



DALLAS COUNTY AREA STUDY: AN ANALYSIS OF SELMA-DALLAS COUNTY AND THE ALABAMA BLACK BELT

**A Report Submitted to the Black Belt Community Foundation and the Selma
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Executive Summary

This report is titled the Dallas County Area Study (DCAS). DCAS was conducted between December 2019 and May 2021. It entails a 500-person survey with 300 respondents residing in Selma-Dallas County and the remaining 200 people drawn from more than a dozen smaller, rural counties. The project is part of the Truth, Racial Healing, & Transformation Selma (TRHT Selma) initiative sponsored by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and hosted by the Black Belt Community Foundation (BBCF) and the Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth & Reconciliation (SCNTR). The survey questions were co-produced by BBCF and SCNTR staff/consultants, community advocates, and the lead researchers (Sekou Franklin, Camille Burge, Princess Williams) representing the National Conference of Black Political Scientists.

The survey findings indicate that the region is still plagued by racial divisions. Blacks and Whites are divided on issues such as the Black Lives Matter movement; the persistence of racism in public institutions, systems of care, and recreational activities; and the causes of the coronavirus pandemic. Even still, there are some grievances between the two groups. Both expressed concerns about the poor responsiveness of local governments and there is some agreement on economic issues and crime prevention. TRHT programs have gained traction in Selma-Dallas County. Blacks and Whites have similar awareness of and participation rates in TRHT activities. Yet, Blacks are particularly attracted to the TRHT public input sessions, “Chat and Chew” events, and restorative justice programs.

This report provides an exhaustive review of issues that are critical to ‘racial healing’ and the ‘transformation’ of economically distressed communities. We conclude this report with a set of recommendations that may bridge racial divisions and help ameliorate chronic distresses in Selma-Dallas County and the surrounding counties. The recommendations highlight multiracial/cross-racial alliances in support of good government policies, participatory government, crime prevention and restorative justice practices, and city/county-backed wage increases. We also recommend a call to action by national leaders for a rural, southern strategy with a particular emphasis on Selma and the Alabama Black Belt.

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INTRODUCTION

The Dallas County Area Study (DCAS) is sponsored by the Black Belt Community Foundation and the Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth & Reconciliation. These organizations are spearheading the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT) project in Selma-Dallas County, Alabama. TRHT has carried out a comprehensive set of activities designed to ameliorate divisions in Selma-Dallas County.

Selma-Dallas County and the adjacent counties (all located in the Alabama Black Belt) were selected because of their historic significance in the civil rights and racial justice movements. Perhaps more than any other region in the 1960s, it was the center of the struggle for voting rights. It has also been the flashpoint for recent debates about voter disenfranchisement, poverty reduction, environmental justice, and racial politics.

In addition, the Alabama Black Belt was the focus of one of the most controversial studies of Blacks in the last century. In the early 1900s, the preeminent scholar W.E.B. Du Bois completed a Department of Labor-funded study of 6,000 Blacks in the region, most of whom resided in Lowndes County (located 30 miles outside of Selma). The study was the Deep South counterpart to Du Bois's *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* and *The Negroes of Farmville: A Social Study*. However, due to the political import of the findings and Alabama's racial history, the Department of Labor destroyed the study and all the data collected for it.¹ Today, despite its rich history, Selma-Dallas County and the adjacent counties are severely under-resourced and impacted by public health epidemics. A United Nation's investigation of poverty in Alabama, with a particular focus on the Black Belt, referred to it as "very uncommon in the First World," and as having some of the worse social conditions in the developing world.² The report identified infrastructure deficits as well as

such as “broken sewerage systems, and [little access to] other vital resources, such as Wi-Fi and broadband access, which limits economic growth, educational opportunities, and business opportunities.”³

Lowndes County, located 30 miles outside of Selma, has experienced sanitation-induced hookworm in recent years.⁴ In areas such as Perry County, where the poverty level is high, some analysts have looked at land ownership as a potential remedy for mitigating economic despair among Blacks.⁵ Selma is one of the poorest cities in the U.S.—ranking in the top ten of highest poverty rates.⁶ Its unemployment rate is twice the national average, and it has experienced a surge in gun violence in the last decade.

DCAS fills an important void in the study of social and economic life in a region that has been historically neglected. It expands our understanding of the region, especially the hub city and county of Selma and Dallas, to assist activists and civic leaders in developing strategies and programs that can mitigate chronic social problems. In providing a comprehensive assessment of Dallas County and the Black Belt region, this report provides a unique portrait of “rural” America that differs from stereotypical depictions in the mainstream media. In many parts of the country, the term “rural” voter evokes images of Whites and conservatism.⁷ Yet, this image runs counter to the great deal of diversity in rural areas in the South.⁸ In Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, and North Carolina, Black Americans are the largest racial minority in rural counties and small-town areas.⁹ Yet, research on southern, rural communities is still lacking, particularly at the intersection of race, identity, public opinion, and political decision-making.¹⁰ As such, the goal of this project is to address this deficit and challenge assumptions about race, so that racial healing and poverty mitigation strategies can transform Selma and economically distressed communities in the Alabama Black Belt.

Research Design

This study relies on an original survey administered by New South Research, a survey research firm in Birmingham, Alabama.¹¹ This survey evaluates the political, economic, and policy orientations of Alabama Black Belt residents. It entails questions on topics that remain thoroughly understudied at the regional (South) and micro (rural) levels, specifically on issues and concerns most relevant to African Americans.

We focus on Selma-Dallas County and its surrounding counties because of the great interest of the Black Belt Community Foundation (BBCF) and Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth, and Reconciliation (SCNTR). In 2016, the BBCF and SCNTR began working on the TRHT initiative sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The goal of TRHT is to engage community partners around the United States in programming designed to raise awareness about inequality in wealth, health, education, and criminal law.¹² The thought is that having more truthful dialogue and developing strategies to address systemic poverty and chronic distress can lead to greater levels of racial healing and relationship building. Core tenets of this initiative focus on legacies of separation (e.g., colonization, segregation, and concentrated poverty), law (e.g., civil, criminal, and public policies), and the economy (e.g., structured inequality and barriers to opportunities), with hopes of bringing about a narrative shift surrounding the plight of individuals in distressed communities.

The DCAS was developed in consultation with the SCNTR staff (Brendan O'Connor and Carolyn Pickett); Corre Robinson, President of ETR Services; and Daron Harris of the BBCF. Jackie Sims, an anti-poverty organizer and advocate with Democracy Nashville-Democratic Communities and the People People's Alliance for Transit, Housing & Employment, also served as a research assistant.

The lead researchers, representing the National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS), are Sekou Franklin at Middle Tennessee State University, Camille Burge at Villanova University, and Princess Williams at Amherst College. NCOBPS was formed in 1969 as a beacon of liberation and social justice in the political science discipline. The organization has critically challenged institutional racism and other systemic inequities inside and outside the academy. DCAS is part of the NCOBPS's Black Rural Project. (NCOBPS has a companion study of the Arkansas Delta.)

The main component of DCAS is a 500-person telephone and online survey administered by New South Research in December 2020. The sample contains 300 people from Selma-Dallas County, Alabama, and 200 people from surrounding rural counties such as Lowndes, Perry, Greene, Choctaw, Macon, Sumter, Wilcox, Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Hale, Marengo, Pickens, Pike, and Russell.

New South Research conducted a random sample of Blacks and Whites in the requested counties, including an oversample of Blacks. Each participant was offered a \$5 amazon e-gift card to complete the survey. The completed survey is comprised 156 Whites, 341 Blacks, and 3 individuals of mixed race. The survey contained 299 women and 201 men.

The survey was developed through a two-step (qualitative and quantitative) process: 1) input sessions and community dialogues; 2) a 500-person random survey of Alabama Black Belt residents. This approach falls within the scope of community-based research and academic-community collaborations. Community-based research allows “community members to form a partnership to identify and solve local problems.”¹³ It promotes experiential learning and collaborative research to study communities of the rural South that are invisible and under-resourced.

