

**31<sup>st</sup> Annual USC-SCAG Demographic Workshop**  
**Panel on the Changing Demographic Outlook and Housing Trends**  
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# **Empty Bedrooms and Overcrowded Rentals in Los Angeles**

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# Background

Los Angeles leads the nation in a ***housing shortage*** that results in rising numbers of homeless and increasing lack of affordability

Not only the shortage of housing but ***shortage of space within housing*** may be problematic as ***overcrowded housing*** has recently drawn new attention for its possible linkage to the spread of the coronavirus (Harvard Pop Center 2020; LA Times 2020; NYU Furman 2020)

Despite this housing shortage, many housing units contain at least two empty bedrooms – the result is a great imbalance of housing, a ***space inequality***

***Vacant or empty space within housing*** might even be a source to be utilized to alleviate the shortage problem – e.g., Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs) which is created out of a bedroom within an existing single-family unit (CA HCD 2020)

# Comparing Number of *Occupants* to Number of *Bedrooms*

Method is to first compute *the number of occupants* in each housing unit, assuming two married people or partners occupy only one bedroom together

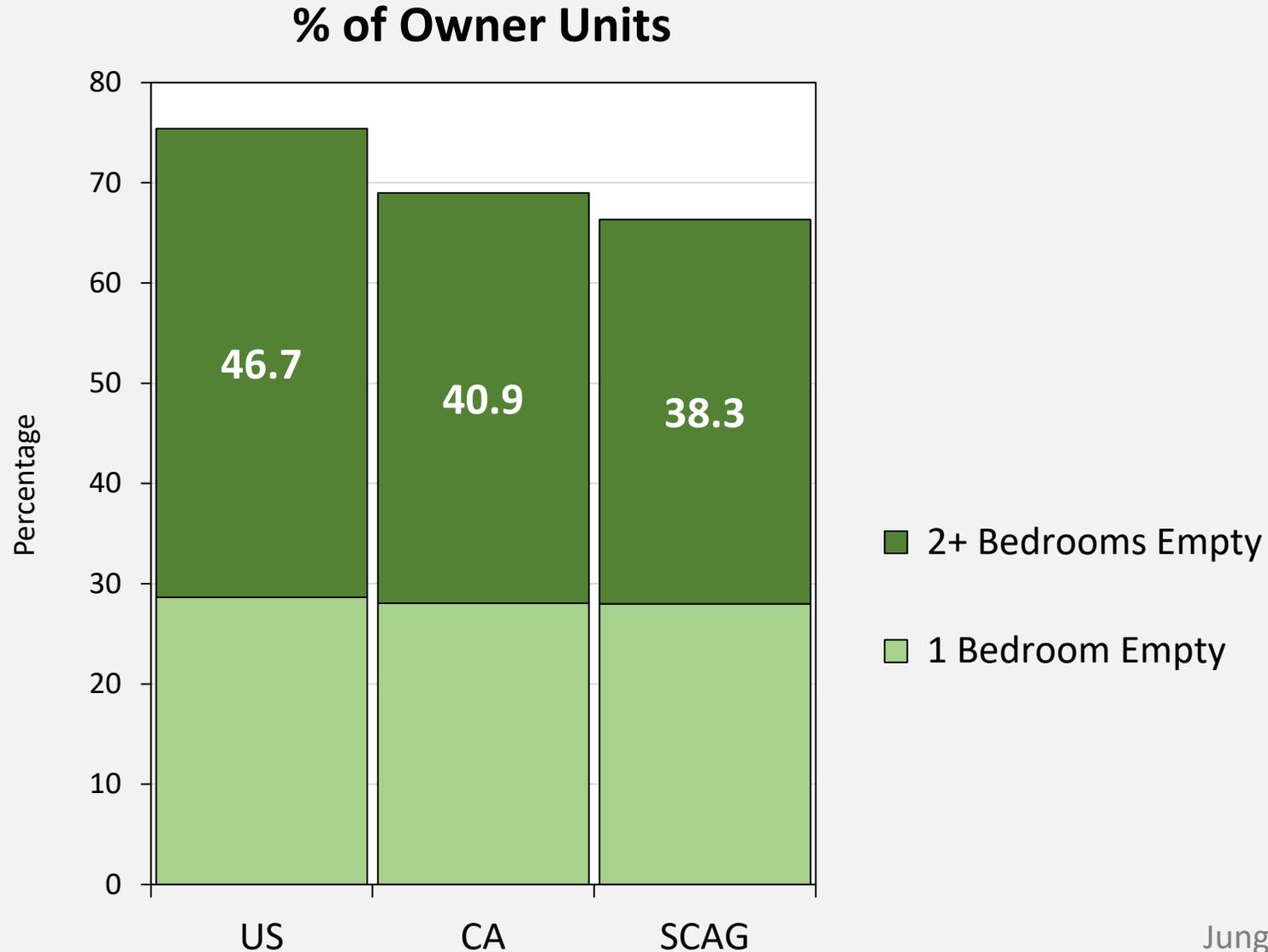
Separately, we calculate *the number of bedrooms* in the same unit and then see how many of the housing units have extra bedrooms or fall short relative to the number of occupants

