

Racial Inequities, Policy Solutions:

*Perceptions of Boston's Communities
of Color on Racism and Race Relations*



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March 2018

Dear Friends:

The Hyams Foundation is proud to have commissioned *Racial Inequities, Policy Solutions: Perceptions of Boston's Communities of Color on Racism and Race Relations*, a first-of-its-kind report highlighting the experiences and policy needs of people of color in the Greater Boston Area.

The study, conducted in November 2017 by The MassINC Polling Group, surveyed more than 900 Boston voters on a range of issues, from racism to education to criminal justice. Hyams commissioned the poll to help inform the numerous conversations around race happening in the city of late, as well as to provide the various sectors that comprise our community—including the business, government, philanthropic, and academic sectors—with invaluable insight into the inequalities experienced in our community—and the potential solutions that can create a better Boston for all.

The results of this study not only found significant variances in opinion between Black, Asian, Latino, and white voters in Boston, it also exposed differences related to age and gender that call for much deeper exploration. While the report is highly nuanced and signals the need for additional research, it did point to several high-level conclusions:

- The majority of Boston voters believe racism is a serious problem and agree that dialogues on race are sorely needed to improve race relations;
- Most voters believe it is difficult to afford living in the city; improvements to public transportation are largely viewed as key to helping improve economic mobility for Boston's residents;
- Boston voters of all races strongly agree that our children need access to quality education at an early age; and
- Respondents felt that our criminal justice system should provide more opportunities for the formerly incarcerated and explore options for restorative justice.

As you read this report and take in the rich, informative data it presents, keep in mind a few things. First, this is just a primer, an introduction to the work we're undertaking to better understand *how* racism and race relations are experienced, but also *what* solutions these communities value in addressing the problems we face. Second, we acknowledge that certain populations—such as Native Americans, the extremely poor, and undocumented residents—were not well represented in this study. We are actively looking at next steps for expanding this existing research and ensuring more diverse representation going forward.

As we continue to work side-by-side with our partners and the Greater Boston community to eradicate racism and injustice, we hope you will join us and become an agent for equality. As you know, conversations around race and racial equity are happening throughout the city and we need your active participation and input to ensure that we move towards the just, equitable, and prosperous Boston all of us envision for ourselves and our loved ones.

Thank you for taking the time to read this study. I hope you will reach out to the Foundation with your thoughts and questions and we look forward to continuing this dialogue with you. In the coming weeks, we will be planning a community conversation about this report and its findings to hear feedback. If you are interested in participating in this conversation, or if you have specific feedback to provide, please email info@hyamsfoundation.org. As always, your thoughts and feedback are important and will help inform how we move our work forward in the future.

Sincerely,



Jocelyn V. Sargent
Executive Director

The Hyams Foundation, Inc.

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We at The MassINC Polling Group gratefully acknowledge the support of The Hyams Foundation, without whom this project would not have been possible. We also recognize the many people who provided feedback in forming the questionnaire to explore these complex issues.

The interpretation and conclusions in this document are the product of The MassINC Polling Group.

Executive Summary

Boston is a changing city. The city's economy is booming, as thickets of cranes pull the skyline upward. Its population is also growing and becoming more diverse. But despite the growing demographic and political clout of communities of color in Boston, our collective understanding of the views, opinions, and experiences of our city's residents leaves much to be desired.

Our ability to examine the nuances of our city's diversity is hampered by how surveys are often conducted. Most surveys tend to focus on representative samples of the population being surveyed, which means groups that make up relatively smaller portions of the population often cannot be analyzed separately. Practically, this means Boston's communities of color are often grouped together as "non-white" in survey results, or we are left relying on a very small number of respondents in each group on which to base our understanding. As a result, our understanding of many of our city's racial and ethnic groups is imprecise and often anecdotal.

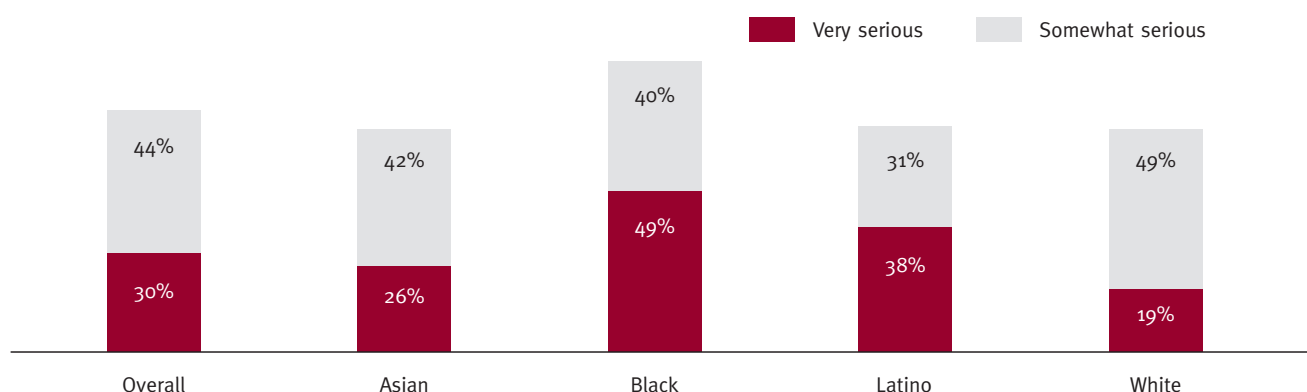
As the first step towards addressing this problem, the Hyams Foundation, Inc. commissioned The MassINC Poll-

ing Group (MPG) to survey Boston voters in a different way. Rather than stopping with only a representative sample of the city's voters, MPG conducted additional interviews with Black, Latino, and Asian voters to have enough interviews from each group to study differences in opinion and experiences between these groups and look within each group by gender, age, and other key demographics.

The result of this effort is a groundbreaking examination of the views of voters in Boston's communities of color on a host of key issues facing the city: racism and race relations, economic opportunity, education, and criminal justice. The poll finds much common ground: widespread agreement about the major problems facing the city and about many proposed solutions. But there are also key differences in opinion between voters of different races within the city. Further, while most polls of Boston only break down one demographic at a time (gender, age, or race), oversampling allowed us to find differences between demographics within racial groupings (i.e., Black men and Black women, older Latinos vs younger Latinos, etc).

FIGURE 1: Perceptions of how serious a problem racism is in the city of Boston

Q: How serious of a problem do you think racism is in the city of Boston?



Racism and Race Relations

Three-quarters of voters think racism is still a serious problem in Boston, but there are differences of opinion as to how serious a problem it is (Figure 1). Across all racial groupings, women are more concerned about racism than men, and younger voters were more concerned than their elders. There are also differences between voters of different races as to the direction Boston is headed with regard to race relations. White voters are somewhat more likely to say race relations are getting better (51 percent) than worse (21 percent). Black and Latino voters are about equally divided as to whether things are getting better or worse. There is one area of common ground: majorities across all groups think that public dialogues could help improve race relations.

Economic Opportunity

Boston's economic tide is not lifting all voters. Just 53 percent agree they have benefited from the city's boom (42 percent disagree). At the same time, 80 percent of voters agree that it's getting harder for them to afford living in the city. The cost of housing was the top issue facing the city as identified by respondents. It was also a major issue in WBUR polling MPG conducted during the 2017 mayoral campaign.

Majorities of Black (66 percent), Latino (55 percent) and Asian voters (63 percent) strongly agree that it is getting harder to afford to live in Boston. Just under half of white voters (46 percent) feel the same. Across all races, younger Bostonians are feeling more economic strain.

Voters are divided as to whether every Bostonian has an equal opportunity to get ahead. Latinos and Asian are most optimistic about the idea of equal opportunity, with roughly six-in-ten in each group seeing equal opportunity. White voters are split, with roughly half agreeing. Just 39 percent of Black voters see an equal shot at success for all residents.

There is broad agreement on some potential solutions for these perceived disparities in opportunity. Majorities of voters think that improving the MBTA, building more housing, and pairing businesses with schools to train students for jobs would be very effective at improving economic opportunity. Giving companies tax breaks to move to Boston was less favored. Only 27 percent thought that would be very effective.

Apart from improving the MBTA, non-white voters were more enthusiastic than white voters about all of the proposed policy options. There were particularly wide differences in the perceived effectiveness of giving preference to minority-owned businesses for city contracts.

Education

Overall, 36 percent of voters give Boston's public district and charter schools an A or B; another 34 percent give them a C. Only 27 percent think the public schools have improved over the past five years; another 38 percent think they have stayed the same.

About the Poll

These results are based on a survey of 913 registered voters in the city of Boston, Massachusetts. The poll was conducted November 13-21, 2017. Interviews were conducted online and by live telephone interviewers via both landline and cell phone.

Oversamples were conducted of Black, Latino, and Asian American voters in the city. These oversamples were then weighted to ensure the final weighted results matched the overall demographics of registered voters in the city based on known population parameters.

The margin of sampling error for the full sample is +/- 4.4 percentage points with a 95 percent level of confidence. The poll was commissioned by the Hyams Foundation.

Latino voters, who are also the group in the poll most likely to have children in the public schools, give the schools the best marks. White voters, who are least likely to have children in the schools, are least likely to offer any opinion at all of Boston's public schools.

