	67.9	78.9	96.8
91360 Thousand Oaks	75.5	37.5	95.4	75.0	73.1	74.4	63.6	66.7	71.1	94.7	86.7	67.9	78.9	96.8
91362 Thousand Oaks	73.3	37.5	51.7	85.0	73.1	74.4	63.6	63.3	71.1	94.7	94.2	67.9	78.9	96.8
93065 Simi Valley	72.6	55.7	100.0	75.0	71.7	82.8	31.8	16.7	67.1	90.4	92.4	78.5	84.0	98.1
93063 Simi Valley	71.9	55.7	73.7	70.0	71.7	82.8	31.8	33.3	67.1	90.4	97.5	78.5	84.0	98.1
91320 Newbury Park	71.8	37.5	73.0	65.0	73.1	74.4	63.6	46.7	71.1	94.7	91.1	67.9	78.9	96.8
93021 Moorpark	71.2	40.5	83.9	80.0	47.5	100.0	70.5	0.0	31.3	78.7	92.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
93022 Oak View	70.3	40.5	69.4	100.0	83.5	22.9	75.0	40.0	68.1	81.9	83.4	74.5	100.0	74.8
93010 Camarillo	66.2	86.0	68.0	72.5	61.3	89.2	52.3	76.7	0.0	100.0	85.4	65.2	16.0	88.7
93012 Camarillo	63.5	0.0	72.2	97.5	61.3	89.2	52.3	90.0	0.0	100.0	92.9	65.2	16.0	88.7
93023 Ojai	60.5	40.5	90.5	72.5	0.0	22.9	75.0	96.7	68.1	81.9	89.1	74.5	0.0	74.8
93040 Piru	57.6	55.7	67.1	100.0	100.0	39.4	0.0	60.0	70.1	23.4	58.4	37.3	100.0	37.1
93066 Somis	57.4	55.7	46.4	40.0	0.0	42.0	38.6	90.0	64.1	100.0	84.1	20.6	100.0	64.7
93015 Fillmore	52.9	0.0	72.7	45.0	92.6	92.4	0.0	50.0	70.1	23.4	74.2	64.8	67.3	34.8
93060 Santa Paula	51.9	83.0	46.8	50.0	72.3	42.0	11.4	66.7	74.1	31.9	43.5	20.6	67.6	64.7
93003 Ventura	45.9	100.0	70.5	70.0	51.1	0.0	52.3	50.0	44.2	72.3	28.1	0.0	38.2	19.8
93004 Ventura	44.6	52.7	62.4	67.5	51.1	0.0	52.3	53.3	44.2	72.3	65.9	0.0	38.2	19.8
93041 Point Mogu Nawc	44.1	83.0	15.7	12.5	48.2	78.8	9.1	30.0	42.2	78.7	56.3	45.6	73.5	0.0
93035 Oxnard	43.2	98.1	0.0	70.0	33.1	78.8	9.1	53.3	42.2	25.5	77.9	45.6	27.7	0.0
93001 Ventura	37.0	31.4	88.8	50.0	51.1	0.0	52.3	26.7	44.2	72.3	6.4	0.0	38.2	19.8
93036 Oxnard	35.1	98.1	23.9	10.0	33.1	39.4	9.1	53.3	42.2	0.0	45.2	37.3	27.7	37.1
93030 Oxnard	28.3	40.5	16.1	0.0	33.1	39.4	9.1	66.7	42.2	0.0	18.3	37.3	27.7	37.1
93033 Oxnard	27.2	40.5	6.6	0.0	33.1	39.4	9.1	80.0	42.2	0.0	0.0	37.3	27.7	37.1

Source: US Census American Community Survey[34] , KidsData[35], California Department of Education[36], California Department of Justice[37], Interface Children and Family Services[38], Ventura County Continuum of Care Alliance[39], Health Matters in Ventura County[40], Ventura County Health Care Agency[41], author's calculation and processing of data reported by law enforcement agencies.

Social and Economic Issues to Pay Close Attention

- One of the critical issues while looking at the place of residence of people provides valuable information about people where they live; neighborhood violence is not entirely captured within the area of residence of people.

- The boundary of gang membership is rather complex. It does not necessarily follow the degree of economic affluence, which could partly be due to how data is gathered for the county. The data come from the California Healthy Kids Survey conducted in various school districts, and as previously mentioned, is self-reported. Ventura County has 20 school districts serving approximately 140,000 kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) students.[42] Unified Districts serve elementary and high school students and adult education students. Separate sections for the elementary and high school levels serve some communities. Elementary school districts generally provide services to K-8 students. The Ventura County Office of Education operates a court, community and several special education schools. [43]

- There is a reasonable probability that students who attend school in one district may come from different neighborhoods.

- There should be a level of evident and apparent emphasis to determine where the problems lie and think about the consequences of issues and shortcomings as pervasive and not limited to one area or another. This requires a clear understanding that the problem in one place is the problem of all.

- Among many challenges within the county is youth gang membership. Poverty, absence of parents, low parental attachment to children, and low supervision of children can increase the probability of joining gangs. Consequences of gang membership may include exposure to drugs and alcohol, age-inappropriate sexual behavior, difficulty finding a job because of lack of education and work skills, removal from one's family, imprisonment, and even death.[44]

- School dropout rate is an essential indicator of measuring neighborhood violence risk. The critical issue about school dropout and several other indicators in this index, such as gang membership or suspension from schools, is that the neighborhood index is not always related to people living there. It includes indicators relating to people and families living there, working or attending school in areas presented in our index across ZIP Codes.

[34] US Census American Community Survey, S2501; https://data.census.gov/advanced

[35] KidsData; https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/73/gang-involvement/summary

[36] Data Quest, 2021-22 Suspension Rate, Ventura County Report Disaggregated by District; https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqCensus/DisSuspRateLevels.aspx?year=2021-22&agglevel=County&cds=56 Data Quest, 2021-22 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Outcome, Ventura County Report Disaggregated by District; https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/CohOutcomeLevels.aspx?agglevel=county&year=2021-22&cds=56

[37] California Department of Justice, Crimes Data; https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/exploration/crime-statistics

[38] Interface Children and Family Services; https://www.icfs.org/services/resources-page/

[39] Ventura County Continuum of Care Alliance (2022), Homeless Count and Subpopulation Survey, Final Report: April 2022; https://s33020.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/VC-2022-Homeless-Count-Report-FINAL.pdf

[40] Health Matters in Ventura County; https://www.healthmattersinvc.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=58&localeId=8134

[41] Ventura Ventura County Health Care Agency (2013), Transforming Ventura County Communities, Understanding the Health Status and Needs of Ventura County; https://vchca.org/

[42] Ventura County Office of Education; https://www.vcoe.org/vc-districts

[43] Ibid

[44] Gangs and Children (2017), American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-and-Gangs-098.aspx

2. Measuring the Risk of Violence Based on Its Various Components

2.4. Risk of Violence Resulting from Vacuum in Supportive Social Institutions

Supportive social institutions are vital in creating an inclusive environment within communities. In 2018, only 16% of Americans reported feeling very attached to their local community.[45] Traditional places such as religious organizations can be a source of support.

Many may not know that social isolation is a crucial predictor of mortality in the US. Social isolation may be higher in communities impacted by violence. Some studies relate to and quantify the relationship between violence and social isolation.[46]

The risk of violence resulting from the vacuum in supportive social institutions is broken into the following indicators:

1. Voting rate in the general election (voters' registration data & anything that can measure the involvement or lack of it in political institutions)
2. Number and types of nonprofits established (nonprofits are vital in helping to enfranchise the underserved within a society)
3. Information on volunteering opportunities
4. The number of pro-social places (community associations, recreation centers, religious institutions, places of worship, etc.)
5. Community health centers

It is correct to add that the linkages between violence and social isolation are still emerging in public health. However, the latest studies indicate heightened attention to this area of study. Living in an unsafe neighborhood may be an essential risk factor for social isolation and loneliness. This study looked at several factors that may impact people's ability to contact others or have a shared experience that brings them together.

They include a state in which an individual lacks a sense of belonging socially, lacks engagement with others, has a limited number of contacts, and is deficient in a fulfilling and quality relationship.[47]

We used the same method of processing data and ranked each indicator's risk level and the aggregate level of risk due to violence in the neighborhood across all the ZIP Codes within the county.

The index has uniqueness and brings a more complex pattern than the other three indices

[45] Denver, Colo (2023), Can religion help treat America's loneliness epidemic? Surgeon general says yes, Catholic News Agency, https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/254223/can-religion-help-treat-americas-loneliness-epidemic-surgeon-general-says-yes

[46] Elizabeth L. Tung et al. (2019), Social Isolation, Loneliness, and Violence Exposure in Urban Adults, Health Affairs, Vol. 38, No. 10; https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00563?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub++0pubmed

[47] Veazie S, Gilbert J, Winchell K, et al., Addressing Social Isolation to Improve the Health of Older Adults: A Rapid Review, Appendix F Social Isolation and Loneliness Definitions and Measures; National Library of Medicine https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK537897/

when challenges and successes are viewed across the SES of different neighborhoods. Some of the economically challenged places rank higher than more affluent communities. This is an interesting issue, which shows that building a supportive community can be improved by the actions and support of a community's members.

Table 4: Risk of Violence Resulting from Vacuum in Supportive Social Institutions

	Index Risk of Violence Resulting from Vacuum in Supportive Social Institutions	Voting Rrate in the General Election	Number and Types of Nonprofits Established	Volunteering Opportunities	Pro-social Places	Community Health Centers
91361 Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village	85.5	87.4	100.0	100.0	100.0	39.9
91362 Thousand Oaks	71.2	87.4	78.7	82.0	82.8	24.9
93040 Piru	67.3	62.5	23.2	97.3	97.0	56.7
93063 Simi Valley	64.4	60.6	23.0	100.0	100.0	38.4
93066 Somis	60.3	62.5	100.0	43.9	43.9	51.3
93015 Fillmore	56.8	13.8	19.2	97.3	97.0	56.7
93012 Camarillo	54.6	81.4	44.7	39.4	39.7	68.0
91377 Agoura Hills, Oak Park	53.0	87.4	28.2	66.3	66.2	17.2
91320 Newbury Park	48.9	87.4	40.4	32.6	32.9	51.0
93023 Ojai	48.7	100.0	79.3	32.2	32.0	0.0
91360 Thousand Oaks	48.4	87.4	48.2	44.3	44.5	17.7
93022 Oak View	47.5	100.0	50.5	26.4	26.3	34.6
93021 Moorpark	47.4	71.0	34.0	50.4	50.6	31.1
93060 Santa Paula	44.2	96.3	20.6	31.8	31.8	40.5
93010 Camarillo	41.7	81.4	41.8	18.2	18.4	48.5
93041 Point Mogu Nawc	41.2	62.5	7.5	34.0	33.4	68.8
93001 Ventura	40.8	52.4	57.8	15.2	15.2	63.2
93065 Simi Valley	39.7	60.6	28.1	50.6	49.6	9.4
93004 Ventura	37.6	52.4	20.3	26.2	26.1	62.9
93003 Ventura	31.7	52.4	63.6	4.4	4.2	33.7
93035 Oxnard	31.1	0.0	35.4	26.6	26.4	67.1
93036 Oxnard	21.4	29.4	18.3	10.7	10.5	38.0
93030 Oxnard	17.6	29.4	18.1	6.0	5.9	28.8
93033 Oxnard	9.8	29.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	19.4

Source: Office of County Clerk-Recorder[48], CauseIQ[49], Carelisting[50], Volunteer Match[51], author's calculation, and estimations based on available information, which could be used to calculate the necessary data for ZIP Codes.

Social and Economic Issues to Pay Close Attention

- Voting turnout and voting record depend on several issues ranging from political to social and economic. However, participation can significantly impact decisions and how those decisions can impact people's lives in those areas. With some exceptions, the county's record of various communities is very strong.
- The emerging pattern of community health centers presents an excellent potential for improvements.
- The creation of more pro-social places and a more significant number of nonprofit establishments can be improved, and their promotion can have a decisive positive impact on providing a higher level of supportive social institutions within the county.

[48] Office of County Clerk-Recorder; https://recorder.countyofventura.org/elections/elections/voter-information/registration-turnout-stats/

[49] CauseIQ; https://www.causeiq.com/search/organizations/?view=list#analyze

[50] Carelistings; https://carelistings.com/federally-qualified-health-centers/ventura-ca

[51] Volunteer Match; https://www.volunteermatch.org/

2. Measuring the Risk of Violence Based on Its Various Components

2.5. Community Violence Risk Index (CVRI)

Finally, we can measure the overall community violence risk by combining all four parts of our discussion to create a Community Violence Risk Index (CVRI). This chart can be seen below.

Table 5: Community Violence Risk Index (CVRI)

	Community Violence Risk Index (CVRI)	Index Risk of Violence Resulting from Adverse Economic Conditions	Index Risk of Violence Resulting from Social Isolation	Index Risk of Violence Resulting from Neighborhood	Index Risk of Violence Resulting from Vacuum in Supportive Social Institutions
91361 Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village	84.9	84.7	69.4	100.0	85.5
91362 Thousand Oaks	78.2	78.3	69.2	94.2	71.2
93063 Simi Valley	75.2	71.6	67.1	97.5	64.4
91377 Agoura Hills, Oak Park	74.9	87.5	66.9	92.0	53.0
93012 Camarillo	71.5	69.1	69.3	92.9	54.6
91320 Newbury Park	71.3	80.4	64.8	91.1	48.9
93021 Moorpark	71.2	71.1	73.5	92.9	47.4
91360 Thousand Oaks	69.4	76.6	66.0	86.7	48.4
93065 Simi Valley	69.3	71.8	73.4	92.4	39.7
93022 Oak View	68.8	66.9	77.2	83.4	47.5
93066 Somis	66.2	54.1	66.5	84.1	60.3
93010 Camarillo	63.5	70.5	56.3	85.4	41.7
93023 Ojai	60.8	50.1	55.4	89.1	48.7
93015 Fillmore	59.2	55.2	50.8	74.2	56.8
93035 Oxnard	56.9	60.1	58.5	77.9	31.1
93004 Ventura	55.8	62.9	56.8	65.9	37.6
93003 Ventura	47.4	62.4	67.3	28.1	31.7
93041 Point Mogu Nawc	45.0	34.2	48.2	56.3	41.2
93040 Piru	44.9	26.3	27.4	58.4	67.3
93036 Oxnard	39.8	35.4	57.2	45.2	21.4
93060 Santa Paula	37.0	27.9	32.4	43.5	44.2
93001 Ventura	34.6	42.5	48.9	6.4	40.8
93030 Oxnard	28.8	41.2	38.0	18.3	17.6
93033 Oxnard	19.1	27.0	39.8	0.0	9.8

Source: Sources cited previously for each index and their overall processing by the author

The above chart presents a fascinating picture of where the socioeconomic foundation of violence lies in Ventura County. This will help policymakers find pragmatic and doable solutions to remove the obstacles and move forward.

Social and Economic Issues to Pay Close Attention

- The greatest challenge is in the area of improving and thereby lowering the risk of violence resulting from social isolation. This involves taking the following steps in areas that are in greater need of the following deficiencies:

- Self-care difficulty. This is likely to increase due to an aging population and the inability of lower-income families to receive the care they need. The pressure of work and the inability to enjoy a work-life balance is another critical issue to keep in mind.
- Veteran population and the support they need should be on any policy agenda within the county.
- Lack of transportation is another area needing attention within the county.
- The digital divide is an essential obstacle within Ventura County. This requires a greater focus on the affordability of such provisions within the county.

- The other important factor that presents considerable challenges is the high risk of violence resulting from the vacuum in supportive social institutions. Looking closer into this factor brings the necessity of greater attention to the following areas in the geographic locations faced with higher risk:
  - There is a dire need to improve the prevailing conditions in community health centers.
  - There is an enormous potential for increasing the number of nonprofit work areas in several communities within the county.
  - There is a dire need to enhance the possibility of volunteerism within several communities.
  - Increasing pro-social places within the county in several areas presents a real challenge. Such development is not a mere function of income and material affluence of individuals and families in various areas. Still, it is a function of social interaction and the creation of an environment in which people help each other, volunteer, share and come together.

- Finally, we need to be quite clear about what can be done to help the most deprived areas in our community in many directions. That requires a clear investment in improving those areas' economic and social conditions. It is hard to focus on only some places when we know people and families in need live in every county neighborhood. Yet, clear calls-to-action based on the index finding are needed to see improvement in our county. With this in mind, we selected the ZIP Codes with an index value of less than 50 to present the following places in need of a considerable amount of social and economic investment:
  - ZIP Code 93033 in the City of Oxnard
  - ZIP Code 93030 in the City of Oxnard
  - ZIP Code 93001 in the City of Ventura
  - ZIP Code 93060 in the City of Santa Paula
  - ZIP Code 93036 in the City of Oxnard
  - ZIP Code 93040 in Piru
  - ZIP Code 93041 in the City of Port Hueneme
  - ZIP Code 93003 in the City of Ventura

- The total population of these ZIP Codes will reach around 299,000, or 36% of the total county population, based on 2021 population data. They present the most areas in need of support and, therefore, the most significant opportunity for the highest return on investment for the creation of human capital and improvements in the lives of the people and families in Ventura County and risk reduction of violence.

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

We gathered information from several county law enforcement agencies and offices in this study segment. The objective of this section is to present the level of crimes that occurred within different geographic locations in the county. We also aimed to investigate the calls for service from various cities. Looking into a call for help is significant, and having such access may present challenges.

We placed much more emphasis on violent crimes and looked much closer at gun-related crimes. To bring attention to where it is needed, we looked into the possibility of presenting the emerging patterns in a smaller geographic location of ZIP Codes. To the extent possible, we also wanted to link what we can bring from this study section to the previous segments focused on assessing the risk of violence through the lens of SES factors and socioeconomic determinants of crimes.

We gathered crime data from many law enforcement departments and offices. The information in most cases, with minor exceptions, included data from 2018 to 2022. We received information from the following agencies:

- Ventura County Sheriff's Office
- Oxnard Police Department
- Santa Paula Police Department
- Simi Valley Police Department
- Ventura Police Department
- California State University Channel Islands Police Department
- Ventura County Community College District Police Department
- California Highway Patrol

The processed information includes the following databases:

- Arrests for only violent or weapon-related offenses
- Call for Service (CFS) (This includes calls from the community as well as self-initiated calls)
- Suicides or non-homicide-related deaths involving a firearm
- Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR)
- Victims of violent or weapon-related offenses

All patterns except CFS are reported within 24 ZIP Codes and affiliated cities in Ventura

County. CFS is reported within cities in Ventura County. All data within cities and ZIP Codes have been placed in Tableau for necessary processing and filtering. We have extracted data, cleaned them and reported them in the following manner:

- Geographic distribution per group of population in either 10,000 or 1,000 population in each geographic location
- Average of five years for each set of data
- Also, each data set has been reported every year (2018 to 2022)
- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Type of crime where possible (with an emphasis on gun-related)

All geographic distributions are presented within the map of Ventura County with its relevant color codes.

3.1. Crime Rates in Ventura County and Its Population Race/Ethnic Structure

Ventura County is a diverse county with a combination of different races and ethnicities. The size of the population varies among its population centers. To make sense of our analysis, we reported various indicators based on a proportion of the total population in various geographic locations. We also made efforts to present different indicators across races and ethnicities. Looking into an absolute number of incidences can be very informative, but any credible analysis looks at the pattern of incidences as a proportion of the totals. This section of the study provides valuable information about the occurrences of crimes, race and ethnic breakdown of the incidences in the county as a whole, and racial and ethnic breakdown within the county and each ZIP Code separately.

3.1.1. Recent History of Crimes Rates in Ventura County Compared with Other Counties in California

We started with the acknowledgment that Ventura County is among the safest counties in California. This brings attention to one of the primary objectives of this study, which is to show the relevance of the socioeconomic condition of communities toward creating a conducive environment for the emergence of crimes and the likelihood of residents falling victim to the crimes or their occurrence. Studies often explore the demographic structure of the population within a region when it comes to shouldering the impact of any social or economic development in an area. We will, therefore, present the pertinent profile of the county's race/ethnic profile during the five years of this study and its breakdown in the latest year of this study, the year 2022, across all the ZIP Codes within the county.

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

In order to present Ventura County comparted to other counties in California, the data analyzed was for extended periods in some parts. For this next section, we investigated the crime rate in Ventura County since 2000. We broke down the rate of violence into violent crimes and property crimes.

Exhibit 1: Crime Rates in Ventura County, per 1,000 (2000-2022)

Source: State of California Department of Justice, Open Justice, State of California Department Finance, Historical Population Estimates

The above chart presents an interesting pattern. The rate of violent crimes has declined since the turn of the century. Its 2 per 1,000 population rate is next to the lowest ever at 1.9 per 1,000 population in 2013. The same trend of decline from the year 2000 can be seen in both property crimes and overall crime rates.

The immediate three following tables present the trend in violent crimes, property crimes and the sum of the two. Then, we looked at the comparison between the 13 most populated counties according to Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) in the State of California.

Table 6: Comparison of Crime Rates in California Most Populated Counties with Ventura County, per 1,000 (2000–2022)

	Alameda County	Contra Costa County	Fresno County	Kern County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	Riverside County	Sacramento County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County	San Francisco County	Santa Clara County	Ventura County
2000	47.0	37.5	60.4	38.6	39.9	26.1	39.2	50.3	38.1	33.6	55.6	26.4	23.2
2001	51.7	42.4	62.9	40.5	40.8	27.8	43.0	52.4	39.9	35.8	39.0	28.2	22.3
2002	51.0	44.5	60.7	42.4	40.8	28.3	42.3	54.3	40.9	36.5	55.9	27.3	22.8
2003	52.6	45.7	56.8	46.8	40.2	27.8	41.6	55.1	42.7	37.8	57.7	27.8	23.4
2004	51.1	45.8	55.5	49.7	38.2	28.0	43.4	57.7	40.4	37.7	54.6	28.9	24.5
2005	49.8	43.6	54.8	50.4	35.9	27.2	44.1	53.7	39.3	37.5	52.7	29.6	23.6
2006	53.5	41.5	50.4	48.6	34.1	25.7	42.2	53.8	36.4	35.9	57.2	30.6	23.6
2007	51.2	40.7	45.2	46.0	33.7	24.9	39.0	47.2	36.1	34.5	53.3	28.9	24.2
2008	48.7	38.3	45.8	45.0	32.6	24.0	36.0	43.9	35.7	32.0	55.2	27.4	22.5
2009	45.1	34.0	43.4	44.0	30.3	22.8	31.9	43.5	33.0	26.9	51.8	27.0	21.3
2010	40.3	33.4	47.7	42.3	28.8	22.5	30.1	41.8	31.6	25.7	48.5	25.3	21.6
2011	41.6	32.2	50.6	40.8	27.8	22.4	31.5	37.0	32.0	24.3	48.0	24.1	19.1
2012	47.9	34.7	49.5	46.5	27.8	24.3	33.5	39.2	34.8	25.8	55.4	28.8	21.1
2013	45.8	32.5	43.4	44.4	26.8	21.8	31.4	35.7	31.7	25.5	67.1	26.3	21.4
2014	42.7	32.7	38.4	37.6	25.8	19.5	29.5	32.5	30.1	21.5	61.9	25.3	22.1
2015	43.2	32.5	39.7	40.1	28.7	24.0	31.4	33.9	32.9	22.8	70.4	26.1	22.9
2016	42.8	29.1	38.4	42.7	30.4	23.2	31.1	31.3	30.8	22.0	62.8	25.0	21.9
2017	44.9	29.5	36.4	38.1	30.3	23.0	29.1	29.1	29.1	20.6	70.2	26.3	21.5
2018	41.7	27.5	33.1	39.6	29.1	21.6	28.2	27.8	29.1	20.4	64.0	26.5	19.7
2019	46.1	28.5	27.6	38.8	27.6	20.7	27.1	28.0	27.5	20.0	63.3	27.8	17.1
2020	40.8	24.0	29.9	37.2	26.4	21.5	24.6	25.8	24.1	18.3	49.8	25.6	17.6
2021	43.1	22.9	32.3	39.7	28.8	21.1	23.7	26.9	23.6	20.3	58.9	25.5	16.6
2022	48.9	25.0	35.1	39.9	31.0	21.8	26.6	29.3	25.7	19.9	64.4	29.3	15.4

Source: State of California Department of Justice, Open Justice, State of California Department Finance, Historical Population Estimates

The comparison indicates that Ventura County has consistently had the lowest rate of crimes over the last two decades.

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

Table 7: Comparison of Violent Crime Rates in California Most Populated Counties with Ventura County, per 1,000 (2000–2022)

	Alameda County	Contra Costa County	Fresno County	Kern County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	Riverside County	Sacramento County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County	San Francisco County	Santa Clara County	Ventura County
2000	6.6	4.8	7.6	4.9	9.5	3.0	6.2	5.9	5.4	4.9	8.4	4.3	2.8
2001	6.5	4.6	7.9	4.9	9.4	3.0	6.1	5.8	5.8	5.1	5.9	4.6	2.6
2002	6.5	4.4	6.2	4.9	9.2	2.8	5.7	6.3	5.6	4.9	7.8	3.7	2.6
2003	6.9	4.3	6.0	5.3	8.7	2.8	5.3	5.9	5.6	4.8	7.4	3.1	2.6
2004	6.2	4.0	6.1	6.1	7.8	2.8	4.7	6.9	5.2	4.7	7.4	3.0	2.4
2005	6.7	4.5	6.4	5.2	6.8	2.9	4.6	7.1	5.1	4.7	7.7	3.2	2.6
2006	8.5	4.8	5.6	5.4	6.6	2.8	4.8	7.9	5.1	4.6	8.5	3.2	2.8
2007	8.5	4.9	5.0	5.8	6.5	2.8	4.5	7.0	5.1	4.6	8.2	3.2	2.6
2008	8.6	4.5	4.7	5.7	6.1	2.6	4.0	6.6	5.2	4.2	8.6	3.1	2.6
2009	7.5	4.1	5.1	5.9	5.6	2.5	3.4	6.4	5.0	4.2	7.5	2.8	2.5
2010	6.9	4.1	5.4	5.8	5.1	2.3	3.0	6.0	4.4	3.8	7.2	2.6	2.1
2011	7.1	3.7	6.2	5.3	4.7	2.1	3.0	5.2	4.2	3.5	6.7	2.5	2.1
2012	7.7	4.1	5.4	5.8	4.5	2.2	3.1	5.6	4.4	3.7	7.1	2.7	2.0
2013	7.5	3.6	5.1	5.7	4.0	1.9	2.7	5.2	4.0	3.5	8.5	2.4	1.9
2014	6.5	3.3	4.7	5.1	4.2	2.0	2.7	5.1	4.0	3.3	8.0	2.5	2.2
2015	6.0	3.4	5.4	5.6	5.0	2.3	3.0	5.6	4.7	3.4	7.9	2.5	2.6
2016	6.2	3.5	6.1	5.8	5.6	2.3	3.2	5.2	4.9	3.3	7.2	2.8	2.6
2017	6.0	3.4	5.8	5.6	5.9	2.4	3.1	4.9	4.8	3.4	7.3	3.1	2.6
2018	6.0	3.4	5.9	5.9	5.7	2.3	3.1	4.5	4.9	3.4	7.1	3.2	2.4
2019	5.9	3.6	4.7	6.1	5.6	2.1	3.1	4.4	5.6	3.4	6.9	3.3	2.2
2020	5.8	3.4	5.8	6.8	5.4	2.3	3.0	4.7	5.9	3.5	5.5	3.2	2.0
2021	6.3	3.4	7.4	7.4	5.9	2.6	3.0	5.0	5.8	3.7	5.8	3.6	2.1
2022	6.8	4.1	7.2	7.4	6.2	2.8	3.3	5.7	5.8	3.8	6.5	3.9	2.0

Source: State of California Department of Justice, Open Justice, State of California Department Finance, Historical Population Estimates

Looking at the rate of violent crimes also indicates that Ventura County has had the lowest rates over the last two decades among all the most populated counties in California.

