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## Diversity in the D.C. Area: Findings from the 2016 D.C. Area Survey

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*by Michael D. M. Bader*

*\*Participating investigators in the study are included in acknowledgments*

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## Table of Contents

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Acknowledgments .....	2
Executive Summary.....	4
Quadrivial and Disproportionately Latino Neighborhoods.....	6
Neighborhood Perceptions.....	10
Fear of Law Enforcement .....	13
Trust in Civil Society: Local Government and Organizations ....	15
Crime .....	19
Health.....	22
Ethnic Relations .....	25
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	28
Methodological Appendix.....	30

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To investigate how D.C.-area residents perceive and experience racial diversity in their lives, American University conducted a comprehensive survey of their attitudes.

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## Executive Summary

Washington, D.C. and its surrounding neighborhoods have become more racially diverse in recent years. Whereas the funk band, Parliament, once famously christened Washington “Chocolate City” and sang about its “vanilla suburbs,” many city and suburban neighborhoods today are interracially integrated.<sup>1</sup> Anger and inequality that arose from Washington’s segregation boiled over into riots that rocked the city in 1968, making today’s racial integration all the more astounding. To investigate how D.C.-area residents perceive and experience racial diversity in their lives, American University conducted a comprehensive survey of their attitudes. We named the study the DC Area Survey (DCAS) and conducted it over 2 months during 2016 in some of the region’s most diverse neighborhoods. This report provides initial findings from that study.

### *The Goal*

We wanted to understand the factors that affect the quality of life of residents in Washington, D.C. and the four surrounding counties: Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties in Maryland and Arlington and Fairfax Counties in Virginia (including the independent cities of Alexandria, Fairfax City, and Falls Church). With these data, we hope to provide systematic evidence about D.C.-area residents’ perceptions that are often left to anecdotal observation. Our study focused on two types of neighborhoods:

- **Quadrivial<sup>2</sup> Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods in which white, Asian, black, and Latino residents each make up at least 10 percent of neighborhood residents and no single group comprises a majority of residents.
- **Disproportionately Latino Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods that are not quadrivial neighborhoods, in which Latinos make up at least 25 percent of neighborhood residents.

### *The Study*

This is the first survey to provide a comprehensive picture of the quality of life in diverse D.C.-area neighborhoods. We asked residents about their communities, crime, businesses, nonprofits, and local government, as well as their views on race relations. We sent the survey to 9,600 households and received responses from 1,222; of those, 674 were returned from quadrivial neighborhoods and 548 from disproportionately Latino neighborhoods. The surveys, distributed in both English and Spanish, were in the field from March 9 to May 16, 2016. More methodological details are available at the end of this report as well as on the study website, <http://www.american.edu/spa/metro-policy/dc-area-survey.cfm>.

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<sup>1</sup> Parliament. 1975. Chocolate City. Casablanca Records.

<sup>2</sup> Quadrivial is a Latin word meaning four roads meeting.

## *Major Findings*

D.C.-area residents living in quadrivial and disproportionately Latino neighborhoods are generally satisfied with their neighborhoods. This pattern of satisfaction held across all racial groups living in these diverse neighborhoods. We found, however, large racial and economic variations in the concerns that residents expressed about their daily lives. In particular:

- **Fear of the police affects the daily lives of more than half of black and Latino residents.** Blacks and Latinos were six to seven times more likely than whites to report that fear of arrest or anxiety about police questioning them or their loved ones affected their daily lives.
- **Latinos, more than other racial groups, fear crime in their neighborhoods.** More than a quarter of Latinos overall and almost a third of Latinos in disproportionately Latino neighborhoods reported being afraid to walk alone in their neighborhood after dark for fear of being a victim of violent crime.
- **Low-income residents who have children feel that nonprofit services are not available to serve their needs.** Households with children that had annual incomes of less than \$30,000 were twice as likely as those making \$150,000 or more to report that nonprofit organizations were not available to serve their needs.
- **Residents have lower levels of trust in their local government than they have in businesses or nonprofits.** Just under half of respondents trusted people in local government to do what was right, compared to 59 percent and 57 percent of respondents who reported that they did trust people in businesses and nonprofits, respectively, to do what was right.

These results suggest that, when shaping future policies and programs, local policymakers and stakeholders must be aware of potential differences in the experiences of racial and economic groups, even among residents of the D.C. area's most racially diverse neighborhoods. Changes in local policies could ease some of the fear that people of color have of law enforcement and violent crime in their neighborhoods. Local government offices and nonprofit organizations should work together to target programs to poor residents in quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods. Police should focus on reducing prosecutions of minor offenses and creating racially diverse groups to observe police policies.

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We found large racial and economic variations in the concerns that D.C.-area residents expressed about their daily lives.

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## Quadrivial and Disproportionately Latino Neighborhoods

### *Why focus on Quadrivial and Disproportionately Latino neighborhoods?*

The growing ethnic and racial diversity of the United States is reflected in the communities that populate the nation's capital and surrounding suburbs. Yet, we know very little about how people living in these diverse neighborhoods perceive their environments. With this year's DC Area Survey (DCAS), we wanted to learn about resident experiences from those who live in the region's most diverse neighborhoods. As of 2014 (the latest date for which Census data are available), nearly one million of the D.C. area's approximately four million people live in either a quadrivial or a disproportionately Latino neighborhood. The map below shows where

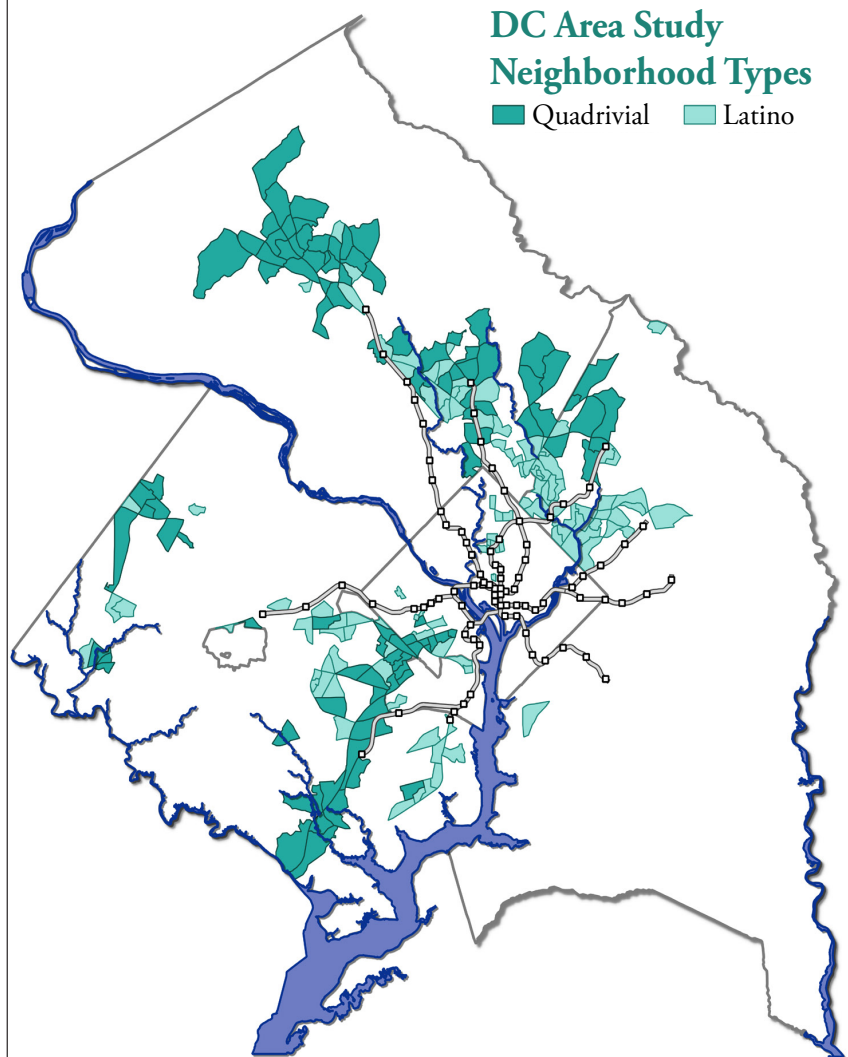


Figure 1: Map of quadrivial and disproportionately Latino neighborhoods in D.C. area



these neighborhoods are located. Despite the popular impression that Washington’s suburbs are very white, the map shows that many of the D.C. area’s most diverse neighborhoods are located in the suburbs.