Majorities overall and across every racial grouping think that investment—in the schools overall (60 percent), in vocational/technical education (62 percent), and in early childhood education (62 percent)—would be very effective at improving the schools.

On other issues, there is more divergence of opinion between voters of different races. Two-thirds of Black and Latino voters think hiring more diverse teachers would be very effective, compared to 41 percent of white voters and 48 percent of Asian voters.

Criminal Justice

While 64 percent of voters have confidence in the state's criminal justice system, only 52 percent think Boston's police treat Blacks and Latinos fairly. Even fewer (45 percent) think the courts in Boston treat Black and Latino defendants fairly. Only 36 percent feel very safe in their own neighborhood.

White, Latino, and Asian voters are mostly aligned on these questions, although white voters are much more likely to feel very safe in their neighborhood. On the other hand, only 16 percent of Black voters in the city feel very safe in their own neighborhood. Black voters also express different views of the criminal justice system. Just 27 percent say Black and Latino defendants are treated equally by Boston courts. Black women are particularly concerned; 59 percent of Black women say they do not have confidence in the state's criminal justice system. About the same number of Black women (60 percent) think that Boston police treat Black and Latino residents unfairly.

Black voters may be more concerned about criminal justice issues, but there is broad agreement across voters of different races about potential solutions to improve criminal justice in Boston. The top policy options involved working with teens to keep them in school and away from gangs (72 percent "very effective"), education and job training for inmates before their release (64 percent), and community policing (63 percent). A majority overall (58 percent) think body cameras on police would be very effective. More than two-thirds of Black and Latino voters think body cameras would be very effective at improving the criminal justice system in the city.

Next Steps

This survey is only a first step towards a more complete view of public opinion in Boston. As a survey of registered voters, this poll did not reach residents not currently registered to vote. Non-citizen residents, who comprise much of the city's recent population boom, are not included. Also excluded are young people who have not yet registered to vote, and others who are not registered for various reasons. Both here and elsewhere, registered voters overall also tend to be whiter and more affluent than all residents.

Although this survey took extra steps to hear from Black, Latino, and Asian voters, surveying smaller race and ethnic groups remains a challenge. Sampling smaller populations, such as Native Americans, would require additional methodological steps or other methods. There are also challenges of interpretation. We saw evidence in this survey of well-documented differences in response patterns among respondents of different demographics.

For these reasons, a future poll of all Boston residents, conducted in multiple languages and adjusted for differences in response style, is a proposed next step in this research.

Introduction

Boston is in the midst of a decades-long population shift. In the 1970s, Boston was 70 percent white. By the 2000 Census, Boston was a “majority-minority” city for the first time. By 2010, the non-white population had grown to 53 percent. It is still growing; the latest figures show communities of color are now 55 percent of Boston residents. Not only are people of color now the majority in Boston, but data from the Census Bureau shows that neighborhoods across the city are becoming more diverse.

As the city undergoes these major changes, our understanding of our own city’s residents’ views and opinions remains limited in important ways. Public opinion surveys can be a valuable tool for nonprofits, policy makers, and others looking to understand the public’s mood and preferences on key issues. But most surveys of Boston miss a key reality of life here.

Despite growing demographic and political clout, communities of color in Boston tend to be grouped together as “non-white” in public opinion surveys. Even though they collectively comprise a majority of residents, Black, Latino, Asian and Native American residents are each individually small enough that a representative sample will typically not interview enough from each group to allow for their responses to be disaggregated and analyzed in meaningful ways.

According to the census, Black non-Hispanic individuals comprise 24 percent of the city’s population, Latinos 20 percent and Asians only 10 percent. Among voters, these percentages are lower still. As a result, important perspectives of and differences between these groups can be missed by opinion polls focused on representing the population as a whole. *Boston Globe* columnist Shirley Leung recently took her own paper’s poll to task for excluding analysis of

Asian Americans. In 2015, her colleague Marcela Garcia noted a similar shortcoming in polls (many of them ours) about the proposed Boston 2024 Olympics.

For a field built on the concept of random sampling, these parameters present a unique challenge. Sampling randomly, a researcher would need to successfully interview more than 1,250 Bostonians to reach 300 Black respondents, and even more to find a similar sample of Latino and Asian respondents. The smaller the population, the more difficult it is to obtain a representative sample. For particularly small groups, including Native Americans in Boston, the challenge is still greater. *The Washington Post* conducted a survey of Native Americans nationwide in 2015-16 by asking Native American respondents they encountered in their other national surveys a series of additional questions. That effort took 5 months to reach 500 respondents.

This survey is a major step forward in filling the gaps in our understanding. The Hyams Foundation, Inc. commissioned MPG to survey Boston voters. MPG sampled from each of 4 different groups of voters—white, Black, Latino, and Asian. The results were then weighted separately according to each race’s unique distribution of age and gender and then to match the demographics of registered voters for the city as a whole. In all, the survey reached 306 white voters, 269 Black voters, 246 Latino voters, and 92 Asian voters. A key goal of an anticipated follow-up survey of all residents is to further expand the number of Asian respondents that participate.

Another key tenet of survey research is working toward the goal of each respondent understanding the question and available answers the same way. Decades of empirical research show that there are cultural differences in

how respondents use the answer categories presented to them. For example, in the United States, Latino survey respondents tend to give more certain answers than white respondents, and first-generation Chinese and Japanese respondents tend to gravitate towards the middle of response scales. Parsing what part of survey responses are due to these cultural differences and which are due to actual differences in opinion or experience is a challenge of cross-cultural research.

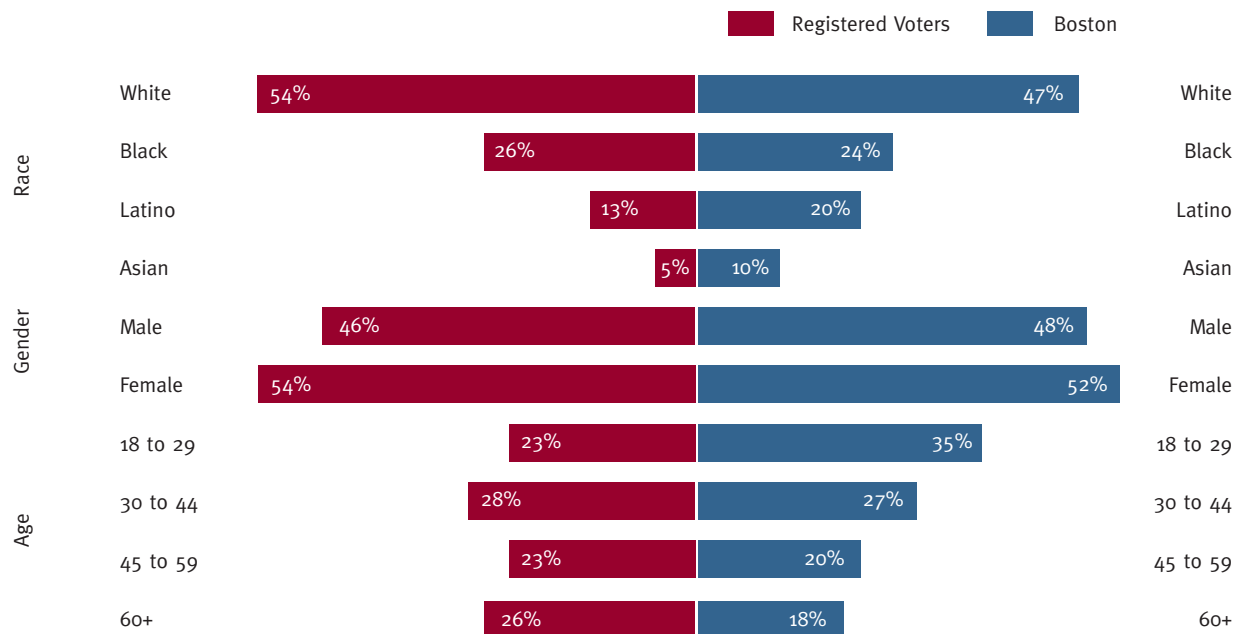
The survey examined voters' views on a host of key issues, from race relations and economic opportunity to education and criminal justice. While race, as a standalone issue, is not top of mind for any specific group of voters, the effects of race and racism pervade the answers throughout the survey. While many say they have benefited from Boston's economic boom, even more feel they are being squeezed by rising costs. Voters cite housing costs, education, and public safety as their top concerns. Black voters

are particularly pessimistic about whether all Boston residents have an equal chance to succeed, and about the city's criminal justice system. There is more consensus between races on policies likely to address economic opportunity, improve education and criminal justice, but even here there are sharp divides on some controversial topics.