Table 8: Comparison of Property Crime Rates in California's Most Populated Counties with Ventura County, per 1,000 (2000–2022)

	Alameda County	Contra Costa County	Fresno County	Kern County	Los Angeles County	Orange County	Riverside County	Sacramento County	San Bernardino County	San Diego County	San Francisco County	Santa Clara County	Ventura County
2000	6.6	4.8	7.6	4.9	9.5	3.0	6.2	5.9	5.4	4.9	8.4	4.3	2.8
2001	6.5	4.6	7.9	4.9	9.4	3.0	6.1	5.8	5.8	5.1	5.9	4.6	2.6
2002	6.5	4.4	6.2	4.9	9.2	2.8	5.7	6.3	5.6	4.9	7.8	3.7	2.6
2003	6.9	4.3	6.0	5.3	8.7	2.8	5.3	5.9	5.6	4.8	7.4	3.1	2.6
2004	6.2	4.0	6.1	6.1	7.8	2.8	4.7	6.9	5.2	4.7	7.4	3.0	2.4
2005	6.7	4.5	6.4	5.2	6.8	2.9	4.6	7.1	5.1	4.7	7.7	3.2	2.6
2006	8.5	4.8	5.6	5.4	6.6	2.8	4.8	7.9	5.1	4.6	8.5	3.2	2.8
2007	8.5	4.9	5.0	5.8	6.5	2.8	4.5	7.0	5.1	4.6	8.2	3.2	2.6
2008	8.6	4.5	4.7	5.7	6.1	2.6	4.0	6.6	5.2	4.2	8.6	3.1	2.6
2009	7.5	4.1	5.1	5.9	5.6	2.5	3.4	6.4	5.0	4.2	7.5	2.8	2.5
2010	6.9	4.1	5.4	5.8	5.1	2.3	3.0	6.0	4.4	3.8	7.2	2.6	2.1
2011	7.1	3.7	6.2	5.3	4.7	2.1	3.0	5.2	4.2	3.5	6.7	2.5	2.1
2012	7.7	4.1	5.4	5.8	4.5	2.2	3.1	5.6	4.4	3.7	7.1	2.7	2.0
2013	7.5	3.6	5.1	5.7	4.0	1.9	2.7	5.2	4.0	3.5	8.5	2.4	1.9
2014	6.5	3.3	4.7	5.1	4.2	2.0	2.7	5.1	4.0	3.3	8.0	2.5	2.2
2015	6.0	3.4	5.4	5.6	5.0	2.3	3.0	5.6	4.7	3.4	7.9	2.5	2.6
2016	6.2	3.5	6.1	5.8	5.6	2.3	3.2	5.2	4.9	3.3	7.2	2.8	2.6
2017	6.0	3.4	5.8	5.6	5.9	2.4	3.1	4.9	4.8	3.4	7.3	3.1	2.6
2018	6.0	3.4	5.9	5.9	5.7	2.3	3.1	4.5	4.9	3.4	7.1	3.2	2.4
2019	5.9	3.6	4.7	6.1	5.6	2.1	3.1	4.4	5.6	3.4	6.9	3.3	2.2
2020	5.8	3.4	5.8	6.8	5.4	2.3	3.0	4.7	5.9	3.5	5.5	3.2	2.0
2021	6.3	3.4	7.4	7.4	5.9	2.6	3.0	5.0	5.8	3.7	5.8	3.6	2.1
2022	6.8	4.1	7.2	7.4	6.2	2.8	3.3	5.7	5.8	3.8	6.5	3.9	2.0

Source: State of California Department of Justice, Open Justice, State of California Department Finance, Historical Population Estimates

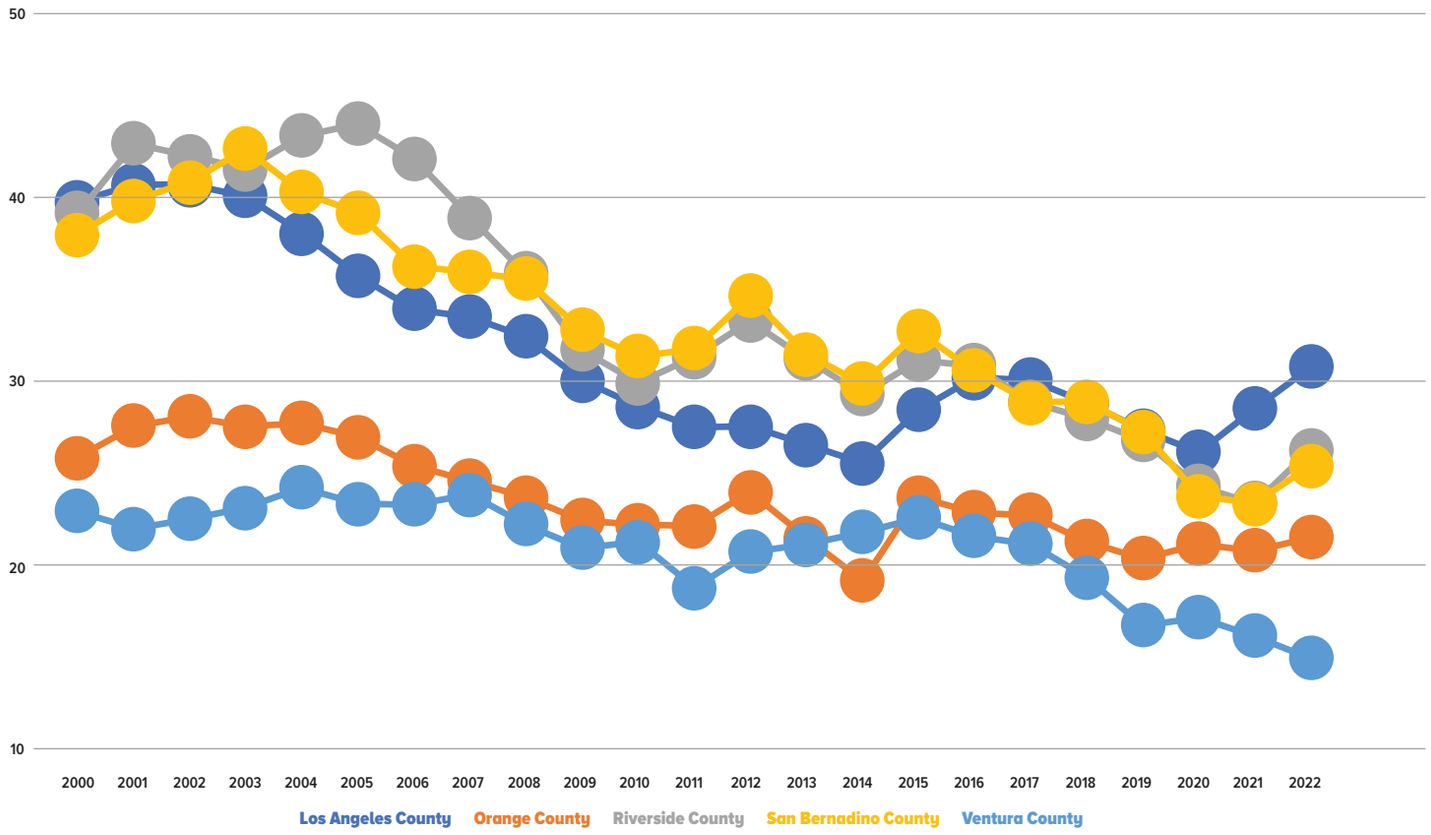
We can find the same declining trend in property crimes. The critical issue is that the rates have remained the same during the last few years or since COVID-19, despite the general belief that crimes have increased. Of course, this declining or stagnant rate of crimes has risen in some counties, but Ventura County is not among them.

Finally, we take the trend and make a comparison among Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) counties which are listed as the most populated. SCAG was established as an association of local governments and agencies that voluntarily convene as a forum to address regional issues. Under federal law, SCAG is designated as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and under state law as a Regional Transportation Planning Agency and a

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

Council of Governments. The SCAG region encompasses six counties (Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura) and 191 cities in an area covering more than 38,000 square miles. Some 19,000,000 live in the SCAG region.[52]

Exhibit 2: Comparison of Crime Rates in SCAG Counties, per 1,000 (2000–2022)

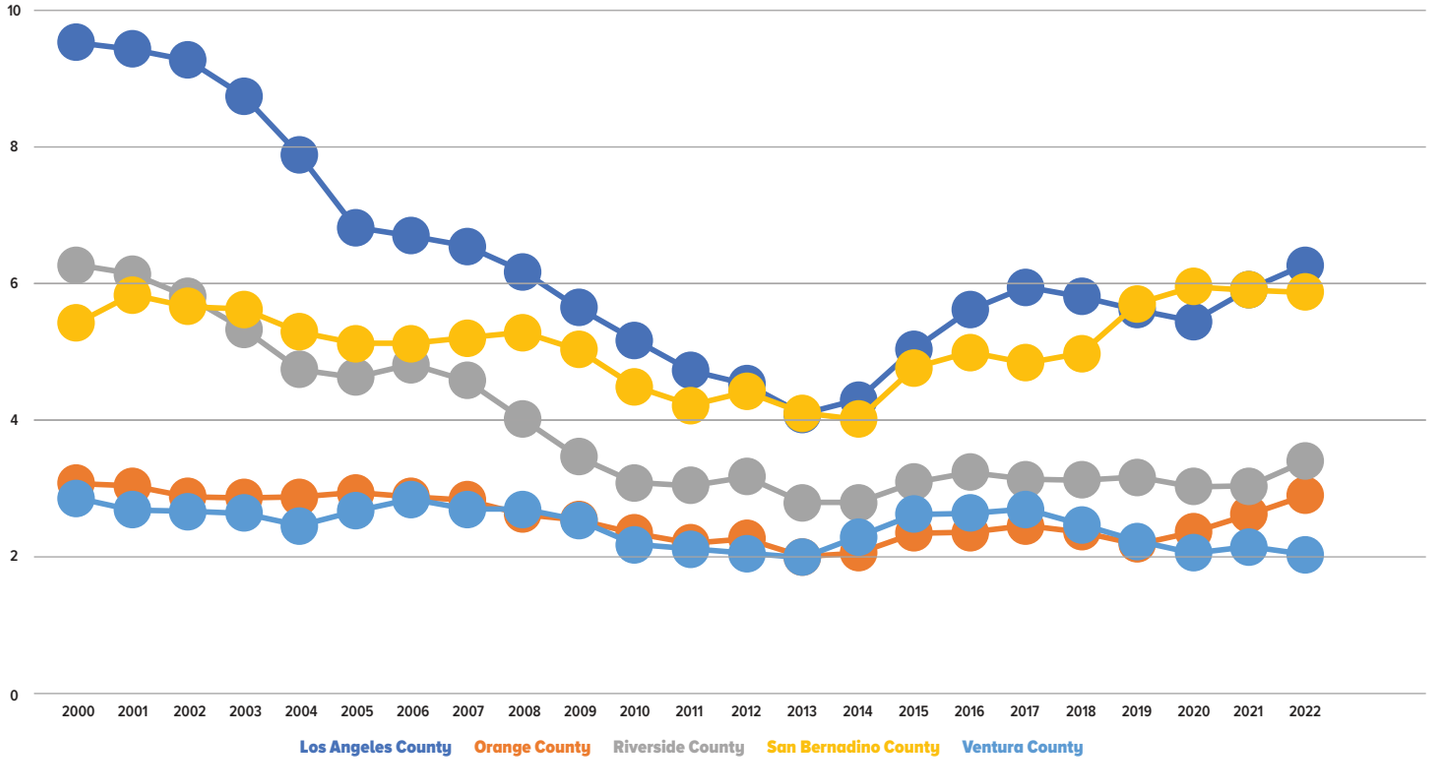


Source: State of California Department of Justice, Open Justice, State of California Department Finance, Historical Population Estimates

The above chart shows that Ventura County is one of the safest counties in Southern California. The most important part of this data is that such a level of safety has persisted over the years.

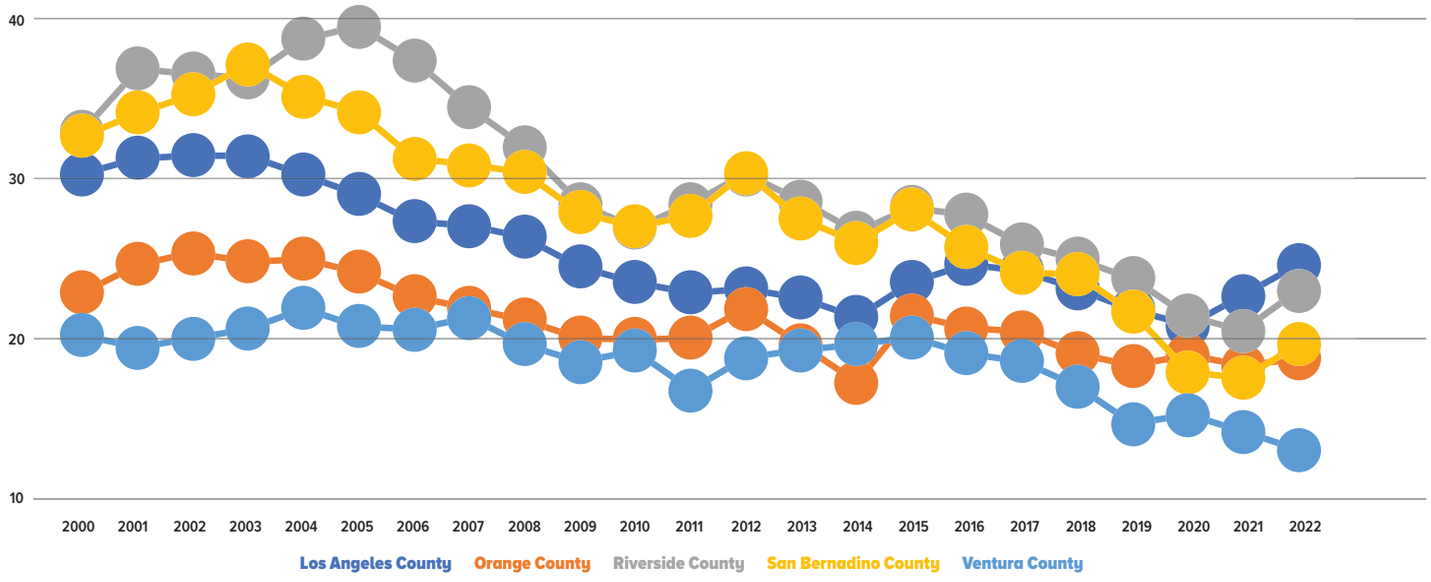
[52] SCAG https://scag.ca.gov/about-us

Exhibit 3: Comparison of Violent Crime Rates in SCAG Counties, per 1,000 (2000–2022)



Source: State of California Department of Justice, Open Justice, State of California Department Finance, Historical Population Estimates

Exhibit 4: Comparison of Property Crime Rates in SCAG Counties, per 1,000 (2000–2022)



Source: State of California Department of Justice, Open Justice, State of California Department Finance, Historical Population Estimates

The above three exhibits present a unified picture that Ventura County has the lowest property and violent crimes among the five most populated counties in the SCAG region.

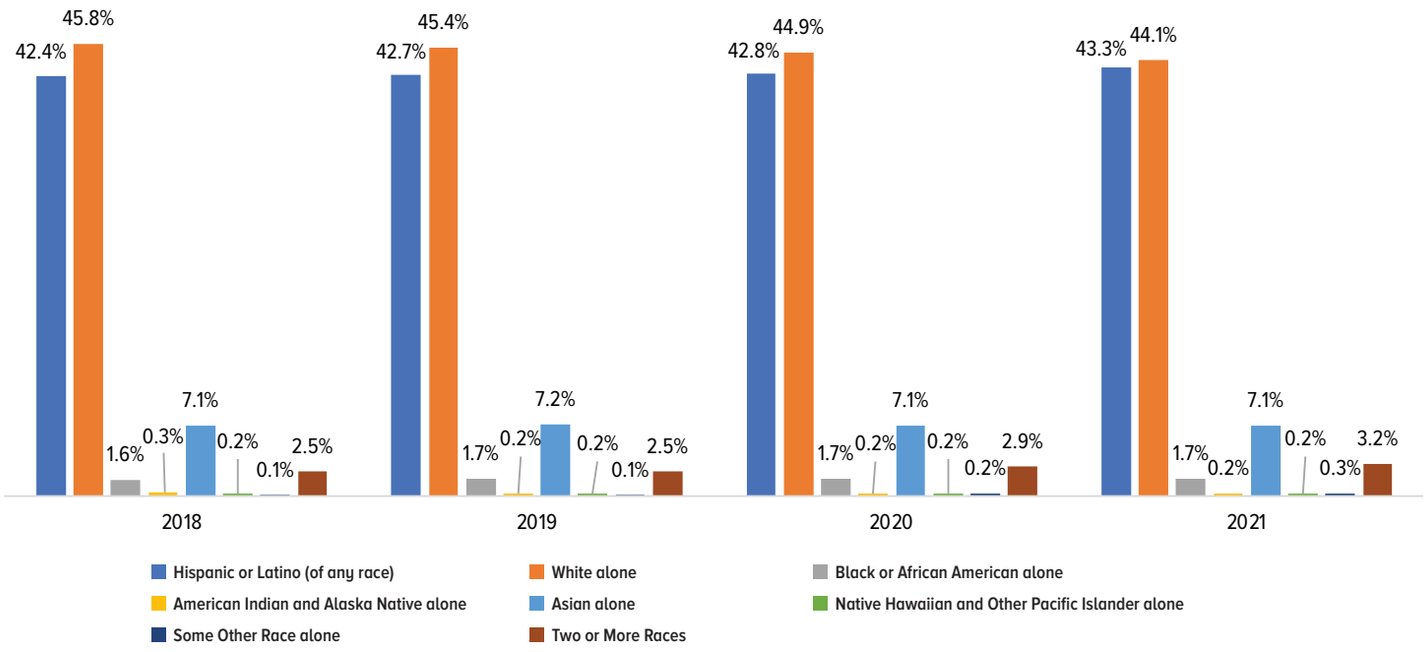
3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

3.1.2. Racial and Ethnic Structure of Ventura County Population

Ventura County has a diverse population, and the proportion of various races and ethnicities has changed over time. The changes have been impacted by a combination of the population structure of multiple groups, the movement of people within California and the nation as a whole, and immigration over several decades. While knowing the construction of race and ethnicity is vital in understanding and making sense of the absolute number of people impacted by crimes as victims or perpatrators, the analysis is based on the proportion of various groups within each: race or ethnicity. Paying attention to population size in each ZIP Code is also essential.

The following chart shows the race/ethnic structure within the county.

Exhibit 5: Race/Ethnicity in Ventura County, 2018–2021



Source: U.S. Census, DP05

White Alone and Hispanic or Latino (of Any Race) form the highest proportion of the population within the county. The trend also shows that the proportion of Hispanics or Latinos (of any race) has risen.

We present a complete picture of the structure in every ZIP Code within the county in the following chart.

Table 9: Race and Ethnicity in Ventura County ZIP Codes, 2021, 5-Year Estimates

ZIP Code	Hispanic or Latino (of Any Race)	White Alone	Black or African American Alone	American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	Asian Alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders Alone	Some Other Race Alone	Two or More Races	Total Population	Highest Proportion Race/ Ethnicity
91320	7,765	29,193	507	0	5,002	66	100	1,723	44,356	White Alone
91360	10,230	26,977	762	131	2,810	34	348	1,692	42,984	White Alone
91361	1,895	14,809	271	18	1,532	0	68	861	19,454	White Alone
91362	6,353	24,084	717	24	3,679	18	286	1,426	36,587	White Alone
91377	1,153	9,372	120	0	2,407	7	63	439	13,561	White Alone
93001	13,516	15,413	165	112	827	5	29	1,521	31,588	White Alone
93003	17,413	30,788	902	92	2,529	0	105	1,720	53,549	White Alone
93004	12,788	15,597	664	8	1,435	55	99	1,059	31,705	White Alone
93010	15,806	24,759	1,482	80	3,411	302	48	2,042	47,930	White Alone
93012	8,845	21,056	618	135	3,957	16	104	1,063	35,794	White Alone
93015	13,555	4,285	87	57	214	0	11	601	18,810	Hispanic
93021	12,295	19,946	1,139	52	2,674	16	26	1,882	38,030	White Alone
93022	1,772	4,146	4	8	58	0	8	144	6,140	White Alone
93023	4,221	15,926	55	92	608	16	40	733	21,691	White Alone
93030	44,965	6,638	1,219	110	3,479	185	211	1,212	58,019	Hispanic
93033	71,935	4,540	1,394	101	5,416	167	50	585	84,188	Hispanic
93035	12,709	10,030	410	68	1,764	36	85	1,122	26,224	Hispanic
93036	32,343	8,724	993	261	2,822	220	76	1,155	46,594	Hispanic
93040	1,652	120	38	5	0	0	0	14	1,829	Hispanic
93041	13,550	7,633	570	37	589	47	33	751	23,210	Hispanic
93060	27,440	6,016	184	51	324	18	128	422	34,583	Hispanic
93063	14,357	32,341	477	116	6,255	118	100	2,434	56,198	White Alone
93065	18,820	42,504	1,186	34	7,853	67	98	2,429	72,991	White Alone
93066	1,083	1,533	0	0	64	14	19	28	2,741	White Alone
Total	366,461	376,430	13,964	1,592	59,709	1,407	2,135	27,058	848,756	White Alone

Source: U.S. Census, DP05

The above picture shows that White Alone and Hispanic or Latino of Any Race are the two most-populated races and ethnicities in Ventura County. ZIP Codes with a majority Hispanic or Latino population are concentrated in the western part of the county. Their proportion is often substantial in the areas where they form the majority. However, most ZIP Codes have a diverse population based on race and ethnicity.

3.2. Calls for Service

Calling for emergency assistance, such as 911, can significantly impact crime reduction, and it has been discussed in the literature. These calls can be for various reasons, including the possible or actual occurrence of crimes. As the nation's helpline, 911 is typically the only available resource to people seeking timely assistance. So, it is unsurprising that 911

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

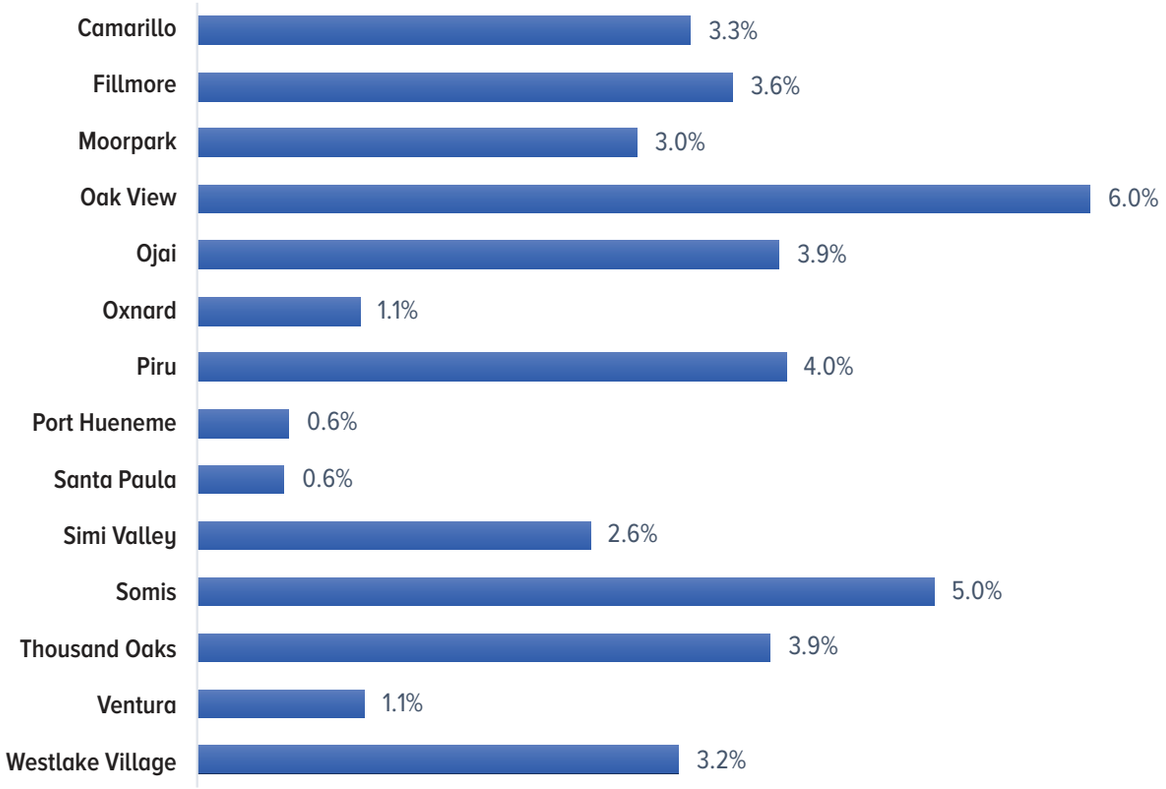
dispatchers receive 240 million calls annually — an average of 7.6 calls every second. Although most 911 calls have nothing to do with crime or violence, police are too often dispatched to respond.[53]

Vera Institute provides the necessary information that indicates many calls can relate to poverty, homelessness, mental health and substance use. These social and public health issues usually pose no danger to the public. All too often, individuals with serious mental health needs are contacted first by law enforcement. This is why law enforcement agencies must have good community-based connections for aiding or accessing programs that can assist these individuals. Ventura County has taken the lead on this approach and created partnerships with local government and community-based organizations to streamline care and access to care. For example, teams of local government workers partner with law enforcement officers to identify at-risk individuals who may be homeless and in need of medical care or mental health services. They actively work to get access to the most critical resources to support the individual successfully. Additionally, the County's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program has trained more than 2,200 first responders, communication operators and key designated personnel in the areas of de-escalation strategies, pre-custody diversion tactics, reducing necessity of force on people in crisis, and collaboration with mental health services partners, through a 40-hour training course designed to support law enforcement in safely responding to crisis calls.

In this study, we came to a similar conclusion when we compared the ratio of violent crime calls to all calls. The percentages were very low within the cities based on the average of the five years (2018-2022).

[53] Nazish Dholakia (2022) Most 911 Calls Have Nothing To Do With Crime. Why Are We Still Sending Police? Vera Institute; https://www.vera.org/news/most-911-calls-have-nothing-to-do-with-crime-why-are-we-still-sending-police

Exhibit 6: Percentages of Violent Crime Calls Over All Calls for Service Across All Communities in Ventura County on Average (2018-2022)



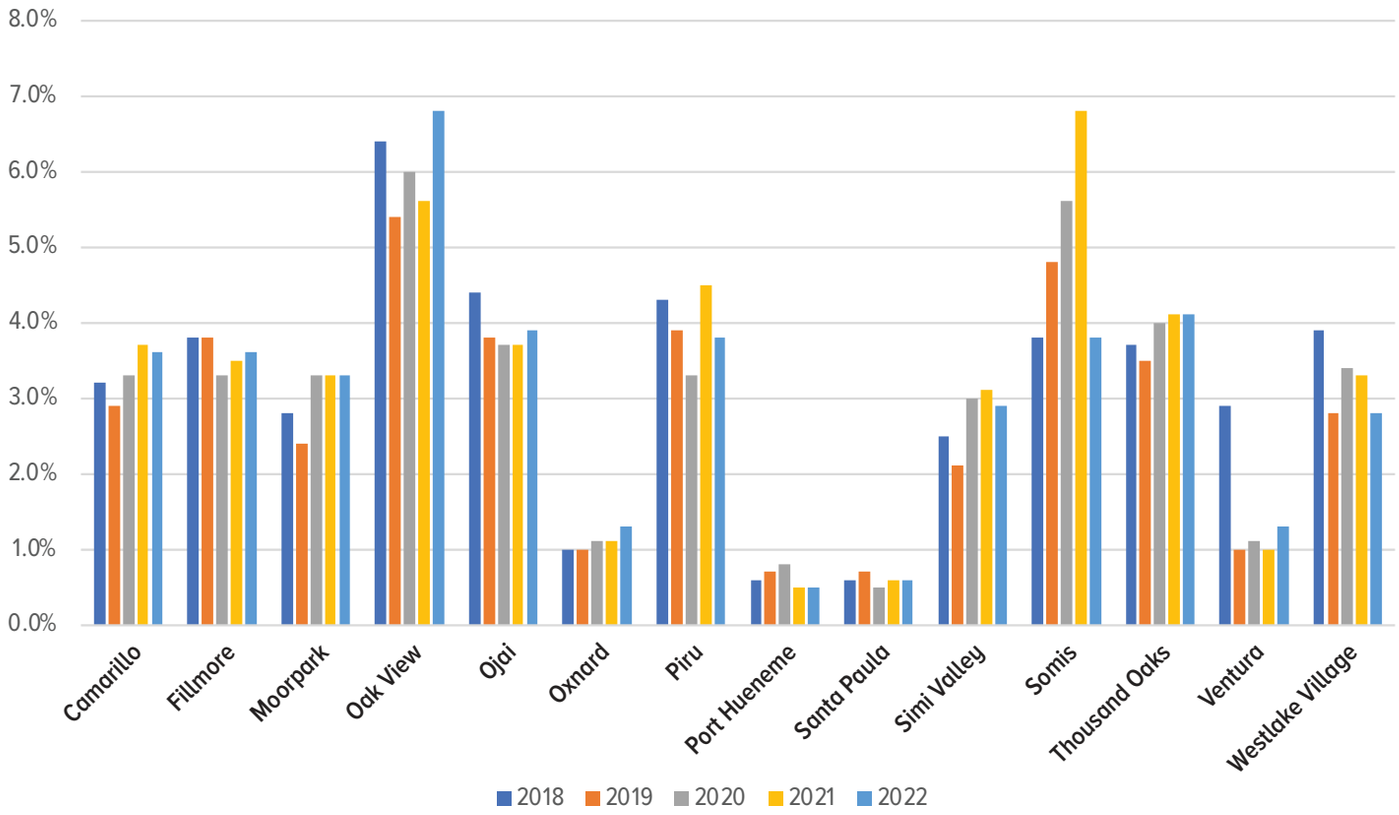
The graph above shows the number of violent calls for service compared to all calls for service for cities in Ventura County. When looking at the Calls for Service (CFS), it was decided that a Violent Call for Service would be murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and/or domestic violence. Overall, of the 2,218,725 CFS between 2018- 2022, 45,674 were determined to be violent-related (2.1%).

A lower ratio indicates that a more significant proportion of the CFS was not related to violent crimes. It is hard to make a clear and definitive conclusion from the above pattern. Nonetheless, some cities appear to have had a much higher relative number of calls unrelated to violent crimes. These cities include Oxnard, Santa Paula, Port Hueneme and Ventura. It should be noted that some calls are likely to prevent occurrence of violent crimes due to timely intervention of police.

The following exhibit provides the yearly information over the five years among the reported geographic population locations.