We wanted to examine quadrivial neighborhoods because they represent one ideal of post-Civil Rights America—namely, that members of all racial groups can live harmoniously together. Based on previous studies, we believe such an ideal will work only if residents of all ages feel invested in and satisfied with their neighborhoods. One major goal of the 2016 DCAS, therefore, was to examine the degree to which this is true.

We also focused on disproportionately Latino neighborhoods because they are often overlooked in discussions of D.C.-area neighborhoods. In fact, over half a million Latinos live in Washington, D.C. and its surrounding suburbs. They live in both disproportionately Latino neighborhoods and quadrivial neighborhoods. Our study, conducted in both types of neighborhoods, represents over half of all Latinos living in the D.C. area and provides the most meaningful picture yet of perceptions held by Latinos in the Washington, D.C. area.

**Race**

Table 1 below shows the breakdown of the sample of DCAS respondents by quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods and by race. Unsurprisingly, respondents from quadrivial neighborhoods represent a more racially diverse group than the D.C. area as a whole. Whites, Asians, blacks, and Latinos each make up more than 20 percent of respondents from quadrivial neighborhoods. Compared to the whole D.C. area, residents of quadrivial neighborhoods were more likely to be Asian and Latino and less likely to be white or black.

**Table 1. Race of respondents in quadrivial and disproportionately Latino neighborhood samples and of D.C.-area residents**

	Quadrivial	Latino	DC Area
<b>White</b>	30.7	20.2	39.9
<b>Asian</b>	20.7	9.7	11.0
<b>Black</b>	21.5	25.0	30.6
<b>Latino</b>	23.7	42.1	15.5
<b>Other</b>	3.4	3.0	3.1

*Note: Percentages in quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods reflect weighted proportions from DCAS. Percentages for the D.C. area are 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 2010–14.*

Because one part of our study focuses on disproportionately Latino neighborhoods (where at least 25 percent of neighborhood residents are Latino), Latinos comprised

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As of 2014, nearly one million of the D.C. area’s approximately four million people live in either a quadrivial or a disproportionately Latino neighborhood.

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Residents of quadrivial neighborhoods were even more educated than the D.C.-area average: Two-thirds of residents held at least a bachelor's degree.

a far larger share of residents in our study than other racial groups. Two out of every five residents studied were Latino. One in five residents of the Latino neighborhoods was white, and black residents made up a quarter of the Latino neighborhoods. Both of these figures are considerably lower than the share of whites and blacks in the general population of the D.C. area. Asians made up just under one in ten residents, roughly reflecting the share of Asian residents in the D.C. area as a whole.

### Education

Residents of the D.C. area are well educated. Over half of the residents 25 years and older have at least a bachelor's degree and a quarter have a master's, professional, or doctoral degree. By comparison, only 29 percent of U.S. residents 25 and older have at least a bachelor's degree.<sup>3</sup> It is impressive, then, that residents of quadrivial neighborhoods were even more educated than the D.C.-area averages: Two-thirds of residents held at least a bachelor's degree.

**Table 2. Highest degree of respondents in quadrivial and disproportionately Latino neighborhood samples and D.C.-area residents**

	Quadrivial	Latino	DC Area
<H.S.	3.8	9.6	10.2
H.S.	9.1	14.8	17.3
Some college	22.1	26.8	21.0
B.A.	31.6	29.1	25.4
M.A.+	33.5	19.7	26.0

*Note: Percentages in quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods reflect weighted proportions from DCAS, and percentages for the D.C. area are 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2010–14, Table S1501.*

Residents of disproportionately Latino neighborhoods were a little more likely to have a bachelor's degree but slightly less likely to have an advanced degree relative to D.C.-area residents overall. Residents of Latino neighborhoods were also closer to area-wide levels of educational attainment below a bachelor's degree.

### Income

D.C.-area households have much higher incomes than households in the nation as a whole. Over a quarter of D.C.-area households had incomes of \$150,000 or more in 2014, compared to just 10 percent of national households. In addition, only about a quarter of households in the D.C. area made less than \$50,000 a year, which is just below the national median household income of \$53,482. The

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2010–2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Table S1501 “Educational Attainment.”

income distribution of respondents in quadrivial neighborhoods closely resembled that of the D.C. area as a whole, though respondents in quadrivial neighborhoods were slightly less likely than D.C.-area households to earn less than \$30,000 a year.

**Table 3. Household incomes of respondents in quadrivial and disproportionately Latino neighborhood samples and of D.C.-area residents**

	Quadrivial	Latino	DC Area
<\$30,000	10.2	19.2	14.7
\$30,000 to <\$50,000	15.8	16.7	11.9
\$50,000 to <\$75,000	14.9	17.8	15.3
\$75,000 to <\$100,000	15.9	15.8	12.8
\$100,000 to <\$150,000	18.6	17.2	19.1
\$150,000+	24.5	13.2	26.2

*Note: Percentages in quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods reflect weighted proportions from DCAS. Percentages for the D.C. area are 5-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2010-2014*

By contrast, respondents in disproportionately Latino neighborhoods reflected the lower end of the area income distribution. The percentage of respondents in Latino neighborhoods with incomes of \$150,000 or more was about half the percentage of respondents in quadrivial neighborhoods, while the percentage making incomes of less than \$30,000 was about twice as large.

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## Neighborhood Perceptions

One of the primary goals of this study was to examine the degree to which racial groups differed in their evaluations of diverse neighborhoods. Overcoming past problems related to racial inequality will be more likely if different racial groups have similar degrees of satisfaction with and perceptions of their neighborhoods. We examined this idea with a series of questions asking residents about how they perceived their own neighborhoods.

### *What do residents of quadrivial neighborhoods and Latino neighborhoods think of their communities?*

On average, DCAS respondents have lived in their neighborhoods for 12 years. This overall average, however, hides the wide range of times residents have lived in their neighborhoods. A quarter of the residents have moved to their current neighborhood in the past 3 years while another quarter have lived in their neighborhood for 17 years.

Overall, DCAS respondents were satisfied with their neighborhoods: **More than two-thirds of respondents were either extremely or very satisfied with their neighborhoods.** There were no differences across the two types of neighborhoods, but whites and respondents with more education were more likely to indicate that they were “extremely” satisfied with their neighborhoods. More than one in four white respondents indicated that they were extremely satisfied with their neighbor-



Figure 2: Percent of residents, by income, who were “extremely satisfied” with their current neighborhood

hoods, compared to only one in five Latino and black respondents and one in six Asian respondents. Figure 2 shows that neighborhood satisfaction increased with income: **Thirty-four percent of residents making \$150,000 or more were “extremely satisfied” with their neighborhood, but only 14 percent of those making less than \$30,000 were “extremely satisfied” with their neighborhood.**

DCAS respondents were optimistic about the direction of change in their neighborhood: Forty percent thought that their neighborhood had become a “much better” or “somewhat better” place in the past 5 years. This optimism was equally shared across racial and economic groups, though Figure 3 shows that whites were slightly less likely to endorse the idea that their neighborhood had gotten “much better.”

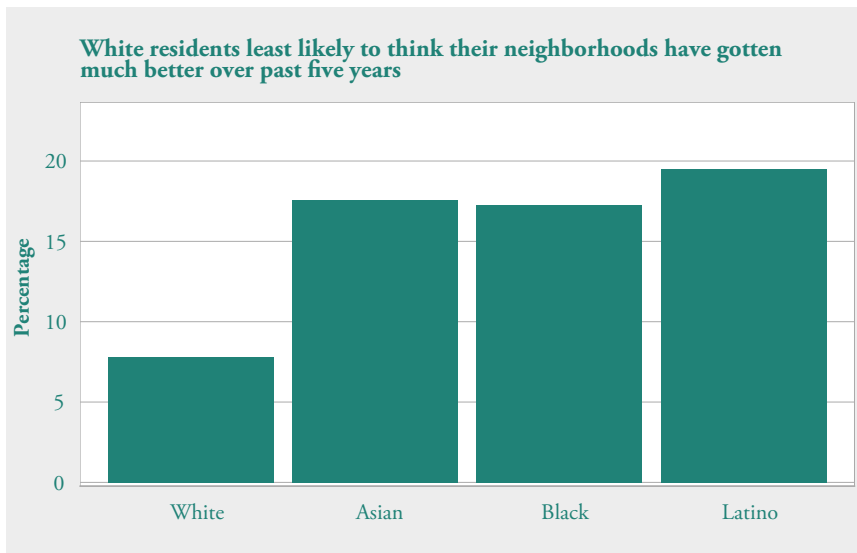


Figure 3: Percent of residents, by race, who think that their neighborhood has become a “much better” place to live in the past 5 years

A striking **95 percent of DCAS respondents thought that their neighborhood was at least somewhat better than most other neighborhoods in the D.C. area**, and two in five of those respondents thought that their neighborhood was a “much better” place to live. Figure 4 (following page) shows that black and Latino respondents were more likely than white and Asian respondents to endorse the idea that their neighborhood was “much better” compared to most others. Almost half of black and Latino respondents thought they lived in a neighborhood that was “much better” than most, compared to a third of Asians and a quarter of whites.