This survey is a first step towards a more inclusive look at public opinion in Boston, but far more work remains. This survey focuses on registered voters, which still leaves out a portion of the city. About seven-in-ten Boston adults are registered to vote, and those who are registered are disproportionately white and affluent. Among those who are not registered or ineligible to vote are newer immigrants, including some of the city's most vulnerable residents. Shorter-term residents, younger people, and lower-income residents are also less likely to be registered to vote. There are likely major differences in life experience and opinion between residents who were born in America or have been

FIGURE 2: Boston registered voters compared to the city population

Comparison of the voter file to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates

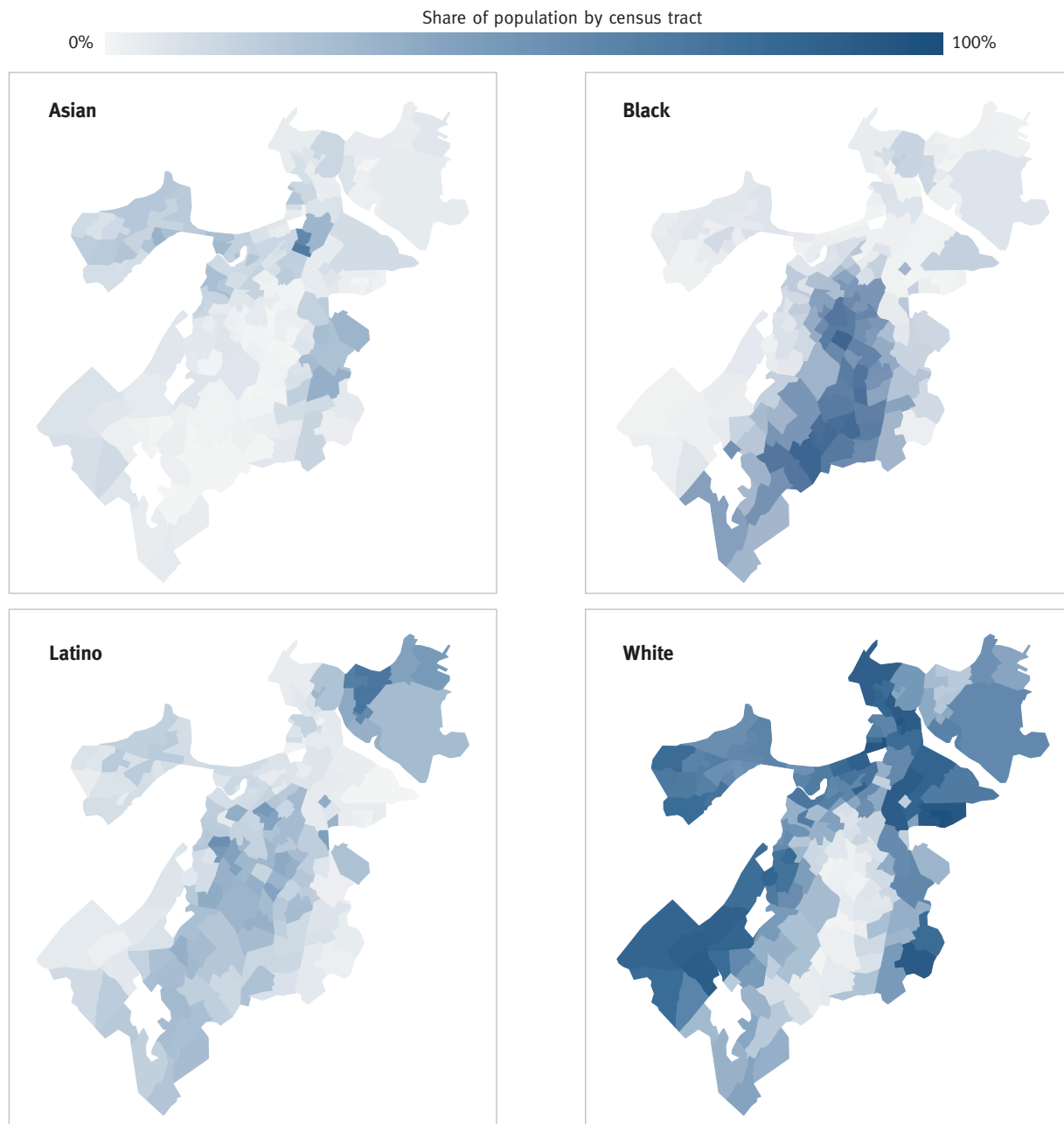


here long enough to be naturalized citizens, and more recent arrivals from whom we did not hear in this survey. See Appendix C for more on these demographic differences.

For these reasons, a future poll of all Boston residents, conducted in multiple languages and adjusted for differences in response style, is a proposed next step in this research.

FIGURE 3: Boston's neighborhoods show the city's diversity

Share of population by race and census tract ACS 2016, 5 year estimates



I. Racism and Race Relations

A recent *Boston Globe* series began from a simple but provocative question: Is Boston a racist city? The paper found that, across a variety of aspects of life in the city, race is still a major factor.

This survey in large part confirms that reporting. Not only do Boston voters think race relations are still a problem in the city, but responses to many other questions split along lines of race in ways that suggest voters of different races have very different experiences and opinions about everyday life in Boston.

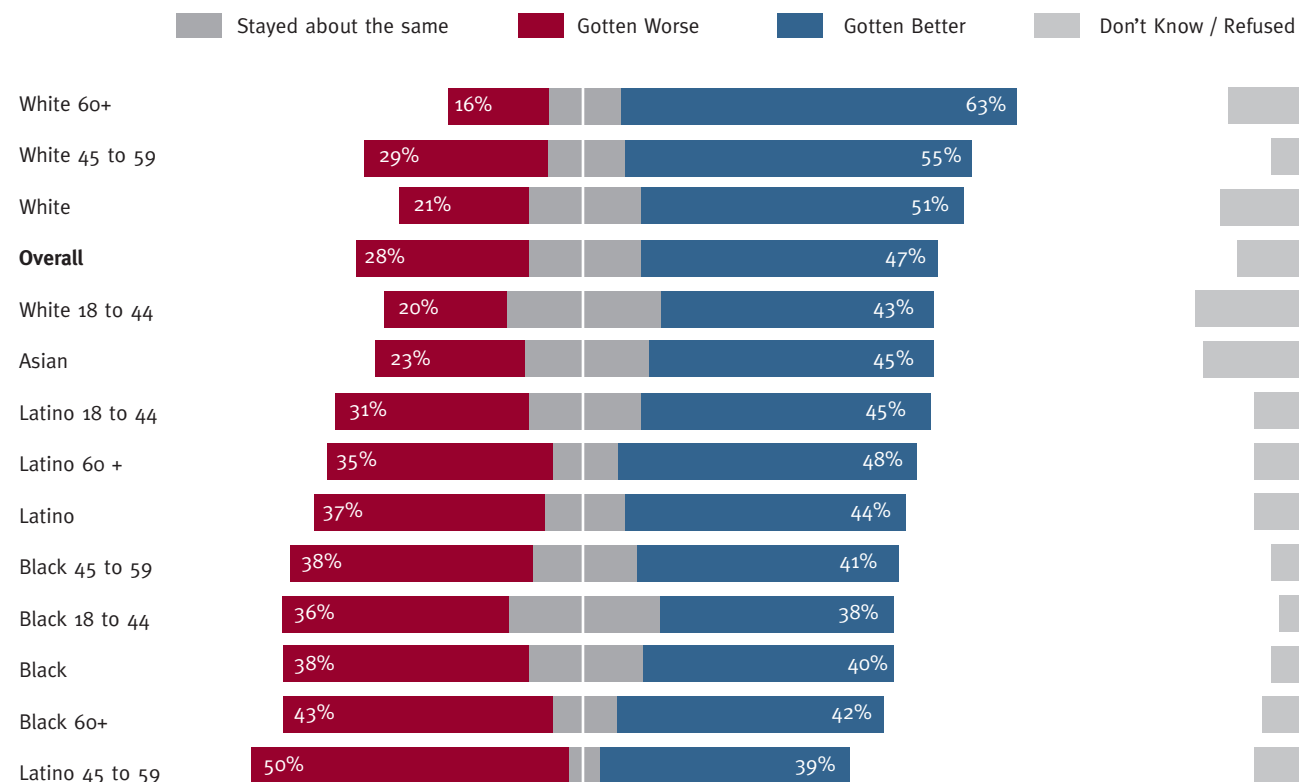
Overall, 74 percent of Boston voters think racism is at least

a “somewhat serious” problem in Boston; 30 percent call it a “very serious” problem (Figure 1). But there are sharp divides on this question between voters of different races. Nearly half of Black voters (49 percent) think racism is a very serious problem, far more than the 19 percent of white voters who think the same. Latino (38 percent) and Asian (26 percent) voters fall in between.

There are also divides based on other demographics. Women of all races were more likely than men to rate racism as a very serious problem in the city. Age is also a factor. Black and Latino voters under 60 years old were more likely to view racism as very or somewhat serious than their older

FIGURE 4: Perceptions of progress on race relations

Q: Would you say race relations in Boston have gotten better or worse in the last ten years?



Race Matters

Demographic factors like race, gender, age, education and income are interrelated. Neighborhood also plays a role. Like any urban area, Boston's residents of color are not uniformly distributed across the city (Figure 3). White voters tend to be older and have higher levels of education and income than Black and Latino voters. These overlaps can make it harder to know which factors are driving differences in opinion: Do white and Black voters answer differently because of their race alone, or because of some combination of other factors?

To answer this question, we ran additional statistical analysis on several key questions in the survey*. We found that race alone is a major factor on many questions, but that other demographics have sway on some as well.