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

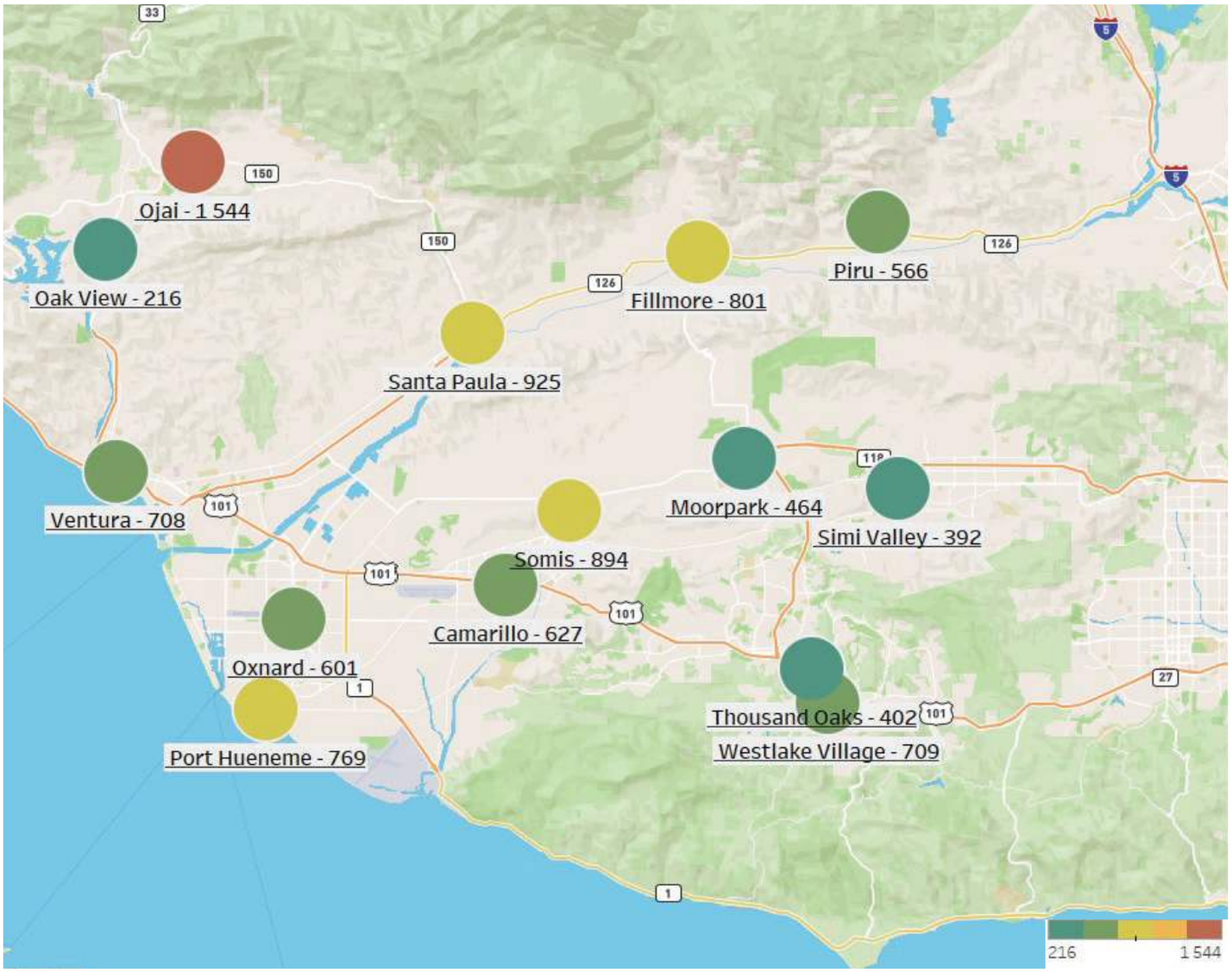
Exhibit 7: Percentages of Violent Crime Calls Over All Calls for Services Across Communities Over Five Years in Ventura County



The above graph shows occasional anomalies in some locations. Using the previously listed methodology for Violent Calls for Service and overall CFS, in most cases, the ratios are persistent. A deeper study of such patterns may help reach a more optimum level of policing among the cities. What determines the number of calls, and how can such an indicator be meaningfully related to an optimum level of policing? More importantly, can calling for service help reduce serious crimes?

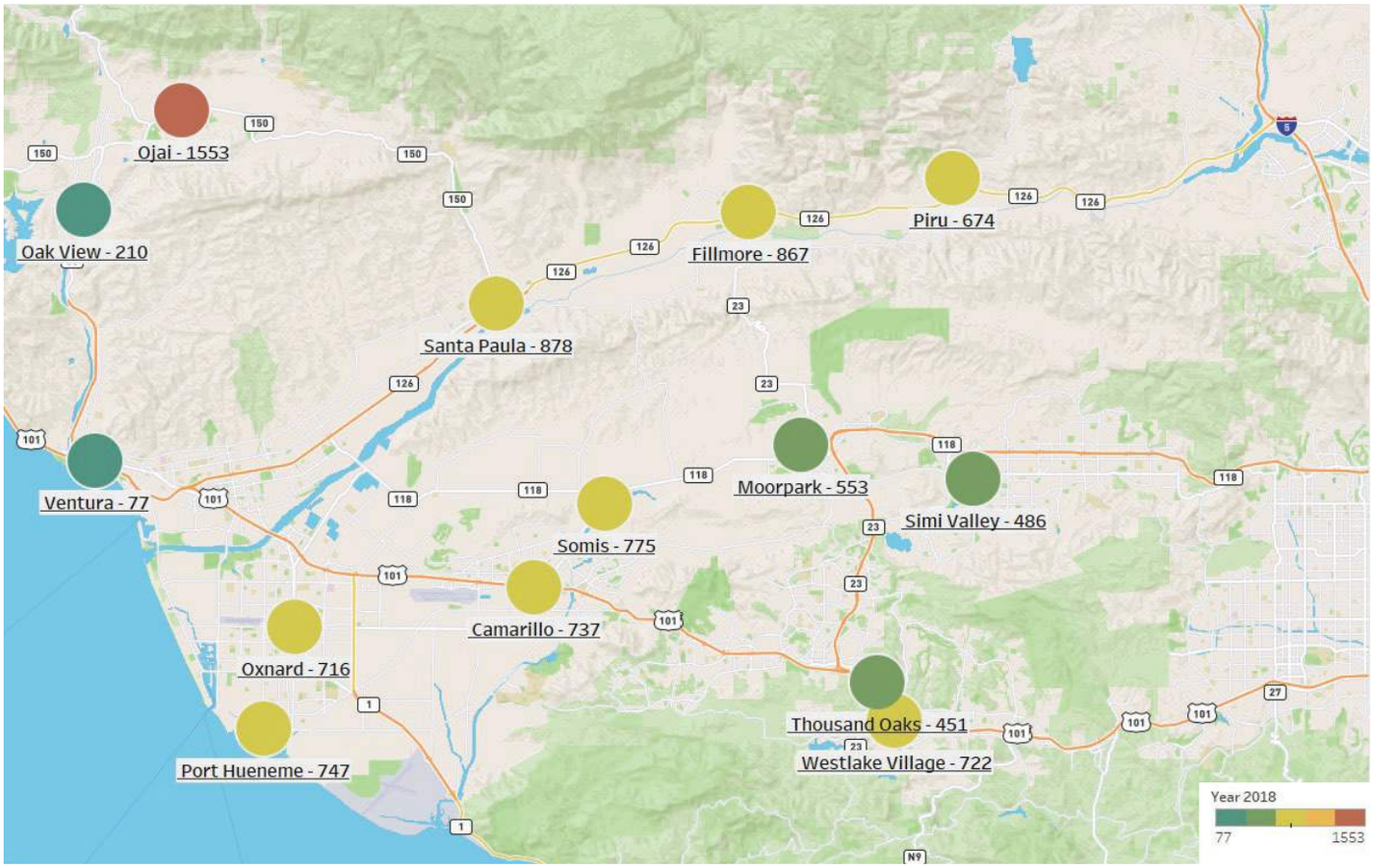
We also calculated the number of CFS across different geographic locations across the counties' cities for the average of five years and every year.

Map 1: Calls for Service rates per 1,000 population by Ventura County Communities, 5-year average (2018-2022)

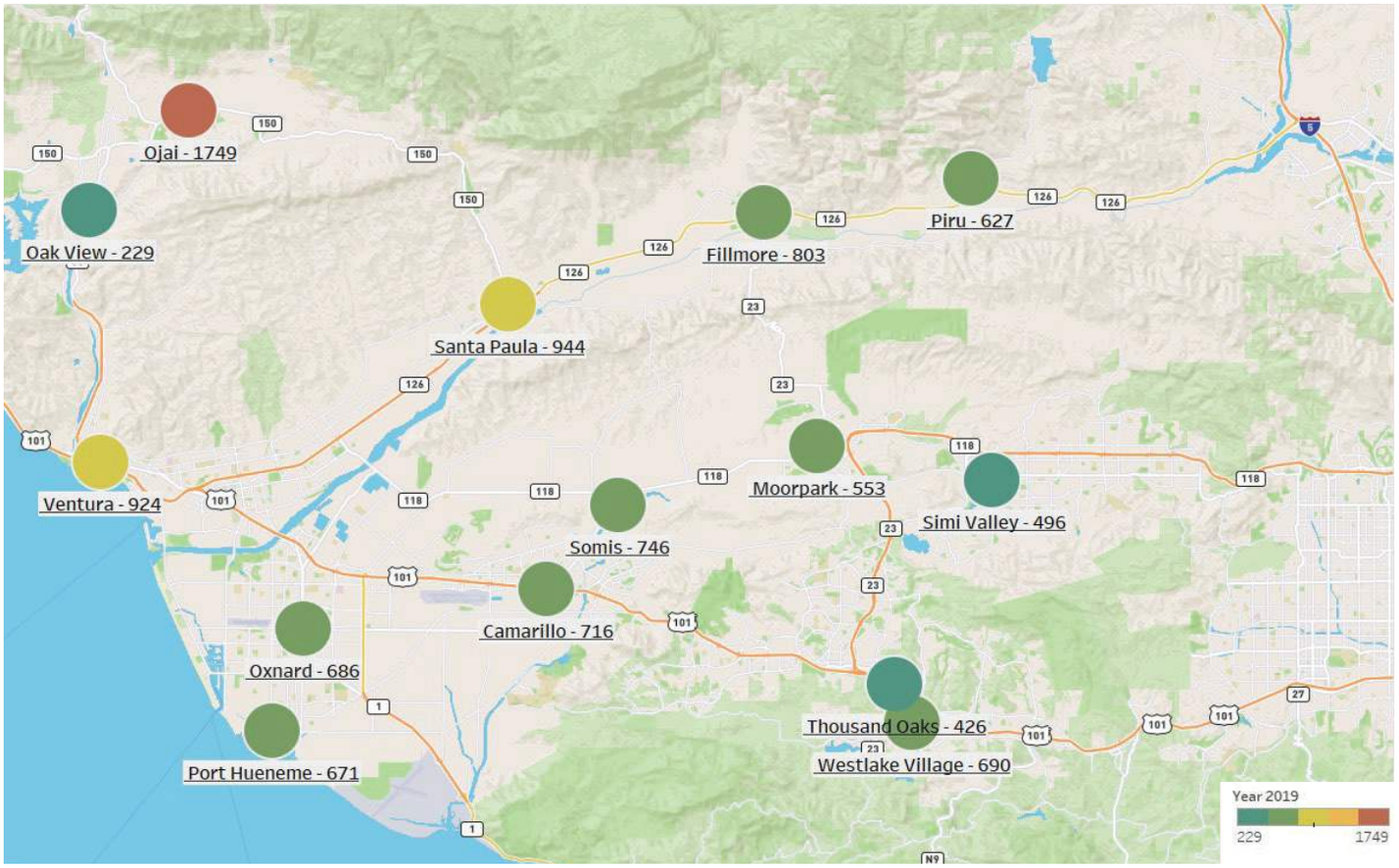


3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

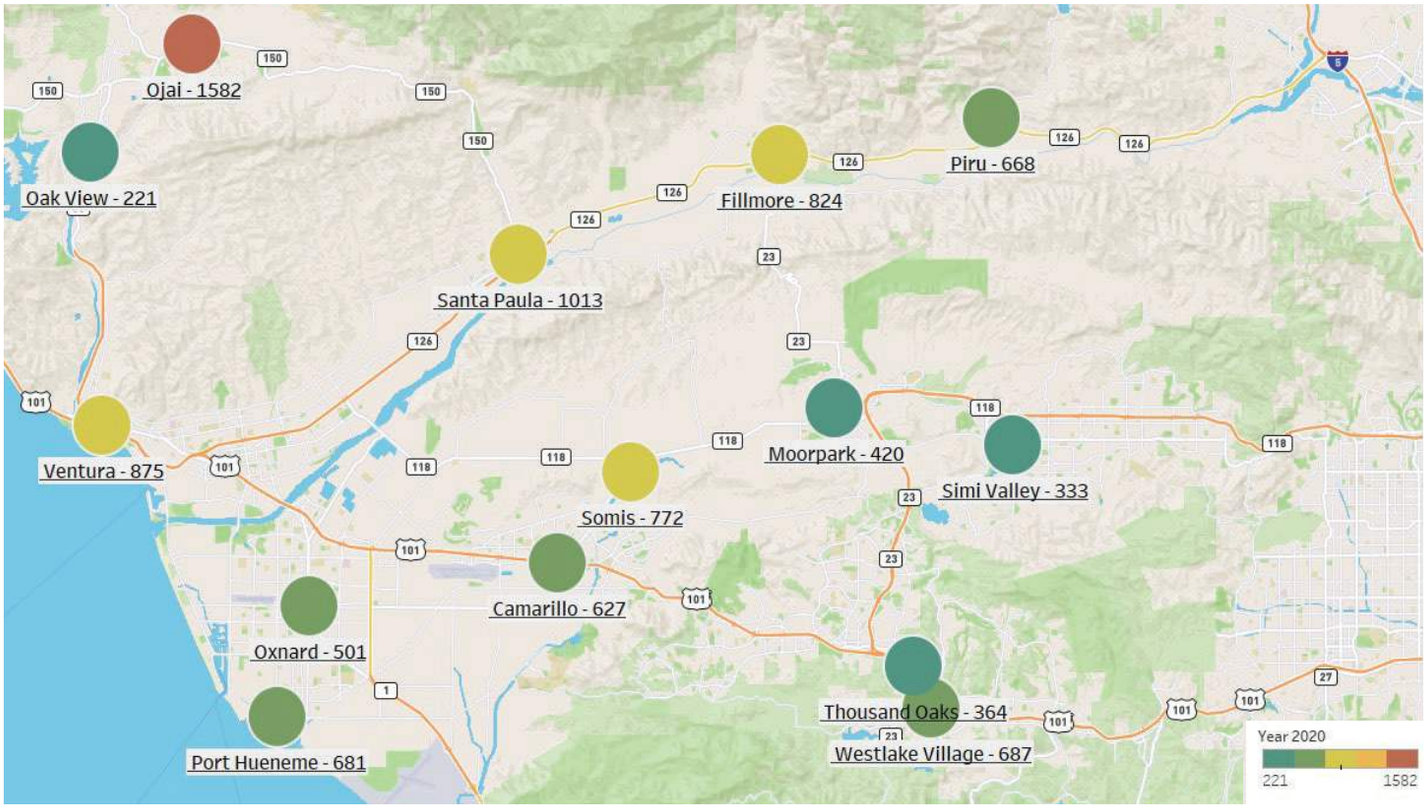
Map 2: Calls for Service rates per 1,000 population by Ventura County Communities, 2018



Map 3: Calls for Service rates per 1,000 population by Ventura County Communities, 2019

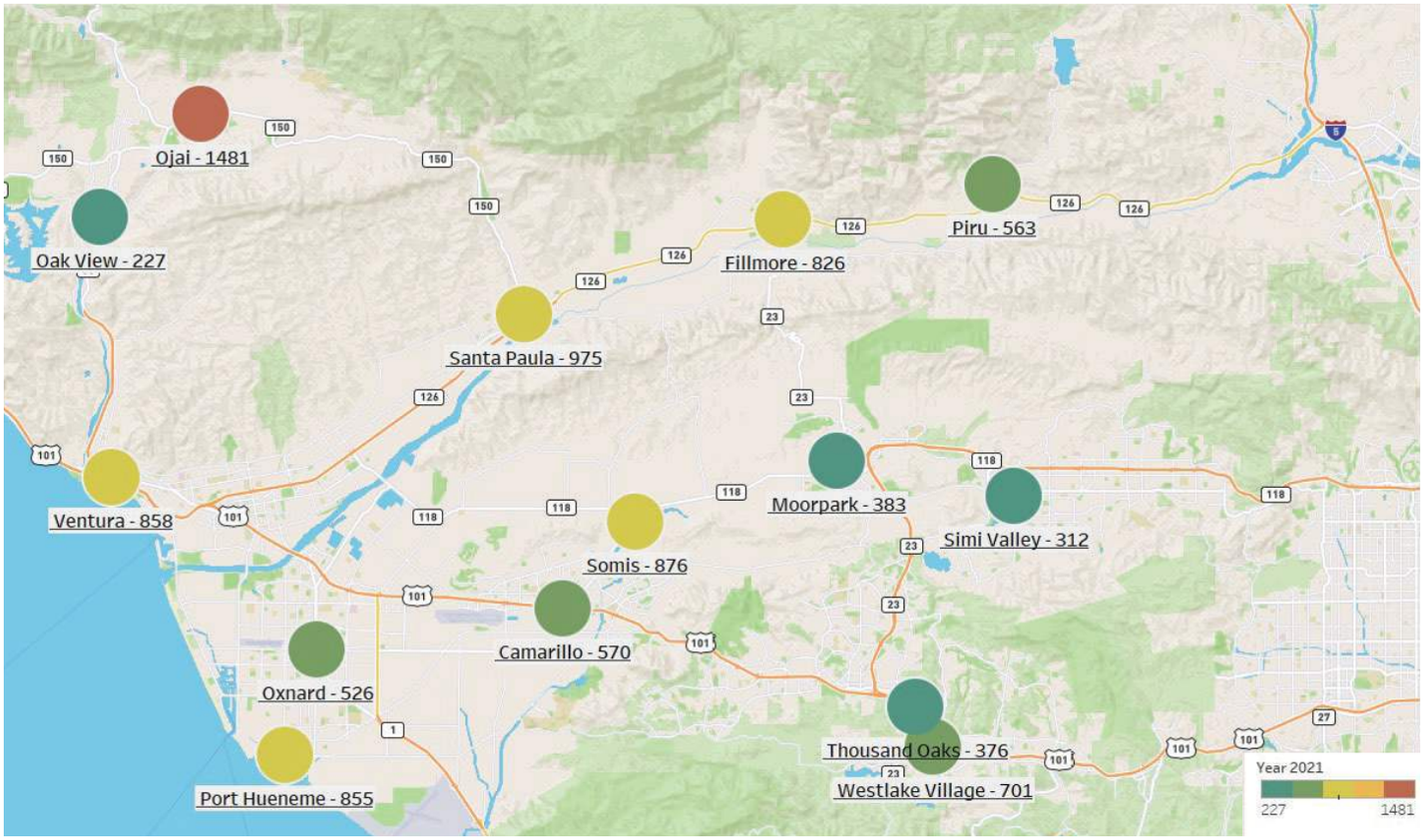


Map 4: Calls for Service rates per 1,000 population by Ventura County Communities, 2020

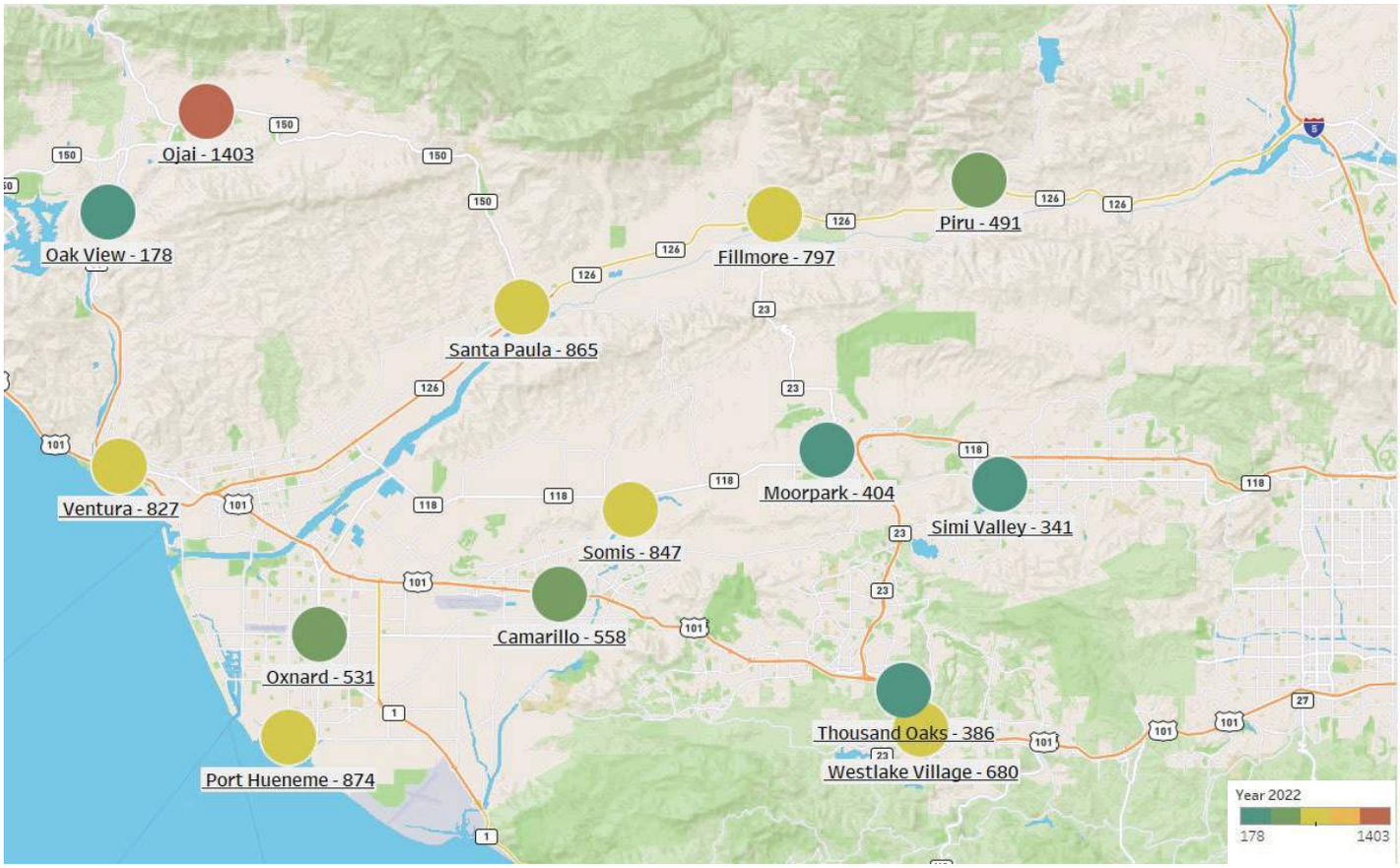


3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

Map 5: Calls for Service rates per 1,000 population by Ventura County Communities, 2021



Map 6: Calls for Service rates per 1,000 population by Ventura County Communities, 2022



The above charts show a similar pattern over the years of reporting.

3.3. Pattern of Arrests Within the County & Across Its ZIP Codes (2018–2022)

The impact of arrests on crimes is an essential issue with controversy and debates. Almost all crime prevention programs include some community outreach or educational effort to establish positive interactions between the police and the many community groups in the neighborhood. But they also have an arrest component within that crime prevention method to address those moments when crimes occur.[54]

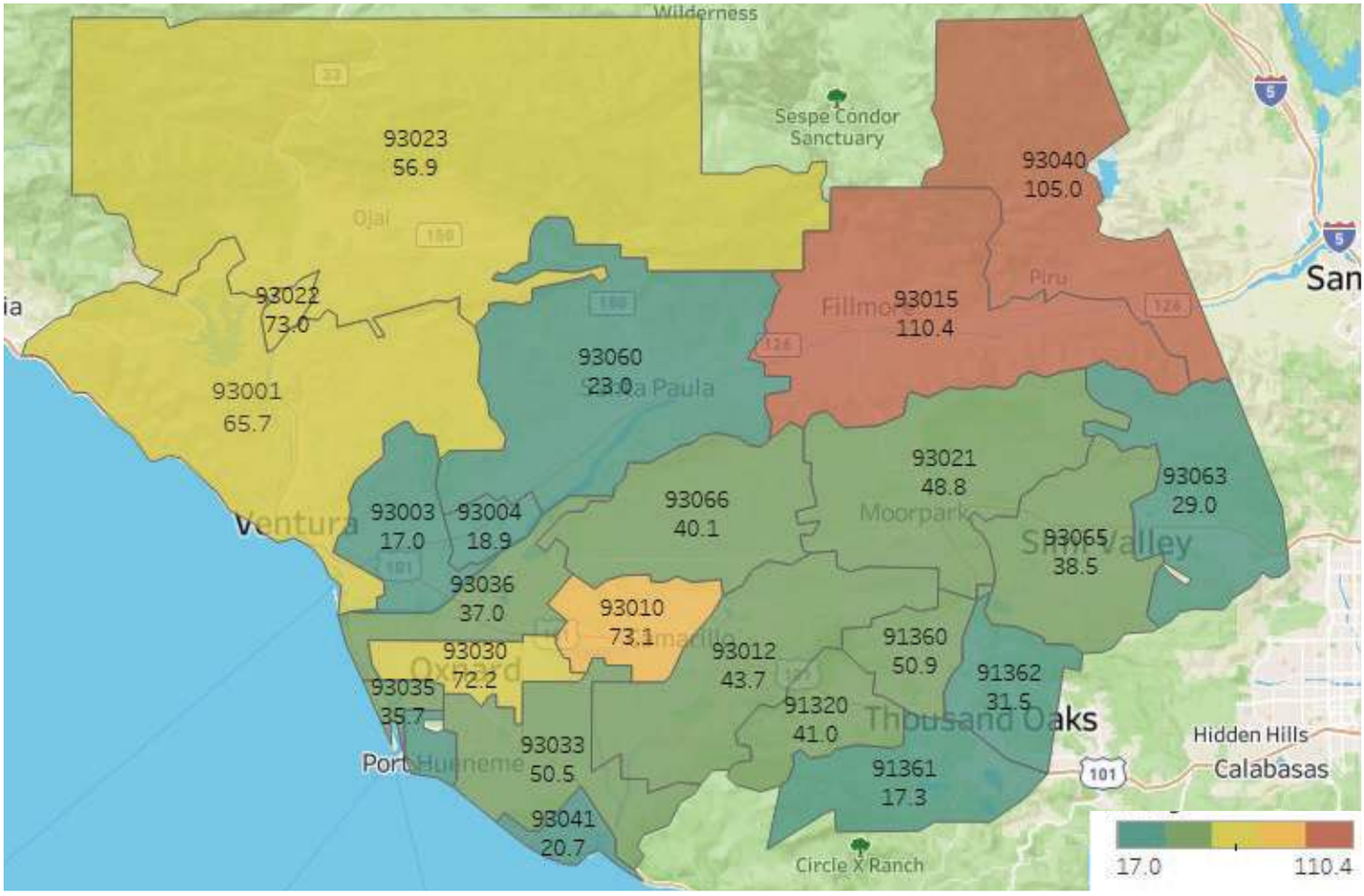
A change in the number of arrests is not necessarily an indicator of reduced crime or lack of effort on the part of the police force. Rather, it should be further investigated as to what other measures, such as social and economic policy initiatives and nonpolicy measures, including using surveillance through technological initiatives and improvements, have contributed to the change in number of arrests. Additionally, repeat offender information (those arrested multiple times) and the recidivism rate significantly affect the number of arrests. This is another area in which further analysis needs to be performed.