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Overall, residents in quadrivial and disproportionately Latino neighborhoods are satisfied with their neighborhoods and, in general, think that their neighborhoods are improving.

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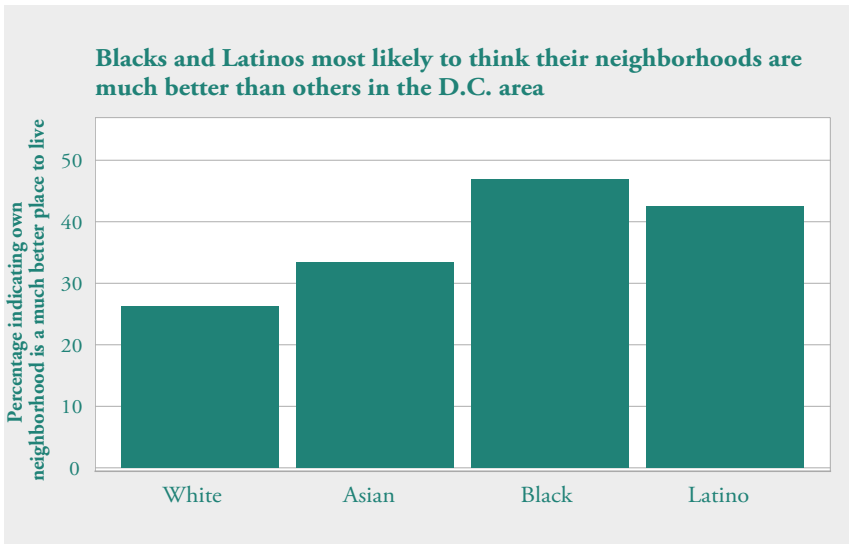


Figure 4: Proportion of residents, by race, who think that their neighborhood is a somewhat or much better place to live compared to most other D.C.-area neighborhoods

### Summary

Overall, residents in quadrivial and disproportionately Latino neighborhoods are satisfied with their neighborhoods and, in general, think that their neighborhoods are improving. Almost all respondents thought that their own neighborhood was better than most other D.C.-area neighborhoods, a sentiment felt more strongly by blacks and Latinos than by whites and Asians. Blacks, Latinos, and Asians—compared to whites—were all also more likely to think that their neighborhood had gotten better over the past 5 years. The overall level of satisfaction indicates that the neighborhood is a source of potential pride among residents. The high levels of satisfaction across racial groups suggest that moves out of neighborhoods due to dissatisfaction are unlikely, offering some hope that neighborhoods can remain racially integrated.

## Fear of Law Enforcement

National events have placed the relationship between law enforcement and communities of color in the foreground of our consciousness. We wanted to know the degree to which law enforcement—in the form of both policing and border enforcement—affects the daily lives of D.C.-area residents. Because we were interested in the influence of law enforcement on their lives generally, we purposely did not ask about local law enforcement agencies. As a result, the questions did not refer specifically to residents’ fears of police in their own neighborhoods.

### *How much does fear of arrest differ across racial groups?*

Among our most striking findings was the degree to which fear of targeting by police affected the daily lives of different racial groups. Figure 5 shows that **black and Latino respondents were six and seven times, respectively, more likely than white respondents to report that their daily lives were affected “somewhat” or “a lot” by the fear that they or their loved ones would be arrested or questioned by the police.** Nearly a *quarter* of Latinos reported that the fear of police affected their lives “a lot.” By contrast, only 1.5 percent of whites indicated that fear of arrest or questioning affected their daily lives. Asians fell in between: Eight percent reported that fear of arrest or questioning affected their daily lives “somewhat” and 9 percent reported that the fear affected their daily lives “a lot.”

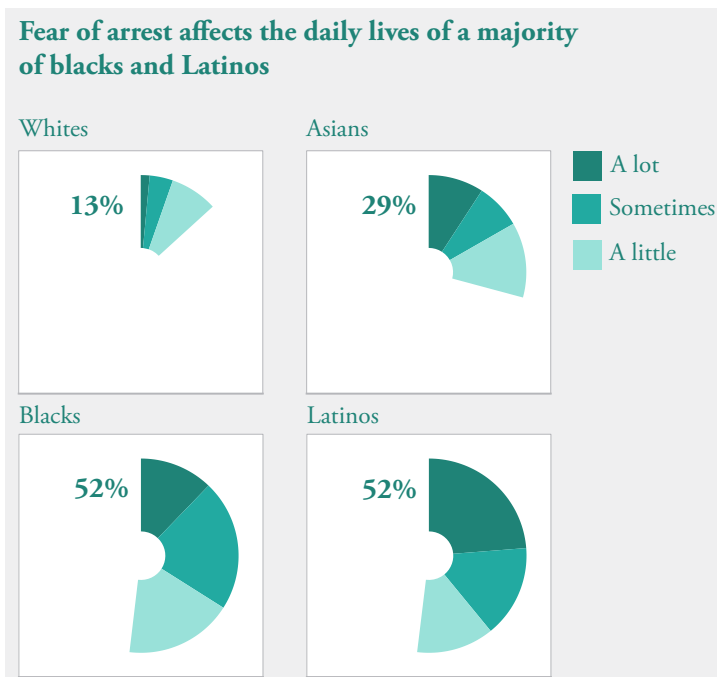


Figure 5: Proportion of residents in quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods, by race, whose lives are affected by fear of arrest or fear that they or loved ones will be questioned by police

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Black and Latino respondents were six and seven times, respectively, more likely than white respondents to report that their daily lives were affected by the fear that they or their loved ones would be arrested or questioned by the police.

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The fear of deportation affected about half of Latinos living in disproportionately Latino neighborhoods.

### How much does fear of deportation differ across racial groups?

For some groups, the fear of policing could be compounded by deportation proceedings carried out by the federal government. Figure 6 shows that three-quarters of Latino respondents reported knowing someone at risk of being deported. Figure 6 also shows that, **of the Latinos who know someone at risk of deportation, 40 percent said the fear of deportation affected their daily lives “a lot,” and another 13 percent said the fear of deportation affected their daily lives “somewhat.”** The fear of deportation affected about half of Latinos living in disproportionately Latino neighborhoods.

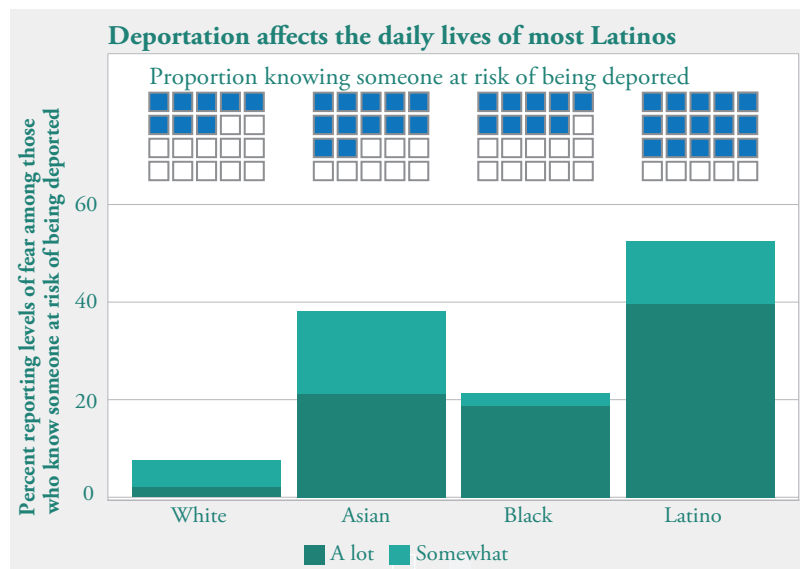


Figure 6: Proportion of residents in quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods, by race, who know someone at risk of deportation and the effect it has on their daily lives

By comparison, about 40 percent of Asians reported knowing someone at risk of being deported and, of those, about 20 percent said that the fear of deportation affected their daily lives “a lot.” Only about two in five whites and blacks reported knowing someone at risk of being deported; among them, 2 percent of whites and 19 percent of blacks said it affected their daily lives “a lot.”