How great is the *mismatch* between occupants and bedrooms?

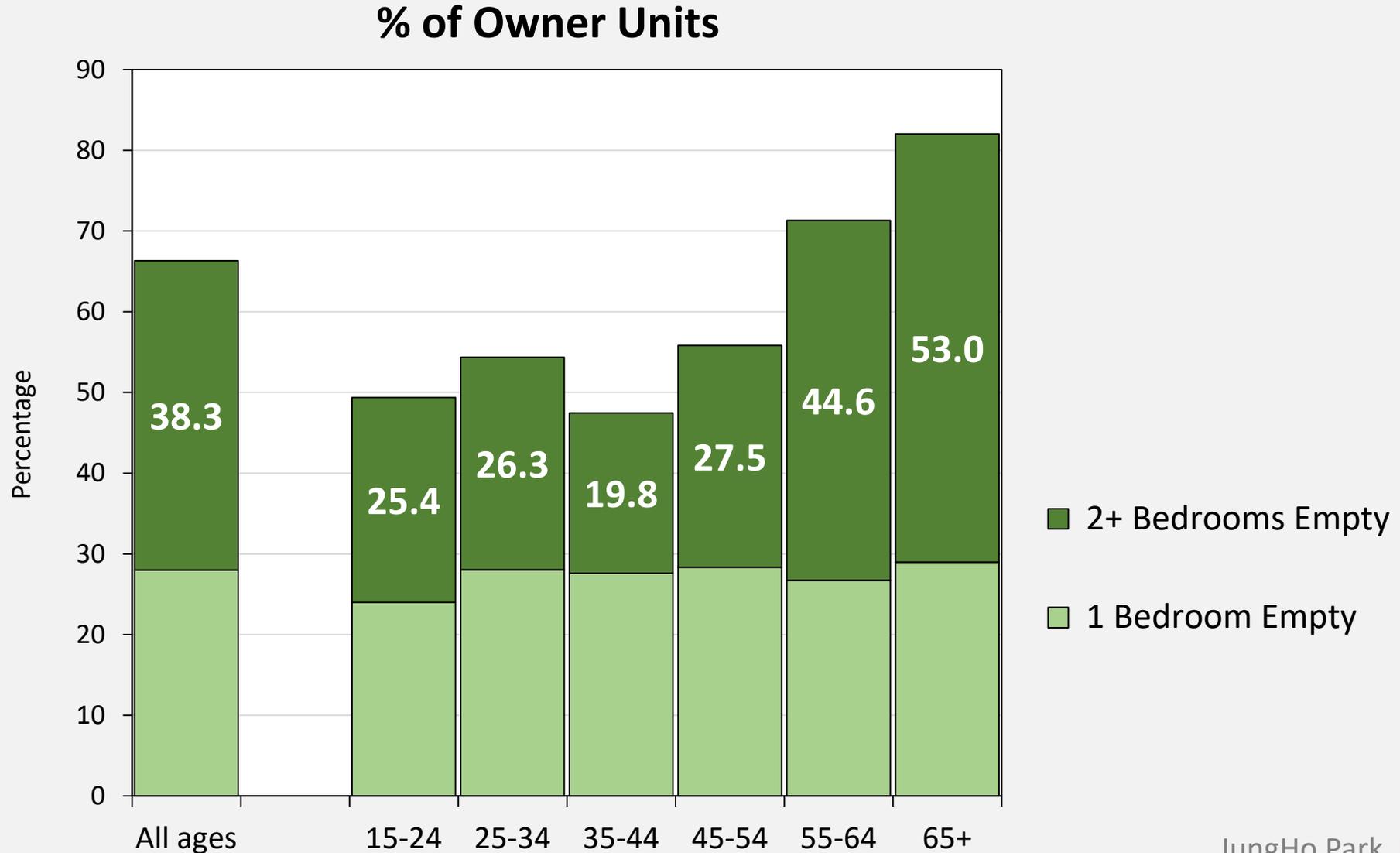
Using *2018 American Community Survey (ACS) microdata*, we see how many owner units have *empty bedrooms* that can be utilized for JADUs or to shelter a homeless person, and how many rental units are *overcrowded* across regions