Black voters were significantly more likely than white voters to think that racism is a "very" or "somewhat serious" problem in Boston, even after controlling for other demographics. All other factors being equal, voters with higher education levels were also more likely to think racism is a problem, while older and higher-income voters were less likely to be concerned. These patterns are apparent on the question of whether race relations have improved in the city: Black voters are less likely than white voters to think they have, while voters over age 60 and with high incomes believe that relations have improved.

Black voters are also less likely than white voters to say they have benefited from Boston's economic boom, after controlling for income and other demographics. On this question, there are significant differences within races by gender and education level. Black women are more likely than Black men to say they have benefited, even when controlling for education and income. White voters with higher education are more likely to say they have benefited, but there was no such positive relationship among Black voters. If anything, higher-educated Black voters were slightly less likely to say they had benefited economically.

**For a more detailed explanation of these statistical tests and results, please see the appendix at the end of this report.*

counterparts. History may account for some of this. Older voters have living memory of busing and other major flash-points in Boston's history of race relations. Younger voters may also have a lower tolerance for bias than their elders.

Voters are more divided as to whether the city is making progress on race relations (Figure 4). Overall, less than half (47 percent) believe race relations in Boston have gotten better over the last 10 years. Nearly as many think they have gotten worse (28 percent) or stayed about the same (17 percent). So while a plurality think race relations are improving, there is no clear consensus among voters.

Voters are split by age and race on this question. About half (51 percent) of white voters think race relations have gotten better, a result driven by older white voters. Only 43 percent of younger white voters (under age 45) think race relations have improved, compared to 55 percent between age 45 and 59 and 63 percent of those over 60. Again, history may be a factor here: Older white voters may feel Boston has moved on from the outright hostility of the 1970s, while younger white voters may lack that frame of reference or have higher expectations of progress.

There is no such generational disagreement among Black voters. Overall, Black voters are split nearly evenly on whether race relations have gotten better (40 percent) or worse (38 percent). That split holds across all age groups, although Black voters under age 45 are more likely to say relations have stayed stable. Still, given that 52 percent of these younger Black voters think racism is a "very serious" problem, stability is not a good finding.

Latino voters are slightly more likely to believe race relations have gotten better (44 percent) than they are to say they got worse (37 percent). But Latinos between age 45 and 59 are the group most likely to think relations have gotten worse (50 percent).

Black and Latino voters are also substantially split by gender on the improvements in race relations. Half of Black men think race relations have gotten better over the past 10 years, while half of Black women believe they have gotten worse. A similar pattern holds with Latinos, with 54 percent of Latino males saying that race relations had improved, and nearly 50 percent of Latino women saying that they had gotten worse.

Opinion among Asian American voters on this question was closer to the dynamic observed among white voters, as it was on many questions throughout the survey. The reasons for this are one of the many findings of this survey that bear further exploration. As Shirley Leung observed in a recent *Boston Globe* column, opinions among Asian Americans often go unreported in surveys. As a result, we have less of an accumulated body of knowledge of Asian American opinion for monitoring trends and patterns, complicating the task of interpreting this survey.

Taken as a whole, these results suggest that the experience of race relations in Boston varies not only by race, but by age and gender as well. A young Black woman's experience in Boston differs not only from the experience of a young Black man, but also from the experience of an older Black woman. This is also true for Latino voters. The search for solutions to help improve race relations must begin by considering these differing experiences.

The fact that six of the 13 members of the Boston City Council are now younger women of color means that body will have a very different point of view as it tackles this problem and others related to it. At the same time, the differing views and opinions by gender and age noted above suggest even more could be done to represent the diverse experiences of race in Boston city government.

Boston voters: Let's get together and talk

Boston voters are experiencing racism and progress on race relations differently. But majorities of voters across all groups agree it is worth talking about the problem. In all, 63 percent believe a series of dialogues about the state of race relations in the city would advance race relations "a great deal" or "a fair amount".

Q: Non-profit leaders have proposed holding a series of public dialogues about the state of race relations in the city of Boston. How much would these kinds of dialogues help to advance race relations?

	Overall	Asian	Black	Latino	White
A great deal	20%	15%	21%	28%	19%
A fair amount	43%	47%	46%	39%	42%
Total helpful	63%	62%	67%	67%	61%
Not very much	25%	16%	24%	22%	27%
Not at all	6%	10%	6%	8%	5%
<i>Don't Know/Refused</i>	6%	12%	2%	3%	8%

II. Economic Opportunity

Boston is a booming city, but economic data suggests that not all residents are feeling the benefits. A report by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, cited in the *Globe* series, found that the median net worth of Black Bostonians is only \$8, compared to nearly \$250,000 for white residents. The *Globe* also found that on other economic statistics — unemployment and Black representation in management positions — little or no progress has been made since 1983. The issue is not solely one of race. A 2016 Brookings Institution report found that Boston had the worst income inequality of any large city in the country.

These statistical realities are reflected in the survey results, which show that a large share of voters across Boston are feeling more pain than benefit from the economic boom. Four out of five voters agree that it is getting harder for them

to afford living in Boston, compared to 53 percent who say they have benefited from the city's economic growth over the last few years. Only 17 percent strongly agree they have benefited. When asked to name the top issue facing the city, 24 percent cited the high cost of housing — the top response given.

As with the previous question about progress on race relations, a bare majority seeing economic gains is not a figure to be celebrated, especially when contrasted with the larger share who are feeling the squeeze from higher costs. These pressures are being felt across voters of different races, but they are particularly acute among non-white voters. A majority overall and across racial groupings *strongly* agree that it is getting harder to afford living in Boston, including two-thirds of Black voters and 63 percent of

Housing costs, crime are top issues facing city

Racism is clearly an issue that seeps into all aspects of life for people of color, but it was not cited as a top concern facing Boston by any group. When asked to name the most important couple of issues facing the city, a quarter (24 percent) named the cost of housing. This is consistent with recent public polling from the Boston mayoral election. The next closest issue was crime and public safety, which was cited by 17 percent of voters.

There were notable variations in how concerned various groups were about each. White voters were less likely to cite either issue than other groups. Black voters were much more concerned about housing and crime than white voters, but less worried about education. Latino voters were the group most concerned about crime, while Asian voters were most likely to point to housing costs.

Q: In your own words, what is the single biggest issue facing the city of Boston right now?

	Overall	Asian	Black	Latino	White
Housing costs	24%	34%	30%	16%	21%
Crime/public safety	17%	18%	22%	27%	10%
Other (specify)	11%	16%	11%	9%	11%
Public Education	8%	3%	4%	5%	12%

Asian voters. Layering age over gender provides further depth: 75 percent of Black voters under age 45 strongly agree Boston is becoming unaffordable to them. Only 4 percent among that same group strongly agree they have benefited from Boston's recent economic success.

With gaps like that, it is perhaps not surprising that Black voters question how level the playing field is when it comes to economic opportunity in Boston. Six-in-ten Black voters disagree that every Boston resident has an equal opportunity to get ahead. It is more surprising that voters overall, and white voters, are also split on this question. Among white voters, just half see equal opportunity. Latino and Asian voters are more likely to say all residents

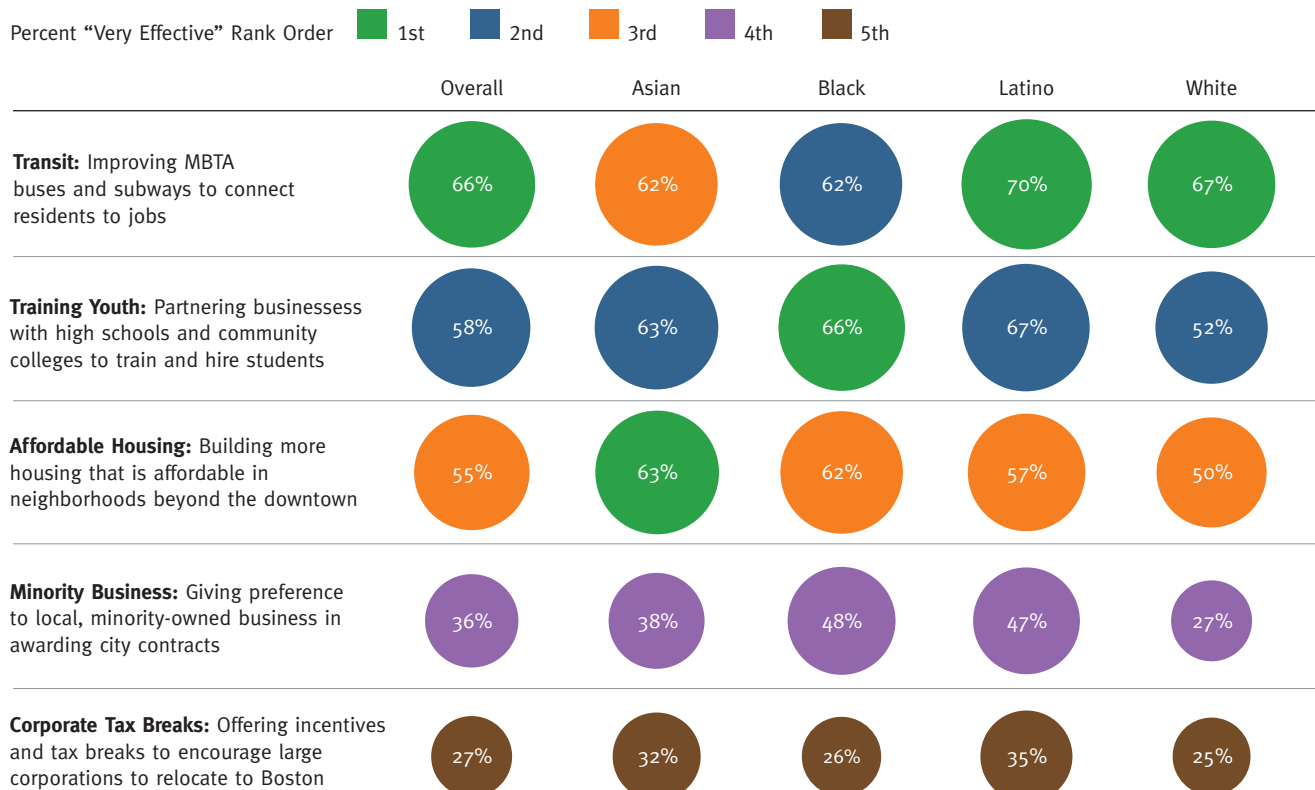
have a fair shot at success.