### Summary

Our study reveals stark racial patterns concerning residents’ fear of law enforcement. These profound differences suggest that different groups face different issues in their neighborhoods, even when racial groups are equally satisfied with their neighborhoods. We also note that respondents in our sample were drawn from the same sets of neighborhoods, so their responses largely reflect differences within the same neighborhoods. Local policymakers should be aware of these racial disparities and create policies to reduce black and Latino fears.



## Trust in Civil Society: Local Government and Organizations

To get a sense of the degree to which DCAS respondents engaged with elements of civil society within or near their neighborhoods, we asked residents about their use, perceptions, and trust in the businesses, government organizations, and nonprofits that served them and their families. The survey assessed residents’ perceptions of whether the resources provided by these entities adequately served their needs and those of their families in the communities where they lived. Additionally, to get a sense of civic engagement, the survey also asked individuals about their philanthropic behaviors, including their donations to and volunteer support of nonprofits. We wanted to know whether responses varied by race and income.

### How do residents view businesses?

Residents in our sample of diverse neighborhoods are generally satisfied with local businesses. About **nine in ten residents reported shopping at, dining in, or buying goods and services from businesses located in or near their neighborhood at least several times a month**. In addition, 85 percent of residents strongly or somewhat agree that neighborhood businesses serve their needs. This was true in both Latino and quadrivial neighborhoods. In addition, around two-thirds of individuals believe businesses in or near their neighborhoods have improved their services over the last 5 years while less than 5 percent thought that business services had gotten worse. Residents of Latino and quadrivial neighborhoods also trust businesses in or near their neighborhoods: Fifty-nine percent of residents somewhat or strongly agree that they can trust businesses in or near their neighborhood to “do what is right.”

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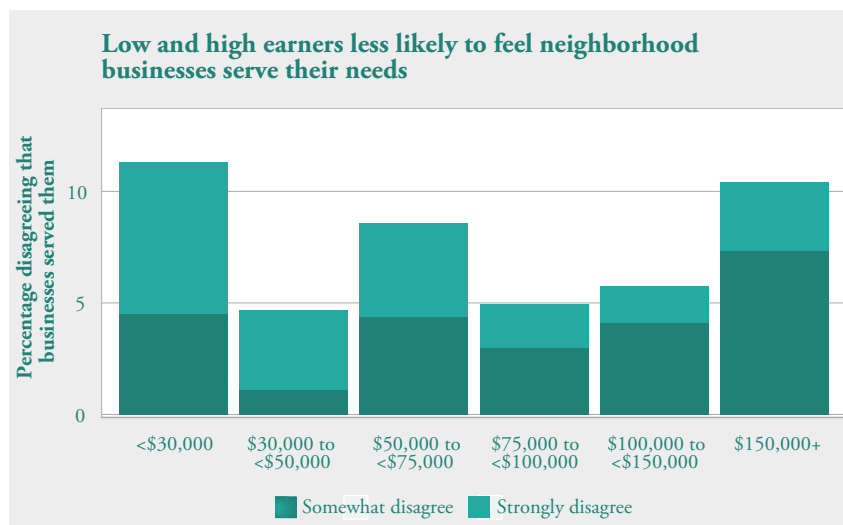


Figure 7: Percent of residents of quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods, by income, who reported being dissatisfied with businesses near their neighborhood

About two in five residents regularly use services provided by nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations at least once a month.

As Figure 7 (preceding page) shows, residents on the extremes of income are most likely to report that businesses do not serve them. Around one in ten of those making less than \$30,000 a year and those making \$150,000 or more think that businesses in or near their neighborhood do not serve their needs.

### *How do residents view nonprofits?*

About **two in five residents regularly use services provided by nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations at least once a month**, including nonprofit education programs, childcare, sports, recreation, arts, religious, health, transportation, and human services. About half of residents think nonprofits serve their needs while most of the rest felt neutral. Only six percent of residents reported that nonprofits did not serve their needs. Just over a quarter, 28 percent, think nonprofits have improved in the past 5 years.

Figure 8 shows that nonprofits were more likely to meet the needs of those with higher incomes. Low-income residents, more than others, reported having no nonprofit organization to serve their needs. Nine percent of low-income residents with children in the household and ten percent of low-income seniors at least 65 years reported that no nonprofits served their needs.

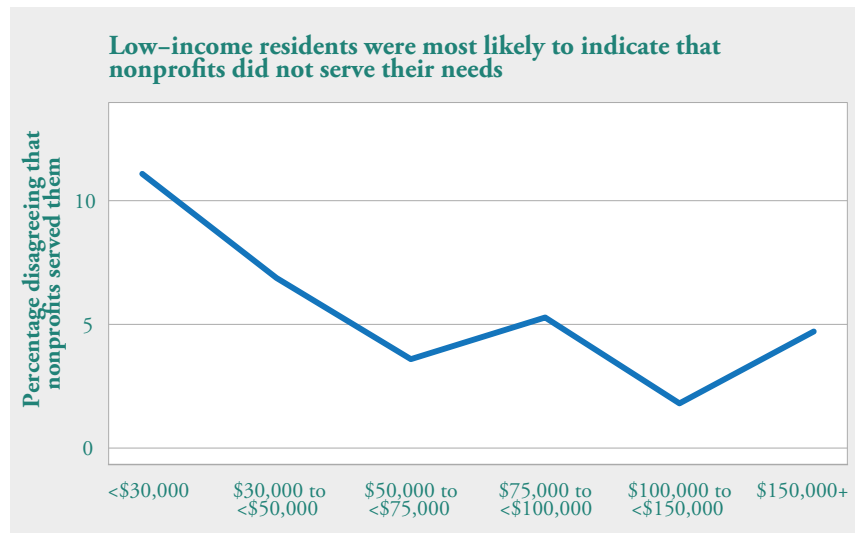


Figure 8: Percent of residents of quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods, by income, who reported that neighborhood nonprofits served their needs

Families with children were frequent clients of nonprofit organizations: Half of the residents with children in the household and incomes above \$30,000 reported using nonprofit programs and services several times a month or more often. As Figure 9 shows, however, the difference for low-income families is striking: **Only 32 percent of low-income individuals with children reported using nonprofits several times a month or more often.** This could have been due to a lack of availability

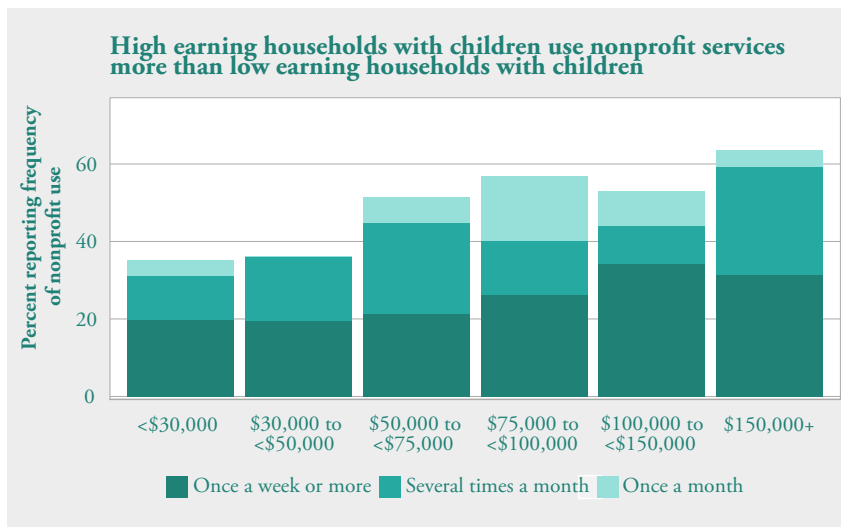


Figure 9: Percent of residents with children of quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods, by income, who used local nonprofit services at least once a month

since this group was also more likely to have reported lower availability of nonprofits near them.