***Empty Bedrooms  
in SCAG Region***

# 38.3% of Homeowners in SCAG Region Have at Least Two Empty Bedrooms, 2018



# ***Older Homeowners* Are *Two Times* More Likely to Have 2+ Empty Bedrooms than Young Homeowners, SCAG Region, 2018**



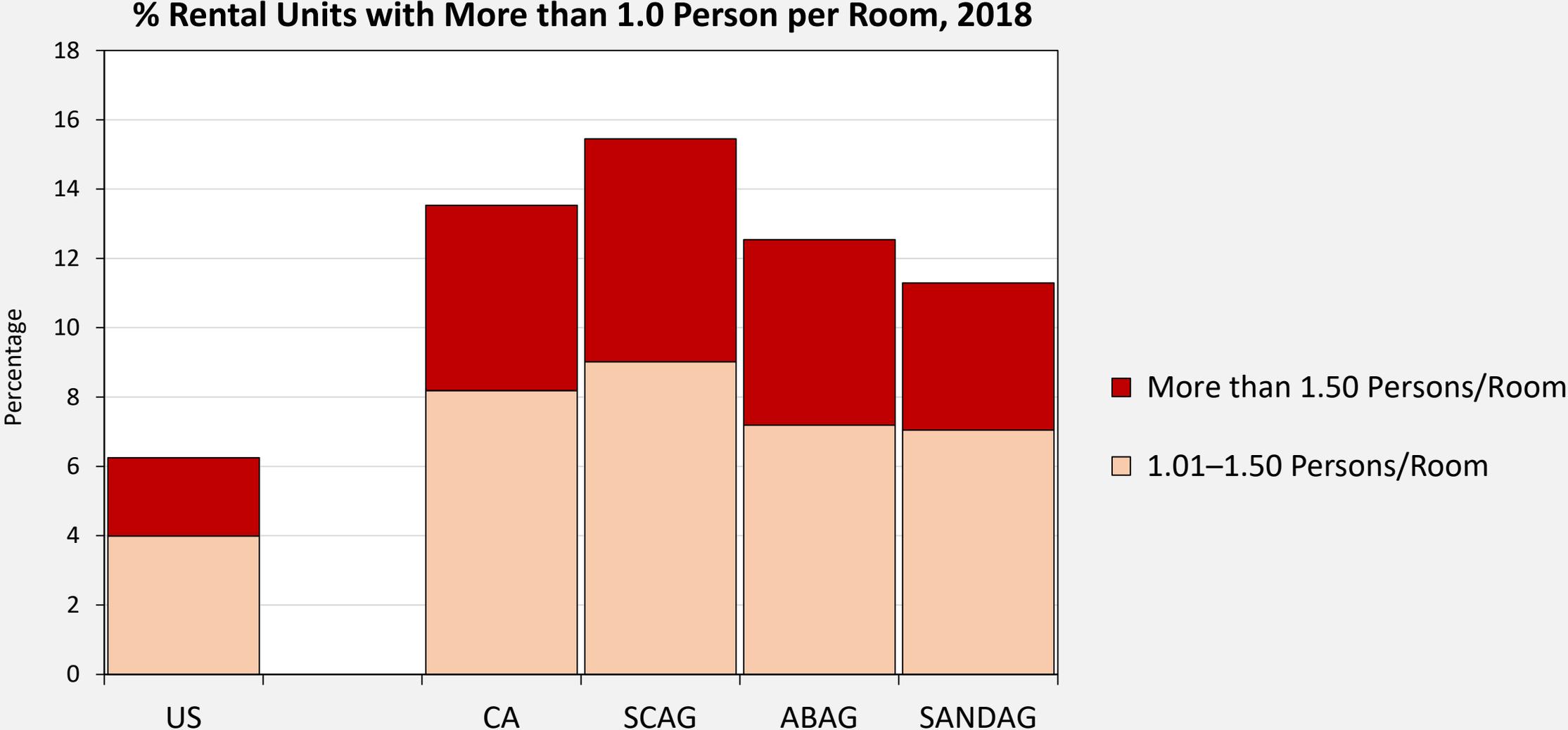
# *Fewest Empty Bedrooms* in NY, LA and California Metro Areas