The survey questions were co-produced by the research team, as well as SCNTR,

BBCF, and ETR staff. The groups coordinated an in-person input session (also called a focus group) on December 19, 2019. SCNTR also invited the research team to a “Chat and Chew” event at the Rangedale Center in a low-wealth community in Selma. On March 2, 2020, another half of the research team, traveled to Selma and met with SCNTR staff. The researchers then met with 10 advocates in Uniontown, Alabama involved in an environmental justice movement against a corporate landfill company.

Between March and September 2020, the research team and staff at the parent organizations met and dialogued about the wording of the questions and survey topics. The academic researchers then paired the proposed questions by the Selma/Black Belt partners with existing questions that are regularly asked in large-scale social science surveys. In summary, the input sessions and meetings generated a 43-question survey that was co-produced by academicians and community advocates. The survey and input sessions were approved by Middle Tennessee State University’s Institutional Review Board.

The survey contains a wide range of variables. We asked respondents their opinions on race relations, the economy, law enforcement, education, healthcare, coronavirus, voting behavior, and trust and efficacy in government. Since this study relates to the Kellogg’s TRHT project, the survey questions give acute attention to race at the intersection of the following topics: trust and efficacy in government, community-building, ameliorative policies and governance, crime prevention, the status of the economy, Black Lives Matter, and COVID-19. A subset of questions in the survey, primarily focusing on TRHT program, are reserved only for Selma-Dallas County residents. (See Appendix B for a copy of the survey.)

The remainder of the report is divided into eight sections: 1) section one provides a summary of the key characteristics of the sample population in the survey; 2) section two looks at trust in government officials; 3) section three examines leadership, crime prevention, and governance; 4) section four gives attention to race relations and racial polarization in areas such as the treatment of Blacks by law enforcement, public institutions, systems of care, and in employment; 5) section five evaluates attitudes about the local economy and economic justice policies; 6) section six looks at the racially disparate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; 7) section seven evaluates opinions about the Black Lives Matter movement; and 8) section eight (reserved only for Selma- Dallas County residents) assesses the popularity of the TRHT programs and local concerns in Selma-Dallas County about crime and violence.

Each section of the study reports separate findings for the total sample (N=500) and the Selma-Dallas County sample (N=300). For clarity, there is a Supplemental Report in Appendix A that illustrates the findings as readable figures with short summaries.

As mentioned earlier, given the theme of ‘truth’ and ‘racial healing’, we are interested in racial differences in how Blacks and Whites perceive the topics. We measure racial differences using bivariate cross-tabulations. We highlight the results that are statistically significant. This is a standard metric used to identify important findings in randomized surveys. Statistical significance indicates that a finding is not due to chance. Instead, it gives us confidence that an observed result is reliable.¹⁴ The results that are the most reliable are identified by the asterisk (*) symbol in the tables.¹⁵

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ALABAMA BLACK BELT

Before moving further, we provide a summary of key characteristics in the study for Selma-Dallas County and the surrounding counties, and for Selma-Dallas County by itself. The survey is comprised of a random sample of 500 people with an oversample of Black respondents. As reported in Table 1, 68% percent of the respondents are Blacks and 31% are Whites. Selma- Dallas County makes up 60% of the sample population, whereas the remaining sample (200 people) reside in the adjacent, Black Belt counties. Women make up 60% of the population and most of the respondents are registered to vote.

Table 1. Key Characteristics of the Alabama Black Belt Surveyed Population

Characteristics	Mean (Percentages)
Race	
Blacks	68%
Whites	31%
Biracial/Mixed-Race	1%
County Residence	
Selma-Dallas County	60%
Other Counties	40%
Gender	
Men	40%
Women	60%
Education	
No high school degree	5%
High school graduate	27%
Some college, but no degree (yet)	20%
2-year college degree	17%
4-year college degree	22%
Postgraduate degree	10%
Income	
Less than \$20,000	20%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	14%
\$30,000 - \$50,000	25%
\$50,000 - \$70,000	15%
\$70,000 - \$100,000	11%
\$100,000 - \$150,000	10%
\$150,000 - or more	5%
Employment Status	
Working Full-Time	50%

Working Part-Time	5%
Not Working	14%
Retired	21%
Permanently Disabled	6%
Student	1%
Other	3%
Registered to Vote	95%
Health Care	
Medicare	19.4%
Medicaid	7.6%
Private or Employer-Based Insurance	59.2%
Accessed Health Care Through the Affordable Care Act	3.2%
No Insurance	10.6%
COVID-19 (Impact on the Finances)	
Hurt my finances MORE than those of most	23.6%
Hurt my finances LESS than those of most other	13.2%
Impacted my finances about the same as it has most other people	30.4%
The outbreak has not impacted my personal financial situation	32.8%
Aware of the Following Career and Workforce Development Programs	
Career Center	43%
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act	9%
Community College	29%
Skills and Training Schools	7%
Career Counseling	2%
Youth Internship Programs	2%
Entrepreneurs Programs	3%
Other Programs	6%

Source: Dallas County Area Study survey (N=500).

The respondents' average level of education hovers around some college but no degree. The average level of income ranges between \$30,000 and \$49,999, yet there is variation across all income categories and 59% of the respondents have incomes under \$50,000. Half of the surveyed respondents work full-time and 20% are not working or are permanently disabled. Another 5% work part-time. The most popular workforce

development outlet in their respective county is the career center.

Almost 11% of the surveyed residents said they had no insurance. Another 30% received government-backed health insurance in the form of Medicare, Medicaid, or the Affordable Care Act/Obamacare. A little over 59% claimed to have private or employer-based health care. Furthermore, close to 24% said that the COVID-19 hurt their personal financial situation more than other people.

Selma-Dallas County Sample

The Selma-Dallas County make up the majority (300) of the 500 respondents. As described in Table 2, an overwhelming majority of respondents (72%) are Blacks, while 28% are Whites, with women comprising 61% of the sample population. Nearly all the respondents are registered voters.

Table 2. Key Characteristics of the Selma-Dallas County Surveyed Population

Characteristics	Mean (Percentages)
Race	
Blacks	72%
Whites	28%
Neighborhood in Selma-Dallas County	
Old Towne	3.3%
East Selma	5.7%
Valley Grande	13.7%
Selmont	3.3%
Orville	2.3%
West Selma	16.7%
Smoky City	1.7%
Other within Selma city limits	22.7%
Other in Dallas County	30.7%
Gender	
Men	39%
Women	61%
Education	
No high school degree	6.3%
High school graduate	29%
Some college, but no degree (yet)	17.7%
2-year college degree	16.7%
4-year college degree	19.3%
Postgraduate degree	11.3%

Income	
Less than \$20,000	22%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	15.3%
\$30,000 - \$50,000	21.7%
\$50,000 - \$70,000	15.3%
\$70,000 - \$100,000	10.3%
\$100,000 - \$150,000	11.3%
\$150,000 - or more	4%
Employment Status	
Working Full-Time	46%
Working Part-Time	5.7%
Not Working	17%
Retired	22.3%
Permanently Disabled	5%
Student	1.7%
Other	2.3%
Registered to Vote	93%
Health Care Status	
Medicare	20%
Medicaid	8%
Private or Employer-Based Insurance	59%
Accessed Health Care Through the Affordable Care Act	3%
No Insurance	10%
COVID-19 (Impact on the Finances)	
Hurt my finances MORE than those of most other people	26.7%
Hurt my finances LESS than those of most other people	10.7%
Impacted my finances about the same as it has most other people	31%
The outbreak has not impacted my personal financial situation	31.7%
Aware of the Following Career and Workforce Development Programs	
Career Center	59.3%
Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act	9%
Community College	19.7%
Skills & Training Schools	4%
Career Counseling	1.7%
Youth Internship Programs	.3%
Entrepreneur Programs	3.3%
Others	2.7

Source: The findings are from the Selma-Dallas County portion of the Dallas County Area Study survey (N=300).

