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The Faces of American Power, Nearly as White as the Oscar Nominees

By HAEYOUN PARK, JOSH KELLER and JOSH WILLIAMS FEB. 26, 2016

We reviewed 503 of the most powerful people in American culture, government, education and business, and found that just 44 are minorities. Any list of the powerful is subjective, but the people here have an outsized influence on the nation's rules and culture.

Leaders of the Largest American Companies

After some years of progress, the diversity of the corporate elite has stalled in recent years, said Richard Zweigenhaft, a professor at Guilford College who studies executive diversity. "Once that barrier is broken, there may be a little less pressure to keep appointing people from that previously excluded category," he said.

The President and His Cabinet

Presidents Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton all had at least six minority cabinet members at some point in their terms.

Presidents of Ivy League Universities

Just two minorities have ever been presidents of Ivy League institutions. In 2001, Brown University appointed the first African-American leader, Ruth Simmons. Eight years later, Dartmouth appointed the first Asian-American leader, Jim Yong Kim. Both officials have since left those posts.

U.S. Senators

In the history of the Senate, there have been just 12 Republican and 14 Democratic senators who were not white. Six of them are now in office. Two of the three Hispanic senators – Marco Rubio of Florida and Ted Cruz of Texas – are running for president.

Hollywood Executives Who Choose Which Movies Are Made

We selected studio executives who decide which movie ideas come to fruition. All are white, with the exception of Kevin Tsujihara, the chief executive of Warner Bros. Entertainment. Minorities are [also underrepresented](#) among directors, writers and actors.

People Who Decide What Music Gets Produced

Shown here are the top 20 people on Billboard's Power 100 list. Except for Eddy Cue of Apple, who is Cuban-American, they are all white. The industry relies heavily on black talent, but few of the industry's most elite decision makers are black.

Mayors of America's Largest Cities

The diversity of mayors in America's 20 most populous cities is closer to that of the United States population than most of the other groups presented here.

People Who Wield the Most Influence Over Which Books Americans Read

There's no single authority for identifying the most powerful people in publishing, but we selected 20 who are among the most influential in deciding which books get published, which ones break out and what Americans read. Among those included are publishing executives who say "yes" or "no" to book proposals, and powerful agents and celebrities who influence which books become best sellers.

A [recent survey](#) of workers at publishing houses found that the industry remains overwhelmingly white. Nearly 90 percent of respondents identified themselves as white, and only 20 percent said strides had been made to diversify the work force

People Who Decide Which Television Shows Americans See

The people pictured here are among the most powerful players in the television industry. The group is not exhaustive, but we included the top producers and executives at major networks and

streaming services. [Channing Dungey](#), head of ABC entertainment, became the first black network president in February.

People Who Decide What News Gets Covered

We selected top leaders of newspapers and networks who decide which stories to cover and how to do so. In 2014 Dean Baquet became the first black executive editor of The New York Times

United States Supreme Court Justices

Thurgood Marshall became the first African-American justice on the Supreme Court in 1967. When he retired in 1991, he was succeeded by Clarence Thomas, who is also African-American

American Governors

In 1989, L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia, a grandson of slaves, became the nation's first African-American to be elected governor by popular vote. Most minority governors have held office in states with larger minority populations. New Mexico, which is 46 percent Hispanic, has elected six Hispanic governors, including its last two.

America's Top Military Advisers

In 1989, Gen. Colin L. Powell became the first African-American chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He resigned in 1993. No other member of the Joint Chiefs since then has been a minority.

Owners of Men's Professional Basketball Teams

About 75 percent of players are black, but Michael Jordan is the only black majority owner among the N.B.A.'s 30 teams. While teams often have multiple owners, we show the ones representing the teams at league meetings.

Owners of Men's Pro Football Teams

There isn't a single black owner in the N.F.L., and only one who is a minority, even though 70 percent of players are black. With teams selling for well over \$1 billion, only the ultra-wealthy find ownership within reach.

Owners of Men's Pro Baseball Teams

In more than a century of professional baseball, teams' owners have mirrored the makeup of corporate America. Decades ago, newspaper publishers, beer barons and mining titans owned teams. These days, owners come from high finance and real estate.

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Note: Race is given according to [census definitions](#), which classify people from Europe, the Middle East and North Africa as white. 102 chief executives are shown. Oracle has two CEOs. After the Fortune 500 list was released, HP split into two companies, and both are shown. Oscar Munoz is on medical leave, but he is shown here instead of the acting chief executive. Six individuals appear in more than one category. Basketball, football and baseball teams often have multiple or corporate owners. The owners shown are the people chosen by the teams to represent them at league meetings, according to each league. The Green Bay Packers are owned by shareholders; their president and C.E.O., Mark Murphy, is shown.

Sources: United States Senate (senators); Billboard Power 100 (music industry); Richard Zweigenhaft, Guilford College and Fortune (Fortune 100); John E. Fage (Joint Chiefs); National Governors Association and Christopher Z. Mooney, Institute of Government and Public Affairs (governors); Paul Light, New York University (cabinet); Tides Foundation (team owners); Major League Baseball; National Football League; National Basketball Association; company and university websites; [socialexplorer.com](#).

Additional work by Sarah Almukhtar, Ken Belson, Sarah Booth, David Braun, Andy Chen, Tanner Curtis, Sandi Daniel, Alicia Desantis, Alex Garces, Rebecca Haliscelik, Laura Kaltman, K.K. Rebecca Lai, Chris O'Brien, Yuliya Parshina-Kottas, Andrew Rodriguez, Karl Russell, Venus Tong, Derek Watkins and Jessica White