One of the troubling findings of the *Globe* series concerned the difficulty that young, educated Black Bostonians have breaking into the middle and professional classes of the city. These survey results shed some light on their struggles. Three-quarters of Black voters with a college degree or higher do not think all Bostonians have an equal opportunity to get ahead. These Black college graduates are also split on whether they personally have benefited from the city's recent economic gains. For a city that prides itself on its institutions of higher education, these findings suggest the city is leaving a significant segment of college graduates behind after they get their diplomas.

FIGURE 5: Proposals to spread economic opportunity

Q: Here are several ideas for economic development in the City of Boston. Please tell me how effective you think each one would be at improving economic opportunity for your family and friends.

Items were asked separately; voters did not rank them against each other.



In the face of these sobering numbers, what do voters think can be done to improve opportunity? Majorities across all groups thought that three strategies would be “very effective” at improving economic opportunity for their family and friends: improving the MBTA system (66 percent), connecting high schools and community colleges to businesses to train future workers (58 percent), and building more housing (55 percent). Fixing the T was considered “very effective” by a majority across every demographic and opinion group analyzed, including gender, race, age, political party, homeownership, education, income, and neighborhood of the city.

On the other end of the spectrum, offering corporations tax breaks to relocate to Boston was seen as very effective by only 27 percent overall, although two-thirds considered it at least somewhat effective. Giving minority-owned business preference in city contracts was the most polarizing option, with nearly half of Black and Latino voters rating it very effective compared to only 27 percent of white voters. This difference may be driven by the question wording, which asked about impacts on one’s family and friends. But even among Black and Latino voters, this idea was not considered as effective as broader investments in transit, housing and education.

III. Education

Enrollment in Boston’s public and charter schools highlights the changing face of the city, as well as its social and economic divides. According to statistics from Boston Public Schools, 42 percent of students at district public schools are Latino, and 35 percent are Black. Only 14 percent are white. Among students not attending a district public school, 45 percent are white and 35 percent are Black. These students are attending charter schools, parochial schools, private schools, or suburban public schools through the METCO program.

These figures provide important context for the survey findings on education. For one, Black and Latino voters are more likely to have a child in the schools, consistent with these enrollment figures. These statistics may also help explain why an unusually large number of white voters offered no opinion on many of the education questions — fewer have direct experience with the schools.

The assessments of white voters who did offer an opinion about the schools are about in line with those of other voters (Figure 6). Overall, a little more than a third give the K-12 public and charters schools in the city an A or a B; and another third give them a C. Among parents with kids in school, 44 percent give them an A or B. This is due, in part, to fewer parents answering “don’t know” to the question. But even accounting for that, parents seem have more positive views of the schools than non-parents. This is consistent with other polling we have conducted, which has found that parents tend to have more positive views of the schools in their communities than non-parents, both in Boston and elsewhere in Massachusetts.

This dynamic may also help explain why Latino voters, who comprise the largest share of public school parents, offer the most favorable rating of the schools. A majority of Latinos give the school either an A (21 percent) or a B (34 percent). Latino women and older Latinos are even more positive about

FIGURE 6: Ratings for Boston schools

Q: What grade would you give the K-12 public schools in Boston, including district schools and the public charter schools?

	Overall	Asian	Black	Latino	White
A	9%	8%	10%	21%	6%
B	27%	30%	26%	34%	26%
A/B	36%	38%	36%	55%	32%
C	34%	38%	41%	27%	32%
D	9%	10%	10%	6%	9%
F	3%	3%	4%	2%	2%
Don't Know/Refused	18%	10%	9%	10%	25%

the schools. This may also be an example of the phenomenon, documented by opinion research literature and mentioned in the introduction, of Latino voters tending to give answers towards the more positive end of response scales.

Latino voters are also the group most likely to say that the schools have improved in recent years. A majority (54 percent) of Latinos think the school have gotten better, twice the share of all voters who think the same (27 percent). Overall, 38 percent think that the schools have stayed the same over the last 5 years, and 17 percent think they have gotten worse. An equal 17 percent were unsure, almost entirely white voters. More than half of Black voters (55 percent) and three-quarters of Asian voters (74 percent) thought the schools had neither gotten better or worse.

Voters do not see the public schools as in crisis, but they certainly see room for improvement. And right now, few see that improvement happening.

As far as kick-starting an improvement in the schools, voters think that investments — overall, and in early and vocational/technical education — would be most effective (Figure 7). And Black and Latino voters, who are more likely to have children in the schools, are the groups most likely to think these investments would be effective.

The most popular ideas are expanding early childhood education (62 percent very effective), investing more in technical and vocational education (62 percent), and increasing funding for BPS generally (60 percent). These are the top three ideas across all four groups, albeit with a slightly different rank order.

Still, there was significant variation in enthusiasm for the various policy proposals. Black and Latino voters are consistently more likely to rate ideas as “very effective” than are white and Asian voters. These gaps are most apparent on the less popular policies. There is a 20-point gap between groups on making school curriculum more culturally relevant to students’ background, and an even larger gap on expanding charter school enrollment.

Only a quarter of white voters think expanding charters would be very effective at improving education. This divide highlights a dynamic that emerged around the charter school ballot question in 2016. During that campaign, white voters turned sharply against the proposed charter school expansion, and many took a more negative view of charters as a concept. This shift in opinion is likely not exclusively due to the campaign—the national political environment has also become polarized on a number of education issues. Even so, the change in support for charter schools among

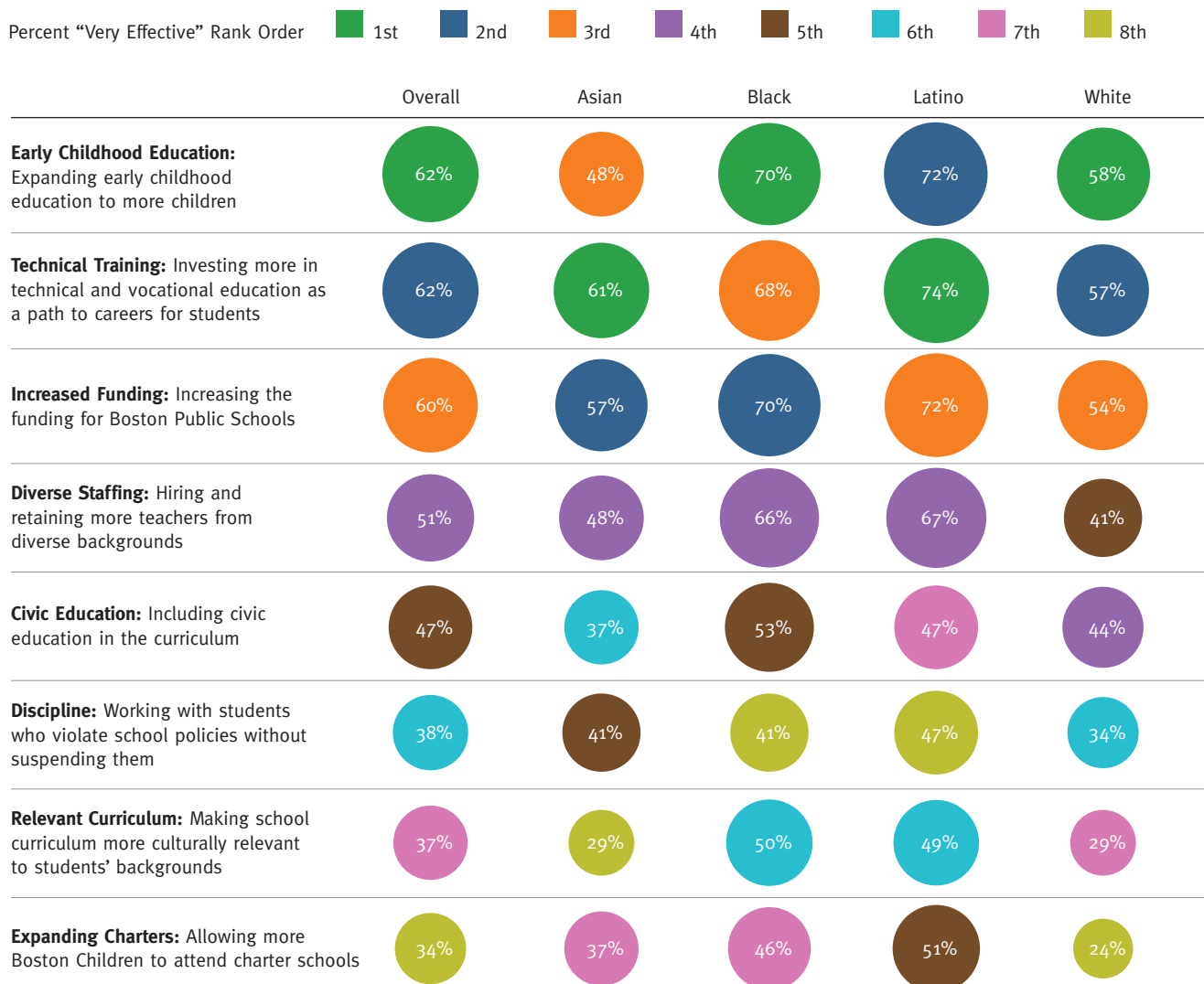
white voters during the 2016 cycle was fairly remarkable. Non-white voters, meanwhile, have been consistently more likely to support charter schools in past polling. This poll suggests this remains the case today.