There is a somewhat even distribution of people across all income categories. Yet nearly 60% had family annual incomes below \$50,000. The largest category of education is those with a high-school degree (29%). Forty-six percent (46%) of the Selma-Dallas County residents worked full-time. The “not working” population (unemployed, laid off, stay at home) of 17% is fairly high and 22% were retired. If interested in work or career opportunities, 59% of the respondents identified the local career center.

The uninsured population was 10% and another 32% received government-backed (Medicare, Medicaid, Affordable Care Act/Obamacare) insurance. Nearly 60% have private or employer-based health care. About 27% said that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted their finances more than other people.

TRUST IN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

The second section of the study looks at trust that residents in Selma-Dallas County and the surrounding areas have in government officials. High-levels of trust are more likely to generate political tolerance.¹⁶ They are also indicative of environments with low levels of unemployment and economic stability.¹⁷

At the input session in Selma-Dallas County on December 19, 2019, the participants conveyed very little trust in government officials. They stated that there is a lack of accountability in the city and county and that politicians fail to deliver on their promises. They further stated that political divisions between powerful families and networks erode trust. The distrust in Selma-Dallas County was exacerbated by municipal layoffs and the inability of the city to coordinate coherent policies to address complicated problems.

On March 6, 2020, our research team also met with 10 activists in Uniontown, Alabama, located in the adjacent Marion County. The activists have been embroiled in

decade-long environmental justice campaign against a powerful, corporate landfill company.¹⁸ The campaign has generated an impressive display of activism in the mostly Black town. But it also revealed a disillusionment in government and the power that government officials have to address public health epidemics.

Alabama Black Belt (Selma-Dallas County and Surrounding Counties)

Overall, we found low levels of trust among Alabama Black Belt residents. We found that a majority of Blacks and Whites living in Selma and surrounding counties ‘strongly agree’ or ‘somewhat agree’ that “too many politicians neglect the interests of its citizens” as indicated in Table 3. However, compared to 61% of Whites who believed that governments neglect citizens, 13 percent more Black residents held this belief (74%), although the findings are barely statistically significant. About 65% of both Black and White residents believe they cannot trust government officials to do what is right. Yet, the most intense feelings – that is the most intense feelings of distrust – are found among Whites.

Table 3. Trust in Government Officials

	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Blacks
	Strongly		Somewhat		Neither		Somewhat		Strongly	
	Agree		Agree				Disagree		Disagree	
Political leaders neglect the interests of people who live in rural areas**	61%	74%	22%	15%	9%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)**	73%	74%	14%	14%	7%	4%	1%	3%	4%	4%
Government administrators can be trusted*	5%	13%	18%	14%	9%	9%	15%	19%	53%	45%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	4%	11%	13%	17%	6%	8%	13%	22%	64%	42%
	Always		Most of time		Some of the time		Never			
Trust government officials in your area to do what is right*	1%	3%	17%	18%	53%	55%	28%	23%		
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	0%	2%	6%	18%	60%	54%	34%	26%		
	A lot		A moderate amount		A little		None at all			
How much influence do people have over local government decisions*	10%	16%	25%	28%	40%	37%	24%	19%		
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	11%	16%	20%	25%	37%	37%	31%	22%		
	A lot		Some		Very little		None at all			
A council or county commission member will listen to my complaint about a local government activity*	22%	26%	42%	34%	20%	27%	16%	13%		
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	29%	29%	35%	29%	16%	29%	20%	13%		

Note: The results measure statistical significance. The asterisk (*) symbol indicates a high confidence that the results are valid and statistically significant (measured at $p < .05$). Two asterisks (**) identify results with a p-value $< .10$, which demonstrate that the result is barely significant. The plus (+) sign indicates that even though there may be racial differences, they are not wide enough to report statistical significance.

Similarly, there are higher levels of distrust among Whites when it came to concerns such as their influence over local government decisions. Although majorities of both racial groups believed that council and county commission members will respond to their complaints, Blacks were more likely to have a negative response to this question.

The findings are very interesting. They raise questions about who oversees city and county governance. It may be the case that higher feelings of distrust among Whites are related to their location in Black Belt counties that have more Black elected and government officials than other parts of Alabama. It also raises concerns that Blacks seemed to distinguish between symbolic (e.g., trust, neglect, etc.) and substantive evaluations (e.g., response to complaints) of public officials.

Selma-Dallas County Participants

We found nearly identical results about trust when assessing Selma-Dallas County by itself. There were low levels of trust and confidence in public officials, particularly among Whites. Yet, Blacks were more likely to indicate that officials would not respond to complaints.

RACE, SOCIETY, AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

This section looks at the intersection of race, social relations, and governance. In our input session on December 19, 2019, the participants expressed concern about the lack of opportunities for youth in Selma. This includes the lack of quality of education and the difficulties in building a skilled workforce. Four questions evaluate social relations and government: a) race and representation; b) inclusion and governance; c) racially segregated schools; and d) racial diversity and social events.

Alabama Black Belt (Selma-Dallas County and Surrounding Counties)

In the study, more Whites (41%) strongly agree with the statement that leadership and government in their area reflects the racial makeup of their community (see Table 4). When asked about racial diversity and social events, both groups agreed with this statement. Yet, the differences between Blacks and Whites for both questions were not significant.

Moreover, we find that a majority (combining ‘strongly’ and ‘somewhat’ agree) of Whites and Blacks living in Selma county and surrounding areas believe that they do not have a voice in local government. There is no statistical significance between Blacks and Whites, meaning each group shares the same sentiment. Across the counties, most Blacks and Whites agree (combining ‘strongly’ and ‘somewhat’ agree) that schools are racially segregated.

The results suggest that Blacks and Whites have quite similar views about the racial make- up of local government, participatory governance, and access to diverse social events. Or to put it another way, the racial differences between the two groups are not that wide.

Selma-Dallas County Participants

The racial differences are starker when assessing Selma-Dallas County as a stand-alone jurisdiction. Whites were more likely to strongly agree (46%) that the leadership and government in their area reflect the racial make-up in their community. On the other hand, a higher percentage of Blacks (‘strongly agree’ =18%; ‘somewhat agree’=23%) believe that they have a voice in local governance. Yet, like the findings in the larger survey, the findings are not statistically significant enough to report with confidence.

Table 4. Race, Society, and Government Relations

	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Blacks
	Strongly Agree		Somewhat Agree		Neither		Somewhat Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Leadership and government in your area reflects the racial makeup of your community+	41%	33%	28%	31%	7%	9%	9%	14%	15%	14%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)+	46%	34%	28%	35%	5%	7%	7%	10%	14%	13%
Feel included and have a voice in decisions made by local leaders in your area+	14%	18%	20%	25%	10%	6%	22%	19%	34%	32%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)+	13%	18%	16%	23%	7%	6%	25%	20%	39%	33%
Schools in my area are racially segregated+	33%	35%	22%	24%	9%	9%	16%	14%	21%	18%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)+	43%	38%	22%	24%	4%	8%	16%	13%	16%	17%
Social events in our community reflect racial diversity and recognizes various backgrounds & heritages+	32%	28%	26%	34%	15%	10%	10%	11%	17%	17%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)+	36%	32%	25%	33%	15%	8%	11%	9%	13%	18%

Note: The results measure statistical significance. The asterisk (*) symbol indicates a high confidence that the results are valid and statistically significant (measured at $p < .05$). Two asterisks (**) identify results with a p -value $< .10$, which demonstrate that the result is barely significant. The plus (+) sign indicates that even though there may be racial differences, they are not wide enough to report statistical significance.