% Owner Units with at Least One Empty Bedroom, 2018



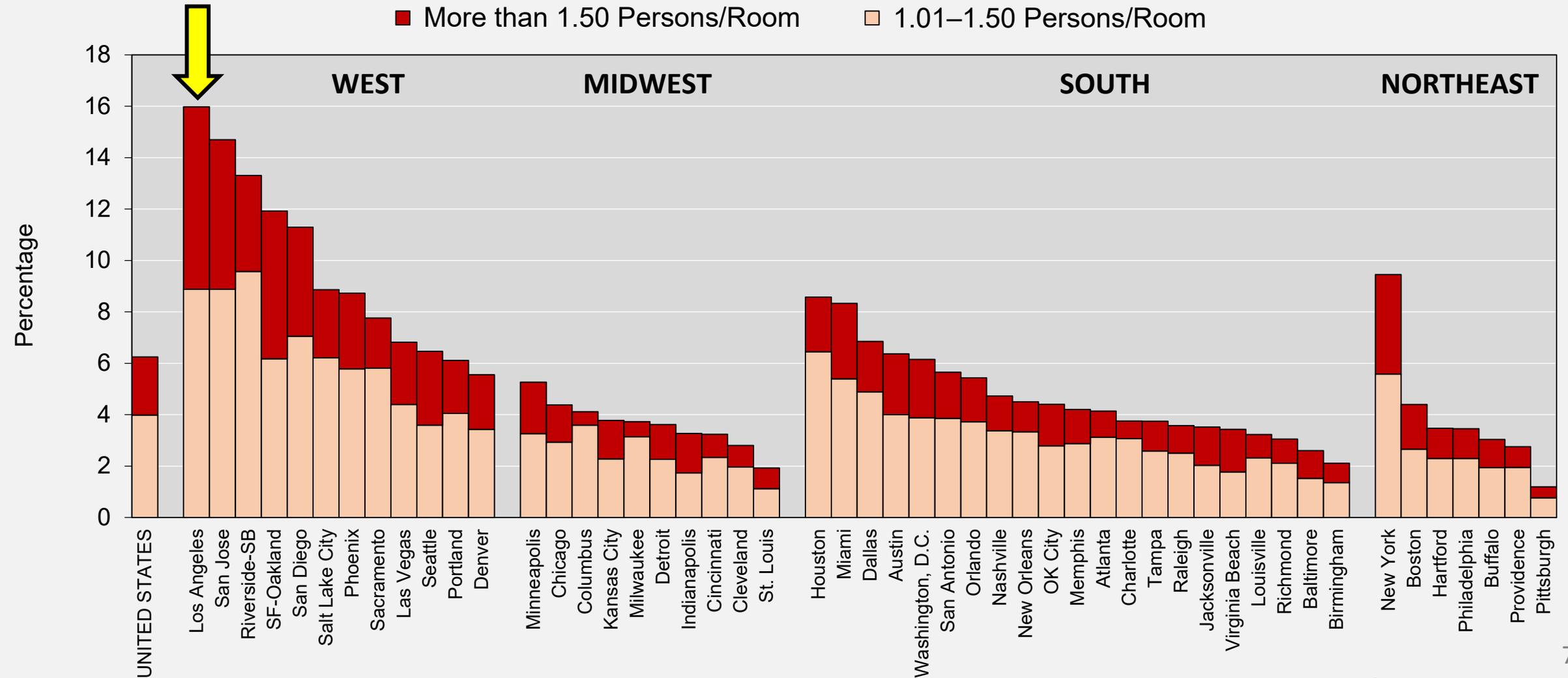
***Overcrowded Housing  
in SCAG Region***