Parents of children in the schools were slightly more likely to rate each of the ideas tested as “very effective,” with the

exception of making the curriculum more culturally relevant. Looking at differences between parents and non-parents within each group does not reveal clear patterns, which suggests that race may be playing more of a role in this opinion dynamic than whether voters have kids in the schools.

FIGURE 7: Proposed ideas to improve local public schools

Q: Please tell me how effective you think each one would be in improving the public schools in your neighborhood. Items were asked separately; voters did not rank them against each other.



IV. Criminal Justice

Perhaps no other issue has so starkly and urgently brought forward the current national conversation about race than criminal justice and policing. Boston has had a checkered past on policing issues. From 1973 to 2004 the BPD operated under a consent decree requiring a diverse police force. Since that decree has expired, the city has struggled to field a police force that looks like the community it serves. While 55 percent of Bostonians are people of color, only 33 percent of the police force are.

Black and Latino individuals have also been more likely to be the targets of police action. A 2014 report from the Massachusetts ACLU found that between 2007 and 2010, Black Bostonians accounted for 63 percent of “stop and frisk” style stops in Boston, despite only accounting for 25 percent of the population. This gap persists despite the fact that, for many types of crimes, Black residents are no more likely to offend than white residents.

The ACLU, and internal BPD data, led the state’s highest court to rule, in 2016, that Black men may have a legitimate reason to flee Boston police. The Boston NAACP gave the city a “D” for public safety on a 2017 report card, in large part because the city has not fully implemented body

cameras on officers. (It did give the BPD higher marks for diversifying its command staff.)

This inequality is also apparent in the court system. As of 2014, the incarceration rate in Massachusetts was 8 times greater for Black residents than for white residents and 4.9 times greater for Latinos. Both of these are substantially higher than the national average ratio, which is 5.8 for Blacks and 1.3 for Latinos. Given this data, it is unsurprising that Black and Latino voters in this survey are more likely to report that they or a family member have been incarcerated.

The survey results suggest controversies like these are felt in public perception of the criminal justice system in the city (Figure 8). Overall, nearly two-thirds of voters have some confidence in the Commonwealth’s criminal justice system. But only 1 in 6 have “a lot” of confidence in the system. A bare majority think that the Boston Police Department treats Black and Latino residents fairly; slightly fewer think the same about the courts. A little more than a third feel “very safe” in their neighborhoods, although within all groups, a majority reported feeling at least somewhat safe.

These overall numbers suggest some unease with the system, and they also mask a sharp divide between Black

FIGURE 8: Confidence in the criminal justice system

See topline for full question wordings.

	Overall	Asian	Black	Latino	White
Very or somewhat confident in state criminal justice system	64%	66%	44%	66%	72%
Think Boston Police treat Blacks and Latinos somewhat or very fairly	52%	48%	41%	59%	56%
Think courts in Boston treat Blacks and Latinos somewhat or very fairly	45%	49%	27%	51%	52%
Feel very safe in own neighborhood	36%	31%	16%	31%	47%

voters and other racial groupings. Majorities of Black voters do not express confidence in the state's criminal justice system and do think police and courts in Boston treat Black and Latino residents unfairly. Only 16 percent of Black voters feel very safe in their neighborhood, compared to nearly half of white voters (48 percent) and 31 percent each of Latino and Asian voters.

Race is important, but it's not the only demographic where differences on these questions emerge. Voters with more education and higher income levels express more confidence in the criminal justice system and were much more likely to feel very safe in their neighborhoods. Only 16 percent of those making \$25,000 a year or less said they felt very safe in their neighborhood, compared to nearly four times as many (63 percent) of those making more than \$150,000 a year. This dynamic plays out across neighborhoods, as well; 56 percent of respondents in the combination of West Roxbury, Roslindale and Jamaica Plain feel very safe, compared to only 23 percent in the Roxbury, Mattapan, Hyde Park, and Mission Hill neighborhoods.

Overall, voters who have had contact with the system, either as a victim or through incarceration, have lower opinions of it. They are less likely to feel very safe in their neighborhoods, to have confidence in the system, and to think the police and courts treat non-white residents fairly. The differences are most pronounced among white voters, but they are present with residents of color as well. This is the opposite of the dynamic seen on education, where parents with children in the schools are more likely to give the schools higher marks. On criminal justice, familiarity, whether as a victim or suspect, seems to breed distrust.

Black voters may be most concerned about the criminal justice system, but there is widespread agreement across groups about potential solutions. Voters of all races were generally open to the ideas tested, with majorities think-

ing all but two would be "very effective" at improving the system in their neighborhood.

The three proposals receiving the most support were: working with teens to keep them away from gangs (72 percent very effective); providing education and job training to inmates before their release (64 percent); and community policing (63 percent). Black and Latino voters were more likely to say that some, but not all, of the proposed changes would be "very effective".

The issue that saw the biggest divergence among groups was requiring Boston police to wear body cameras while on duty. Nearly 70 percent of Black and Latino voters thought this would be very effective, and a further 20 percent thought it would be somewhat effective. A slight majority of white and Asian voters thought the policy would be very effective. This gap on body cameras is further evidence of the different experiences Bostonians have while interacting with the police.

Less than a majority thought two proposals would be very effective: ending mandatory minimums for non-violent offenders, and sealing the criminal records of offenders from employers. Majorities think both these ideas would be at least somewhat effective, but they lag behind other interventions designed to prevent crime and rehabilitate offenders. These results do not mean that voters are opposed to these reforms, only that they do not believe that they will be very effective at improving the system as it is experienced locally.

These findings are broadly in line with MassINC's previous polling on criminal justice. Polls in 2014 and 2017 have found that voters favor prevention and rehabilitation as goals for the criminal justice system, over enforcement and punishment. Those polls also found support for ending mandatory minimum sentences and sealing criminal records to help former inmates find work and avoid recidivism.

FIGURE 9: Proposed ideas to improve the criminal justice system

Q: How effective you think each one would be in improving criminal justice in your neighborhood of the city. Items were asked separately; voters did not rank them against each other.

Percent “Very Effective” Rank Order 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th



Conclusion

This survey offers civic leaders a rare look into the differences in opinion among and within different groups of Boston voters. It offers a set of facts and ideas that could serve as a basis for the conversations about racism and race relations that the poll says voters want. In many ways, this survey confirms many of the anecdotes and data collected by others about race, the economy, education and criminal justice in Boston. The *Globe* series on race highlighted many ways that the experience of living in Boston is not the same for everyone. This survey shows that large numbers of voters are experiencing these everyday realities.

Despite sometimes stark differences in opinion, the poll shows there are areas of common ground, particularly around policies that voters think would be effective at addressing some of the inequities observed. In each policy area, large majorities see solutions they think would be very effective at tackling the problems. In this respect, Boston voters are united with a desire to see progress that

will benefit everyone, regardless of race. These shared opinions could serve as the seeds of a common policy agenda to unite Boston residents.

This survey of Boston voters is a first step towards understanding opinion among and within communities of color in the city. A next step would be to poll all Boston residents — voters and non-voters, citizens and non-citizen residents, native and foreign-born, students here for a few years and neighbors who have been in the city for generations. That is a much larger undertaking, but it would offer the fullest possible picture of public opinion in Boston on important issues.

Until then, we hope this survey of Boston voters serves as a starting point for conversation about the issues that divide us, and the solutions that could bring us together.

Appendix A – Topline Results

Survey of 913 Registered Voters in Boston, Massachusetts
Field Dates: November 13-21, 2017

In your own words, what are the biggest issues facing the city of the Boston right now? *Open ended. Sorted in descending order. Percentages may total more than 100%.*

Housing costs	24%
Crime/public safety	17%
Public education	8%
Opioids and other drugs	6%
Transportation	5%
Economic opportunity	5%
Race relations	5%
Homelessness	4%
Taxes / budget issues	2%
Overdevelopment	2%
Climate change	1%
Policing issues	1%
Diversity in government	1%
Parks / open space	<1%
Other	11%
Don't Know / Refused	8%

How serious of a problem do you think racism is in the city of Boston — very serious, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not at all serious?