RACE RELATIONS AND POLARIZATION

The fourth section investigates race relations. Racial polarization is a salient feature of U.S. politics and race relations.¹⁹ In many policy areas such criminal justice, health care, education, and others, racial polarization characterizes the Black-White encounter.²⁰ The DCAS survey asked if race relations are getting worse and a battery of questions that asked about the treatment of Blacks compared to Whites regarding employment, by police officers, in the court and school systems, in the voting booth, while shopping, and in the health care system.

Alabama Black Belt (Selma-Dallas County and Surrounding Counties)

The survey results are reported in Table 5. We found that neither a majority of Blacks nor Whites believe race relations have stayed the same in recent years. Thirty-two percent (32%) of Blacks compared to 18% of Whites believe that race relations have gotten worse.

The gap between Blacks and Whites is over 30% in their belief that they are treated worse in the employment arena. Similar levels of racial polarization exist in the areas of law enforcement (54% of Blacks compared to 15% of Whites), the court system (57% of Blacks compared to 14% of Whites), public schools (36% of Blacks compared to 8% of Whites), and the health care system (33% of Blacks compared to 7% of Whites). The findings are statistically significant and reveal that Blacks and Whites have fundamentally different perceptions about the treatment of Blacks and validity of racism. There are even minor, though noticeable differences, in how the racial groups view the treatment of Blacks when they are shopping and voting.

Table 5. Race Relations and Polarization

	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
		Better	Same			Worse
Race Relations are getting better or worse*	10%	11%	72%	58%	18%	32%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	8%	11%	73%	59%	19%	30%
Treatment of Blacks compared to Whites on their jobs*	12%	4%	79%	54%	9%	42%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	11%	4%	80%	52%	10%	44%
Treatment of Blacks compared to Whites by police officers*	16%	5%	69%	41%	15%	54%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	16%	5%	67%	37%	17%	59%
Treatment of Blacks compared to Whites by the court system*	13%	4%	73%	38%	14%	57%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	16%	4%	72%	38%	12%	58%
Treatment of Blacks compared to Whites in school systems*	17%	6%	75%	58%	8%	36%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	17%	6%	76%	58%	7%	36%
Treatment of Blacks compared to Whites when voting**	19%	8%	77%	68%	4%	25%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)**	18%	9%	78%	65%	4%	27%
Treatment of Blacks compared to Whites when shopping**	13%	6%	81%	66%	6%	28%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)**	11%	6%	87%	64%	2%	30%
Treatment of Blacks compared to Whites in the health care system*	12%	6%	81%	61%	7%	33%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	14.5%	6%	78.3%	60%	7.2%	34%

Note: The results measure statistical significance. The asterisk (*) symbol indicates a high confidence that the results are valid and statistically significant (measured at $p < .05$). Two asterisks (**) identify results with a p -value $< .10$, which demonstrate that the result is barely significant. The plus (+) sign indicates that even though there may be racial differences, they are not wide enough to report statistical significance.

Selma-Dallas County Participants

For Selma-Dallas County, the racial polarization is nearly identical as the total population sample. In all areas (the state of race relations and treatment of Blacks in employment, by police officers in the court system and school system, in the voting booth, while shopping, and in the health care system), racial polarization is stark. Blacks in Selma-Dallas County are much more likely to believe that they are treated worse than Whites.

LOCAL ECONOMIES

The state of the economy is a significant concern in the Alabama Black Belt. As mentioned at the outset of this report, the region is one of the most under-resourced in the country. The low-wealth status of Black Belt counties has led to calls for the creation of a federal initiative for the region that would be patterned after the Appalachian Regional Commission.²¹ The ARC was established by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 to address distressed communities in Appalachia.

In our dialogues with residents in Selma and Uniontown in December 2019 and March 2020, the state of the economy was front and center. Some residents conveyed concerns about the lack of jobs that allow people to make a sufficient living. The lack of businesses, the prevalence of nepotism, and inaccessibility to networks that promote job opportunities were other concerns. The participants were further disillusioned about being excluded from the tourism economy and that “old money” was being used to suppress wages, particularly in Selma.

This section looks at the local economic policies such as living wage policy for city employees, economic cooperatives, and an increase in the city or county budgets. We included a question that asked if the average person benefits from the tourism economy.

Alabama Black Belt (Selma-Dallas County and Surrounding Counties)

The majority of respondents in Table 6 across racial groups believed that city employees deserve a living wage, although this policy is more strongly felt among Blacks. Yet, the majority of Blacks and Whites stated that they neither opposed nor supported economic cooperatives. The findings suggest that there needs to be more education about cooperatives among everyday people. Blacks (68%) were significantly more likely than Whites (37%) to support a large increase in the city or county budget. Yet, when combining large and moderate increases, 68% of Whites expressed support.

The tourism economy revealed minor, but noticeable racial differences. Whites tended to state that the average person in their area benefits from tourism economy. Even still, it should be noted that both Blacks and Whites “strongly” disagreed with this statement.

Selma-Dallas County Participants

Selma-Dallas County residents mirrored the larger group (Selma-Dallas County and the surrounding counties). On tourism, Whites were more sympathetic than Blacks in their views toward the tourism economy.

Table 6. Local Economies

	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Blacks
	Strongly Support		Somewhat Support		Neither		Somewhat Oppose		Strongly Oppose	
City/County Living Wage Policy*	48%	67%	26%	14%	9%	9%	6%	4%	12%	5%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)**	48%	72%	18%	14%	11%	7%	5%	3%	18%	5%
Support for economic cooperatives*	19%	19%	11%	14%	67%	65%	0%	0%	1%	2%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)**	21%	19%	13%	13%	63%	67%	1%	0%	2%	1%
Average person in my area benefits from tourism*	15%	11%	24%	20%	10%	13%	15%	17%	37%	39%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	23%	13%	22%	23%	8%	13%	18%	14%	29%	37%
	Increased a great deal		Increased a moderate amount		Decreased a little		Decreased a lot			
Increase in city or county budget*	37%	68%	31%	20%	31%	9%	1%	3%		
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)**	44%	69%	30%	20%	25%	7%	1%	4%		

Note: The results measure statistical significance. The asterisk (*) symbol indicates a high confidence that the results are valid and statistically significant (measured at $p < .05$). Two asterisks (**) identify results with a p -value $< .10$, which demonstrate that the result is barely significant. The plus (+) sign indicates that even though there may be racial differences, they are not wide enough to report statistical significance.

RACE AND COVID-19

This section looks at the impact of COVID-19 in the Alabama Black Belt. The region was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.²² By June 2020, several months after the COVID-19 outbreak, a quarter of the deaths from the virus occurred in the Black Belt even though the region makes only 11 percent of the state population.²³

The COVID-19 questions investigate Black and White perspectives about COVID-19 and its racially disparate impact. The life choices of Blacks, their work in industries that require contact with the public, lack of access of adequate health care, neglect by government leaders, and lack of testing sites in Black communities, or reasons ‘beyond their control’ are assessed. Another question looks at the impact that COVID-19 had on the financial status of Alabama Black Belt residents.

Alabama Black Belt (Selma-Dallas County and Surrounding Counties)

As indicated in Table 7, a considerable percentage of Blacks (40%) and Whites (42%) said that Blacks’ life choices were a ‘major reason’ why they had higher infection rates. Yet, the differences were not significant enough to draw any conclusions. A majority of Blacks (over 50%) said that a major reason for the persistence of racial disparities was due to their work in high- risk industries, lack of health care, or it was ‘beyond their control’. Among Whites, only 20.5% attributed high-risk work environments as a major reason why racial disparities persisted. Only 25% pointed to the lack of health care, and 31% stated racial disparities were beyond people’s control. Racial differences exist regarding perspectives about neglect and testing sites in the Black community. Blacks were also more likely to say that the COVID-19 economic shutdown hurt their personal financial situation.