# 15.5% of Renters in SCAG Region Live in Overcrowded Units, 2.5 Times the National Incidence



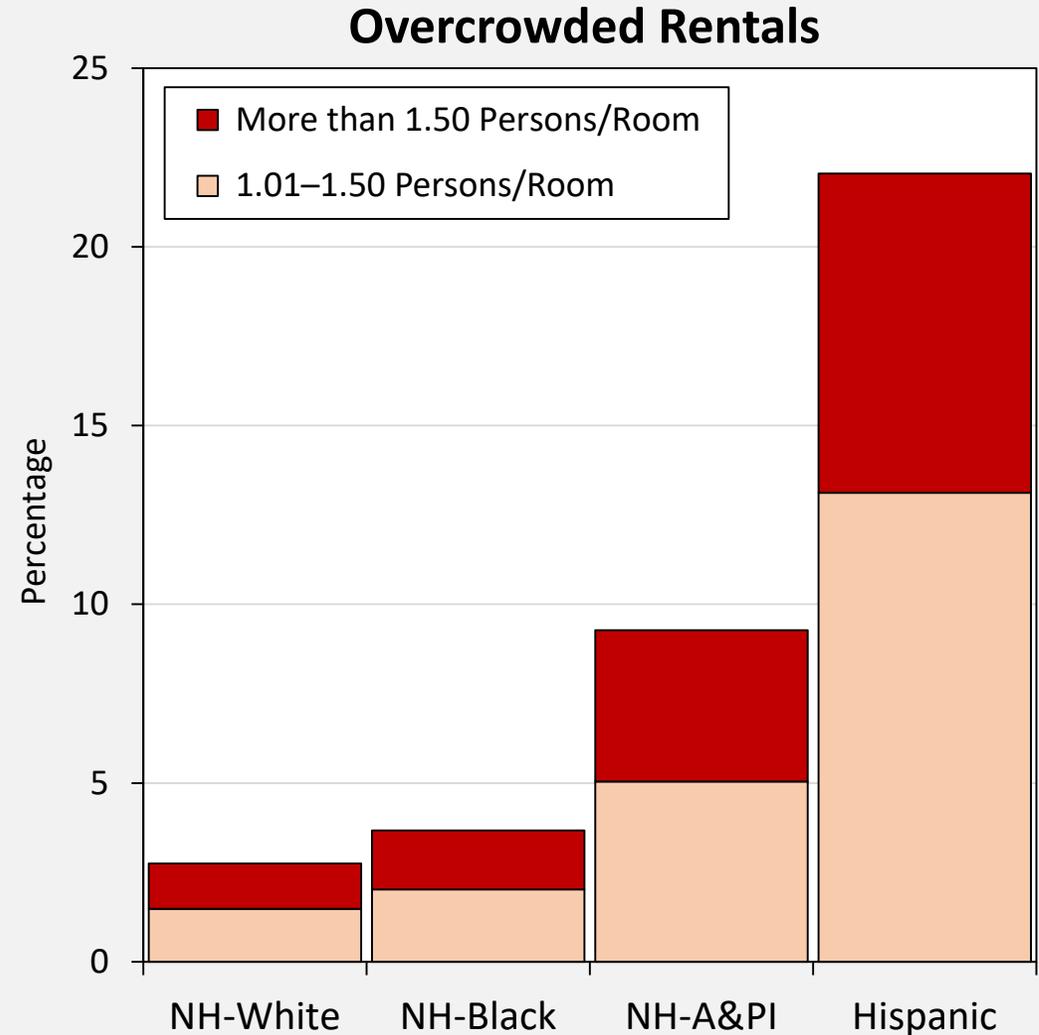
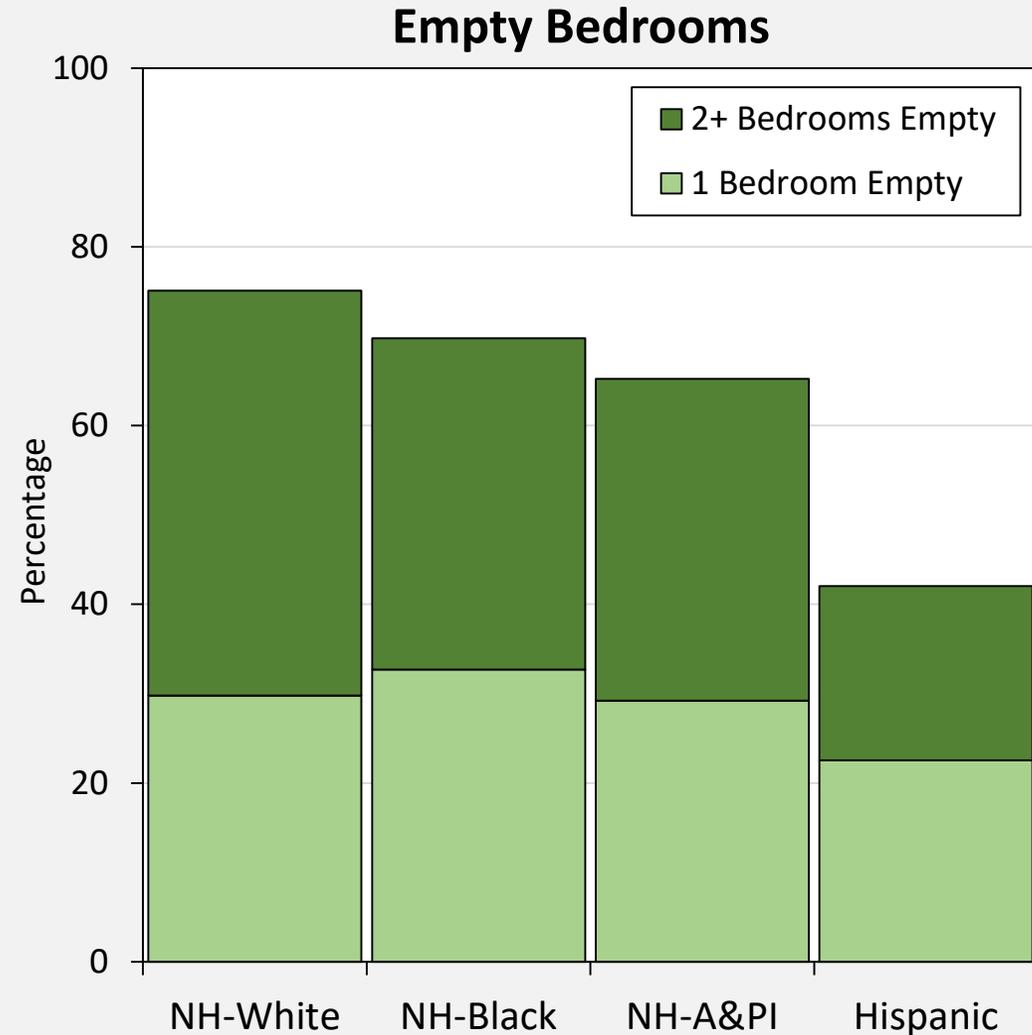
# LA and California Metro Areas *Most Overcrowded* in the Nation

% Rental Units that Are Overcrowded, 2018



***Racial Disparities in  
Density within Housing***

# Hispanic *Owners* have Least Empty Bedrooms, While *Hispanic Renters* Live in Most Overcrowded Units, LA County, 2018



# Scarce empty bedrooms and overcrowded rentals – *LA worst in the nation*

- *LA has the most scarce owner units that have at least two empty bedrooms*
- *The problem of overcrowded rental housing varies a lot across regions and its worst case is LA*
- *Racial disparities in the density within housing are large*

visit **USC PopDynamics** for more

<https://sites.usc.edu/popdynamics/housing/>

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