[54] Richard T. Long, CPP, Detective Services Commander (Ret.), Newport Beach Police Department, California (2019) Crime Prevention Through Targeted Arrest Strategies, International Association of Chiefs of Police, https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/crime-prevention-through-targeted-arrest-strategies/

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

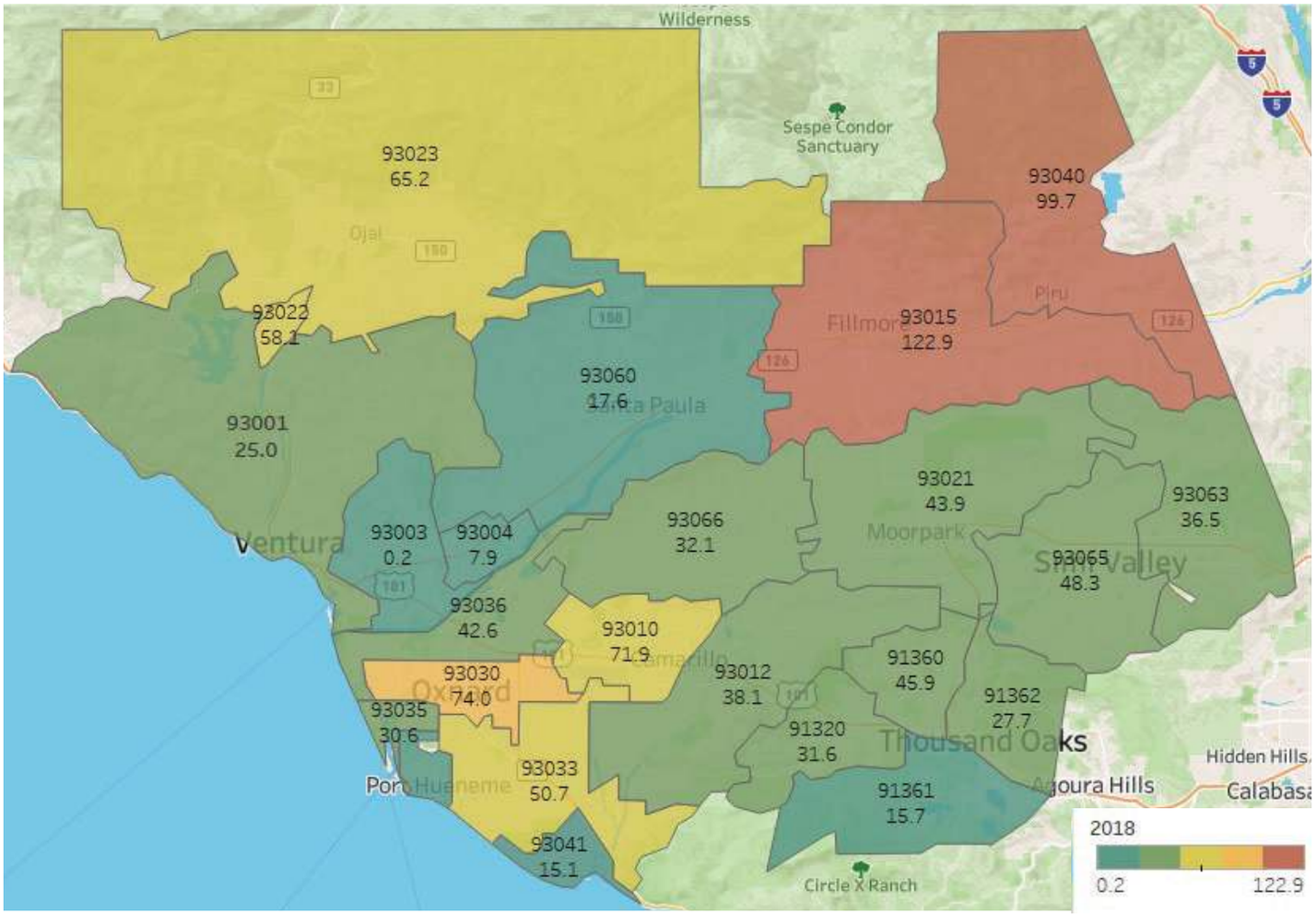
Arrest rates were also looked into across various socioeconomic patterns of those arrested, and the results were extensively debated by experts and scholars in the field of study regarding their impact on multiple communities. With such a background, we tried to bring all the available information and present it across various ZIP Codes.

Map 7: Rate of Arrests of Violent Crimes per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 5-year Average (2018-2022)



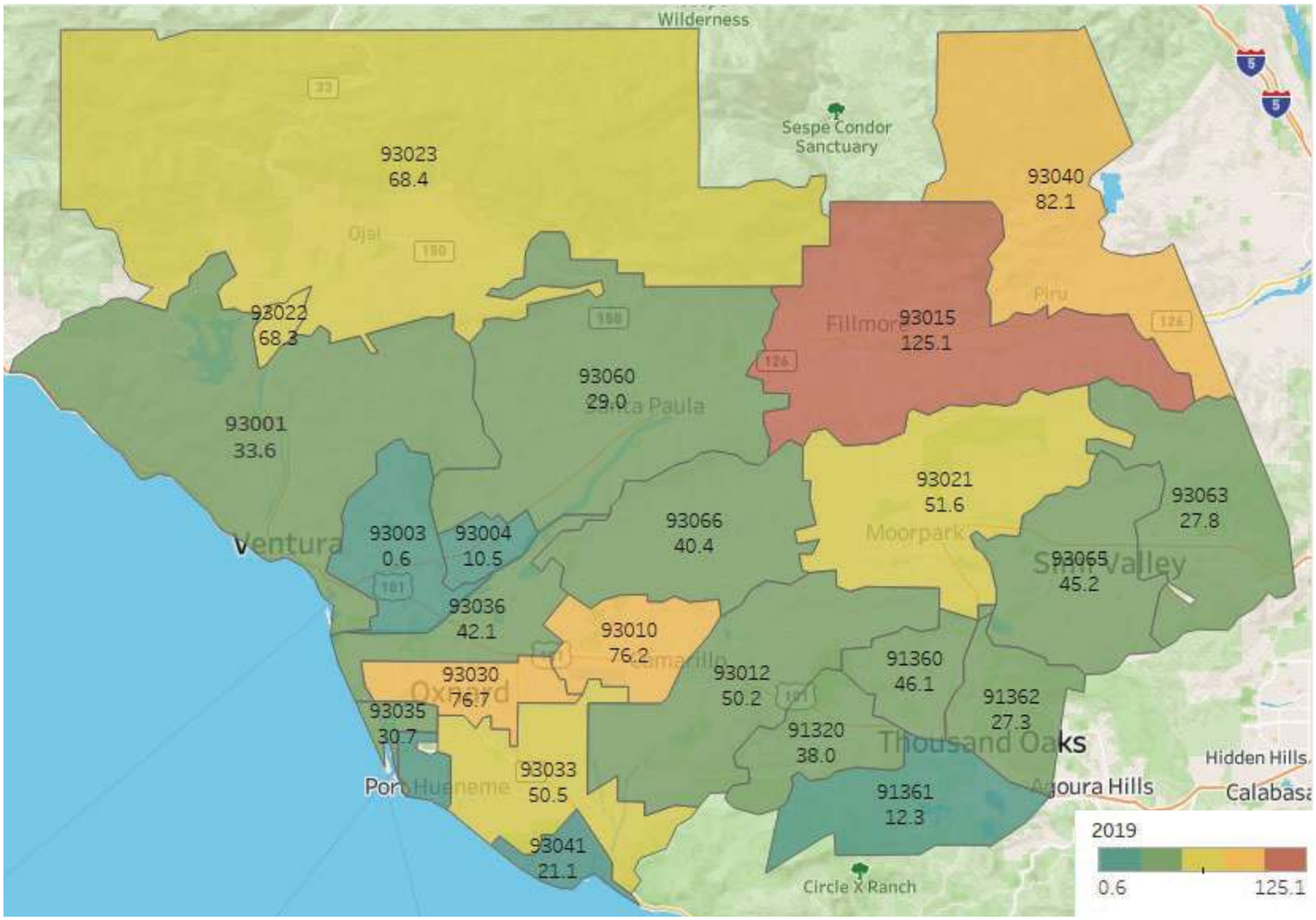
Source: Reports from Different Law Enforcement Agencies processed for this study

Map 8: Rate of Arrests of Violent Crimes per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 2018

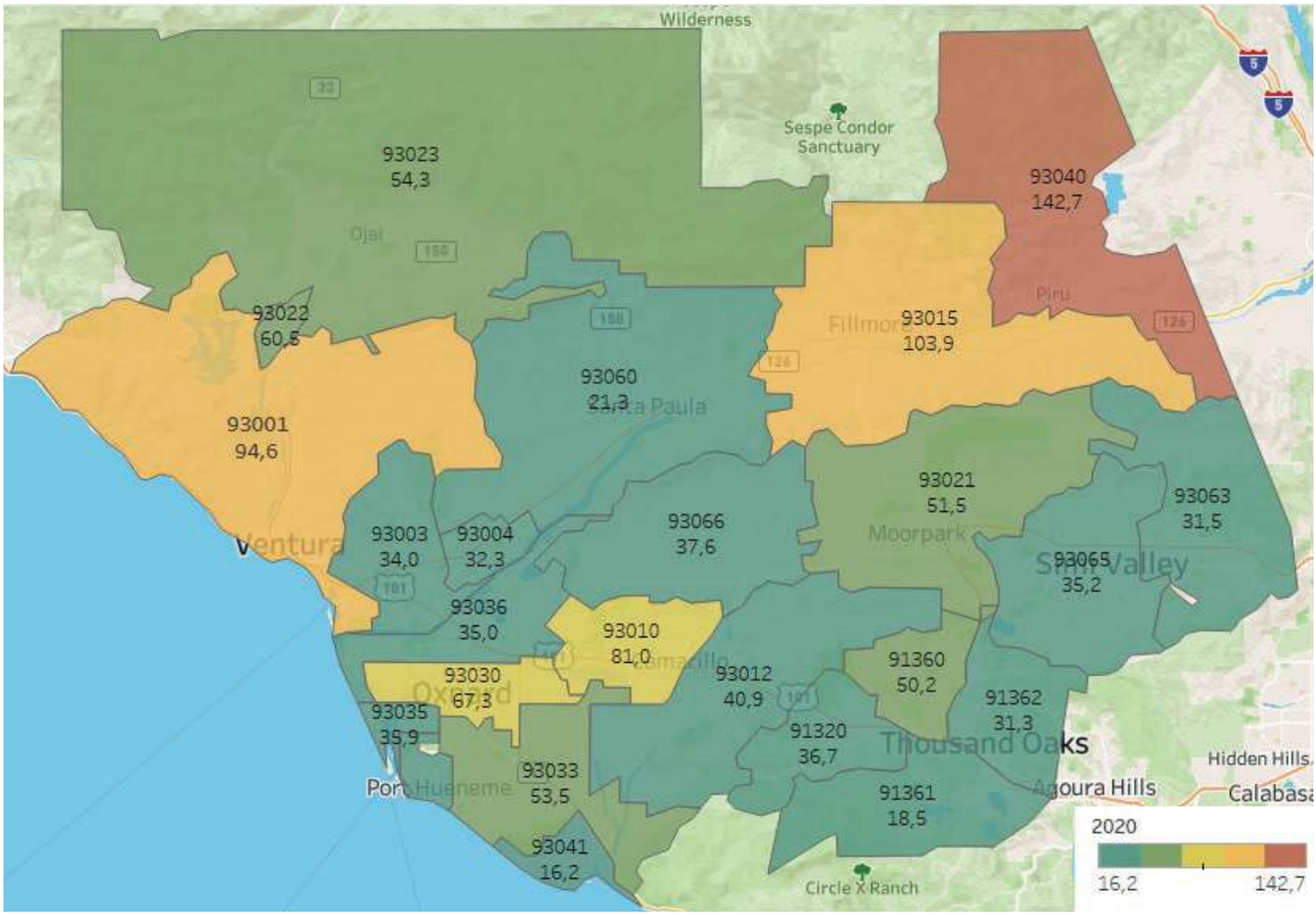


3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

Map 9: Rate of Arrests of Violent Crimes per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 2019

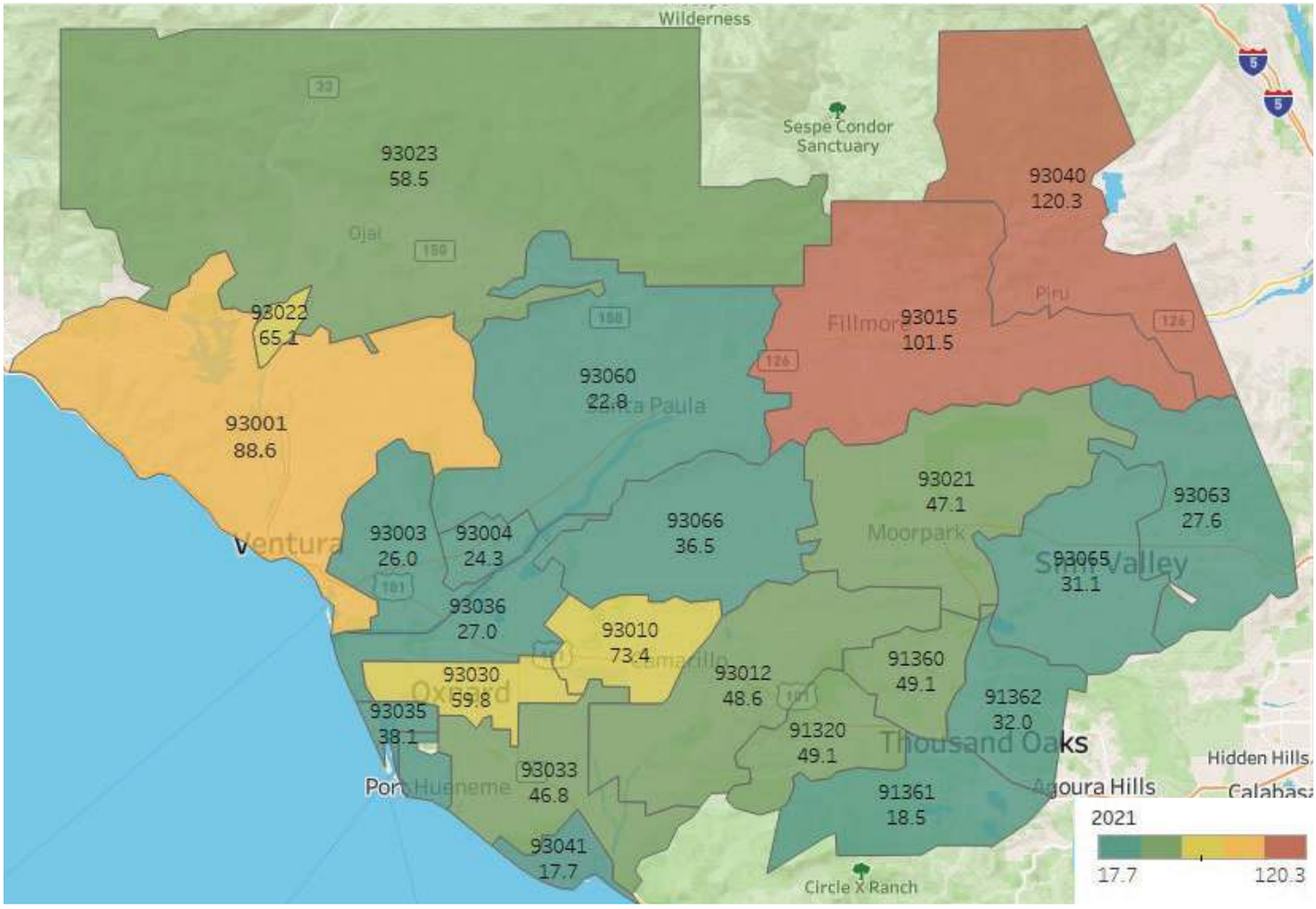


Map 10: Rate of Arrests of Violent Crimes per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 2020

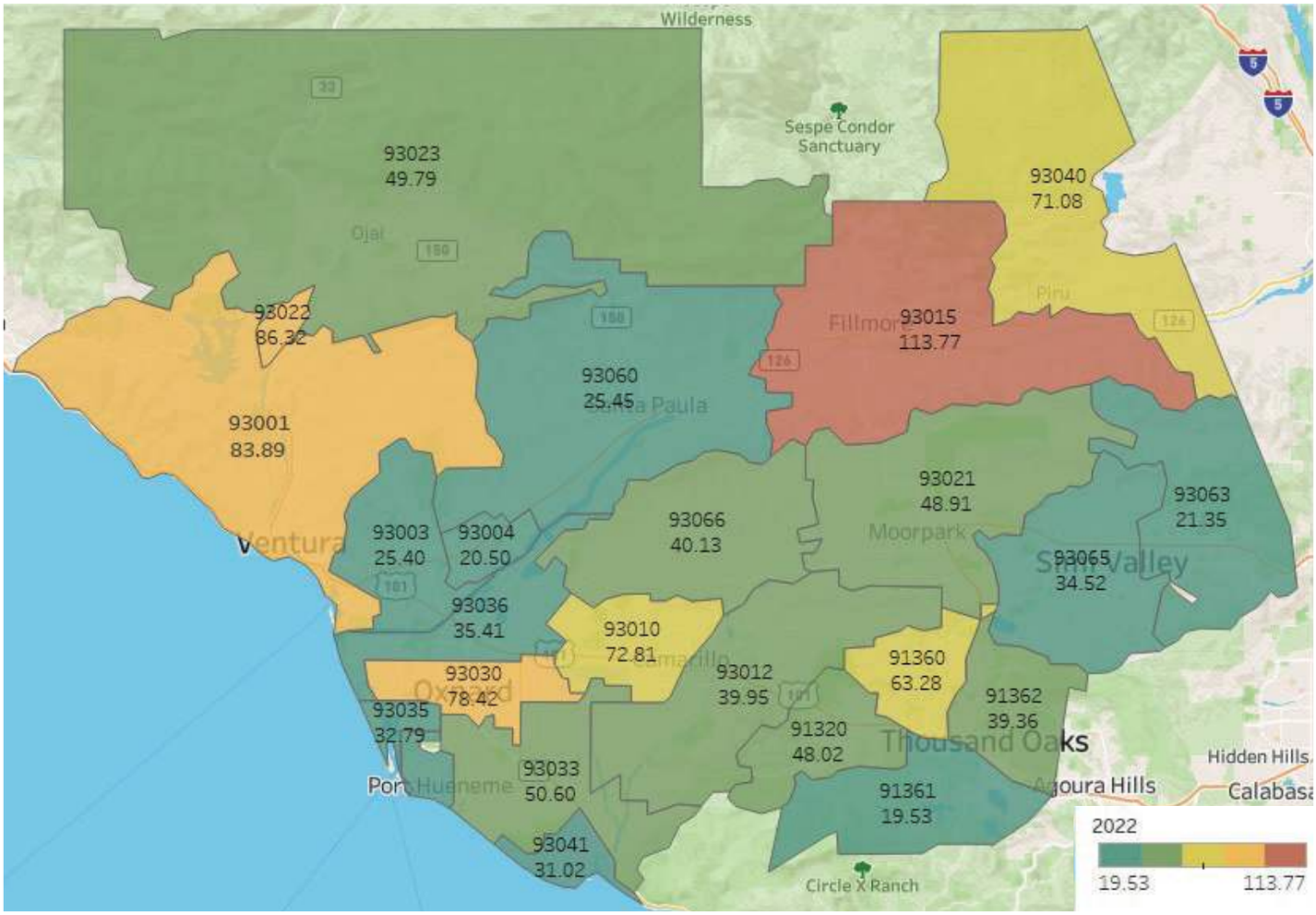


3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

Map 11: Rate of Arrests of Violent Crimes per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 2021



Map 12: Rate of Arrests of Violent Crimes per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 2022



The last six maps bring out the overall pattern of arrest on average over the five years between 2018 to 2022 and their designs over each year for the duration of the review. This calls to attention some differences over the years in some of the ZIP Codes analyzed.

To observe the changes accurately, we need to look at each ZIP Code and find the difference, which can help us better understand what has occurred in each area. However, an overall comparison over the last five years (2018 to 2022) suggests an increase in the number of locations since the start of COVID-19. Overall, the changes have been more significant in West County than in East County.

We also looked into the pattern of violent crimes for which arrests were made for violent or weapon-related offenses, providing valuable information on why the arrests were made.

The study also looked at the demographic structure of arrests within the county and its neighborhoods identified by ZIP Codes. These presentations are all based on the overall pattern of the 5-year period.

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

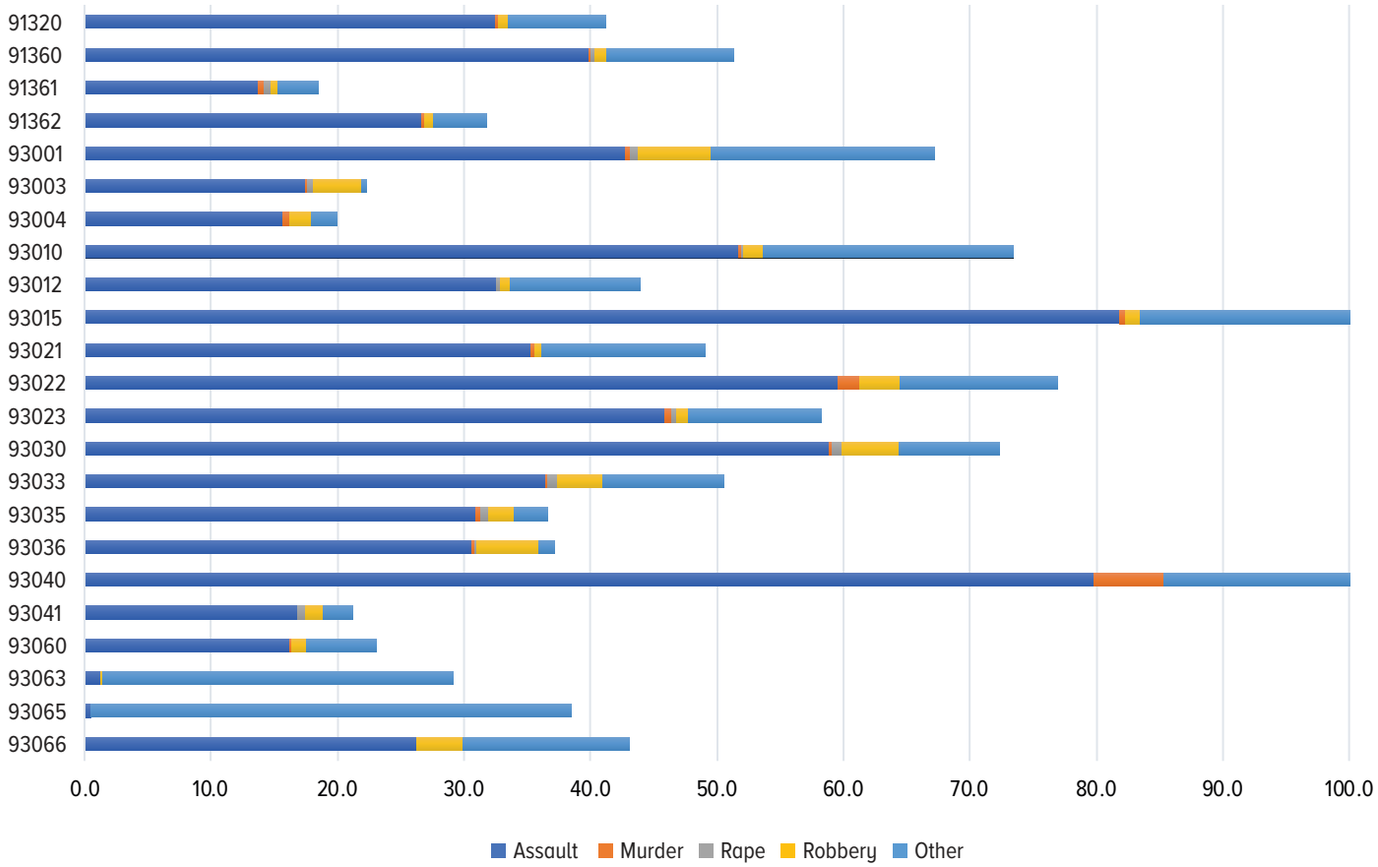
The rate of violent crime arrests varies remarkably among ZIP Codes. Suppose the rate of arrests for violent crimes can be considered a reasonable indicator of the occurrence of crimes in various places. In that case, the results, with some exceptions, support the close relationship between the event of crimes and the socioeconomic status of those arrested for the crimes.

It is, however, essential to explore the demographic features of those arrested. Analyzing the demographic characteristics of those arrested is critical in examining how the administration of justice is pursued within the county, as being arrested does not necessarily mean being guilty of the crime.

When analyzing arrestee information and discussing violence within our communities, we must understand who these offenders are. Law enforcement takes multiple data pieces into account when determining subsequent actions. Witness statements, video surveillance or additional information are often pivotal to decisions made by officers in the field. Additionally, after arrests are made, analyzing demographic and residential information is essential in understanding the crime a community experiences. Often, arrestees and suspects of crime commit offenses in areas other than their communities. Given the economic, tourist and commercial options available to Ventura County and its proximity to Los Angeles, it is not uncommon for arrestees or suspects to reside outside Ventura County. Like many other counties in California, Ventura County also falls victim to organized crime groups and crews that commit multiple crimes and then return to their residing city that is outside of Ventura County.

The following charts will help us explore the existing pattern within the county.

Exhibit 8: Rate of Arrests of Violent Crimes Per 10,000 Population by Type of Crimes on Average Between 2018 to 2022 by ZIP Code



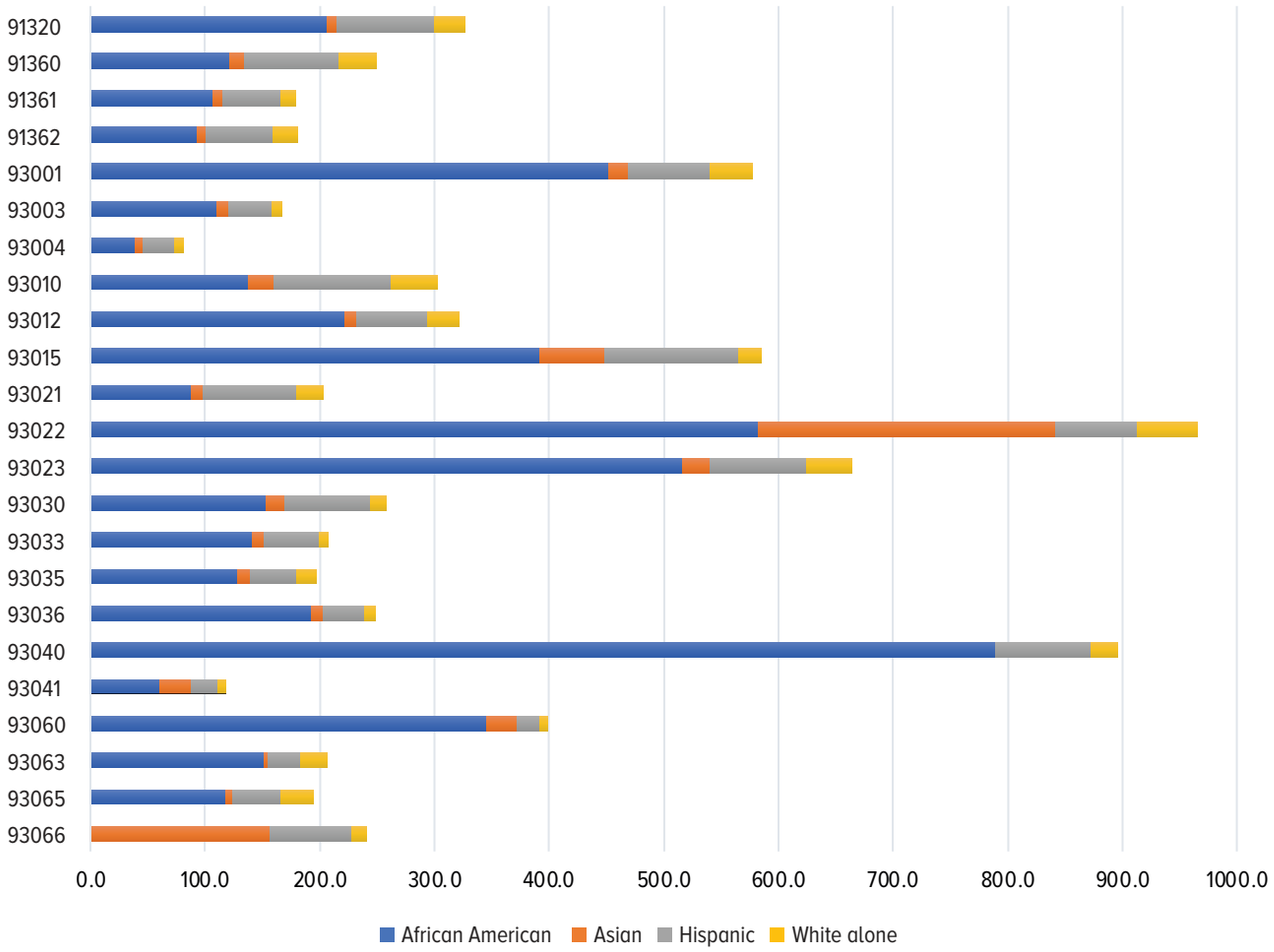
In the above graph, the following violent offenses were included: homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault.

Examining the above exhibit shows that the rate of arrests for violent crimes changes remarkably within the county and across its various ZIP Codes.

Going further, we investigated the pattern of arrest across the race and ethnicity of those arrested. In looking into race and ethnicity, we explored the proportion of those arrested in every geographic location based on the overall makeup and their proportion based on the racial structure of the population. In simple language, we will show, for example, what proportion of the people arrested were White Alone and, at the same time, what is such proportion based on the total number of White Alone who live in that neighborhood.