Selma-Dallas County Participants

Not surprisingly, we found nearly identical results for the Selma-Dallas County

population. The racial groups were more likely to identify Blacks' life choices as a 'major reason'—this compared to the choices of 'minor reason' and 'not a reason'—for racial disparities and COVID-19 hospitalization rates. Similarly, gulfs exist between Blacks and Whites on the other measures. Blacks also stated that the COVID-19 shutdown harmed their personal financial situation more than others.

Causes for racially disparate impact of COVID-19 hospitalizations	Table 7. Race and COVID-19							
	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black		
	Major Reason		Minor Reason		Not a Reason			
Due to Black people's life choices+ (Selma-Dallas County Participants)+	40%	42%	27%	29%	33%	29%		
	45%	41%	19%	29%	36%	29%		
Black people are more likely to work in industries that require contact with the public* (Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	20.5%	53.4%	27.6%	24%	51.9%	22.6%		
	15.7%	55%	24%	24%	63.9%	21%		
Black people are less likely to have access to adequate health care* (Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	25%	53%	22%	28%	53%	19%		
	21%	54%	18%	27%	61%	19%		
Government leaders do not care about preventing deaths among Black Americans* (Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	15%	38.7%	19%	26.7%	65%	34.6%		
	12%	40%	16%	28%	72%	32%		
Government leaders did not provide enough testing for Black communities* (Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	13.5%	39.3%	23.7%	27.6%	62.8%	33.1%		
	11%	41%	18%	29%	71%	30%		
It is beyond people's control* (Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	30.8%	50.4%	29.5%	24.9%	39.7%	24.6%		
	28%	47%	23%	24%	49%	29%		
	Hurt finances more than other		Hurt finances less than others		Impacted finances the same as others	No impact on personal finances		
COVID-19's impact on your own personal financial situation*	14%	28%	21%	10%	24%	33%	41%	29%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)**	15.7%	30.7%	12%	10.2%	28.9%	32.1%	43.4%	27%

Note: The results measure statistical significance. The results measure statistical significance. The asterisk (*) symbol indicates a high confidence that the results are valid and statistically significant (measured at $p < .05$). Two asterisks (**) identify results with a p -value $< .10$, which demonstrate that the result is barely significant. The plus (+) sign indicates that even though there may be racial differences, they are not wide enough to report statistical significance.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

The Black Lives Matter questions in the survey measure the effectiveness and support of the movement. The BLM movement produced some of the largest protests in the nation's history in response to police violence such as the murder of George Floyd. Many activists viewed themselves as the offspring of civil rights icon John Lewis. During the height of the protests in the Summer 2020, Selma and the march across Edmund Pettus Bridge in 1965 were regularly evoked by activists and academicians to draw linkages between past and present movements.²⁴

Alabama Black Belt (Selma-Dallas County and Surrounding Counties)

Whereas 35% of Whites believed BLM was 'very' and 'somewhat' effective, 76% of Blacks positively evaluated the BLM in Table 8. Forty percent (40%) of Whites expressed support ('strong' or 'some') for BLM, yet 87% of Blacks expressed some level of support. In general, we see striking racial differences regarding support for BLM.

Selma-Dallas County Participants

The racial differences toward BLM also show up in the Selma-Dallas County sample population. In fact, 87% of Selma-Dallas County Blacks compared to 40% of Whites said the BLM was effective. Only 26% of Whites 'strongly' or 'somewhat' supported the BLM compared to 78% of Blacks.

Table 8. Black Lives Matter Movement

	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White	Black
	Very Effective		Somewhat Effective		Not Too Effective		Not At All Effective	
Effectiveness of Black Lives Matter Movement*	6%	20%	29%	56%	16%	13%	49%	10%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	10%	58%	18%	29%	17%	7%	55%	6%
	Strongly Support		Somewhat Support		Somewhat Oppose		Strongly Oppose	
Support for the Black Lives Matter*	16%	58%	24%	29%	16%	6%	44%	6%
(Selma-Dallas County Participants)*	7%	20%	19%	58%	14%	12%	59%	10%

Note: The results measure statistical significance. The asterisk (*) symbol indicates a high confidence that the results are valid and statistically significant (measured at $p < .05$). Two asterisks (**) identify results with a p-value $< .10$, which demonstrate that the result is barely significant. The plus (+) sign indicates that even though there may be racial differences, they are not wide enough to report statistical significance.

TRUTH, RACIAL HEALING, AND TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMS

The final section evaluates the TRHT programs in Selma-Dallas County. We look at participation in TRHT initiatives and awareness of specific programs including the: Design Teams; BBCF grant opportunities; public input meetings; “Chat and Chew” community conversations; restorative justice programs; and live storytelling.

Before evaluating the programs, we look at TRHT participation rates. Over one-quarter of Blacks and Whites heard about TRHT programs as indicated in Table 9 with no discernable differences between the races. Although this is not a majority, it is fairly impressive considering that the survey consisted of a random sample. A little over 7 percent of the population participated in TRHT initiatives with no statistical differences between the groups. In other words, Blacks and Whites are participating in TRHT programs at the same rate.

The public input meetings and “Chat and Chew” conversations were the most popular among both racial groups. Yet, public input sessions were 20% more popular among Blacks compared to Whites. “Chat and Chew” events were 14% higher among Blacks. And one-third of Blacks heard about TRHT restorative justice programs and 27% heard about the live storytelling compared to 16% of Whites.

Table 9. Evaluations of Truth, Racial Healing, & Transformation Programs

	White	Black
Have you heard about the TRHT programs?+	27%	28%
Have you participated in TRHT programs?+	7.2%	7.4%
	Have heard of the event	
Heard about monthly meetings of the “design” teams+	10%	17%
Heard about grant opportunities by Black Belt Community Foundation to community organizations+	18%	22%
Heard about public input meetings such as Bosco*	27%	47%
Heard about “Chat & Chew” community conversations that have happened at the Coffee Shoppe and in other neighborhoods in Selma+	24%	38%
Heard about a restorative justice program, such as the one that took place at RB Hudson*	11%	33%
Heard about a live storytelling events such as the growing up in Selma activity called Tenx9+	16%	27%

Note: The results measure statistical significance. The asterisk (*) symbol indicates a high confidence that the results are valid and statistically significant (measured at $p < .05$). Two asterisks (**) identify results with a p -value $< .10$, which demonstrate that the result is barely significant. The plus (+) sign indicates that even though there may be racial differences, they are not wide enough to report statistical significance.

On the issue of crime and governance (see Table 10), both Blacks and Whites are more likely to believe that prevention strategies are the best option or that both prevention and punishment should be employed. Yet, Blacks are more likely than Whites to be more supportive of prevention.

Table 10. Crime, Punishment, and Violence in Selma-Dallas County

City/County should focus resources on crime prevention or punishing crime and violence*	White	Black
Prevention	41%	46%
Punishment	6%	4.7%
Both Prevention and Punishment	53%	47%
Root Causes of Violence in Selma-Dallas County*	White	Black
Laziness	43.4%	34.9%
Poverty	27.7%	41.4%
Naturally violent	1.2%	1.9%
Hopelessness	10.8%	2.3%
No family support	12%	5.6%
Few or no community resources	4.8%	13.5%

Note: The results measure statistical significance. The asterisk (*) symbol indicates a high confidence that the results are valid and statistically significant (measured at $p < .05$). Two asterisks (**) identify results with a p -value $< .10$, which demonstrate that the result is barely significant. The plus (+) sign indicates that even though there may be racial differences, they are not wide enough to report statistical significance.

Even still, explanations about the root causes of violence in Selma-Dallas County underscore racial differences. More Blacks highlight systemic factors such as poverty (41.4%) and the lack of community resources (13.5%). On the other hand, Whites are more prone to point to individual or micro factors such as laziness (43.4%), no family support (10.8%), and hopelessness (12%). Even though the racial differences are significant, it is worth noting that Blacks seem to have internalized some stereotypes, as nearly 35% attributed laziness as root cause of violence.