Residents have high levels of trust in nonprofits. Fifty-seven percent of residents trust nonprofits to “do what is right” and only 14 percent do not trust nonprofits to “do the right thing.” The relative trust in nonprofits is reflected in residents’ participation in and support of the nonprofit sector. Residents of D.C. Latino and quadrivial neighborhoods demonstrate relatively high levels of philanthropy compared to national averages, with 45 percent of residents volunteering at least one hour for a nonprofit organization in the past month and 78 percent donating over \$100 for religious and charitable purposes in the past year.

### *How do residents view local government?*

Residents view local government positively overall. About two-thirds of residents somewhat or strongly agree that local government serves them and their families. Residents tend to use local government services: **Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) reported using services provided by local government at least once a month**, including schools, parks and recreation facilities, libraries, health or nursing care facilities, daycare, transportation, and social services. Eighty percent of low-income respondents with children in the household reported using local government services at least several times a month, compared to 74 percent of all other individuals with children and 49 percent of individuals without children in the household. Residents also perceived improvement in local government services: Forty-three percent said government facilities and services had improved in the last 5 years, including 56 percent of residents with less than \$30,000 in family income.

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Nearly three-quarters of residents reported using services provided by local government at least once a month.

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Residents across income groups tend to trust people working in businesses and nonprofits more than they trust people working in government.

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A larger proportion of residents, however, was more dissatisfied with their local government than they were with local nonprofits or businesses. Among residents with incomes below \$30,000, 13 percent reported being dissatisfied with their local government. Older, low-income residents (those over 65 years old) also reported being underserved by local government: More than one in ten residents over 65 years making less than \$30,000 felt that local government did not serve their needs. Zero percent of residents over 65 years old with family incomes above \$150,000 reported being dissatisfied with local government.

Residents in quadrivial and disproportionately Latino neighborhoods also reported relatively low levels of trust in their local government. When asked if they trust people in business, government, and nonprofits to do what is right, residents across income groups tend to trust people working in businesses and nonprofits more than they trust people working in government. Similar percentages of residents reported trusting people in businesses and nonprofits (59 percent and 57 percent, respectively), but only 48 percent trust people working in local government. Almost a third of the residents (31 percent) distrust local government to “do the right thing” compared to 23 percent who distrust people in business and 14 percent who distrust people working in nonprofits.

### *Summary*

Respondents in quadrivial and disproportionately Latino D.C.-area neighborhoods reported being satisfied with businesses, nonprofits, and local government in their neighborhoods; respondents see them as having improved in the last few years. This sentiment echoes (and perhaps contributes to) respondents’ satisfaction with their neighborhoods. Low-income residents, by contrast, disproportionately reported being underserved. Residents with larger incomes generally reported greater availability of nonprofit services and greater levels of satisfaction with local businesses, nonprofits, and government. These findings suggest areas in need of improvement despite generally high levels of residents’ satisfaction with neighborhood services.

## Crime

Crime, especially violent crime, is a perennial concern among residents nationally. These concerns can affect daily quality of life and interactions with neighbors. We wanted to know whether residents perceive crime to be a problem in their own neighborhoods. To gauge how much personal experiences affect perceptions and reported fear of crime, we asked residents in D.C.'s diverse neighborhoods whether they had been victims of crime in the past year. As we have with other questions, we considered the degree to which perceptions and victimization varied by race and income within the neighborhood.

### *How concerned are residents about crime in their neighborhoods?*

**Eighteen percent of DCAS residents think that violent crime is a moderate or serious problem in their neighborhood.** This perception comes despite the fact that very few residents reported being victims of crime. **Only one in ten indicated that they had been the victim of a crime**, and a vast majority of those individuals reported being victims of *property crimes*, not violent crimes.

Residents living in disproportionately Latino neighborhoods were more likely to express concerns about violent crime than residents living in quadrivial neighborhoods even though residents from both types of neighborhoods reported similar actual experiences with crime. As Figure 10 shows, one-quarter of residents living in disproportionately Latino neighborhoods reported that violent crime was a moderate or serious problem compared to one in ten residents of quadrivial neighbor-

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Eighteen percent of residents think that violent crime is a problem in their neighborhood.

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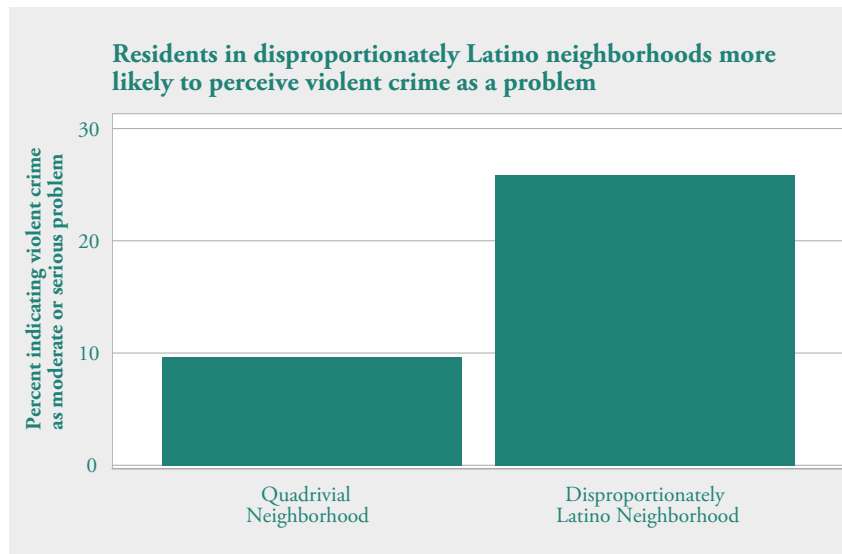


Figure 10: Percentage of residents in quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods who consider violent crime to be a moderate or serious problem in their neighborhood

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About one in three Latinos living in disproportionately Latino neighborhoods expressed fear of violent crime compared to about one in five whites and blacks, and one in twenty Asians.

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hoods. Asian Americans living in disproportionately Latino neighborhoods were less likely to consider crime a problem than Latino, black, and white residents, who all expressed similar levels of concern.

We also wanted to assess how fearful residents were about crime in their neighborhood and whether their attitudes on crime affected their sense of safety. We asked whether respondents would be afraid to walk alone at night out of fear of becoming a victim of violent crime. Residents of disproportionately Latino neighborhoods were more likely than those in quadrivial ones to be concerned about walking alone in their neighborhoods at night due to their fear of violent crime.

Compared to other residents of disproportionately Latino neighborhoods, Latinos were most likely to express fear of violent crime. **About one in three Latinos living in disproportionately Latino neighborhoods expressed fear of violent crime compared to about one in five whites and blacks, and one in twenty Asians.** In both types of neighborhoods, the poorest residents were the most afraid of violent crime.

These subjective measures are important to consider when assessing how residents view their neighborhood. More residents expressed fear or concern about violent crime than are reflected in reports on victimization and official crime statistics. These perceptions are relevant not only for understanding the issue of crime but also for understanding how residents interact with others in their neighborhood—or fail to interact—based on these perceptions. Indirectly, views of safety can affect residents’ engagement with their neighbors on crime issues as well as other forms of collective efficacy. The range of perceptions on crime—as reported in our study—provides insight as to why some groups might interact with others in their neighborhood differently from others.

### *How do residents perceive the police?*

Given these fears of crime, and the current tensions that exist between the police and minority communities throughout the country, we asked what residents of these diverse areas think of the job police are doing. Most residents think that the police are doing a good job keeping them safe in their neighborhoods. **Between 77 percent and 80 percent of all four racial groups somewhat or strongly endorsed the statement that police were doing a good job keeping them safe in their neighborhoods.** Only 3.5 percent of residents somewhat or strongly disagreed that the police were doing a good job and 18 percent were neutral.

That being said, residents living in DCAS neighborhoods have little contact with the police. Approximately **two-thirds of residents reported that they had had no contact with local police in the past 12 months.** Figure 11 shows that residents with less education were more likely not to have had contact with police, especially those without a high school degree or only a high school degree. White respondents

were the most likely to have had contact with the police over the past 12 months. Those who did report contact with the police were a little more likely to have had casual interactions with the police than interactions related to a crime. Calling the police for general help and information and engaging in casual conversation or police-sponsored activities were reported by about 12 percent of respondents. About ten percent contacted the police to report a crime and nine percent reported a traffic stop.

