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**CALIFORNIA**

# Fresno's Ugly Divide

In California's poorest major city, policy, poverty, and a legacy of discrimination and segregation haunt the most vulnerable residents.

**GILLIAN B. WHITE** AUGUST 25, 2018

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MARY NEWMAN

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Fresno is the largest city in California's Central Valley. It's also the poorest major city in the entire state.

Over the past year, graduate students at U.C. Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism have reported deeply into Fresno's past and present, investigating the vast inequalities that exist within the city and its surrounding areas. *The Atlantic* is partnering with the school to publish what these reporters found—that a legacy of discrimination and segregation, the same forces that shaped Fresno at its founding, are a crucial part of what makes the city the way it is today.

Inequality in Fresno isn't just persistent; it is punishing—and selectively so. These stories show how Fresno's systemic problems plague poor and minority residents in myriad nuanced and not-so-nuanced ways, including the dramatically lower life expectancy for Fresno's black residents compared with its white residents.

Here are the stories in the series:

2. In "[Fresno's Mason Dixon Line](#)," Reis Thebault chronicles the history of redlining in Fresno, and the troubling ways that the city continues to segregate residents of color.
3. In "[The Thousands of Children Who Go to Immigration Court Alone](#)," Misyrlena Egkolfopoulou takes a look at the unique challenges facing unaccompanied minors who settle in areas far away from immigration courts and abundant, low-cost legal services.
4. In "[Growing Up Undocumented When Your Siblings Are Citizens](#)," Briana Flin tells the story of Andy Magdaleno, who struggled with his status as an undocumented immigrant in the U.S., and the vast discrepancies it created between the opportunities he and his siblings had access to.
5. In "[A Mother's Zip Code Could Signal Whether Her Baby Will Be Born Too Early](#)," Margaret Katcher illuminates how race, location, and bias create a system that puts the health of mothers and babies in jeopardy.
6. In "[Pregnant and Addicted to Heroin](#)," Rachel Cassandra chronicles the life of Amanda, a woman she met at a needle exchange who was five months pregnant and scared she wouldn't be able to get clean before she gave birth.
7. "[The Bias in Fresno's Justice System](#)," Reis Thebault and Alexandria Fuller investigated Fresno's police department, justice system, and schools, and found a pattern of dangerous racial discrimination.
8. In her documentary "[Meth-Addicted Mothers and Child Abuse](#)" Mary Newman follows mothers who are addicted to meth and the officers and treatment professionals who are confronting the epidemic every day.