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

Exhibit 9: Rate of Arrest of Violent Crimes Per 10,000 Population by Race and Ethnicity Based on the Proportion of Each Group Across Various ZIP Codes on Average Between 2018 to 2022 in Ventura County

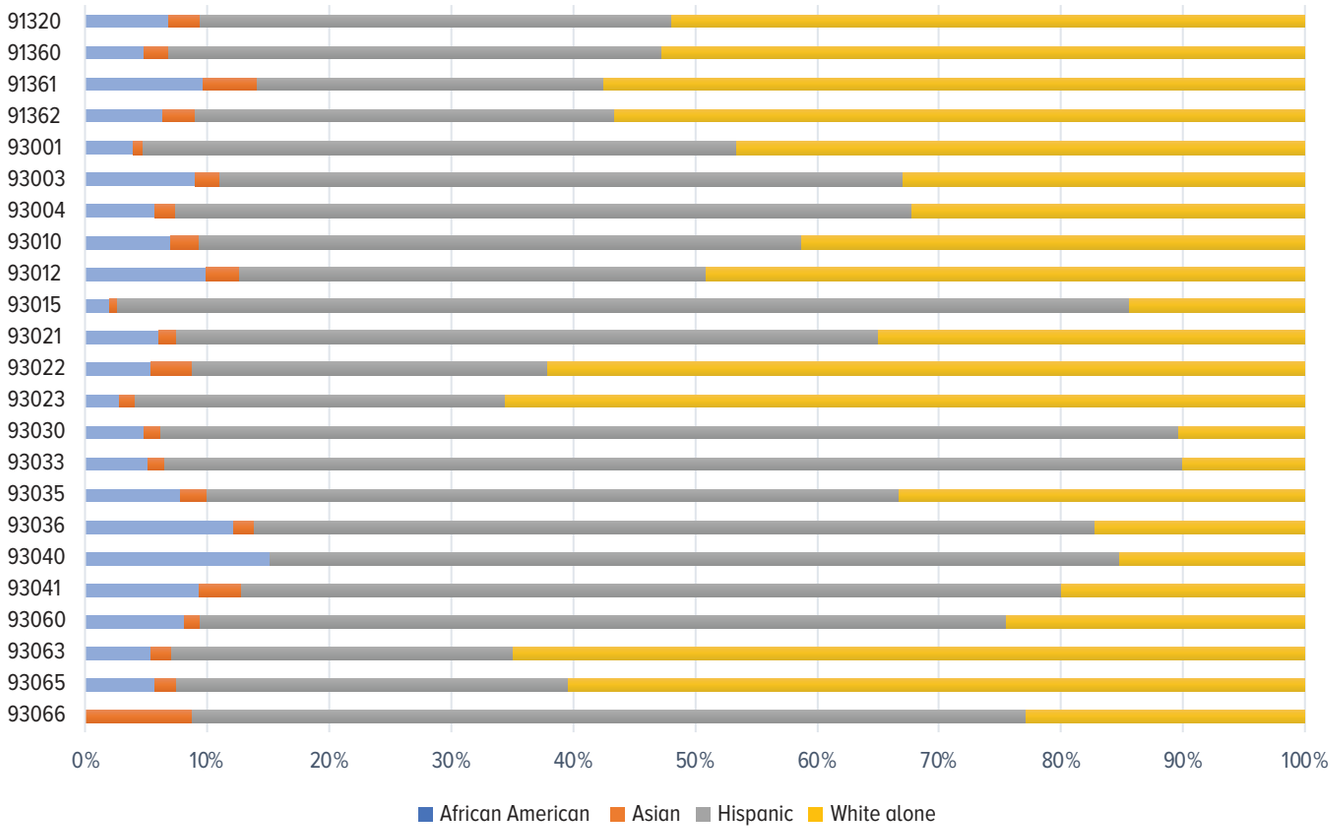


The results show that out of 18,443 arrests made between 2018 and 2022, 1,033 African Americans were arrested (accounting for 5.6% of all total arrests). This presented an average of around 206 persons arrested per year. For transparency, the population total for African Americans who have listed their residential address as a location in Ventura County in 2021 is 15,486.[56] In comparing the arrest rates and race to the Census data for Ventura County, African

[56] There might be some differences among population size reported for various years for Ventura County as a whole or across its ZIP Codes. The reason for such differences is that we used 5-year data from American Community Survey (ACS) for ZIP Codes while in other places we used annual data from the US Census for the county as a whole.

Americans present a much higher rate of being arrested as a proportion of their population in each area throughout the county. Some additional data pieces need further analysis that could impact this. Often, as previously noted, arrestees do not live in the county or region they are arrested in. Ventura County is a desirable location for pleasure, commerce, tourism and other activities that residents from Los Angeles and other counties frequent. While this positively impacts the economy of Ventura County, it can also come with some unintended consequences for crime, traffic, police contacts and migratory populations throughout the county. This observation has its importance and needs to be looked into much further. However, it is also essential to state that we have a comparatively much smaller proportion of African Americans in the county than White Alone or Hispanic. The above chart shows that African Americans present a much higher rate of being arrested as a proportion of their population in each area throughout the county. This observation has its merit and needs to be further explored. We see a similar, but to a much lesser extent, significantly higher ratio of Asians being arrested in some areas, and this, as mentioned before, could very well be caused by relatively much fewer Asians in some parts of the county.

Exhibit 10: Percentage of People Arrested for Violent Crime in the Makeup of Race/Ethnic Structure Within Each Area between 2018–2022



3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

The above chart brings a different view of the race and ethnicity makeup of those arrested for violent crimes. These ratios present the proportion of those arrested as a percentage of the total number of people arrested. This pattern is more representative of the racial and ethnic structure of the incarcerated population. Bearing in mind that African Americans form a very small portion of the people within the county, they are over-represented in the makeup of those arrested. Hispanics in most areas represented the highest proportion of those arrested. Finally, Whites Alone are a much smaller proportion of those arrested than their population in most areas.

3.4. Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) of Violent Crime Across Various ZIP Codes in Ventura County (2018-2022)

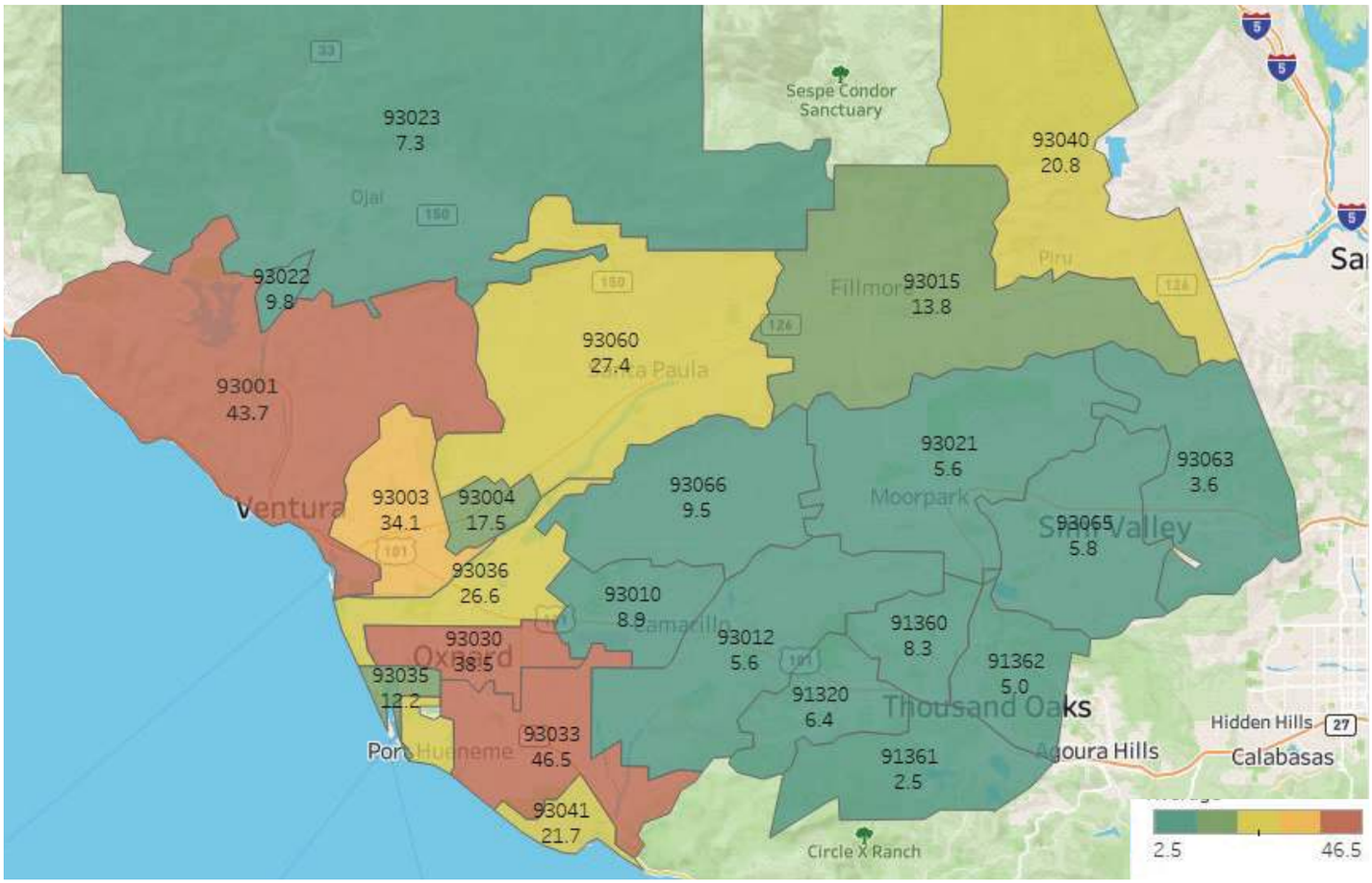
Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) is one of the most common and reliable sources of gathering consistent crime statistics. It has been around since 1930. It includes data from more than 18,000 cities, universities, colleges, counties, and state, tribal and federal law enforcement agencies. Agencies participate voluntarily and submit their crime data through a state UCR program or the FBI's UCR Program.[57] For detailed information regarding the definition of crimes, please review the FBI website.[58]

This study brings a structured summary of UCR from all the law enforcement agencies within Ventura County. They are presented based on the past five years' average (2018 to 2022) and for every year. The information is also divided across race, ethnicity and other crucial demographic information. After 2022, most law enforcement agencies will report crime information via the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

[57] Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Crime/Law Enforcement Stats (Uniform Crime Reporting Program), https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/more-fbi-services-and-information/ucr

[58] Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Crime in the United States 2013. https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2013/crime-in-the-u.s.-2013/rape-addendum/rape_addendum_final

Map 13: Rate of Violent UCR per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 5-year Average (2018-2022)

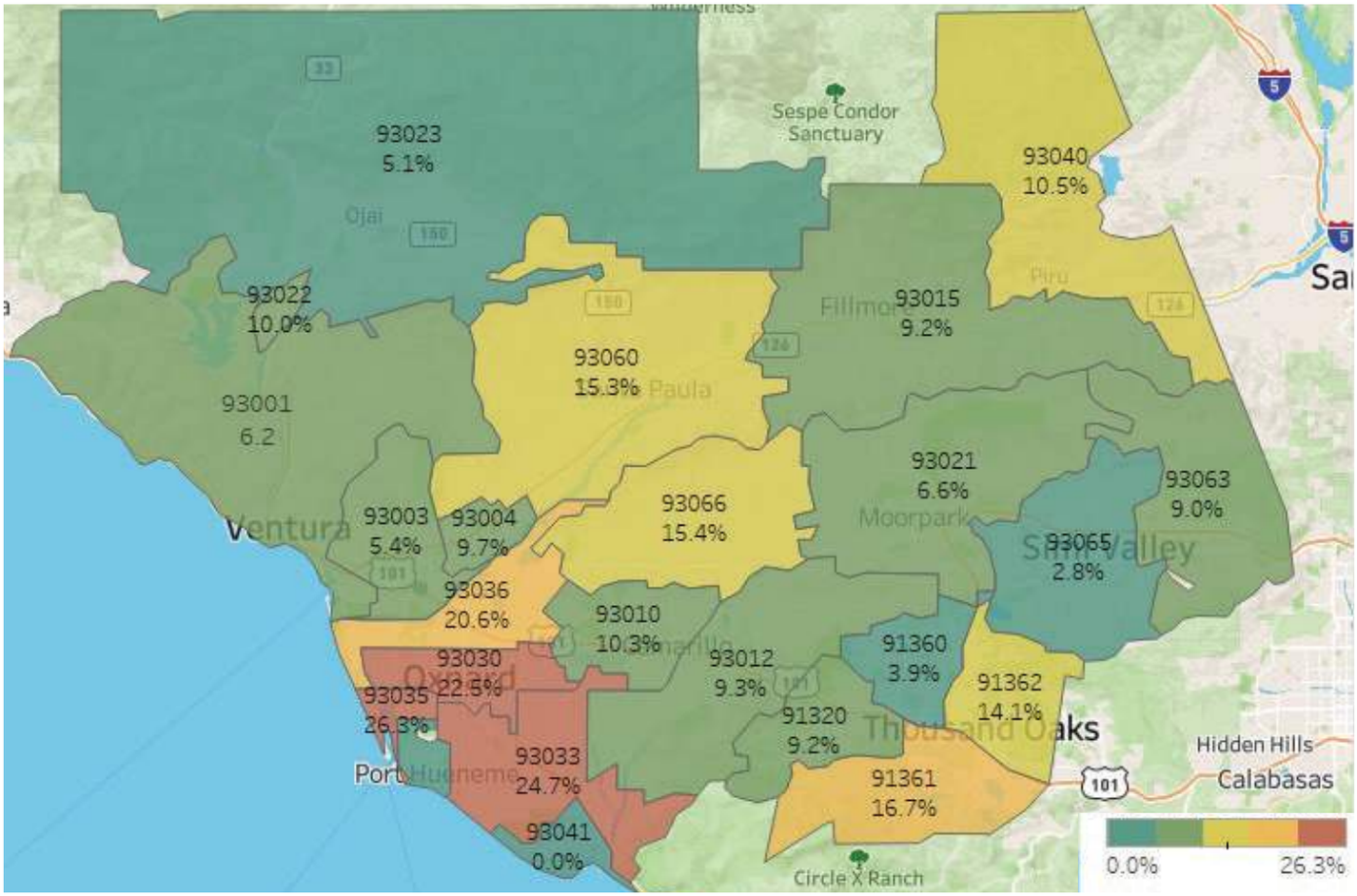


Some ZIP Codes in cities such as Oxnard and Ventura have the highest rate of crimes reported in the form of UCR.

The following map presents the percentage of gun-related crimes within the overall pattern of the study. Therefore, it is not a pattern of UCR gun-related reports, but it does provide a measure of the severity of gun-related violence within each ZIP Code.

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

Map 14: Percentage of Violent Gun-Related UCR among all Ventura County ZIP Codes, the 5-year average 2018-2022



The above pattern shows that in several ZIP Codes, which generally do not have a high rate of violent crimes according to the UCR, a significant proportion of them are gun-related. This includes Westlake Village, Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley. In some other ZIP Codes in Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Paula and Piru, the proportion of UCR-based crimes and gun-related violence out of all crimes is relatively high.

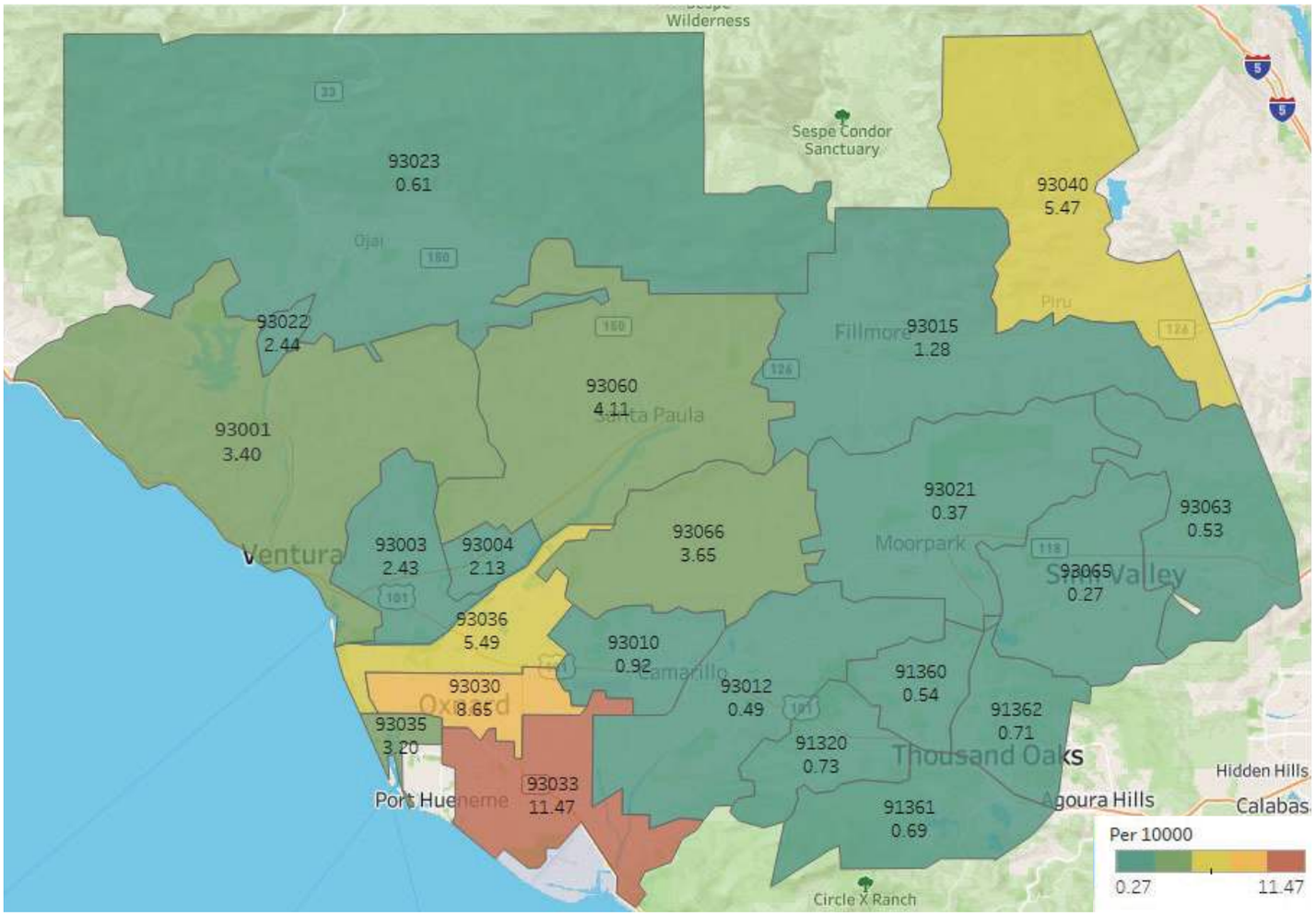
Finally, the following map provides the map of gun-related violence reported in the framework of UCR. This chart provides a different perspective, a relative pattern of gun-related violence based on UCR across the ZIP Codes within Ventura County.

Comparing the last three charts provides a much better insight into the prevalence of violence and the likelihood of facing gun-related violence in Ventura County across its different locations identified based on ZIP Codes.

Using UCR for the last five years (2018 to 2022), several ZIP Codes in West County appear to have had more violence in their neighborhood than in East County. ZIP Codes in Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Paula and Piru are among such geographical locations. On the other side of this comparison, ZIP Codes in East County, such as Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village, Moorpark, Newbury Park and Simi Valley, are among areas with a lower crime rate.

Gun-related violence shows a similar pattern of occurrence across the county. ZIP Code 93033 in the City of Oxnard shows the highest rate of gun-related violence occurrence. Gun-related violence is also relatively high in other ZIP Codes in Oxnard, Santa Paula, Ventura, Santa Paula and Piru.

Map 15: Rate of Violent Gun-Related UCR per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 5-year Average (2018-2022)

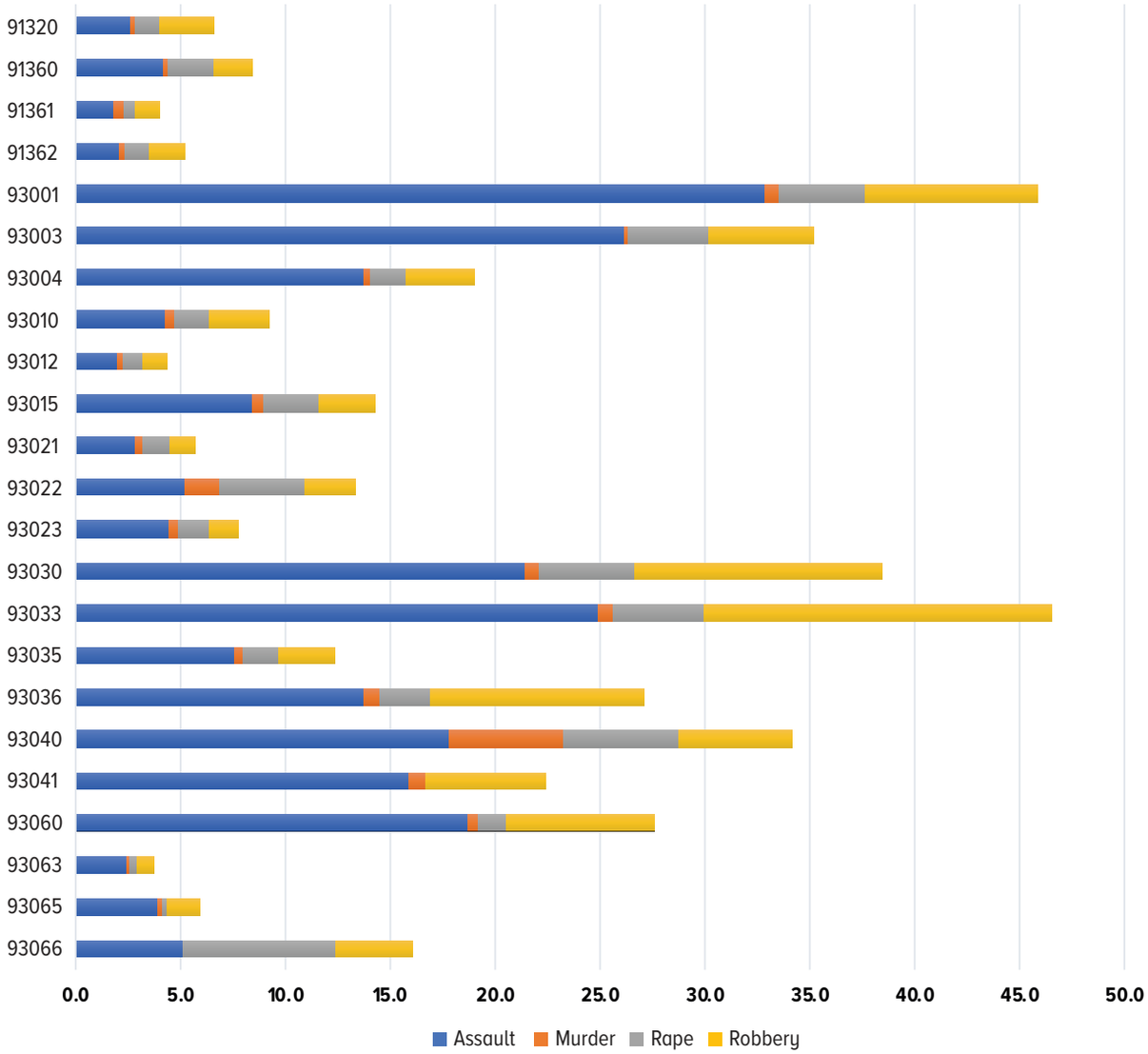


3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

While the rate of gun-related violence in particular parts of East County is lower, the proportion of gun-related violence out of all violent crimes in some of these areas of West County, including Westlake Village, Thousand Oaks, Newbury Park and parts of Simi Valley, is relatively high.

The following chart presents different violent crimes reported through UCR within the county.

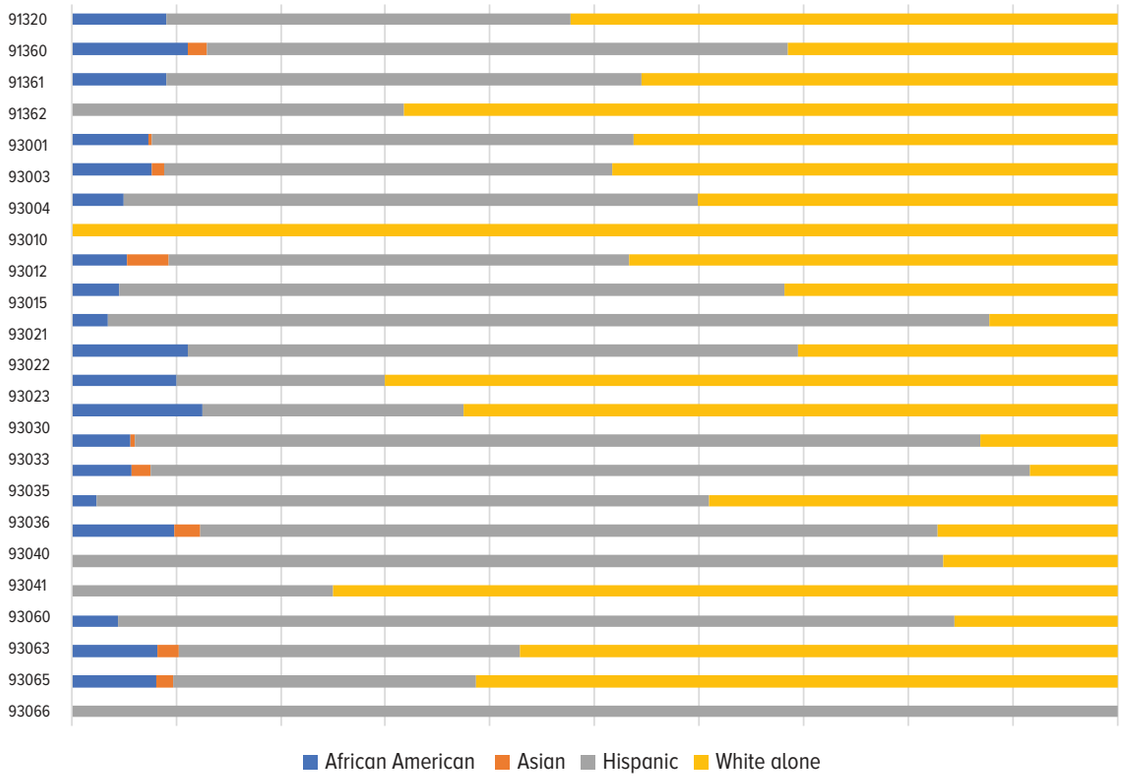
Exhibit 11: Rate of Violent UCR per 10,000 Population of Crime by Type of Crimes Across ZIP Codes (5-Year Average)



As stated previously in the study, the number of violent crimes in Ventura County is much lower than in the state of California or other large counties within California. During the five years (2018-2022), there were 7,378 Violent crimes. There were 96 Homicides, 4,428 Aggravated Assaults, 762 Rape/Criminal Sexual Assaults, 2,067 Robberies and 25 reports that were listed as Violent without a category. Overall, the majority of offenses were assault or robbery-related (88%).

The exhibit shows that assault and robbery have the primary share in the makeup of the crimes.

Exhibit 12: Assaults Reported by Race/Ethnicity of Arrestee (Average of Five Years)



The pattern shows a proportionate distribution based on the demographic structure of areas. Though the population is small, African Americans are overrepresented.

The following exhibit shows the percentages of violent crimes reported through UCR in which a gun was used. The picture is, as expected, very grim, indicating a high rate of murder as a result. Guns were used dramatically in robbery and, to a lesser extent, in assaults. Guns were not used in cases of rape.