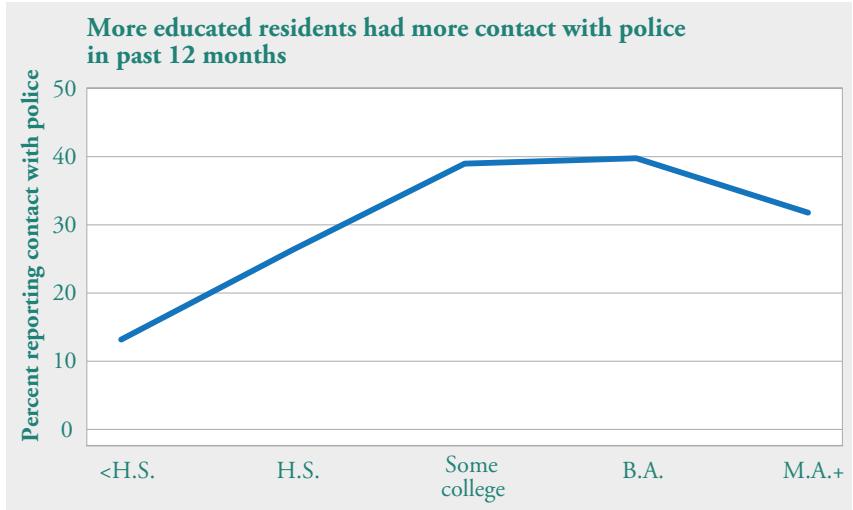


Figure 11: Percent of residents of quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods, by education, who reported contact with police in the past 12 months

### Summary

Latinos feared being a victim of violent crime more than other racial groups, and Latinos living in disproportionately Latino neighborhoods were especially fearful. This type of subjective assessment of crime could affect the everyday lives and opportunities of Latino residents. Despite these fears, however, actual victimization rates were generally low, especially for violent crimes. Residents—regardless of race—supported the job that local police were doing to keep them safe in their neighborhoods, though most residents did not have much contact with police.

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Despite fears of violent crime, actual victimization rates were generally low.

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Nine out of ten respondents reported being in at least “good” health.

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## Health

Health inequalities between racial and economic groups are pronounced in our nation, and we wanted to investigate the degree to which those inequalities might be present among residents of diverse D.C.-area neighborhoods.

### *How healthy do residents report being?*

We asked residents to rate their own health. This “self-rated health” measure is among the most commonly used to assess health, and it correlates with some measurable health outcomes. **Nine out of ten respondents reported being in at least “good” health.** This number is consistent with the health estimates issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC reports that residents in the D.C. metropolitan area are among the healthiest residents in the nation.<sup>4</sup>

Despite overall levels of good health, Figure 12 shows that non-white respondents were two to three times more likely to report having “fair” or “poor” health overall. While 13 percent of Latino residents and 11 percent of Asian residents reported having fair or poor health, only 4 percent of whites did. Blacks, of whom 9 percent reported being in fair or poor health, fell in the middle.

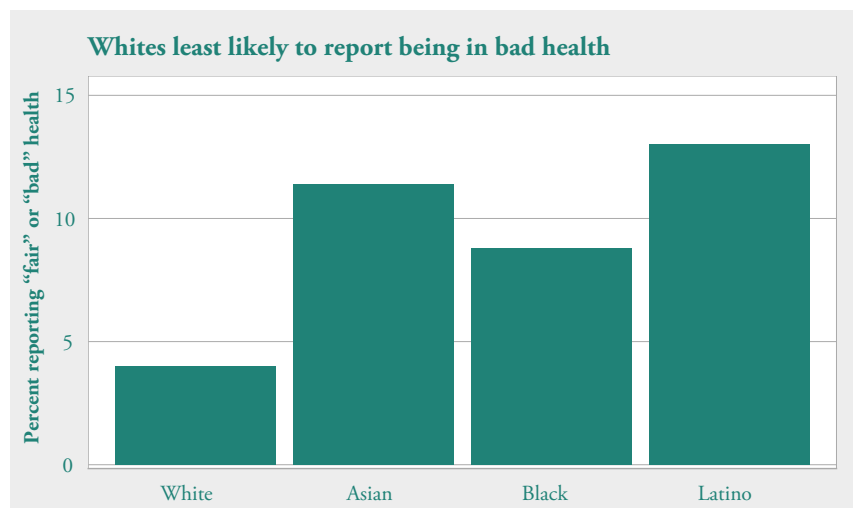


Figure 12: Percent of residents of quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods, by race, who report being in “fair” or “bad” health

<sup>4</sup> Chowdhury, Pranesh P. et al. 2016. “Surveillance for Certain Health Behaviors, Chronic Diseases, and Conditions, Access to Health Care, and Use of Preventive Health Services Among States and Selected Local Areas — Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, United States, 2012.” MMWR. Surveillance Summaries 65:1–142. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/ss/ss6504a1.htm>



Non-whites, however, were generally more optimistic than whites about their future health. **Approximately three-quarters of Latinos, Asians, and blacks anticipated that their health would improve in the next 5 years.** By comparison, only 60 percent of whites anticipated improvements to their health (possibly because they reported better health).

### Where do residents receive healthcare?

Not having a primary healthcare provider was correlated with income. **Nearly a quarter of residents who made less than \$30,000 did not have a primary healthcare provider.** By contrast, among the highest earners—those making \$150,000 or more—97 percent had a primary healthcare provider.

Lack of a primary healthcare provider seemed to correlate, in our study, with a higher number of emergency room (ER) visits (which generally cost more than going to a clinic or doctor’s office). **More than 17 percent of residents who made less than \$30,000 reported visiting the ER in the past 6 months compared to just 7 percent of those who made \$150,000 or more.** Figure 13 shows both the percentage of residents reporting that they went to the emergency room in the past 6 months and the percentage of residents who did not have a primary care provider. Among racial groups, Latinos were more than twice as likely as other racial groups to have visited the ER and about a third more likely not to have a primary care physician.

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Nearly a quarter of residents who made less than \$30,000 did not have a primary healthcare provider. By contrast, among the highest earners 97 percent had a primary healthcare provider.

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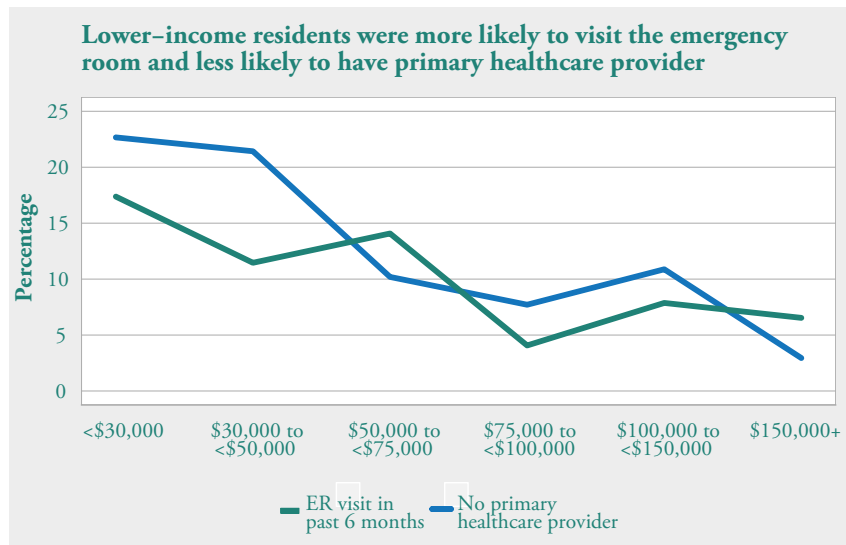


Figure 13: Percent of residents of quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods, by income, who reported visiting the emergency room in the past six months and who reported not having a primary healthcare provider

### *Summary*

Levels of health reported by residents in D.C.-area neighborhoods were among the highest in the nation. There were, however, racial differences in these self-reports of health. Latinos were the most likely to report having fair or poor health, though Asians and blacks were also more likely to do so than whites. On the other hand, people of color were more optimistic than whites that their health would improve. We also found evidence that income correlated with having a primary healthcare provider and emergency room visits: Poorer residents were less likely to have a primary healthcare provider and more likely to use the emergency room.