CONCLUSION

The DCAS report evaluated perspectives that are critical to racial healing on a range of topics with attention to differences between Blacks and Whites. On many issues, the groups are still incredibly divided on racial issues. Yet, we find it most interesting that both Black and White respondents do not trust the government and feel neglected by their local leaders. And, fascinating to us, is the wide agreement in support of increasing the living wage for city/county

employees. The differences in opinions on social movements related to race and a lack of equitable treatment surrounding various issues is striking. There is little common ground on support for Black Lives Matter. Similarly, Blacks and Whites in DCAS disagree about the equitable treatment of Blacks by police, courts, in employment, in public schools, in systems of care, and even in recreational activities such as shopping, with Blacks believing that they have been treated worse in these various areas. They also disagree about why there is a racially disparate impact in COVID-19 hospitalizations.

Recommendations

Having discussed racial divisions, it is important to summarize some points of departure that may offer pathways for ‘racial healing’ and interracial/multiracial alliance building in Selma and the Black Belt region. First, Blacks and Whites (and presumably other racial/ethnic groups) may be willing to come together around ‘good government’ reforms that encourage participation and public input. Both groups, though to varying degrees, have concerns that local government officials in their respective counties are either unwilling or unable to address their concerns. Good government approaches to governance that promote inclusion, shared governance, and procedural justice may unite racial groups. Participatory governance models have traction in other parts of the South, especially when local cultures, histories, and traditions are considered.²⁵

Second, there is some proximity between the racial groups on economic justice issues. A living wage for city employees (distinguished from living wages for private sector employees) and even increases in city/county budgets are areas where there is some cohesion. Here, we are suggesting that civic leaders and elected officials that promote living wage policies may be able to bridge divisions across racial groups. There is some evidence that government-sponsored

employment or wage programs have more traction than expected, especially in areas with significant income inequality. When these programs are backed by diverse and reputable political leaders, grassroots advocates, and civic organizations,²⁶ then they may be able to bridge the racial divide.²⁷ These may entail training programs that leverage public resources with private sector organizations or job training centers.²⁸ Given the popularity of the career center in Selma-Dallas County, a city-backed jobs program that pays a living wage and coordinated in partnership with the career center may garner support among Blacks and Whites.

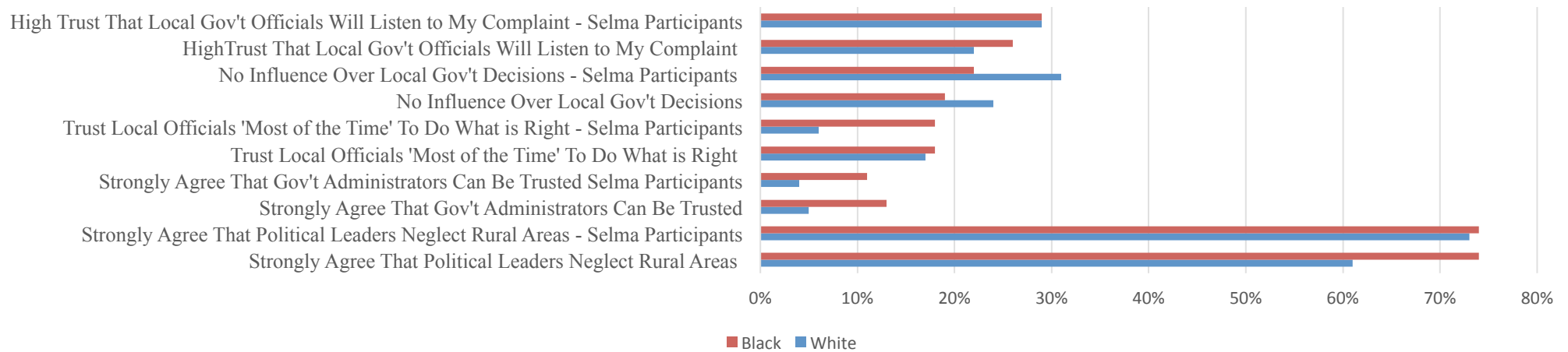
A third set of recommendations based on the findings highlights the need to explore crime prevention and restorative justice programs to mitigate crime. Certainly, there are troubling stereotypes (among Whites and Blacks alike) about the root causes of why people participate in crime. Yet, prevention has considerable support (over 40%) among both groups. Among Blacks in Selma-Dallas County, restorative justice approaches are championed as demonstrated in the TRHT program.

Fourth, public input matters in governance and feelings of efficacy. About one-quarter of Whites heard about the public input and “Chat and Chew” sessions in Selma-Dallas County. Between 38-47% of Blacks heard about these events. These activities can be leveraged to encourage participation in good governance and crime prevention strategies, all of which can promote racial healing.

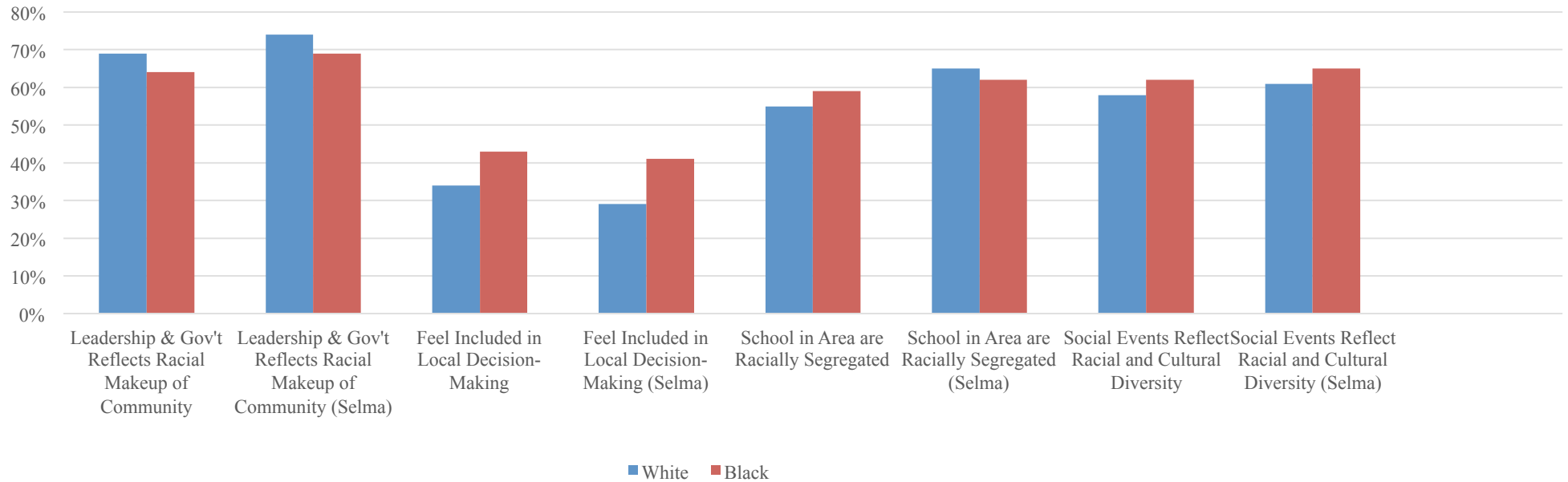
A fifth set of recommendations may want to call for congressional hearings in the Alabama Black Belt that draws upon the experiences of TRHT sessions and participants. The hearings could focus on the promotion of good governance strategies, a rural economic development initiative for distressed communities, and a regional commission patterned after the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Altogether, the findings in this report are not necessarily surprising. Yet, we believe they serve as a starting point for more research inquiry to better understand points of commonality, difference, and how we might go about healing racial divisions and addressing poverty and chronic distress in rural areas. Further, the TRHT programs and other scholarly research indicates that community interventions can make a difference in promoting efficacy, building multiracial/cross-racial coalitions and alliances, and holding officials accountable.