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

Exhibit 13: Percentage of Violent UCR When Gun Was Used by Type of Crimes (5-Year Average)

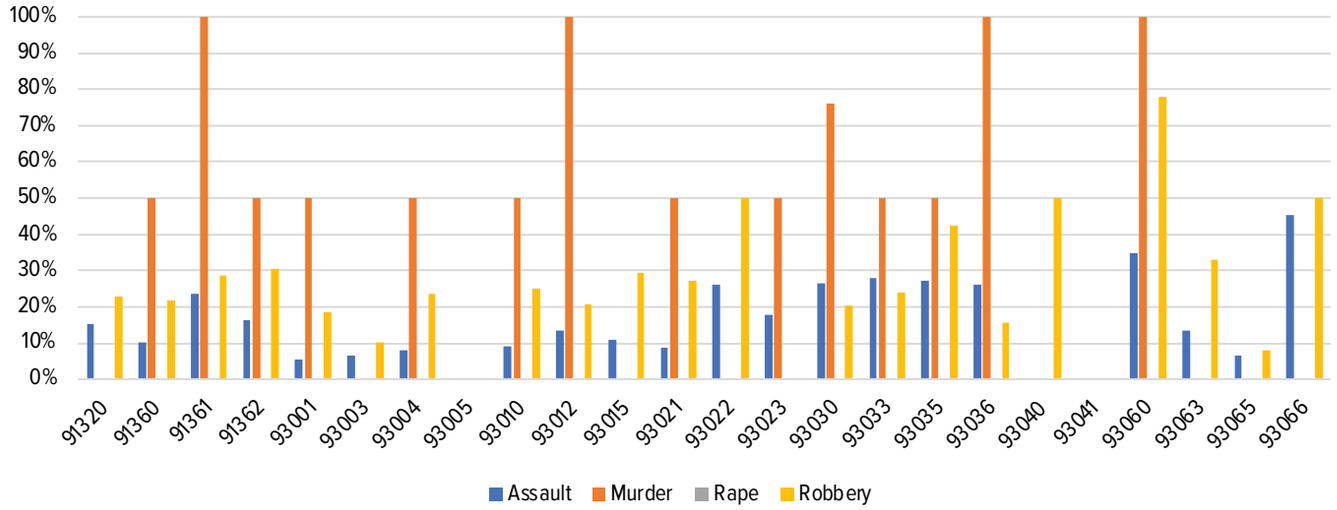
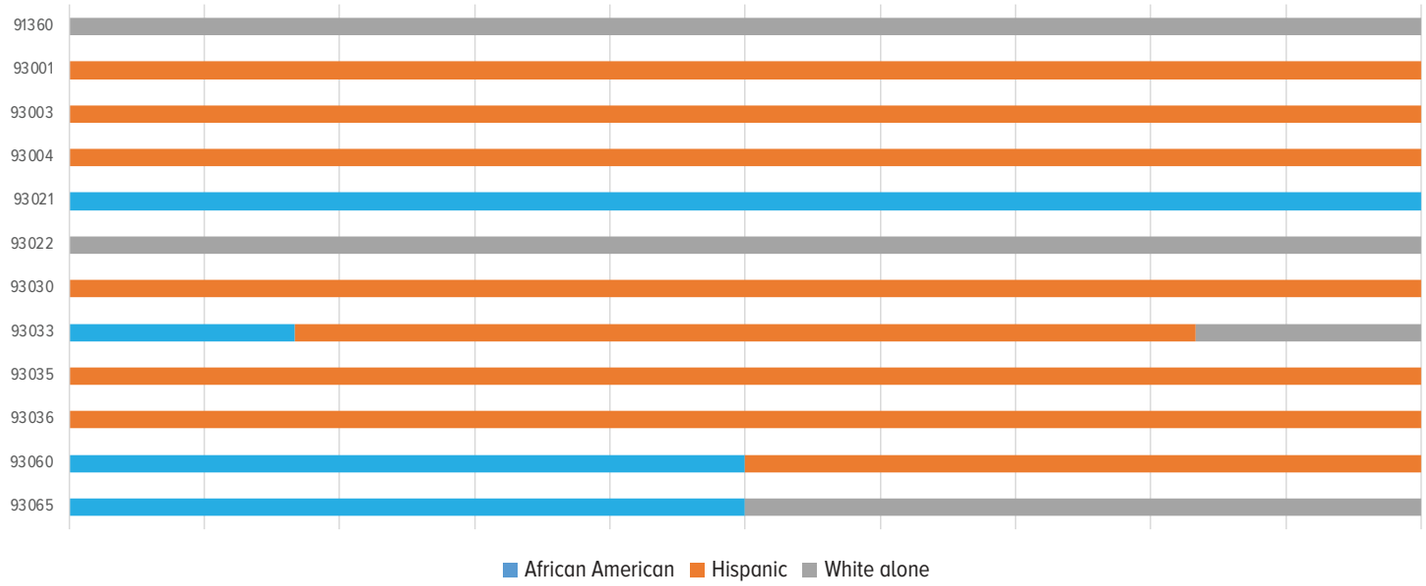
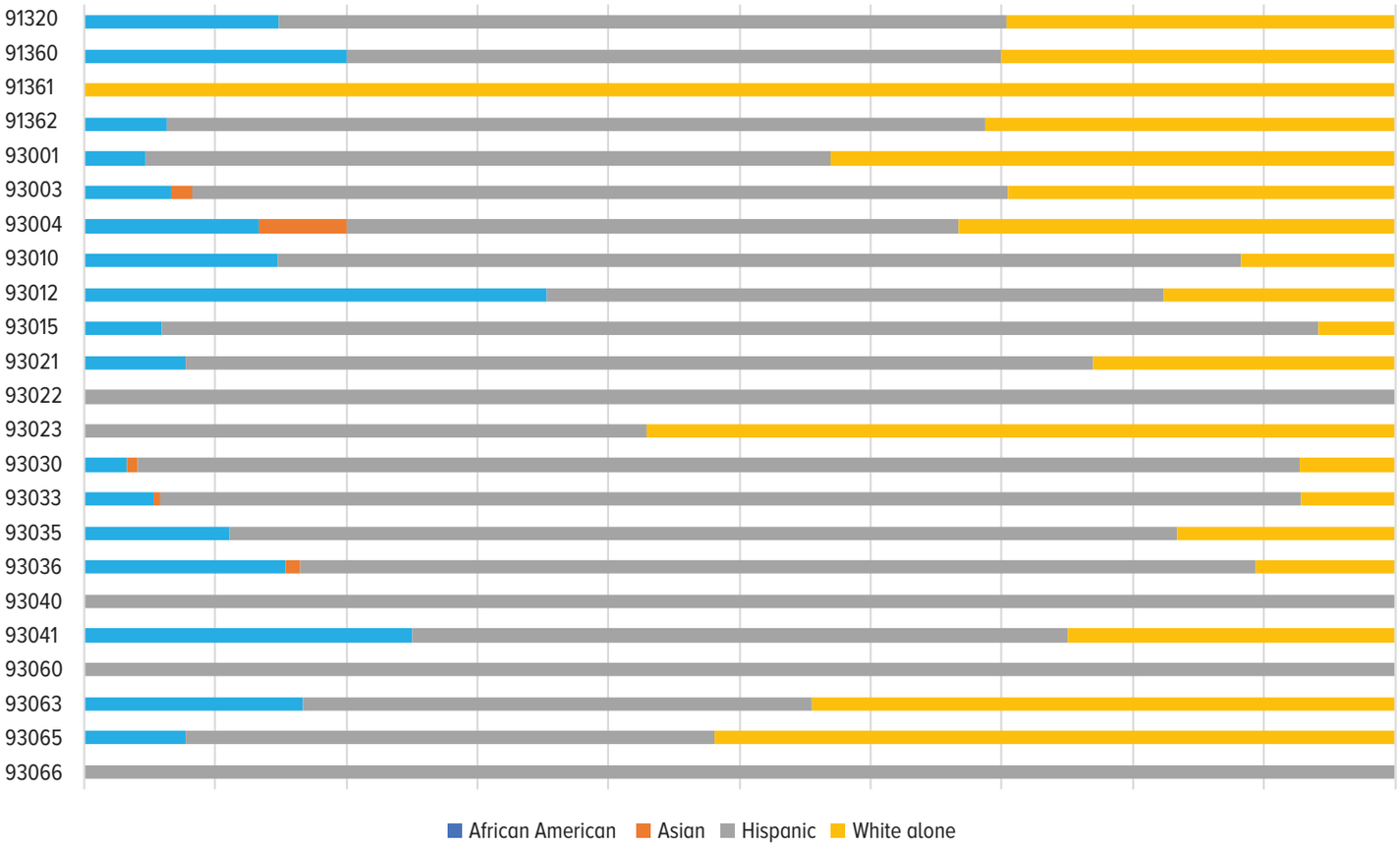


Exhibit 14: Murder Reported in UCR by Race/Ethnicity of Arrestee (5-Year Averages)



There was a 5-year average of 24 cases of homicide between 2018-2022. With the race/ethnicity breakdown of the offender: African American- 4, Hispanic- 16, White Alone- 4. Hispanics represent the largest share of those arrested for murder. African Americans, compared to their overall population size, are overrepresented in proportion for those arrested for murder.

Exhibit 15: Robberies Reported in UCR by Race/Ethnicity of Arrestees (5-Year Averages)

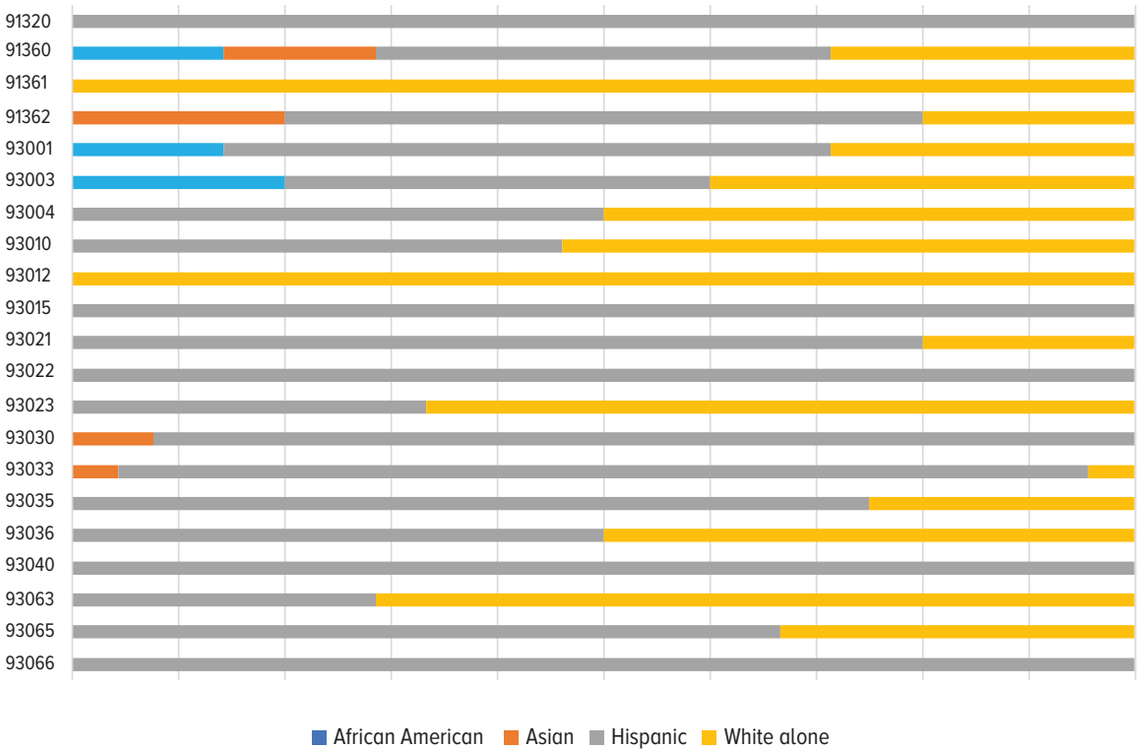


There was a total of 731 arrests for robberies between 2018-2022. The racial breakdown is as follows: African American- 62, Asian- 4, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander- 1, Hispanic- 519, White Alone- 115, and Other- 30.

Finally, the last exhibit provides the distribution of those arrested for rape. There was a total of 90 arrests for rape. Hispanics (73) and Whites Alone (12) comprise the overwhelming proportion of those arrested for this crime.

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

Exhibit 16: Rapes Reported in UCR by Race/Ethnicity of the Arrestees (5-Year Averages)



3.5. Reports of Victims of Violent Crimes in Ventura County (2018-2022)

Violence creates human tragedies, and it is hard to estimate the full extent of such costs. Cost to victims is one of the most crucial segments of such cost. A recent study by Everytown Research and Policy (2022), updated for February of 2023, indicates that 120 Americans are killed with guns every day, and more than 200 are shot and wounded.[59] The US gun homicide rate is 26 times that of other high-income countries. Firearms are the leading cause of death for American children and teens. In 2021, it brought about 4,733 deaths.[60]

According to Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes (2000), nearly one million women alive in that year have been shot or shot at by an intimate partner, and over 4.5 million American women in the United States report having been threatened with a gun by an intimate partner.[61] It is important

[59] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, WONDER Online Database, Underlying Cause of Death. A yearly average was developed using four years of the most recent available data: 2018 to 2021. Everytown For Gun Safety Support Fund, "EveryStat: United States," https://everystat.org/. Based on analysis of 2019 HCUP nonfatal injury data.

[60] Ibid

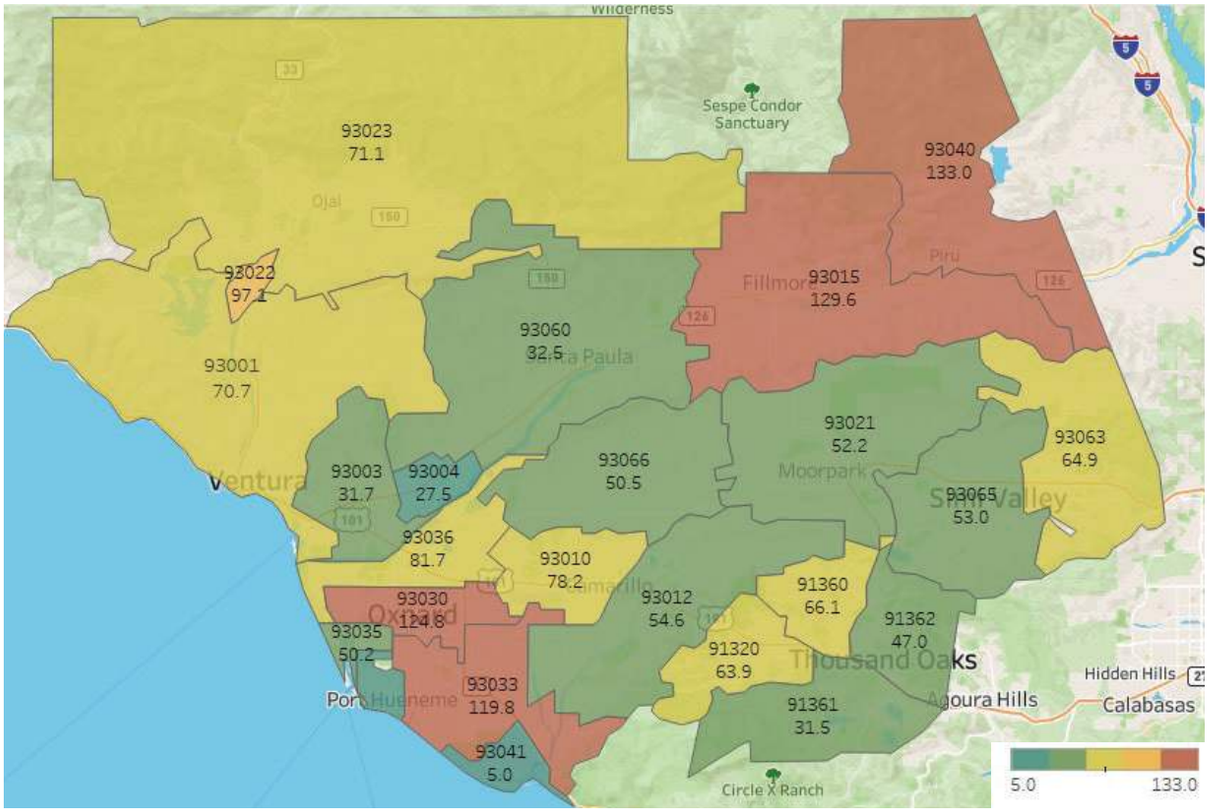
[61] Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey, November 2000, https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/183781.pdf) Also see Ortner Center on Violence & Abuse I Philadelphia, PA https://sp2.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/OC-IPV-and-Guns-fact-sheet_11182020.pdf#:~:text=The%20great%20majority%20%2880%25%29%20of%20intimate%20partner%20violence,to%20protect%20women%20from%20abusive%20men%20with%20fir

to note that intimate partner violence has no socioeconomic boundaries and affects all classes and strata within a society.[62]

Some 59% of adults or someone they know or care about have experienced gun violence in their lifetime.[63]

Our study includes some important statistics about victims of violent or weapon-related crimes in Ventura County and across its various locations.

Map 16: Rate of Victims of Violent Crimes per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 5-year Average (2018-2022)



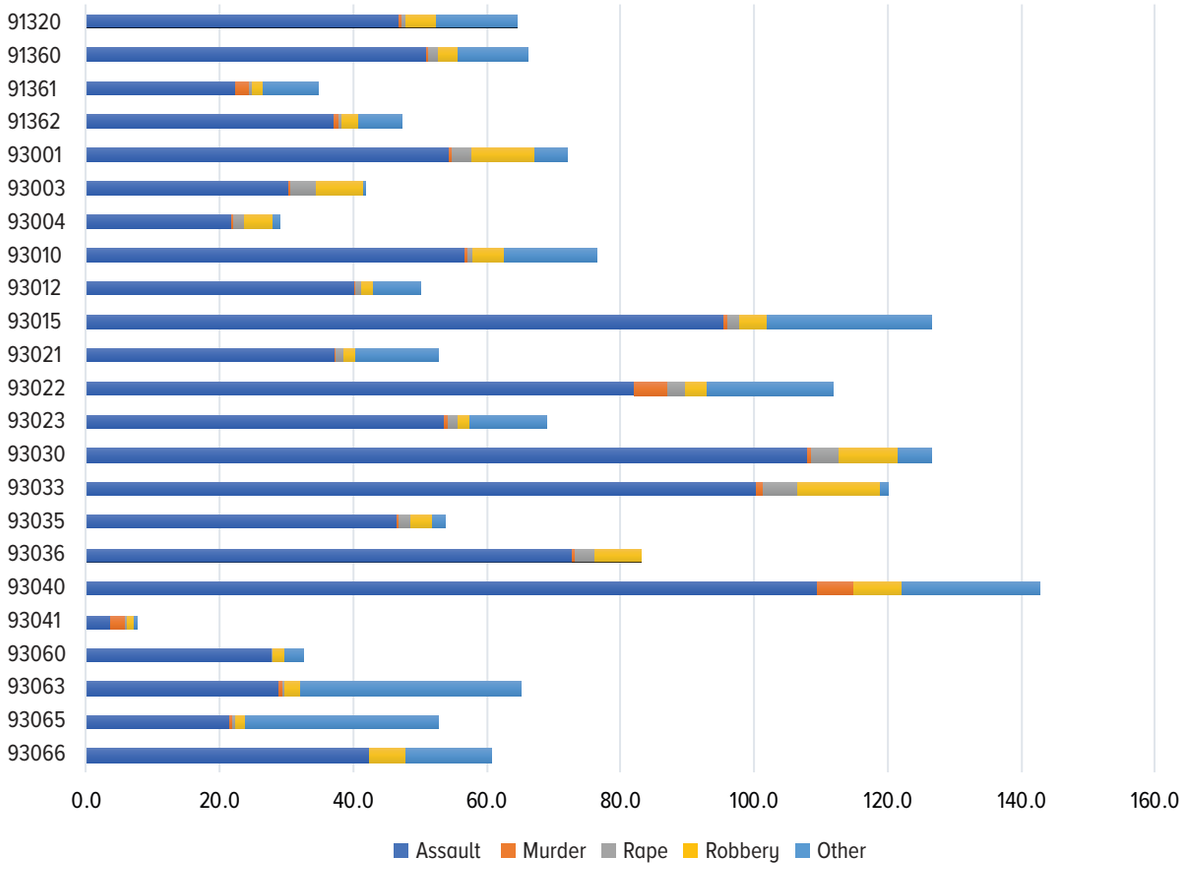
The pattern in the above exhibits follows the pattern of crime occurrence as we discussed in the previous section of this study. West County has a much larger concentration of crime victims than East County. Two of five ZIP Codes in Oxnard have a higher rate of victims of crimes. The rates in Fillmore and Piru are also very high.

[62] Duncan et al. (2020), Domestic Violence and Safe Storage of Firearms in the COVID-19 Era; https://journals.lww.com/annalsofsurgery/fulltext/2020/08000/domestic_violence_and_safe_storage_of_firearms_in.16.aspx

[63] Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Gun Violence Survivors in America," February 1, 2023, https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-survivors-america/

3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

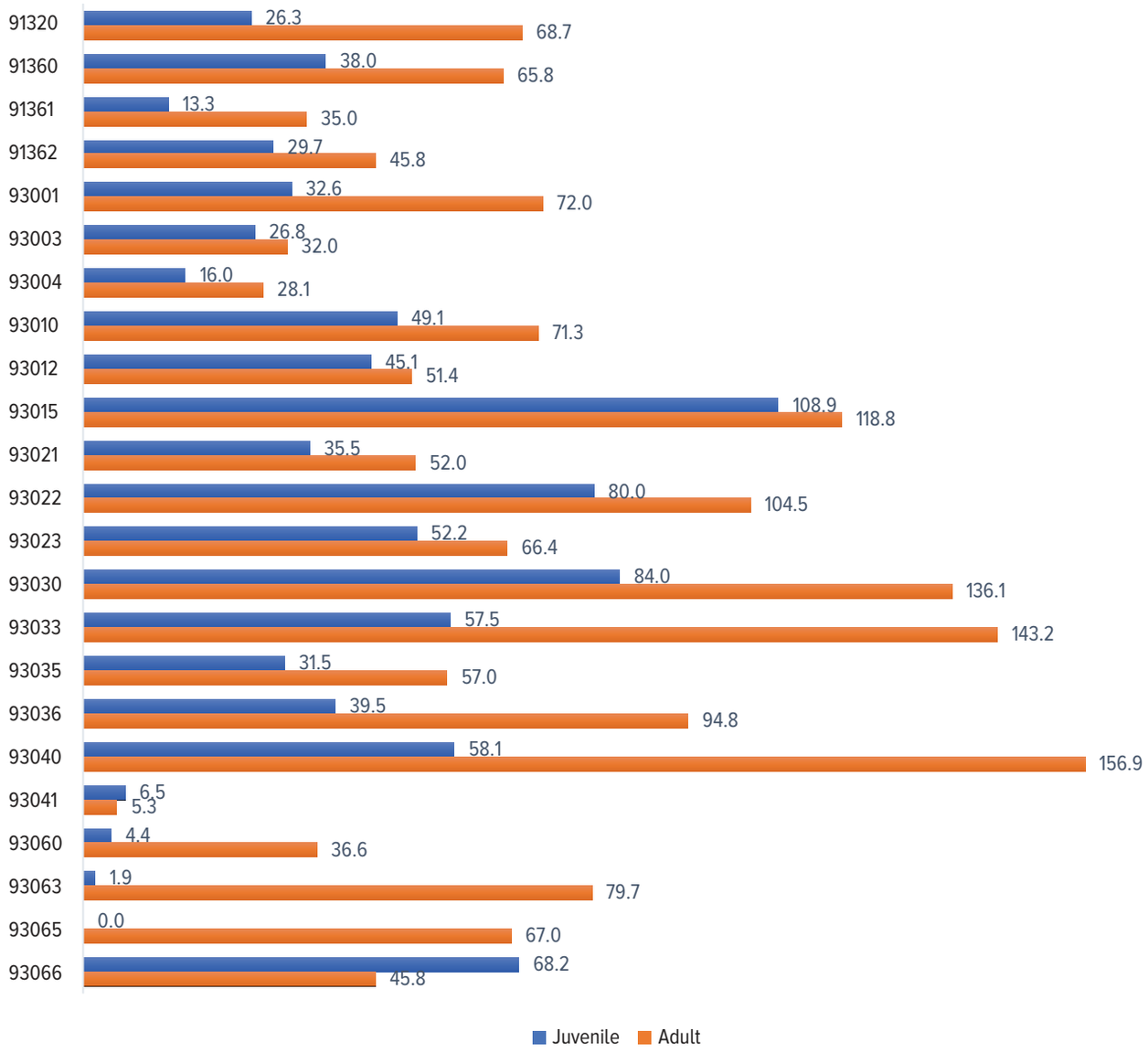
Exhibit 17: Rate of Victims of Violent Crimes Per 10,000 Population by Type of Crimes



- The above chart shows the distribution of the rate of victims of violent crimes across different geographic locations. In most cases, we can observe a similarity in this pattern compared with the distribution of violent crimes through UCR. However, this appears to be different in some places. In ZIP Codes 93041 Port Hueneme and 93060 Santa Paula, the rates of crimes are relatively much higher when compared with the rate of reported victims. On the other side, in ZIP Codes 93012 Camarillo; 91361 Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Thousand Oaks; 91362 Thousand Oaks; 93063 Simi Valley; and 93065 Simi Valley, the crime rate is much lower when compared with their relative rate of victims of crimes. This may suggest some under-reporting of victims, which is conceivable for

various economic or social reasons. One of the reasons may be the reluctance of victims to report or come forth and ask for protection or compensation for various reasons of social isolation or fear of its consequences. It should be added that fear may originate from the perception of some segment of population on their own social status, such as being undocumented immigrants. This is not based on survey of relevant population and is not supported by any concrete research. It should also be mentioned that services given to population by law enforcement agencies is not based on their immigration status.

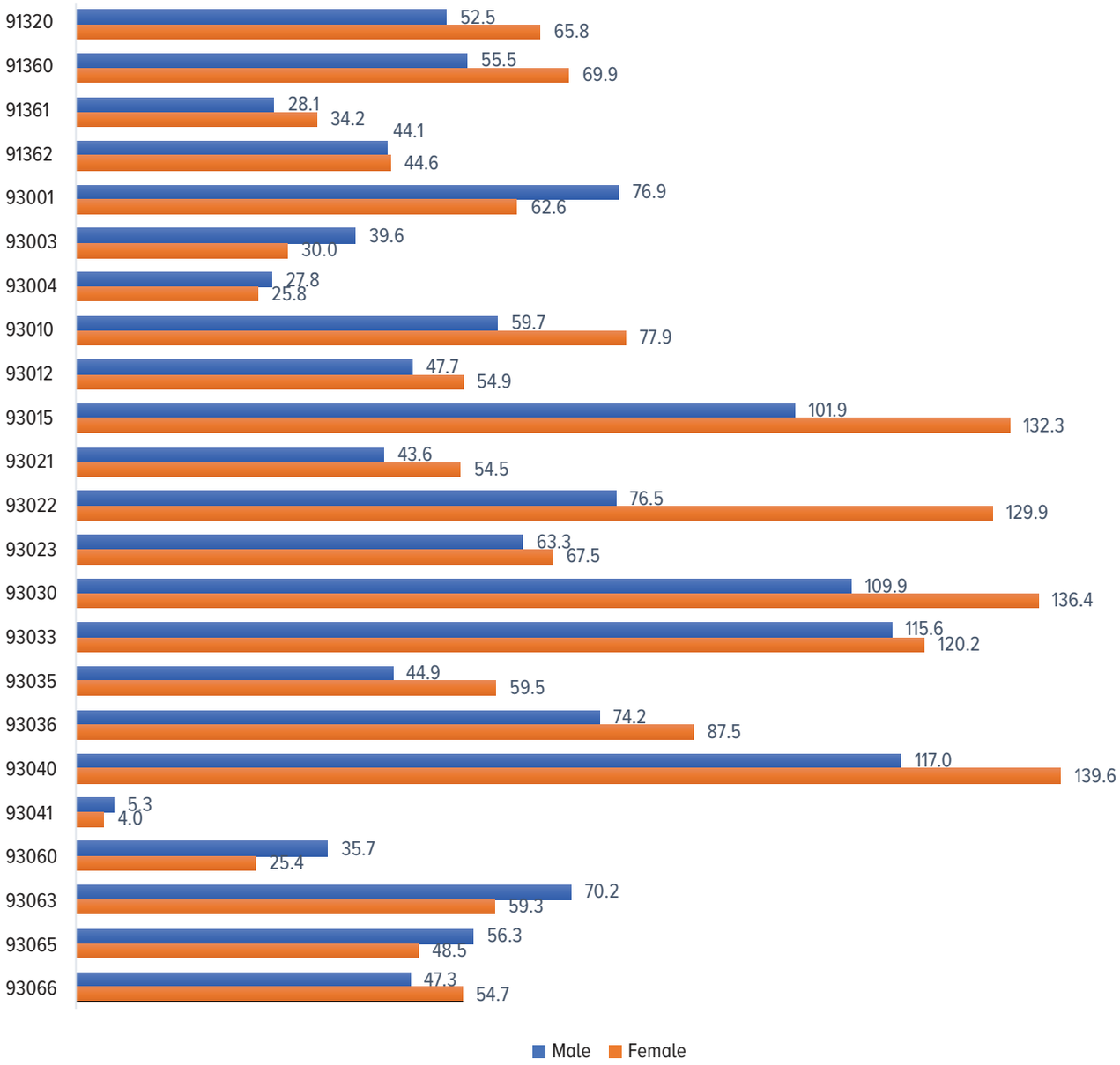
Exhibit 18: Rate of Victims of Violent Crimes by Age Across Various ZIP Codes



One of the essential ways of helping victims of crimes is to have a clear policy in the protection of victims and in areas necessary to follow a policy of trauma-informed and victim-centered approach through the creation of procedures and modalities that prepare law enforcement personnel for such treatment of victims.

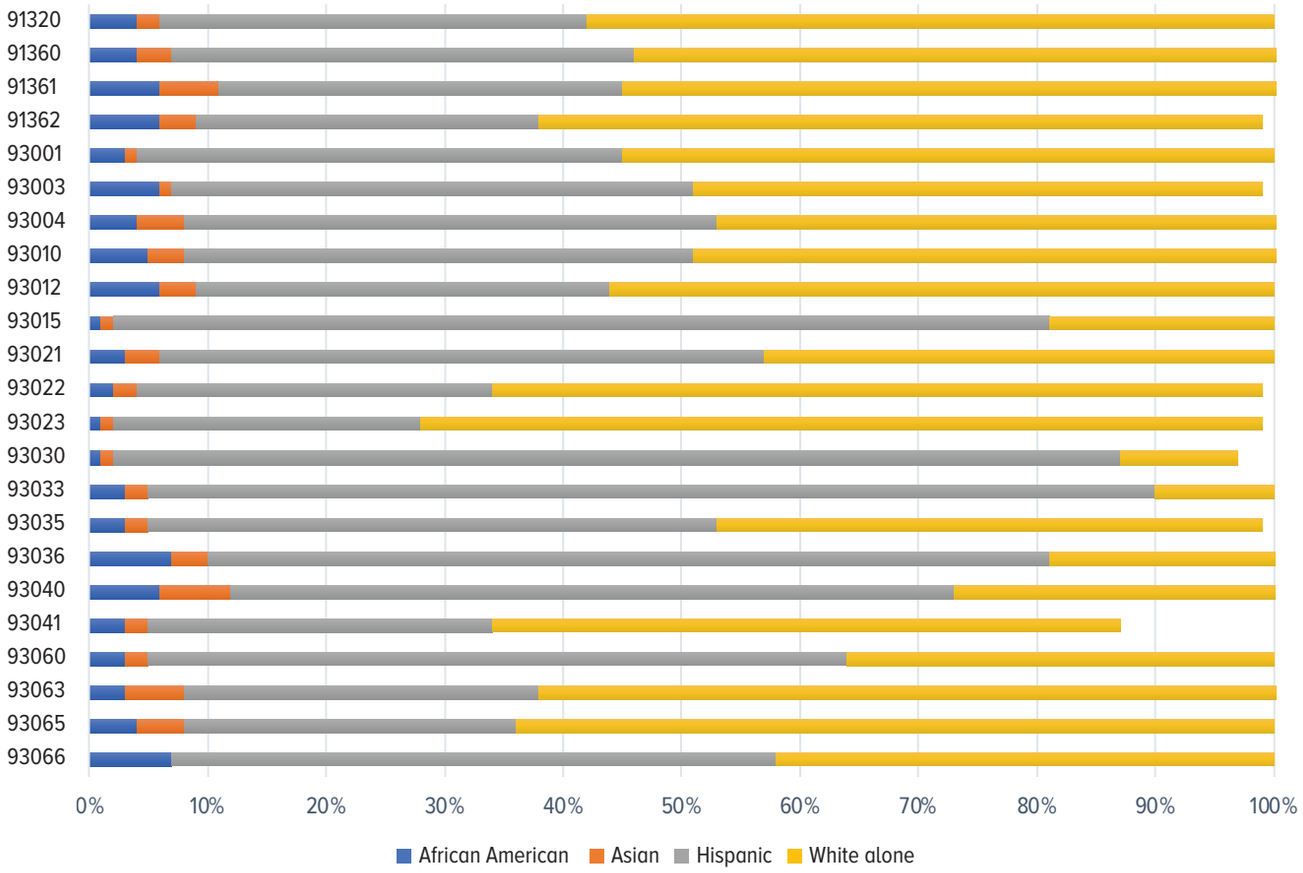
3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

Exhibit 19: Rate of Victims of Violent Crimes by Gender Across the County



There are more women victims than men victims in almost every area.