## Ethnic Relations

We asked respondents a number of questions about inter-group relations. We grouped the questions around several topics: the extent to which respondents have diverse social contacts; their social prejudice against individuals whose ethnicity is different from their own; and to what extent they think immigrants are represented in various local institutions. These questions have become central to the national political dialogue, and we wanted to investigate the degree to which residents of the D.C. area's diverse neighborhoods endorsed the various viewpoints expressed nationwide.

### *How much contact do residents have with immigrants and non-English speakers?*

As one might expect from sampling quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods, social contact with immigrants and non-English speakers was relatively high. More than half of respondents (62 percent) reported talking to “people who were not born in the United States, or whose parents are not from the United States” at least once a week. Only one in ten reported never having such contact with immigrants. Perhaps as important, non-immigrants reported similar levels of contact with immigrants as immigrants reported having with other immigrants. **Four out of every five residents interact with people who speak little to no English over the course of their “daily life.”** Only 3 percent reported never encountering people who speak little to no English. The level of daily contact was similar for those who completed the survey in English and those who completed it in Spanish.

### *What are the attitudes about racial diversity?*

To get a sense of intergroup prejudice, we asked respondents how “bothered” they

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Four out of every five residents interact with people who speak little to no English over the course of their daily life.

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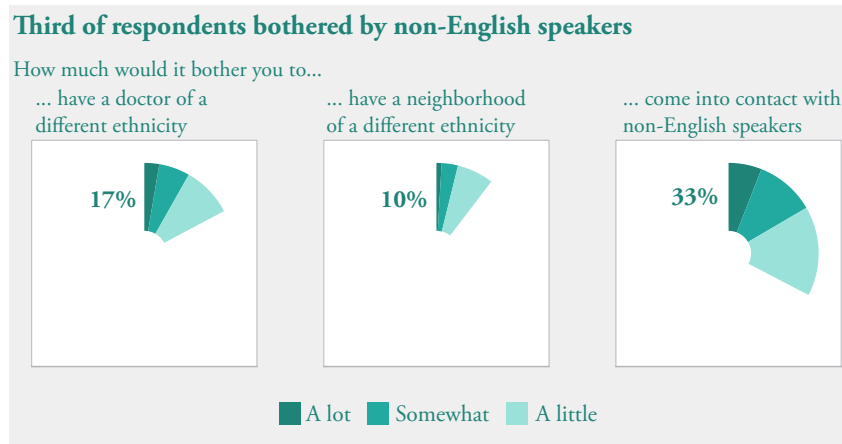


Figure 14: Percentage of residents reporting being bothered by different experiences with racial and linguistic diversity

A third of respondents claimed to be at least “somewhat” bothered by interacting with people who speak little to no English.

are (or would be) in three different situations: having a doctor whose ethnicity is different from their own; having a neighbor of a different ethnicity; and dealing in their daily lives with people who do not speak English well. Figure 14 (previous page) illustrates how respondents answered each.

In general, responses to these questions suggest there is very little overt prejudice. In particular, residents reported that they were willing to have a doctor or neighbor of a different race or ethnicity: Eighty-three percent of residents claimed not to be bothered at all by a doctor of a different ethnicity, and 90 percent of respondents claimed not to be bothered at all by a neighbor “different than your own ethnicity.” Respondents expressed greater dissatisfaction with non-English speakers: **A third claimed to be at least “somewhat” bothered by interacting with people who speak little to no English.**

We also asked the respondents whether they felt that different racial and ethnic groups in the United States agree or are divided on “important values.” Half of the respondents felt that racial groups sometimes agree and sometimes are divided on important values. Approximately equal numbers of residents thought that racial and ethnic groups “mostly agree” or are “divided” on important values. Black residents were slightly less likely to believe that racial groups agree on important values.

Roughly a quarter of the respondents leaned to either “agree” (27 percent) or “divided” (23 percent), but the most frequent response was the more ambivalent one: Sometimes they agree, and sometimes they are divided (49 percent). Figure 15 breaks this distribution down by respondents’ race. On average, blacks, more than other racial groups, reported that racial groups are “divided” on important issues.

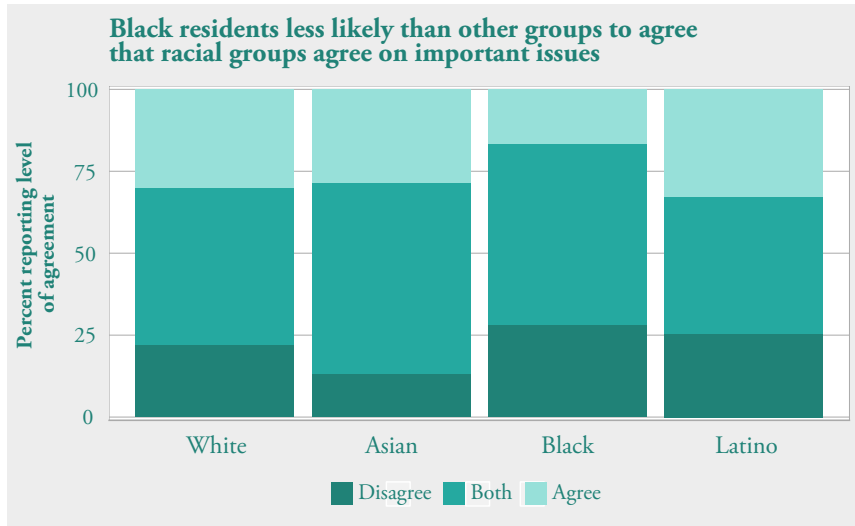


Figure 15: Percent of residents of quadrivial and Latino neighborhoods, by race, on whether racial groups agree, sometimes agree and sometimes disagree, or disagree on important issues

***How well do residents think that immigrants are represented in societal institutions?***

Finally, we asked our respondents for their views on immigrant representation at the local level. Specifically, we asked whether they felt that immigrants in the U.S. are over- or underrepresented in local government, in local neighborhood associations, in local police, in management of business, and as small business owners. Their responses are reported in the table below.

**Table 4. Residents’ opinions of representation in different areas of social life**

	Mgmt. of Businesses	Small business owners	Local govern- ment	Local n’hood associa- tions	Local police
<b>Too many</b>	12%	16%	8%	6%	4%
<b>About right</b>	46%	50%	39%	41%	38%
<b>Too few</b>	42%	34%	53%	53%	58%

Very few respondents believe that immigrants are overrepresented in any of the categories we queried. On the other hand, majorities reported underrepresentation in local government, in local neighborhood associations, and most of all in local police. They have a somewhat less critical view of immigrant representation in small business ownership and management; about half claimed that immigrants are represented at about the right level.

***Summary***

DCAS respondents experience a substantial degree of contact across ethnic and linguistic boundaries, as one would expect given the diversity of their local surroundings. Respondents reported low levels of prejudice, but were ambivalent about whether ethnic groups in the U.S. disagree or agree on major issues in an abstract sense. Our respondents do, however, favor increased immigrant representation in local politics and law enforcement.

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A majority of respondents reported that immigrants are underrepresented in local government, in local neighborhood associations, and most of all in local police.

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The most positive finding of the DCAS was that most residents—regardless of race—were highly satisfied with their neighborhoods.

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## Conclusions and Recommendations

The 2016 DCAS enabled us to examine how residents of diverse neighborhoods in the Greater Washington, D.C., area perceive their neighborhoods and quality of life questions of our time. Our findings shed light on the sentiments of residents and, we hope, will provide context for local stakeholders and policymakers who want to improve the lives of D.C.-area residents.

**1. Residents of diverse neighborhoods are satisfied with local institutions.** The most positive finding of the DCAS was that most residents—regardless of race—were highly satisfied with their neighborhoods. A majority of residents expressed satisfaction with their neighborhoods, and respondents nearly universally endorsed the idea that their own neighborhood was better than most others. A majority felt that local businesses and nonprofits served their needs, about half felt that local government served their needs, and a large majority of residents felt that the police were protecting them.

These findings reveal a sense of community pride among residents of D.C.'s most diverse neighborhoods. In a city that was wracked by riots nearly five decades ago fueled by intense stark racial segregation, our study finds that black, white, Latino, and Asian residents now live together with high levels of satisfaction. We believe that this demonstrates racial progress in the D.C. area over the past half century.

**2. Racial and economic groups face different threats to their well-being.** Although many of our findings suggest strong satisfaction with living in diverse communities and multiracial agreement on a number of issues, other findings reveal that different racial and ethnic groups living in diverse D.C.-area neighborhoods face different threats. Our findings point to several realms needing much more action from area stakeholders and policymakers. These are discussed below.