Appendix A (Supplemental Report)

Figure 1. Trust in Government

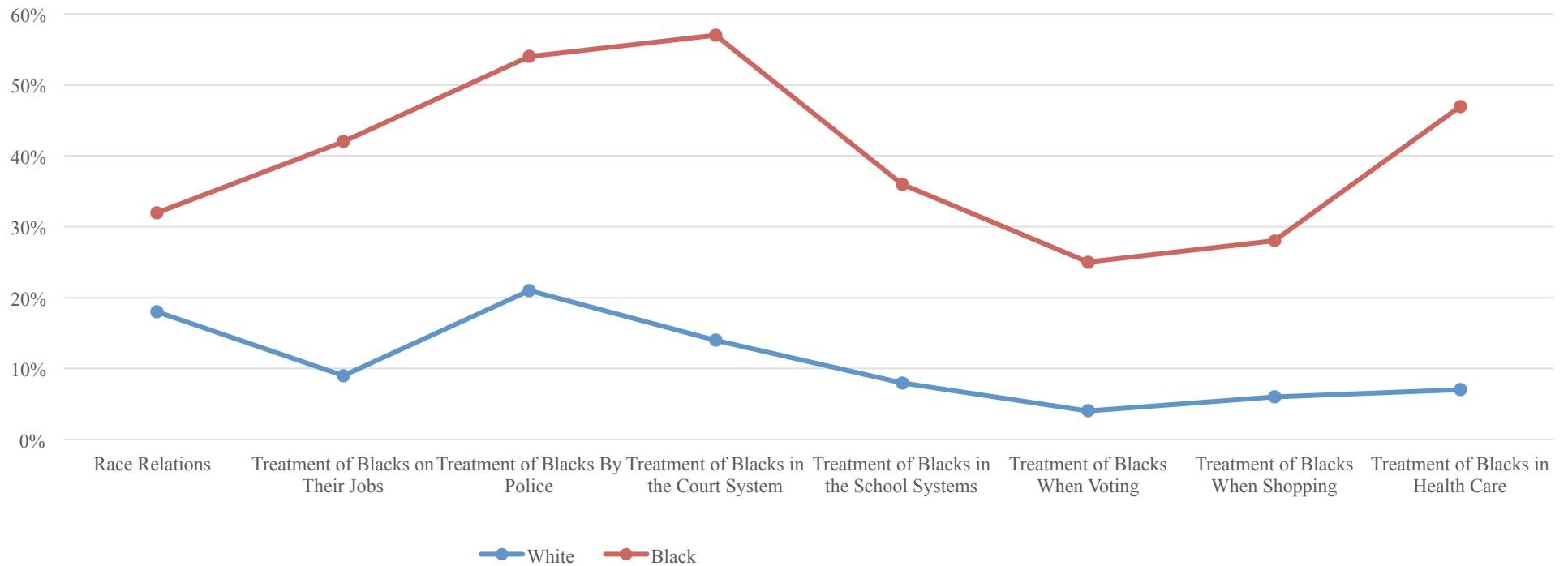
Note: Figure 1 summarizes the data in [Table 3](#) in the full report. The figure states that both Blacks and Whites have low levels of trust in local government officials and the respondents believe that political leaders neglect the interests of the rural communities. Regarding racial differences, Whites are more likely to state that they have no influence over local government decisions and that that local government officials cannot be trusted, especially in Selma-Dallas County.

Figure 2. Race, Society, and Government Relations

*The results combine the "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree"" and "strong support" and "somewhat support" responses in the dataset.

Note: Figure 2 summarizes the data in [Table 4](#) in the full report. The findings show that there is similarity between Blacks and Whites. Both groups believe that local government leadership reflects the racial makeup of their communities and that social events are racially and culturally diverse. However, they believe the school systems are racially segregated and that they are excluded from local decision-making.

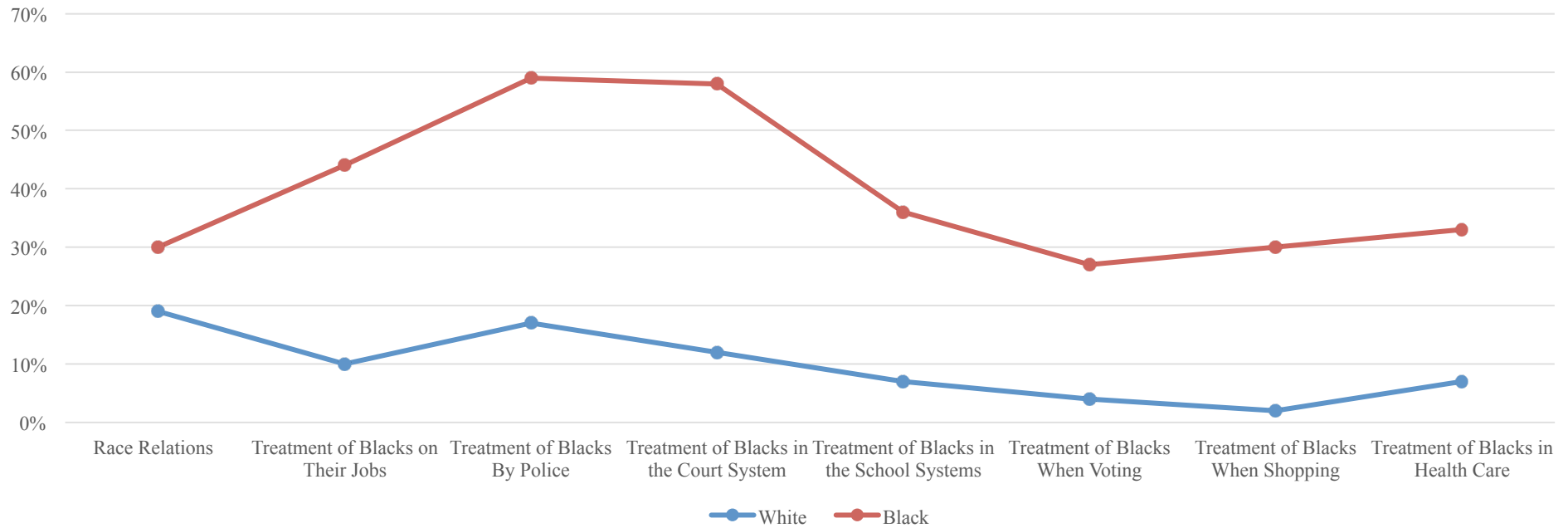
**Figure 3. Race Relations and Polarization
(Selma-Dallas County and the Surrounding Counties)**



*The survey asks the respondents if race relations and the treatment of Blacks compared to Whites are getting "better, the same, or worse." This figure reports those who reported that conditions are getting worse.