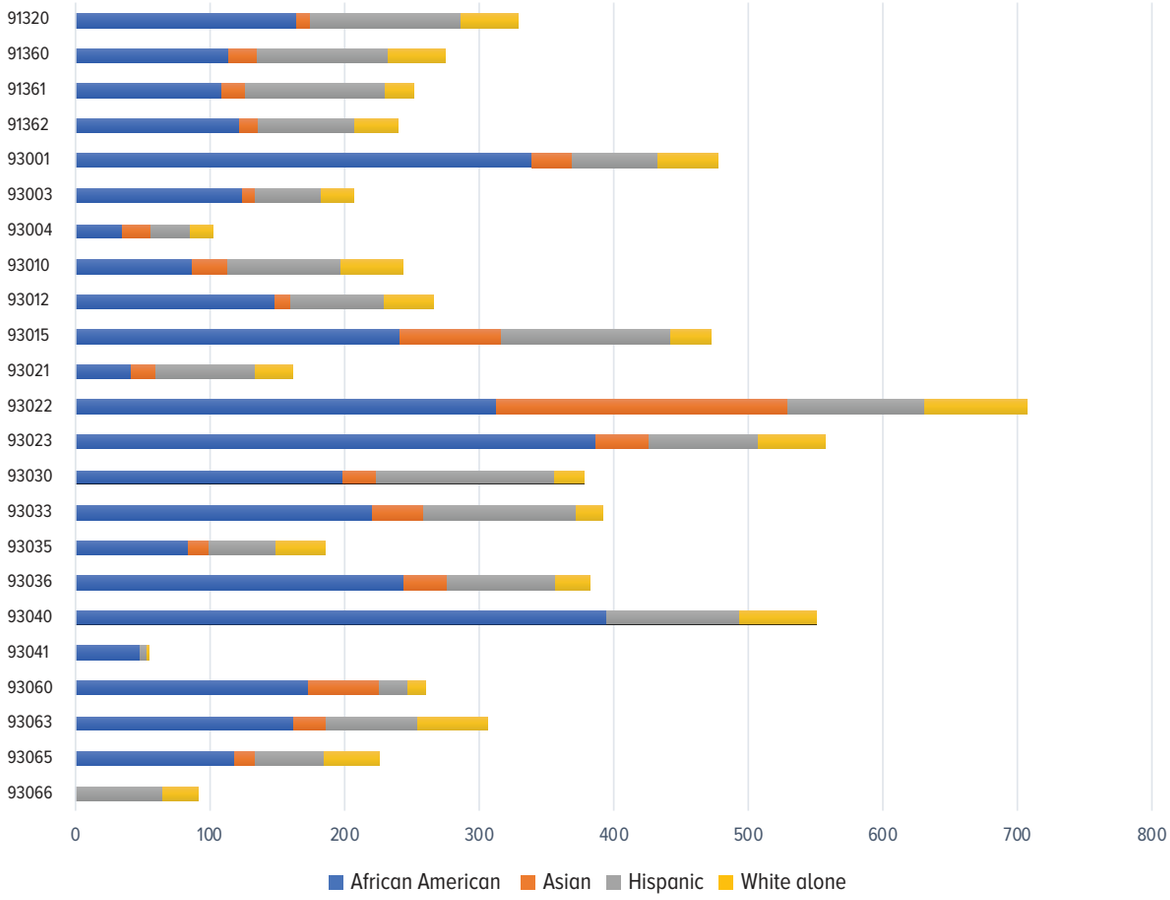
Exhibit 20: Victims of Violent Crimes by Race/Ethnicity Across Various ZIP Codes



The above exhibit shows that the population of victims follows the race and ethnic structure of the population. However, over or under-representation can be better understood from the following exhibit.

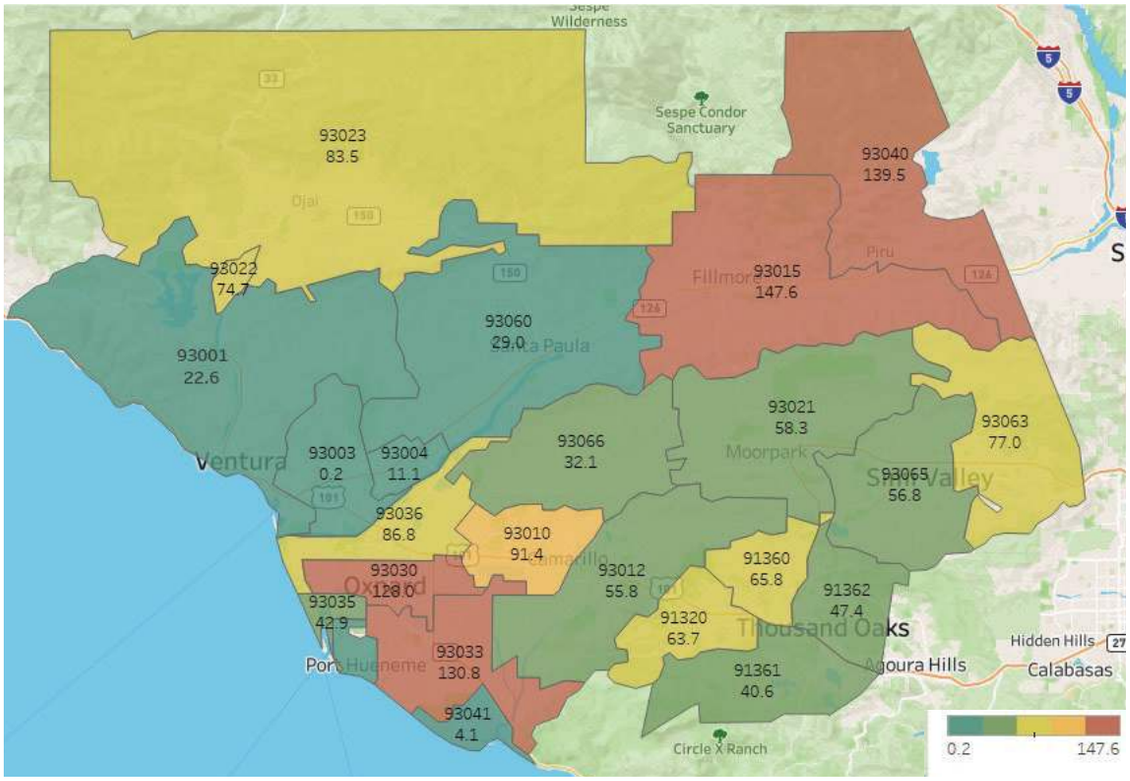
3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

Exhibit 21: Distribution of Victims of Violent Crimes Per 10,000 Population Within Its Overall Population for Each Race and Ethnicity Across the County

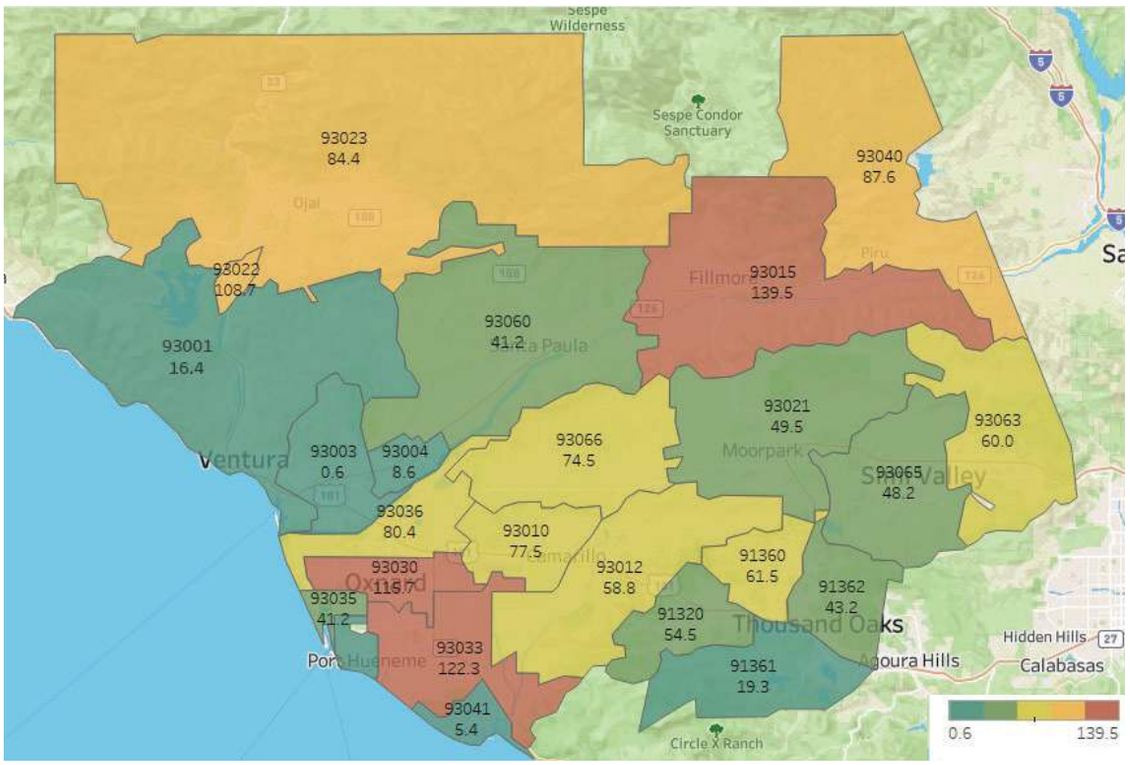


The total number of victims of violent crime between 2018-2022 was 28,379. The racial breakdown shows that African Americans accounted for 976 victims, Hispanics accounted for 14,865, Asians accounted for 589, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander accounted for 41, Other accounted for 677, Whites Alone accounted for 9,561, and Unknown accounted for 1,669 victims. The above chart shows African Americans are heavily impacted and have fallen victim to violent crimes in the county.

Map 17: Rate of Victims of Violent Crimes per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 2018

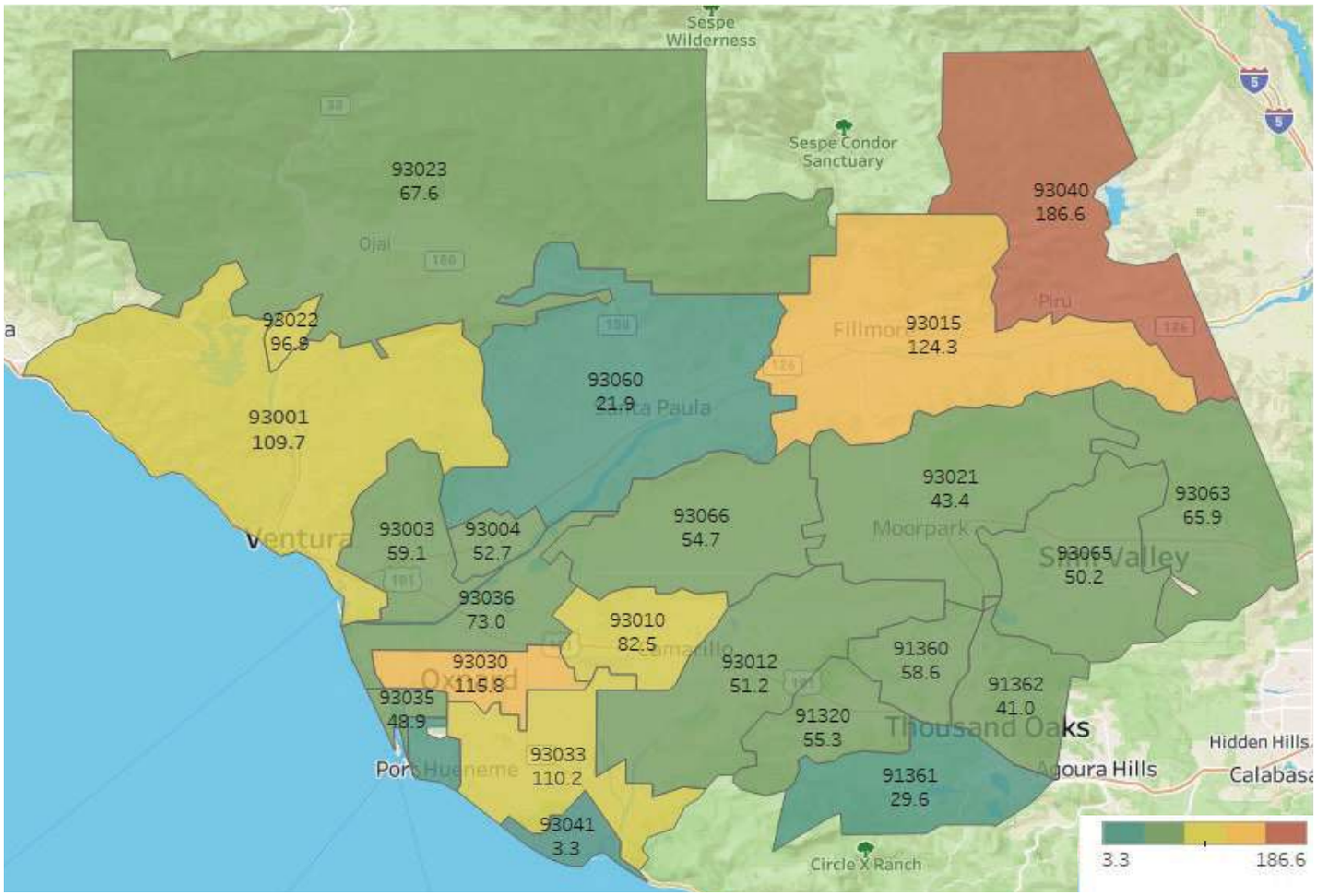


Map 18: Rate of Victims of Violent Crimes per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 2019

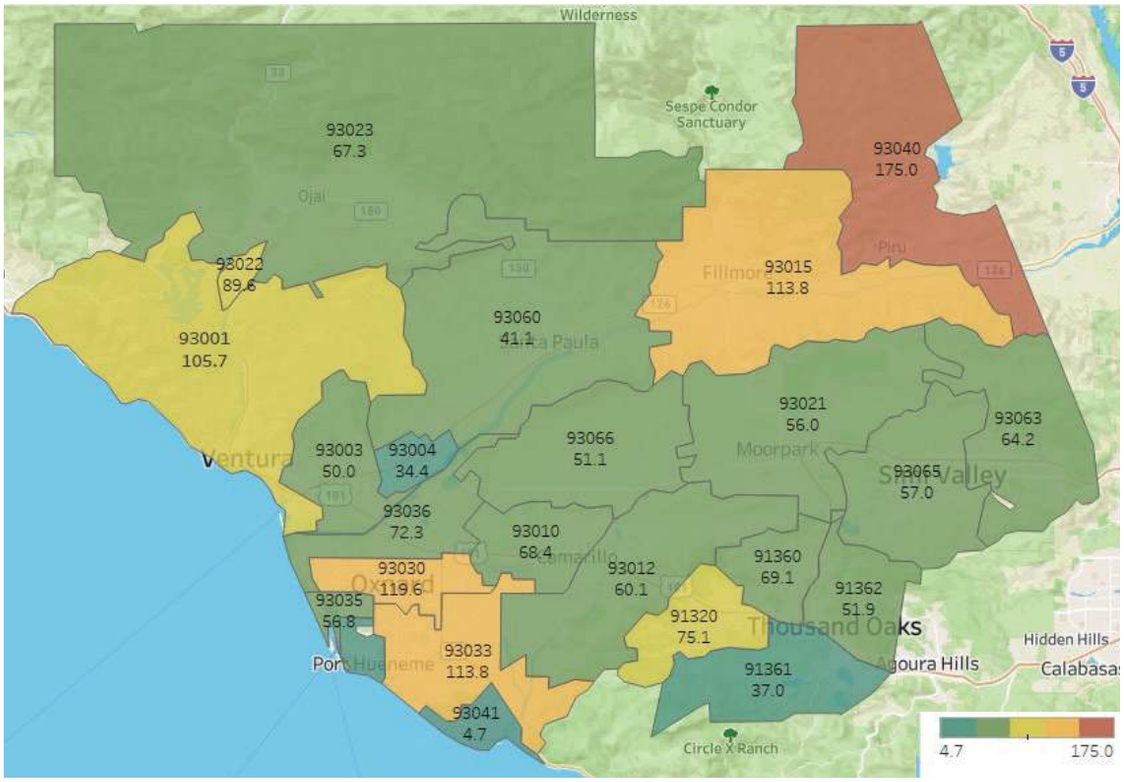


3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

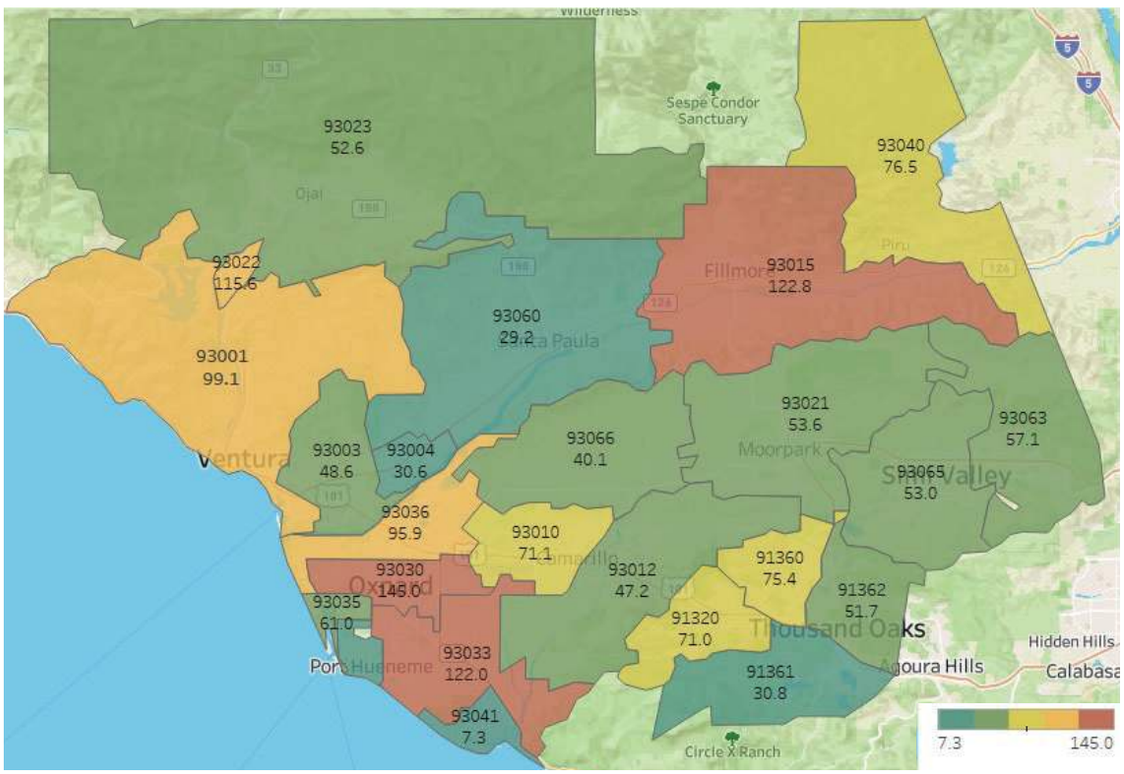
Map 19: Rate of Victims of Violent Crimes per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 2020



Map 20: Rate of Victims of Violent Crimes per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 2021



Map 21: Rate of Victims of Violent Crimes per 10,000 Population by Ventura County ZIP Codes, 2022



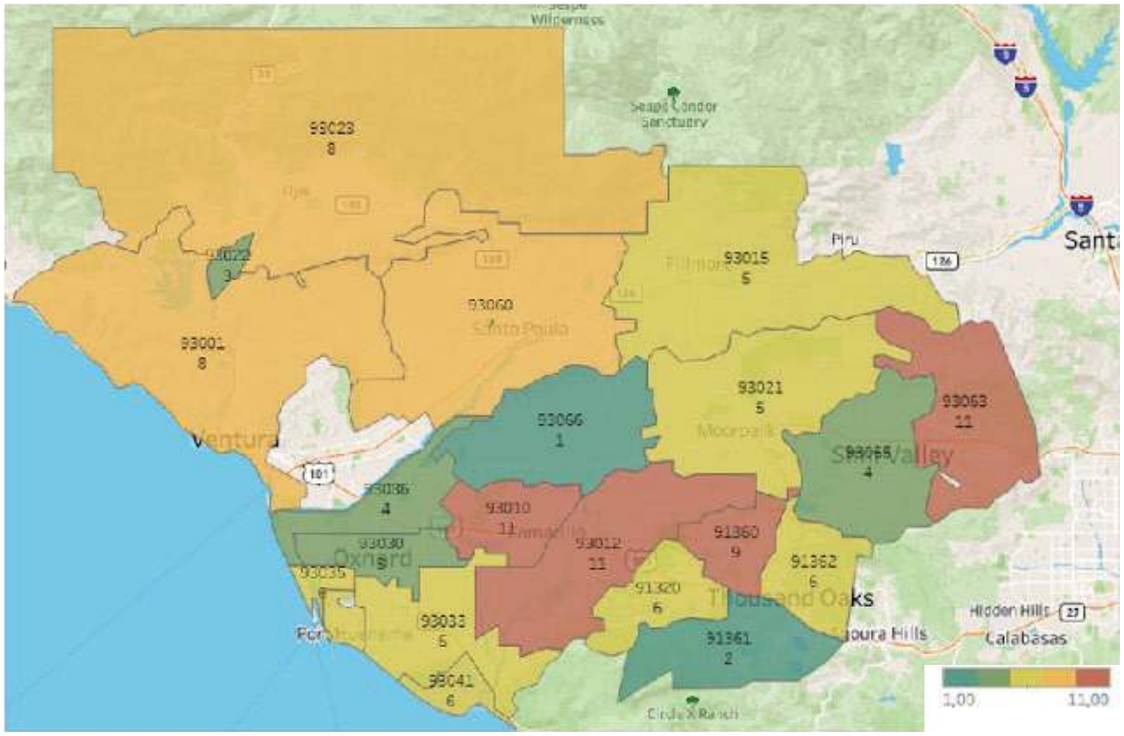
3. The Pattern of Crimes, Calls for Service and Victims Across Different Demographics in Various Geographic Locations in Ventura County

The pattern over the last five years, from 2018 to 2022, shows that 2020 and 2021 rates of violent crime decreased in several places across the county. However, the rate increased to its previous level in 2018 and 2019. This may be due to the COVID-19 era and changes in lifestyle, work, and closure of normal economic and social activities.

3.6. Number of Nonviolent Gun-Related Suicides, Attempted Suicides, Non-Homicide Deaths and Suicides Across Ventura County by ZIP Codes During 2018 to 2022

Between 2015 and 2020, suicide rates increased for those aged 15 to 24, 25 to 34, and 35 to 44.[64] In 2020, suicide was the second leading cause of death for those aged 10 to 14 and 25 to 34. Suicide was the third leading cause of death for ages 15 to 24, the fourth leading cause of death for ages 35 to 44, and the seventh leading cause of death for ages 55 to 64.[65]

Map 22: Number of Nonviolent Gun-Related Suicides, Attempted Suicides and Other Deaths by Ventura County ZIP Codes From 2018 to 2022



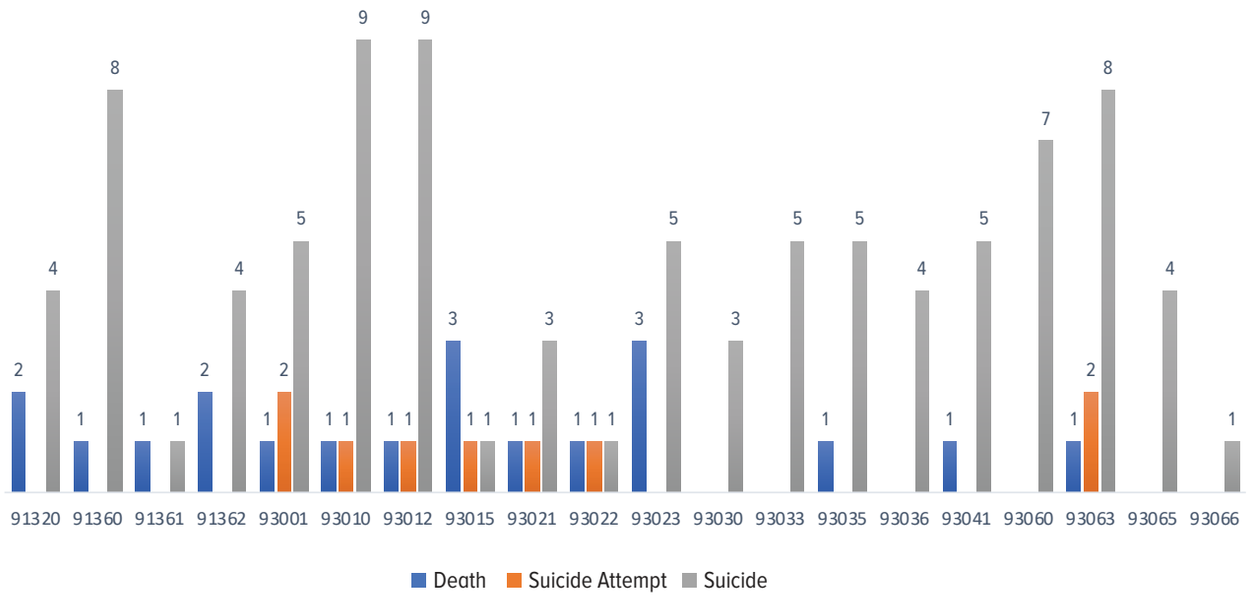
[64] Suicide by Age (2021), Suicide Prevention Resource Center, https://sprc.org/about-suicide/scope-of-the-problem/suicide-by-age/#:~:text=Between%202015%20and%202020%2C%20suicide,a%20downward%20turn%20in%202018.

[65] Ibid

This map shows a comparatively higher number of such incidents occurring in both ZIP Codes in Camarillo and one ZIP Code in Simi Valley

The following exhibit shows the distribution of all incidences within the county and across its various ZIP Codes.

Exhibit 22: Total Number of Nonviolent Gun Related Deaths, Suicide Attempts and Suicides Across Various ZIP Codes from 2018-2022



Note: Non-Homicide-related deaths are not criminal. The incidents included in this data set are deaths that have a firearm related to the event and may be a suicide. However, the investigation has not ultimately concluded that the death was a suicide or due to a criminal act.

4. Summary of Findings and Possible Implications

4. Summary of Findings and Possible Implications

This study subscribes to the existing research, which suggests that the origins of violence appear to be correlated with the development of the production economy, which led very early on to a radical change in social structures. We, therefore, considered individuals' and families' socioeconomic status (SES) for tracing the causes of violence within our communities. The study detail is profound, with the creation of four separate indexes, each consisting of a number of economic, social and political factors that explain and measure the level of risk of violence due to prevailing challenges. They are:

- Risk of Violence Resulting from Adverse Economic Conditions
- Risk of Violence Resulting from Social Isolation
- Risk of Violence Resulting from Neighborhood
- Risk of Violence Resulting from Vacuum in Supportive Social Institutions

The study identified these risks to form the Community Violence Risk Index (CVRI).

The study then brings all the crime reports from all law enforcement departments and offices to map the prevailing crime rates — broken down into different types of crimes — to profile the victims and those arrested.

We also used an extensive database for reporting and documenting the occurrence of violence across the county. The database, together with some demographic profiles of those arrested and those who fell victim, enabled us to depict where the violence occurred. With the information this study brings and its analyses, we can look further into what measures should be taken to meaningfully and fundamentally protect our communities against crimes. The hope is to create transformation that can prevent crimes within the county.

4.1. Where Are the Neighborhoods with the Highest Risk of Violence and Types of Risk Based on Their Socioeconomic Structure?

Ventura County has a highly imbalanced economy with affluence and extreme impoverishment in its various locations. The areas are in close vicinity to each other. Some residents are under enormous hardship within the county, and others enjoy considerable comfort and affluence. To be straightforward and blunt, we can list the following ZIP Codes with the largest share of economic insecurity and, therefore, the highest risk of violence due to adverse economic conditions. We need to add and emphasize that the selection of places with the highest risk in

no way diminishes the importance of recognizing a considerable amount of risk of violence in other areas. The best policy is to make every effort to provide security for all the residents.