Very serious	30%
Somewhat serious	44%
Not too serious	19%
Not at all serious	5%
Don't Know / Refused	2%

Would you say race relations in Boston have gotten better or worse in the last ten years?

Gotten better	47%
Gotten worse	28%
Stayed about the same (not read)	18%
Don't Know / Refused	8%

Non-profit leaders have proposed holding a series of public dialogues about the state of race relations in the city of Boston. How much would these kinds of dialogues help to advance race relations?

A great deal	20%
A fair amount	43%
Not very much	25%
Not at all	6%
Don't Know / Refused	6%

I'm going to read you a series of statements. For each, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with that statement. **PROBE:** And is that strongly (agree/disagree) or just somewhat?

<i>Order rotated. Sorted by "strongly agree"</i>	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Refused
It's getting harder for me to afford to live in Boston.	53%	27%	10%	8%	2%
Every Boston resident has an equal opportunity to get ahead and be successful.	21%	28%	26%	23%	2%
I have benefited from Boston's economic boom of the past few years.	17%	36%	25%	18%	5%

Here are several ideas for economic development in the City of Boston. Please tell me how effective you think each one would be at improving economic opportunity for your family and friends. First, **READ FIRST?** Would that be **READ SCALE?** How about **READ NEXT?**

<i>Order rotated. Sorted by "very effective."</i>	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective	Don't know / Refused
Improving MBTA buses and subways to connect residents to jobs	66%	24%	5%	3%	2%
Partnering businesses with high schools and community colleges to train and hire students	58%	34%	4%	3%	1%
Building more housing that is affordable in neighborhoods beyond the downtown	55%	28%	9%	7%	1%
Giving preference to local, minority-owned business in awarding city contracts	36%	42%	9%	9%	5%
Offering incentives and tax breaks to encourage large corporations to relocate to Boston	27%	40%	19%	11%	3%

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and F to denote the quality of their work. What grade would you give the K-12 public schools in Boston, including district school and the public charter schools?

A	9%
B	27%
C	34%
D	9%
F	3%
Don't Know / Refused	18%

Over the past 5 years, would you say that the public schools in Boston have...

Gotten better	27%
Gotten worse	17%
Stayed the same	38%
Don't know/refused	17%

Here are some ideas for improving public education in Boston. Please tell me how effective you think each one would be in improving the public schools in your neighborhood

<i>Order rotated. Sorted by "very effective"</i>	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective	Don't know / Refused
Expanding early childhood education to more children	62%	28%	4%	3%	3%
Investing more in technical and vocational education as a path to careers for students	62%	28%	4%	3%	3%
Increasing the funding for Boston Public Schools	60%	26%	6%	4%	3%
Hiring and retaining more teachers from diverse backgrounds	51%	33%	7%	4%	4%
Including civic education in the curriculum	47%	39%	7%	3%	5%
Working with students who violate school policies without suspending them	38%	33%	15%	9%	4%
Making school curriculum more culturally relevant to students' backgrounds	37%	37%	13%	7%	5%
Allowing more Boston children to attend charter schools	34%	33%	14%	10%	9%

How much confidence do you have in the criminal justice system here in Massachusetts, which consists of the police, the courts, probation, parole, and prisons — do you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, a little or no confidence at all?

A lot of confidence	17%
Some confidence	46%
A little confidence	23%
No confidence at all	11%
Don't Know / Refused	2%

Overall, how fairly would you say the Boston Police treat Black and Latino residents? **PROBE:** And would you say very fairly/unfairly, or just somewhat?

Very fairly	17%
Somewhat fairly	35%
Somewhat unfairly	24%
Very unfairly	13%
Don't Know / Refused	11%

And how about the court system? Do you think Black and Latino defendants are treated fairly by courts in Boston? **PROBE:** And would you say very fairly/unfairly, or just somewhat?

Very fairly	12%
Somewhat fairly	33%
Somewhat unfairly	28%
Very unfairly	13%
Don't Know / Refused	13%

How safe from crime do you feel in your neighborhood?

Very safe	36%
Somewhat safe	47%
Not too safe	9%
Not at all safe	7%
Don't Know / Refused	1%

How much of a priority do you think reducing gun violence should be for Marty Walsh in his second term as Mayor... *Order rotated.*

A major priority	70%
A minor priority	22%
Not a priority	5%
Don't Know / Refused	4%

Here are some ideas for improving policing and the criminal justice system in Boston. Please tell me how effective you think each one would be in improving criminal justice in your neighborhood of the city. First, **READ FIRST**. How about **READ NEXT**?

<i>Order rotated. Sorted by "very effective"</i>	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective	Don't know / Refused
Working with teens to keep them in school and away from gangs and criminal activity	72%	21%	3%	3%	1%
Providing education and job training to inmates before they are released	64%	25%	5%	3%	2%
Sending police into communities to get to know residents and local issues better	63%	28%	4%	4%	1%
Requiring all Boston police officers to wear body cameras	58%	27%	8%	4%	3%
Sending non-violent offenders with drug problems to treatment instead of prison	56%	30%	7%	5%	2%
Connecting inmates with community groups and resources after they are released	52%	34%	7%	4%	3%
Ending mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent offenders	46%	32%	10%	7%	5%
Sealing criminal records from employers after some period of time	32%	38%	13%	9%	7%
Have you or a member of your immediate family ever been a victim of a crime?					
	Yes				43%
	No				55%
	Don't Know / Refused				2%
Have you or a member of your immediate family ever been incarcerated?					
	Yes				21%
	No				77%
	Don't Know / Refused				2%
Did you vote in the election this past Tuesday for Mayor of Boston, or did something come up that prevented you from voting?					
	Voted				62%
	Did not vote				35%
	Don't Know / Refused				3%

The last few questions are for statistical purposes only

Do you have any children in K-12 schools? If so, what type of school do they attend? *Multiple responses allowed. Totals may add up to more than 100%.*

Yes, in a standard public school	14%
Yes, in a public charter school	7%
Yes, in a private school	4%
No, don't have children in K-12 schools	75%

How do you normally get around? *Open ended. Multiple responses allowed. May add up to more than 100%.*

Drive alone	51%
Take the MBTA subway	31%
Take a MBTA or other public bus	24%
Walk	19%
Drive or ride with others	16%
Take a taxi, Uber or Lyft	13%
Take the commuter rail	6%
Ride a bicycle	4%
Take a ferry	1%
Other	2%

During the average week, do you use MBTA buses and trains for all of your trips, most of your trips some of your trips, just a few trips, or none of your trips?

All of your trips	10%
Most of your trips	22%
Some of your trips	17%
Just a few trips	22%
None of your trips	29%
Don't Know / Refused	0%

Do you own or rent your current residence?

Own	50%
Rent	48%
Don't Know / Refused	2%

Demographics

Race

White, not Latino	55%
Black, not Latino	27%
Latino	13%
Asian	5%
Other	0%
Don't Know / Refused	0%

Age

18 to 29	23%
30 to 44	28%
45 to 59	23%
60+	26%
Don't Know / Refused	0%

Gender

Male	46%
Female	54%

Education

High School or less	22%
Some college, no degree	27%
College graduate (BA/BS)	33%
Advanced degree	18%
Don't Know / Refused	1%

Party Identification

Democrat	72%
Republican	14%
Independent	12%
Don't Know / Refused	2%

Appendix B – Regression Analysis of Key Survey Questions

The survey results revealed differences in responses on key questions based on several demographics: gender, age, race, education, income, and neighborhood within the city. Many of these demographics overlap and are interrelated; for instance, race is related to socioeconomic status, as the Boston Fed report found, and residents of different races often live in different parts of the city.

In order to determine which demographic and geographic factors were most directly related to the differences in opinion among different groups, we performed regression analyses on responses to several key questions from the survey. This analysis is intended to isolate the influence of certain demographic variables on the likelihood of a voter answering a question in a certain way. We analyzed three questions: two about race relations and one about economic benefits. We used a model that accounts for race, gender, the combination of race and gender, age, education, and income.

The first question asked how serious racism is in Boston. Column 1 of table below shows how much more or less likely a voters having that demographic characteristic would be to say racism is a “very serious” problem, all other factors being held equal. The second column does the same but for responses “very serious” or “somewhat serious”.

In both models, Black voters were more likely to see racism as serious issue, holding other factors constant. Latino voters were more likely than white voters to say that racism is very serious, but not more likely to say very serious or somewhat serious together. This disparity may be attributed to a tendency frequently observed among Latino respondents in the United States, towards answering on the extreme end of response scales.¹

Marginal effect of being Black and/or Female Q: Agree/Disagree: I have benefited from Boston's economic Boom of the past few years.

		RACE	
		White	Black
SEX	Male	0.00	-0.22
	Female	-0.17	-0.14

This table shows the relative probability of being black, female, or both on agreeing with the question. In this instance, a black woman is 14 percentage points less likely than a white man to agree, all else equal.

Other demographics also had an effect on responses to this question. A higher level of education is associated with an increased probability of viewing racism as a serious issue, all else equal. Individuals with higher incomes and those over 60 are less likely to view racism as a very serious issue.