**Addressing inequality in fear of arrest.** Most notably, race exerts an extremely strong influence on the degree to which policing affects the lives of residents. Fear of arrest or of questioning by police—whether of oneself or of a loved one—affects a majority of blacks and Latinos in our sample.

These fears reflect national problems—not necessarily a distrust of local law enforcement. Indeed, a vast majority of blacks and Latinos in the D.C.-area neighborhoods think that police officers are keeping them safe in their neighborhoods. That said, local policymakers and stakeholders nevertheless need to understand the unequal toll that the fears take upon black and Latino residents and, to the degree possible, address those fears with new policies. Policymakers might consider, for example, policies that would a) reduce routine surveillance and enforcement of minor violations and b) create racially diverse groups to observe police policies, protocols, and actions.

**Addressing unequal fear of deportation.** Fear of deportation affects the lives of a majority of Latinos living in Latino neighborhoods and a large proportion of those who live in quadrivial neighborhoods. There are ways to reduce these fears. Local jurisdictions can resist using local police forces to enforce immigration laws. This could include a refusal to enforce detaining orders issued by Immigration and Customs Enforcement—a practice already in place in D.C., Montgomery County, and Prince George’s County. Local agencies, nonprofits, and community groups can devote special attention to the manner in which fear of deportation might affect other aspects of life. These efforts should be supported with more research—in particular, an examination of how the fear of deportation affects the lives of Latinos.

**Addressing disproportionate fear of crime by Latino residents.** Adding to the complexity of policies to ease tensions with police is the fact that Latino residents expressed a disproportionate fear of violent crime in their neighborhoods. Efforts to increase feelings of safety must, if they are to be successful, take into account the wariness of residents to law enforcement agencies.

**Addressing a perceived lack of nonprofit services.** The sentiment expressed by many low-income residents about nonprofit services—namely, that nonprofit organizations were not available to serve their needs—represents another disparity revealed by our analysis. Nonprofit organizations need to expand their outreach to diverse D.C.-area neighborhoods, particularly those in the suburbs where the problems associated with poverty receive less attention. It might also be important to develop strategies that identify low-income residents within relatively affluent neighborhoods rather than targeting neighborhoods based solely on the concentration of poverty.

### *What’s Next?*

These findings provide a glimpse into the quality of life of D.C.-area residents living in diverse neighborhoods. The findings provide statistical basis for determining what D.C.-area residents believe and experience in their daily lives.

We hope the findings prove helpful to policymakers, researchers, community groups, and residents alike. With additional funding support, we intend to continue surveying distinct types of D.C. neighborhoods to get a more complete understanding of all resident experiences and attitudes in different communities throughout the D.C. region and to be able to track how they change over time.

### *Conclusion*

The D.C. area has become much more diverse. Residents of D.C.’s most diverse neighborhoods are very satisfied with their neighborhoods. Nevertheless, local policy makers and community groups should address the profound fear that black and Latino residents have of law enforcement and the perceived lack of non-profit services among poor residents.

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Local policymakers and community groups should address the profound fear that black and Latino residents have of law enforcement and the perceived lack of non-profit services among poor residents.

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## Methodological Appendix

The 2016 DCAS was conducted by SSRS—a survey research firm based in Media, PA—and was fielded from March 9 to May 2, 2016. Packets were mailed to 9,600 households, with an equal number sent to quadrivial and disproportionately Latino neighborhoods. The packet included a cover letter written in English and Spanish, the survey (an English version only in quadrivial neighborhoods; English and Spanish versions in disproportionately Latino neighborhoods), a \$2 bill, and a postage-paid return envelope. A reminder letter written in English and Spanish was sent on March 24 with instructions on how to request another copy of the survey in case it had been misplaced.

### *Sample*

A stratified address-based sample was drawn with strata oversampling households with Asian surnames, households with Spanish surnames, and households in neighborhoods where blacks made up more than 25 percent of residents.

We received responses from 1,222 households: 674 from households in quadrivial neighborhoods and 548 from households in disproportionately Latino neighborhoods.

### *Weights*

Weights were created and applied to all analyses in this report. The base weight accounted for the probability of selection within strata and the probability of selection within households based on the respondent's report of the number of adults living in the household. Post-stratification weights were applied to make the sample representative of the population on known parameters.

## Margins of Error

Overall margins of error (95 percent confidence intervals) including design effects for the overall sample are  $\pm 4.04$  percent, for quadrivial neighborhoods are  $\pm 5.32$  percent, and for disproportionately Latino neighborhoods are  $\pm 6.05$  percent. The margins of error for specific analyses vary from these overall margins.



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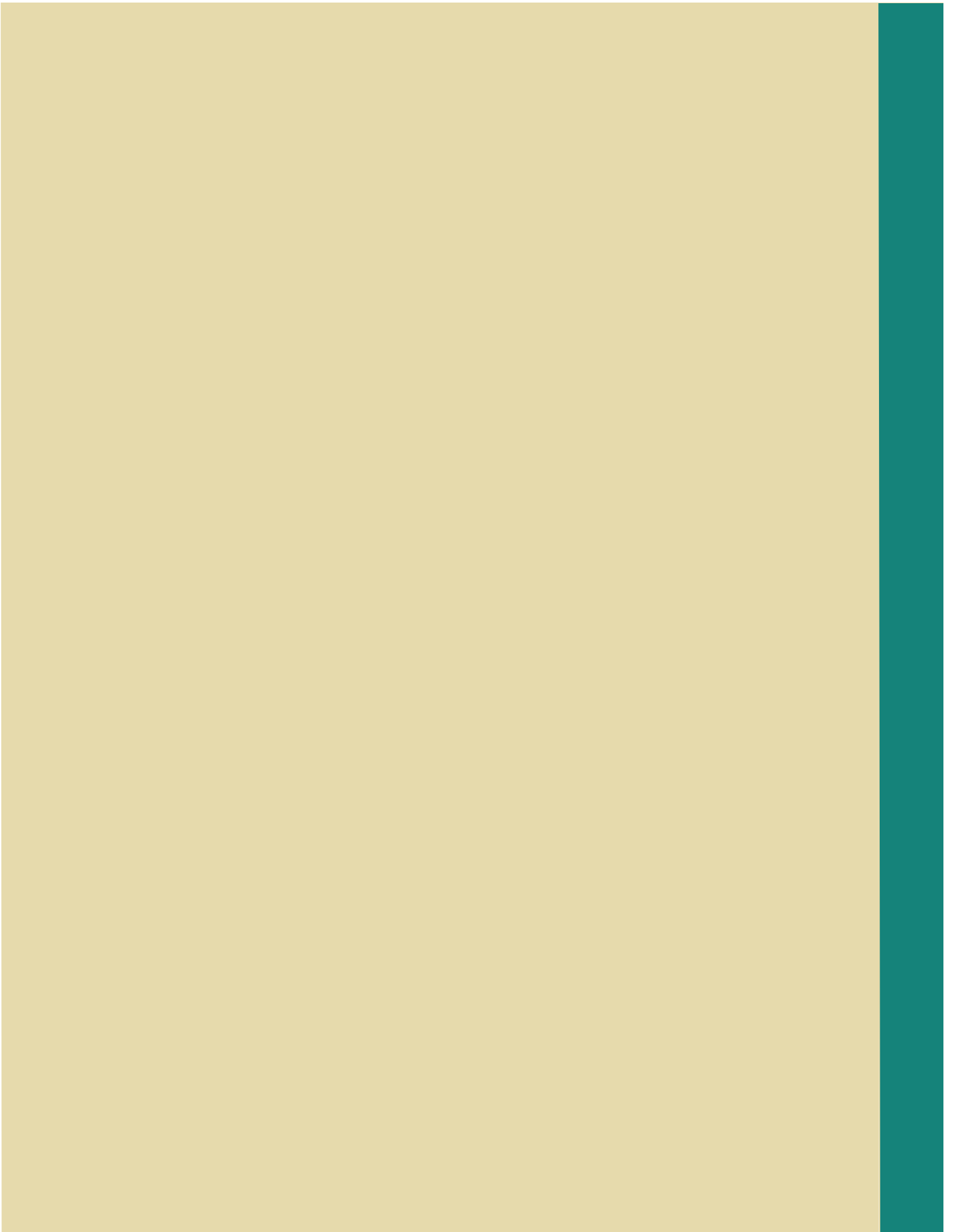
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