The following ZIP Codes have been selected based on the index level for each one being less than 50 out of a maximum value of 100 — the maximum value is 87.5 for ZIP Code 91377 Agoura Hills, Oak Park.

Table 10: Neighborhoods Faced with the Highest Risk of Violence Resulting from Adverse Economic Conditions

Geographic Location	Population	Measure of Risk
93023 Ojai	21,691	50.1
93001 Ventura	31,588	42.5
93030 Oxnard	58,019	41.2
93036 Oxnard	46,594	35.4
93041 Port Hueneme	23,210	34.2
93060 Santa Paula	34,583	27.9
93033 Oxnard	84,188	27.0
93040 Piru	1,829	26.3
Total Population	301,792	36% of the Total Population

These ZIP Codes are home to almost 302,000 county residents, or 36% of its total county population, in 2021. Many working families and individuals in these areas present high levels of labor force participation but also suffer from short- and long-term unemployment. The rates of poverty in general and for families with children are high. Many families in these areas do not have health insurance. They suffer an increased risk of violence due to adverse economic conditions in these communities.

Going further, we explored communities with a high risk of violence due to social isolation. Once again, we included all ZIP Codes with a value of near 50 or under out of a maximum scale of 100. The highest value is at Oak View, with a value of 77.2. The important issue regarding social isolation is that the county has some deep problems and constraints. This is true primarily in the low-income areas, but middle and high-income regions also have challenges.

4. Summary of Findings and Possible Implications

Table 11: Neighborhoods Faced with the Highest Risk of Violence Resulting from Social Isolation

Geographic Location	Population	Measure of Risk
93015 Fillmore	18,810	50.8
93001 Ventura	51,588	48.9
93041 Port Hueneme	23,210	48.2
93033 Oxnard	84,188	39.8
93030 Oxnard	58,019	38.0
93060 Santa Paula	34,583	32.4
93040 Piru	1,829	27.4
Total Population	272,227	32% of the Total Population

Self-care is a common and widely observed problem in our community. This should not surprise anyone as we have an aging population and lack sufficient care within the county. Unfortunately, the inability to care for oneself is profound and runs into several existing issues that stem from our society's shared work and life philosophy. At present, society does not adequately plan for long-term care for aging residents, especially within the family dynamic. Ventura County population is coming of age, and this change brings its share of self-care and rise of risk of violence.

The dependency ratio is a demographic measure of the number of dependents to the total working-age population in a country or region. As the population gets older, this ratio changes, which can be a good indicator of the needs of an aging population.

The interesting emerging picture in this part of the study is that the emerging map of the areas with the highest risk of violence due to social isolation includes many of the same as those with adverse economic conditions. More than 272,000 people live in these areas, or around 32% of the total population of the entire county.

Among the causes of isolation faced by a large group of county residents, we need to mention the following:

- English language isolation
- Digital divide
- Problems faced by the foreign-born population
- Self-care difficulty

The study also brings attention to the **Risk of Violence Resulting from the Neighborhood**. Neighborhoods often have blurred boundaries, so sometimes it takes time to tell where one starts and another ends. Major streets often act as logical boundaries, but people usually define a neighborhood by its characteristics. One of the critical issues while looking at the place of residence of people provides valuable information about people where they live; neighborhood violence is not entirely captured within the area of residence of people.

Once again, we selected all the ZIP Codes with slightly more than 50 or fewer index values. The highest value of the index in this area is 80.6 for ZIP Code 91377 Agoura Hills, Oak Park. The following regions appeared as the ones with relatively more challenges.

Table 12: Neighborhoods Faced with the Highest Risk of Violence Resulting from Neighborhood

Geographic Location	Population	Measure of Risk
93060 Santa Paula	34,583	51.9
93003 Ventura	53,549	45.9
93004 Ventura	31,705	44.6
93041 Port Hueneme	23,210	44.1
93035 Oxnard	26,224	43.2
93001 Ventura	31,588	37.0
93036 Oxnard	46,594	35.1
93030 Oxnard	58,019	28.3
93033 Oxnard	84,188	27.2
Total Population	389,660	46% of the Total Population

Adding all the population of the areas together, we find nearly 390,000 of the county population, or some 46% of its total population, suffer from the considerable risk of violence due to issues relevant to what has been defined and presented as neighborhood issues and problems. It is essential to break down and bring urgent attention to several challenges that families living in these areas face. They include problems among younger populations ranging from relatively higher school dropout, school suspension and teen birth rates. There is a high rate of eviction and a high rate of homelessness in some of these areas. There is also a high rate of domestic violence, child abuse, property crimes and gun-related violence.

Problems with the Risk of Violence Resulting from a Lack of Supportive Social Institutions are the most challenging and, in some ways, a relatively more ignored area of attention. This study shows that while socioeconomic difference still plays a role in this particular area, its contribution to causing challenges is lower than in other areas of our research. Indeed, many areas with more economic challenges have better conditions than those in economically affluent regions. We arrive at the following table using all areas with index values of near 50 or lower.

4. Summary of Findings and Possible Implications

The highest index value, 85.5, belongs to ZIP Code 91361 Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village. Interestingly, the value drops quickly and significantly from the top to a few after it. It is also important to realize that some of the socioeconomically challenging ZIP Codes are among the places with a higher index value and, therefore, less at risk of violence due to the lack of supportive social institutions. These areas show the importance of community building, pro-social places and volunteering, which exist in some communities but not others. This is an important issue that brings attention to what brings people within a community together. This requires a deeper study of how a sense of community can be created and strengthened.

Table 13: Neighborhoods Faced with the Highest Risk of Violence Resulting from a Lack of Supportive Social Institutions

Geographic Location	Population	Measure of Risk
91320 Newbury Park	44,356	48.9
93023 Ojai	21,691	48.7
91360 Thousand Oaks	42,984	48.4
93022 Oak View	6,140	47.5
93021 Moorpark	38,030	47.4
93060 Santa Paula	34.583	44.2
93010 Camarillo	47,930	41.7
93041 Port Hueneme	23,210	41.2
93001 Ventura	31,588	40.8
93065 Simi Valley	72,991	39.7
93004 Ventura	31,705	37.6
93003 Ventura	53,549	31.7
93035 Oxnard	26,224	31.1
93036 Oxnard	46,594	21.4
93030 Oxnard	58,019	17.6
93033 Oxnard	84.188	9.8
Total Population	663.782	78% of the Total Population

The above list indicates that more than 663,000 residents of Ventura County, or 78% of its total population, are exposed to considerable risk of violence due to a relative lack of supportive social institutions. This vital discovery should call for more significant actions to reduce such a gap and reduce the risk of violence to its residents.

Finally, we combined all these separate risk indexes to provide a reliable **Community Violence Risk Index (CVRI)** for the county in its various ZIP Codes. With such an aim, we selected all

ZIP Codes with a CVRI of 50 or lower. The highest score represents the lowest CVRI with a value of 84.9, calculated for ZIP Code 91361 Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village.

These areas are home to over 333,000 county residents or 39% of its population.

Table 14: Neighborhoods Faced with the Highest Risk of Violence Resulting from Community Violence Risk Index (CVRI)

Geographic Location	Population	Measure of Risk
93003 Ventura	53,549	47.4
93041 Port Hueneme	23,210	45.0
93040 Piru	1,829	44.9
93036 Oxnard	46,594	39.8
93060 Santa Paula	34,583	37.0
93001 Ventura	31,588	34.6
93030 Oxnard	58,019	28.8
93033 Oxnard	84,188	19.1
Total Population	333,560	39% of the Total Population

4.2. Pattern of Violent Crimes and Demographics of Those Arrested and Have Fallen Victim in Ventura County

4.2.1. What Has Been Learned from Calls for Service (CFS) from 2018 to 2022 Across Cities?

- A lower ratio of calls has been for violent crimes. It is hard to make a clear and definitive conclusion from the pattern that emerges from different cities. Nonetheless, some cities appear to have had a much higher relative number of calls unrelated to violent crimes. These cities include Oxnard, Santa Paula, Oak View, Port Hueneme and Ventura.
- The proportion of calls related to violent crimes has not changed over the observation period, with a few exceptions.
- This study did not consider the difference between self-initiated calls for service that are officer-initiated and those that are generated by the community. This is an important distinction due to one of the variables being proactive police activity versus a responsive type of police activity.
- A few issues are of great importance. What determines the number of calls, and how can such an indicator be meaningfully related to an optimum level of policing, and prevention of some crimes? More importantly, how can calling for service help reduce serious crimes?

4. Summary of Findings and Possible Implications

4.2.2. What Has Been Learned from Pattern of Arrests?

- A change in the number of arrests is not necessarily an indicator of reduced crime or lack of effort on the part of the police force. Rather, should be further investigated as to what other measures are taken. These measures include policies helping the population in need and in danger of serious crimes. We should also look into using surveillance through technological initiatives and improvements, which have impacted the prevailing conditions.

- The rate of violent crime arrests varies remarkably among ZIP Codes. Suppose the rate of arrests for violent crimes can be considered a reasonable indicator of the occurrence of crimes in various places. In that case, the results, with some exceptions, support the close relationship between the event of crimes and the SES of those arrested for the crimes.

- African Americans represent a much higher rate of being arrested as a proportion of their population in each area throughout the county. This observation has particular importance and needs to be investigated further. However, it is also essential that we acknowledge that we have a comparatively much smaller proportion of African Americans in the county than Whites Alone or Hispanics. As discussed earlier, additional factors should be considered and researched thoroughly regarding repeat offenders or arrestees and arrestees who commit crimes in communities they do not reside in, such as organized crime crews — and their impact on crime rates — given their mobility to commit multiple crimes in various jurisdictions.

4.2.3. What Has Been Learned from Pattern of Violent Crime Reported in the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Between 2018 and 2022?

- The pattern that emerged within the county shows, that in several ZIP Codes which generally do not have a high rate of crimes according to the UCR, a significant proportion of violent crimes are gun-related. This raises several questions that cannot be answered without more research. These ZIP Codes include Westlake Village, Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley. In other ZIP Codes, such as Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Paula and Piru, the proportion of violent UCR-based crimes and gun-related violence is relatively high.

- Using UCR for the last five years (2018 to 2022), several ZIP Codes in West County appear to have had more violence in their neighborhood than in East County. ZIP Codes in Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Paula and Piru are among such geospatial locations. On the other side of

this comparison, ZIP Codes in East County, such as Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village, Moorpark, Newbury Park and Simi Valley, are among areas with a lower crime rate.

- Gun-related violence shows a similar pattern of occurrence across the county. ZIP Code 93033 in the City of Oxnard shows the highest rate of gun-related violence occurrence. Gun-related violence is also relatively high in other ZIP Codes in Oxnard, Santa Paula, Ventura, Santa Paula and Piru.

- Between 2018 and 2022, Ventura County reported 96 homicides and made 41 arrests for homicide/murder. Of those arrested for homicide, Hispanics represent the largest share of those arrested for murder (23 individuals). African Americans accounted for three arrests for murder, which, compared to their overall population size, demonstrates an overrepresentation in proportion to those arrested for murder. Please see Appendix A for a detailed breakdown of the different violent crimes across ZIP Codes.

4.2.4. What Has Been Learned from Pattern of Victims of Violent Crimes in Ventura County (2018-2022)?

- The pattern of victims of crimes largely follows the pattern of crimes within the county. Occurrence as discussed in this study's previous section. West County has a much larger population of victims of crimes compared with East County. Two of five ZIP Codes in Oxnard have a higher rate of victims of crimes as compared to other ZIP Codes in West County. The rates in Fillmore and Piru are also very high.

- In most cases, we can observe a similarity in this pattern compared with the distribution of crimes through UCR. However, this appears to be different in some places. In ZIP Codes 93041 Port Hueneme and 93060 Santa Paula, the rates of crimes are relatively much higher when compared with the rate of reported victims. On the other side, in ZIP Codes 93012 Camarillo; 91361 Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, Thousand Oaks; 91362 Thousand Oaks; 93063 Simi Valley; and 93065 Simi Valley, the crime rate is much lower when compared with their relative rate of victims of crimes. This may suggest some under-reporting of victims, which is conceivable for various economic or social reasons. One of the reasons may be the reluctance of victims to report or come forth and ask for protection or compensation.

- One of the essential ways of helping victims of crimes is to have a clear policy in protecting victims and, in areas necessary, to follow a trauma-informed and victim-centered approach by creating procedures and modalities that prepare law enforcement personnel for such treatment of victims. Examples of these victim-centered approaches within

4. Summary of Findings and Possible Implications

Ventura County include The Family Justice Center, the Ventura County Human Trafficking Taskforce and Project Hope, among others. These efforts can be summarized below:

- **Ventura County Family Justice Center**
  - A collaborative team from more than 40 public agencies and community-based organizations and volunteers dedicated to working together to help reduce trauma, eliminate repeat victimization, mitigate future risks and make a lasting positive difference in the lives of crime victims and their families.
  - See https://vcfjc.org/
- **Interface Children & Family Services**
  - Interface Children & Family Services is the region's most comprehensive nonprofit social services agency in Ventura County. They provide direct, responsive, wrap-around services to address the complex needs of the community. As a critical safety net for children and families, Interface provides programs to assist with mental health and trauma treatment, domestic violence and child abuse prevention, youth crisis and homelessness, human trafficking prevention, and intervention, as well as youth intervention and diversion programs.
  - https://www.icfs.org/about/
- **Ventura County District Attorney Crime Victims' Assistance Unit**
  - The Crime Victims' Assistance Unit guides victims through the criminal justice process, ensures victims' rights are honored and assists them in obtaining services to help them cope with their trauma.
  - See https://www.vcdistrictattorney.com/divisions/victim-community-services/
- **Ventura County Human Trafficking Task Force**
  - The Ventura County Human Trafficking Task Force is co-led by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office and Interface Children & Family Services. It's a multidisciplinary task force that strives to enhance the identification of human trafficking victims, investigate/prosecute human traffickers, and provide victim services in a trauma-informed, victim-centered and culturally affirming manner.
  - See https://www.icfs.org/services/human-trafficking-task-force/
- **Project HOPE (Helping Our Community Progress Effectively)**
  - A partnership between the Ventura County Sheriff's Office and Ventura County Behavioral Health that teams law enforcement officers with community service coordinators to make contact with homeless residents, or those at risk of homelessness, to offer to connect them with resources to assist them with both physical and mental health needs.
  - See https://cityofcamarillo.org/hot_topics/homelessness.php

- The pattern of victims of crimes over the last five years, from 2018 to 2022, shows that 2020 and 2021 decreased in several places across the county. However, the rate increased to its previous level in 2018 and 2019. This may be due to the time of COVID-19 and changes in lifestyle, work, and closure of normal economic and social activities. The observation suggests bringing a greater focus on safety gunlocks and other devices that will protect the individual contemplating suicide (particularly teenagers).[67] This highlights the importance of funding for a pre-established hospital-based violence intervention program for paid violence intervention specialists that can respond to victims with an open case, thereby decreasing the potential for retaliation.[68]

4.2.5. What Has Been Learned from Pattern of Gun-Related Number of Suicides, Attempted Suicides and Non-Homicide Deaths Across Various Areas in Ventura County

- Some areas are at much higher risk than others, and the pattern is not necessarily a function of the economic affluence of an area.
- This area is an important issue requiring a much higher level of attention from the availability of mental health care to all county residents.

4.3. How Can We Do Better?

This study established an unmistakable and unquestionable relationship between the occurrence of crimes, its reporting, the proportion of violent crimes, and the rate of gun-related crimes within the county based on the socioeconomic condition of its residents. It also helped to identify where some of the prevailing gaps in meeting the needs of its population are in various geographic locations (ZIP Codes). The study also raises several questions that can only be answered with more research and information and, therefore, refrains from speculating where the information is not complete.

To improve the prevailing conditions and create a better environment for resilience toward crimes in its neighborhood, the study proposed the following possible policy implications:

4.3.1. Clarity in Identification of Existing Economic and Social Areas of Needs

A significant proportion of Ventura County has considerable challenges in the following areas of need.

[67] The Committee on Trauma (n.d.) Gun Safety and Your Health; https://www.facs.org/media/y52d5onw/gunsafety_brochure.pdf

[68] TRAUMA Violence Intervention Programs (n.d.) A Primer for Developing a Comprehensive Program within Trauma Centers; https://www.facs.org/quality-programs/trauma/advocacy-and-injury-prevention/firearm-injury-prevention-activities/violence-intervention-programs/

4. Summary of Findings and Possible Implications

- **Shortcomings from Economic Challenges Manifested by:**
  - Food insecurity should be addressed seriously. The total rate of food stamps in the county is 7.2% of families. The total proportion of families entitled to food stamps in ZIP Codes 93001 Ventura, 93023 Ojai, 93030 Oxnard, 93033 Oxnard, 93040 Piru, 93041 Port Hueneme and 93060 Santa Paula together reach 53.6% of all families in need of food stamps. The same ZIP Codes form 49.2% of all food deserts in the county.
  - Lack of medical insurance in areas with more foreign-born residents.
  - High poverty in families with children.
  - Low educational attainment in some areas.
  - High poverty in households headed by single mothers.

- **Shortcomings from Social Isolation Manifested by:**
  - English language isolation. While the overall percentage of the population with English language isolation in Ventura County is 13.5%, the share of English language isolation collectively in ZIP Codes 93001 Ventura, 93015 Fillmore, 93030 Oxnard, 93033 Oxnard, 93040 Piru, 93041 Port Hueneme and 93060 Santa Paula together account for 56.4% of all in the county.
  - Digital divide. The digital divide in Ventura County overall is 9.4%. The share of the same ZIP Codes listed above is 37.3% of the total county.
  - Assisting the foreign-born population. The overall rate of the foreign-born population in Ventura County is 21.1% of the county's total population. The overall rate of foreign-born people in the same group of ZIP Codes listed above is 56.4%.
  - Demographic dependency.
  - Self-care difficulty.

- **Shortcomings from Neighborhood Challenges Manifested by:**
  - Overcrowded housing
  - High rate of eviction
  - Homelessness
  - Youth problems and challenges in schools
  - High school dropout rates
  - Mothers under 18 years old
  - Child abuse
  - Domestic violence

- **Shortcomings from Vacuum in Supportive Social Institutions Manifested by:**
  - Number and types of nonprofits established (nonprofits are vital in helping to enfranchise the underserved within a society)
  - Provisions and organizations that promote volunteering opportunities
  - The number of pro-social places (community associations, recreation centers, religious institutions, places of worship, etc.)
  - Community health centers

It is important to realize that what a significant number of county residents face in their social and economic lives is not certainly limited to these 20+ areas gap in the county's socioeconomic areas of need. However, this study provides a clear data-based insight into how significant these gaps are and what ZIP Codes the gaps can be found in. This provides a clear roadmap of what needs to be done.

4.3.2. What Needs to Be Done?

- **Economic Assistance Through the Following Provisions**
  - Improving food security through assisting Food Share of Ventura County
  - Creating viable food assistance programs through schools and other youth-supporting programs such as Boys & Girls Clubs
  - Helping county residents who face various sorts of barriers to accessing food stamps and other official food security programs to have access
  - Greater outreach to those who do not have medical insurance, particularly the foreign-born and undocumented population
  - Making sure that countywide and citywide DEIJ (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice) bring about tangible and meaningful results in their respective areas of activities.
  - Promoting programs and initiatives through nonprofit organizations that can address these economic challenges throughout the county. Ventura County Community Foundation is an excellent example of such entities. VCCF provides scholarships for the younger underserved population, supports nonprofits, directs philanthropic efforts toward community needs, and creates various fora for community leaders, advocates, and members to communicate and join forces to assist communities in need.

- **Removing Social Isolation Through the Following Provisions**
  - Helping to reduce English language isolation through direct teaching via adult schools, community colleges and universities, as well as through programs that can train and offer certificates to those trained to teach the community in need in their areas of expertise. Such an endeavor requires concrete planning, a sufficient budget and promotional activists through all the existing and emerging community networks.

- Removing the digital divide through the existing channels.
- Increasing efforts that can address the aging of the population and their physical, mental, economic and emotional health.

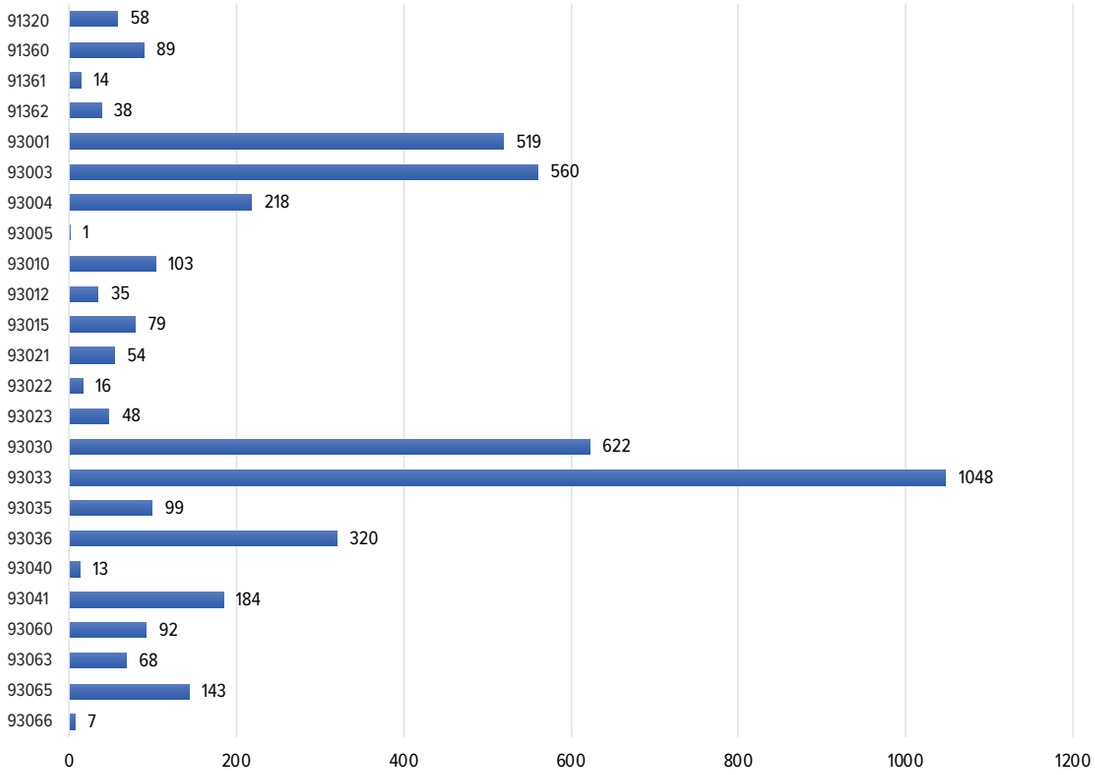
- **Lifting the Existing Barriers in the Creation of Better Neighborhoods Through the Following Provisions**
  - Housing assistance through programs for promoting homeownership and promotion of "social housing."
  - Looking into removing barriers to reach hard-to-reach children and youth
  - Promoting family justice centers throughout the county, particularly in underserved communities. One of the better ways to bring about change is to consider its financial and budgetary needs as a component of many within the county program it serves.

- **Removing the Existing Barriers in the Promotion of Supportive Social Institutions Through the Following Provisions**
  - Establishing new, and expanding existing, nonprofit institutions that can address the areas of needs of the population in underserved communities.
  - Promotion of nonprofits can be extended through multiple programs that provide financial support and training, and promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship. Colleges, universities and many foundations can play a pivotal and constructive role in such endeavors.
  - Enhancing pro-social places around the county and in areas faced with an apparent shortage. This challenge, in various forms, impacts underserved and affluent communities.
  - Finding creative ways of building communities and, in doing so, taking advantage of many cultural advantages that exist within the community and are not all utilized in their optimum capacity and potential.

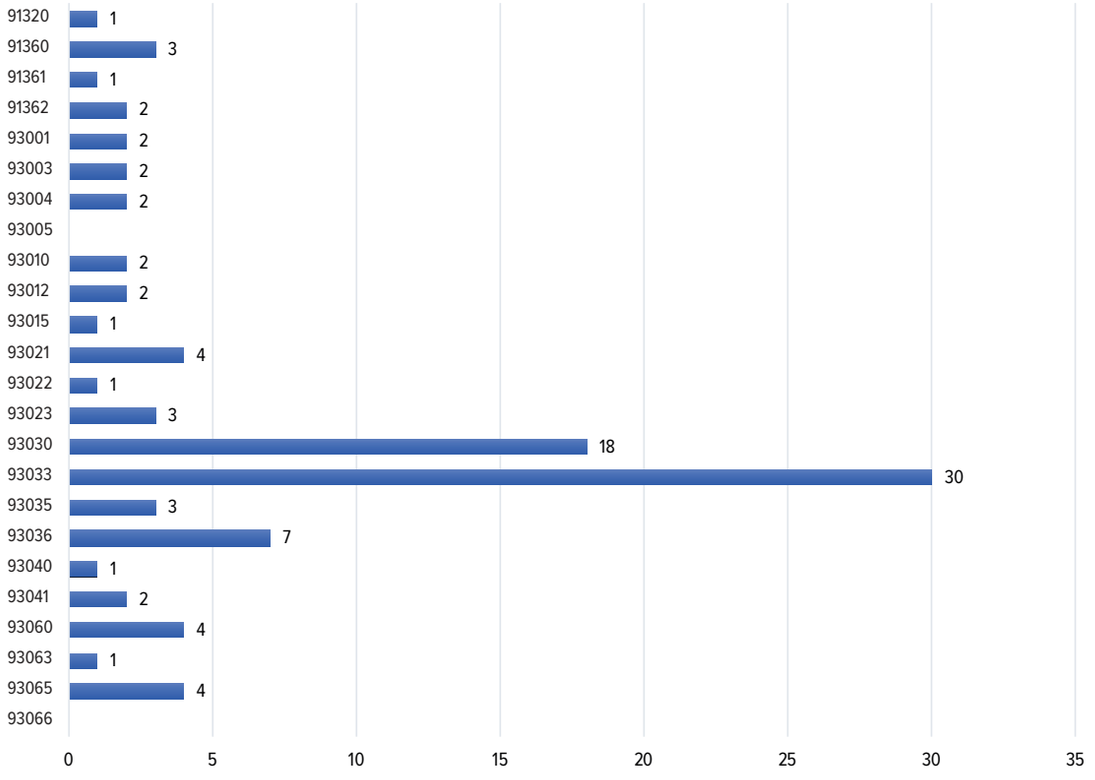
Appendix

Appendix

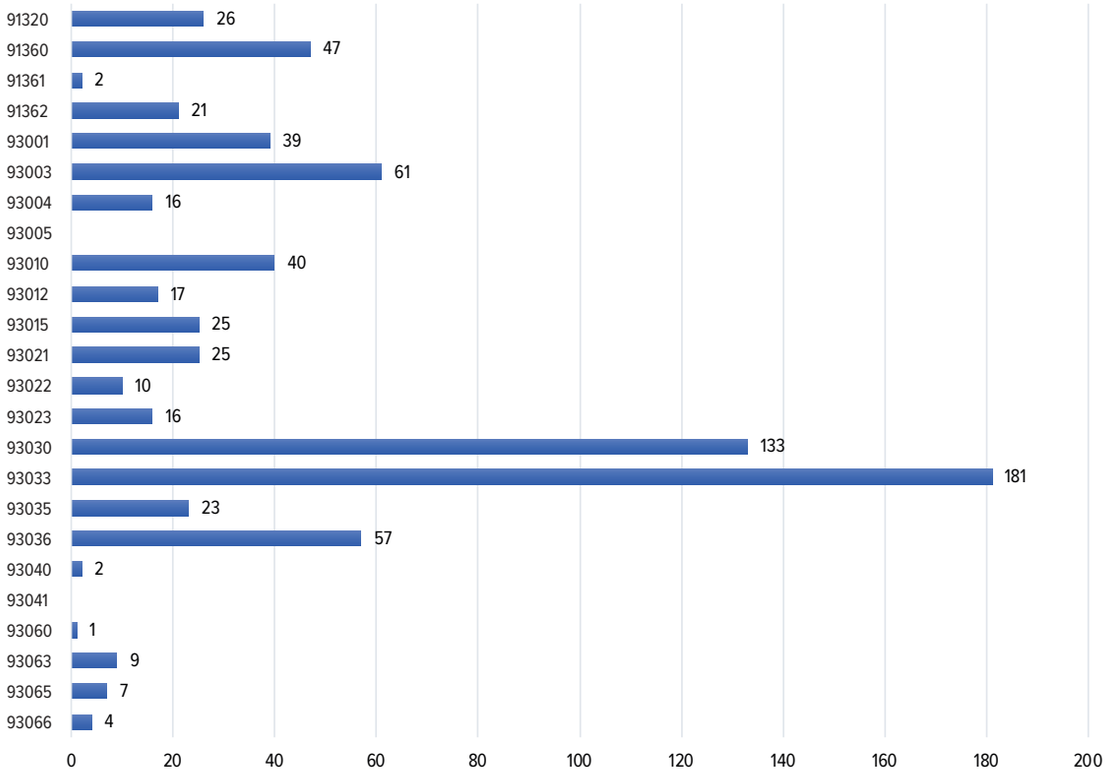
Assaults reported in UCR by Zip Codes, 2018–2022



Murders reported in UCR by Zip Codes, 2018–2022



Rapes reported in UCR by Zip Codes, 2018–2022



Ventura County
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Incidence of Violence in Ventura County

Looking into Its Demographic Profile in Search of Ways for Transformative Changes

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