A similar set of patterns emerges when the same analysis is performed on responses to a question about whether race relations in the city have improved. Black voters are less likely to say race relations have improved, other factors equal. Voters over 60 and those with higher incomes are more likely to believe they have improved, all else equal.

The story is more nuanced when examining who believes they have benefitted from the economic boom. Black women are more likely than Black men to believe they have benefited from the economic boom, even when controlling for education and income. Furthermore, when

¹ ERIC A. GREENLEAF; MEASURING EXTREME RESPONSE STYLE, Public Opinion Quarterly, Volume 56, Issue 3, 1 January 1992, Pages 328–351

allowing education to have a different effect for each race, we find that education does not mitigate the effect of being Black on responses to this question.

While we cannot say from this data that race *causes* these differing responses among voters, we can be fairly certain

that race is not simply a functioning as a catchall proxy for the effects of income or neighborhood. Further analysis of the follow-up survey of all residents may shed more light on these effects.

Regression Results on Key Questions

	Racism		Race Relation	Benefit from Boom	
	Very serious	Very/Some serious	Gotten better	Strongly agree	Strong/Some agree
Black	0.242*** (0.063)	0.228*** (0.057)	-0.116+ (0.067)	-0.077 (0.051)	-0.218** (0.066)
Latino	0.189** (0.067)	0.034 (0.061)	-0.027 (0.071)	0.047 (0.054)	0.074 (0.071)
Female	-0.003 (0.060)	0.088 (0.055)	-0.082 (0.064)	-0.036 (0.049)	-0.166** (0.063)
Black * Female	0.051 (0.087)	-0.033 (0.079)	-0.024 (0.092)	0.046 (0.071)	0.245** (0.092)
Latino * Female	0.031 (0.089)	-0.031 (0.082)	-0.053 (0.095)	-0.062 (0.072)	0.009 (0.094)
Age: 30 to 44	0.019 (0.046)	-0.042 (0.042)	0.014 (0.049)	0.005 (0.037)	0.021 (0.048)
Age: 60+	-0.040 (0.044)	-0.093* (0.041)	0.127** (0.047)	0.068+ (0.036)	0.107* (0.047)
Col. Deg. or Higher	0.069 (0.042)	0.074+ (0.039)	-0.009 (0.045)	-0.010 (0.034)	0.020 (0.045)
\$25-\$75k	-0.066 (0.047)	-0.080+ (0.043)	0.020 (0.050)	-0.052 (0.038)	-0.086+ (0.050)
\$75-\$150k	-0.116* (0.057)	-0.132* (0.052)	0.152* (0.061)	-0.012 (0.046)	0.045 (0.060)
More than \$150k	-0.140+ (0.074)	-0.091 (0.067)	0.055 (0.079)	0.134* (0.060)	0.075 (0.078)
Constant	0.249*** (0.063)	0.721*** (0.057)	0.495*** (0.067)	0.193*** (0.051)	0.597*** (0.066)
Observations	678	678	678	678	678
R ²	0.076	0.068	0.050	0.038	0.057

Standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variables are equal to 1 if a respondent answered in line with the model heading.

+ p < 0.10, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Appendix C – Demographic Analysis

Assessing demographic differences between registered voters and all residents

This survey was conducted among registered voters in the City of Boston. Such a poll is useful, particularly for testing policy ideas; lawmakers and officials are particularly attuned to the opinions of voters. But of course not every resident is registered to vote, especially in a city like Boston, with its large student population and recent influx of foreign-born residents. Boston's resident population is minority-majority, but its registered voters are still majority-white.

Our hope is to conduct another survey of all Boston residents in the near future. In the meantime, it is important to understand how the voters surveyed here differ demographically from all residents. For some demographics — age, gender, race, and party — this is as simple as comparing the statistics of all Boston voters in the voter file to those for all Boston residents from the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS). For large cities, including Boston, the Census releases yearly estimates on a host of demographic characteristics. Commercial voter files also contain these statistics for individual voters.

For other statistics — education and income — there is partial Census data, and only estimated data on voters. Comparing income is particularly difficult because some percentage of respondents will refuse to provide that information. Precise estimates of income also require deeper exploration than the single question included in this survey. But for these demographics, the voters we survey differ from the demographics of all resident *in the same direction* as we would expect them to, based on Census research into which demographic groups are more and less likely to register to vote.

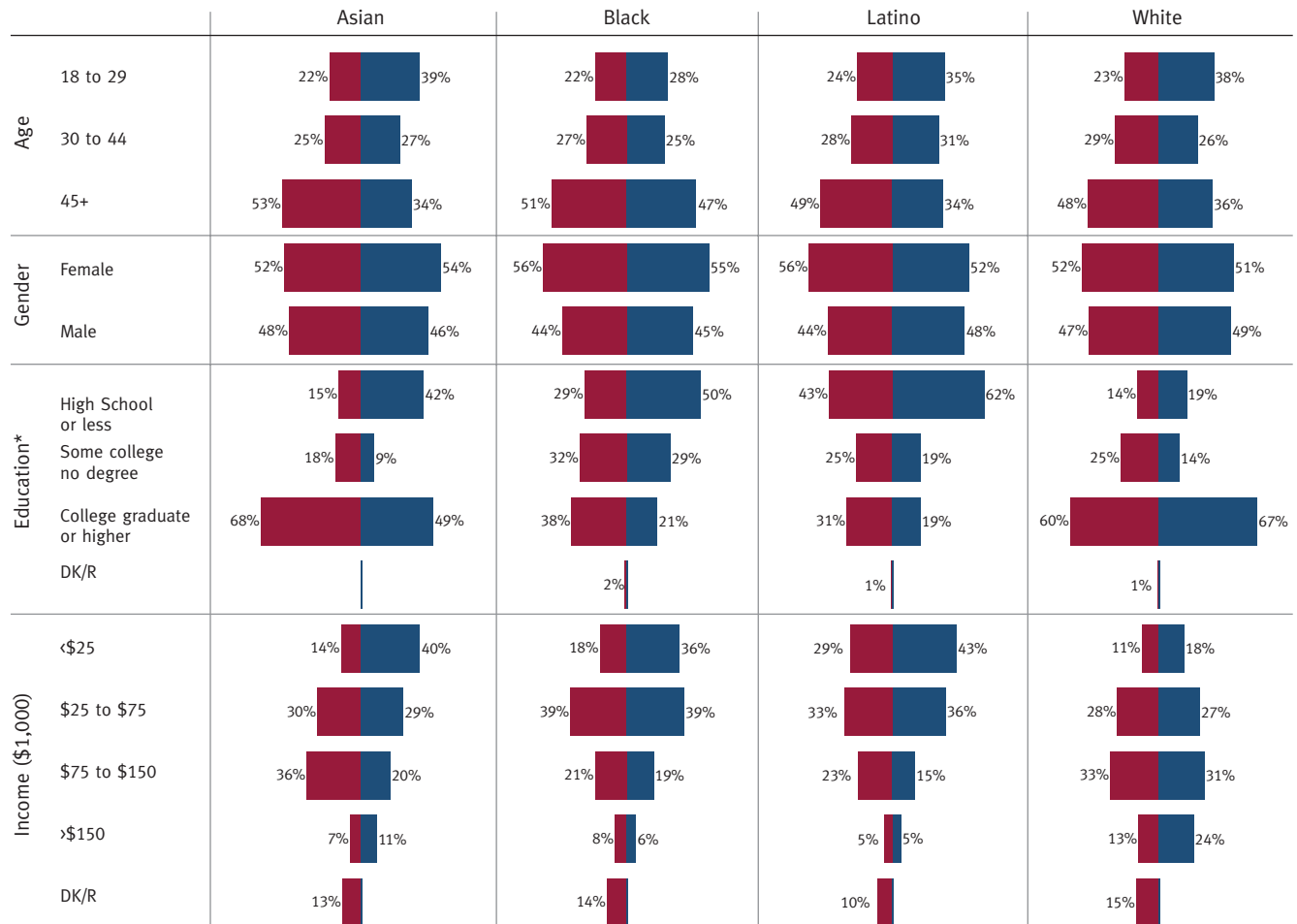
The figure below shows the differences, within the four groups sampled in the poll, between the weighted sample of voters surveyed and the most recent 5-year estimates

from the ACS. Because each group was weighted separately by age and gender, the differences shown here are the same as those between all registered voters of that race and all residents of that race. For education and income, where reference data is less available, the differences point in the direction we would expect. Overall, voters are older, more female, and have higher education and income levels than all residents.

These patterns hold across all groups, with the exception of white voters, who are slightly less likely to hold a college degree than the general population. This deviation is likely explained by a combination of factors. The Census only provides educational attainment for the population over age 25. This means that many of Boston's undergraduates, who have not yet attained degrees, are missing from the Census data but may show up in voter rolls if they have registered to vote while in school in the city. Also, older white residents may not have achieved college degrees but are registered to vote. That said, white voters with college degrees are still the largest educational cohort among white voters, as would be expected in Boston.

Based on this analysis and our experience conducting voter polls in Boston and other geographies in Massachusetts, we are confident that the sample we surveyed here is representative of registered voters in Boston. Still, care should be taken not to conflate the views of registered voters from those of all residents.

Demographics



Weighted Sample ACS 5 Year Estimates



11 Beacon Street
Suite 500
Boston, MA 02108