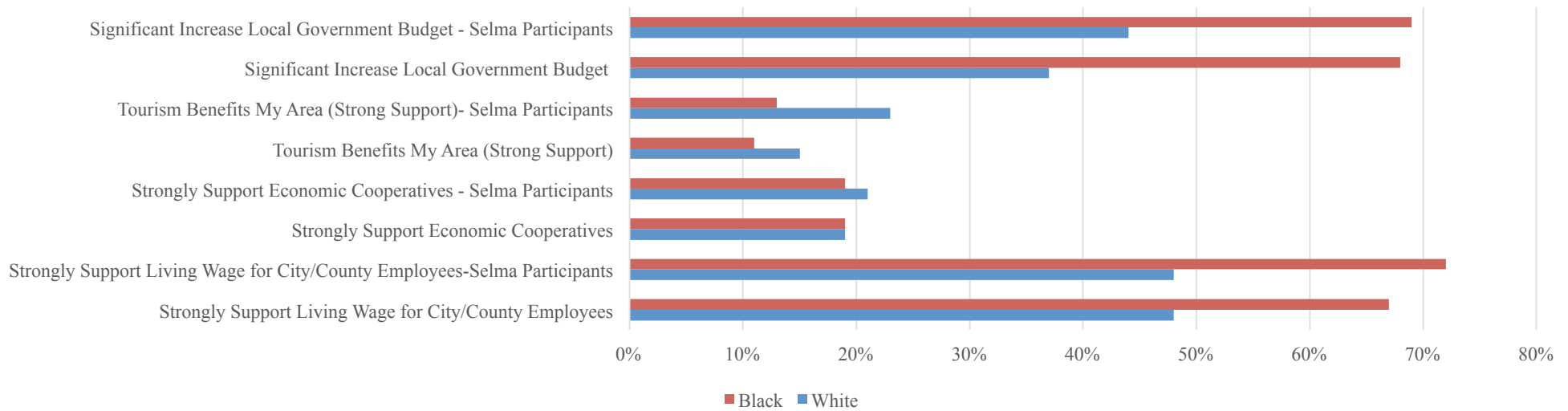
Note: Figure 3 summarizes the data in [Table 5](#) in the full report. The findings pertain to respondents in ‘Selma-Dallas County and the surrounding counties’. The findings show patterns of racial polarization, especially regarding the treatment of Blacks compared to Whites. Blacks overwhelmingly believe they are treated “worse” than Whites with the widest divisions related to police, the court system, and health care system. That is, Blacks view racism as a significant problem in Selma-Dallas County and the surrounding counties.

**Figure 4. Race Relations and Polarization
(Only Selma-Dallas County Participants)**



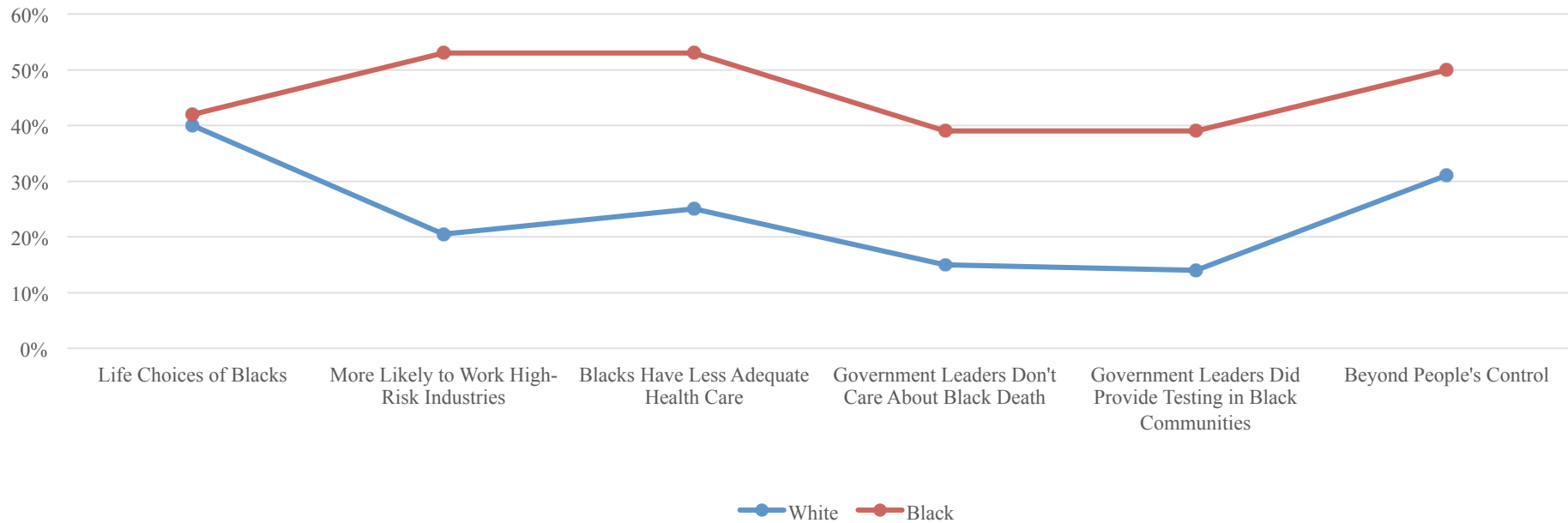
*The survey asks the respondents if race relations and the treatment of Blacks compared to Whites are getting "better, the same, or worse."
This figure reports those who reported that conditions are getting worse.

Note: Figure 4 summarizes the data in [Table 5](#) in the full report. The findings pertain only to the respondents in ‘Selma-Dallas County’. The findings show patterns of racial polarization, especially regarding the treatment of Blacks compared to Whites. Blacks overwhelmingly believe they are treated “worse” than Whites with the widest divisions related to police, the court system, and health care system. That is, Blacks view racism as a significant problem in Selma-Dallas County.

Figure 5. Local Economies

Note: Figure 5 summarizes the data in [Table 6](#) in the full report. The findings show that Blacks have the highest level of support for increases in local government budgets and living wages for city and county employees. Even still, regarding “strong support” for government employee-based living wages, there is considerable support on Whites. Both Blacks and Whites also believe the tourism economy does not benefit the area.

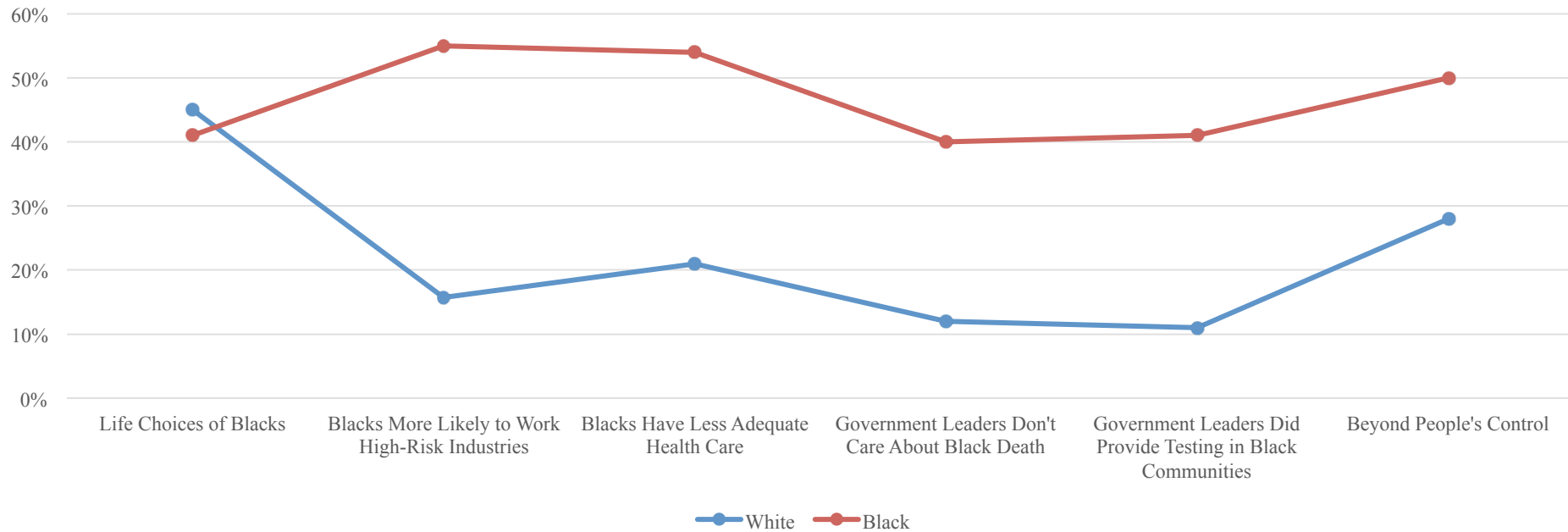
**Figure 6. Race and COVID-19
(Selma-Dallas County and the Surrounding Counties)**



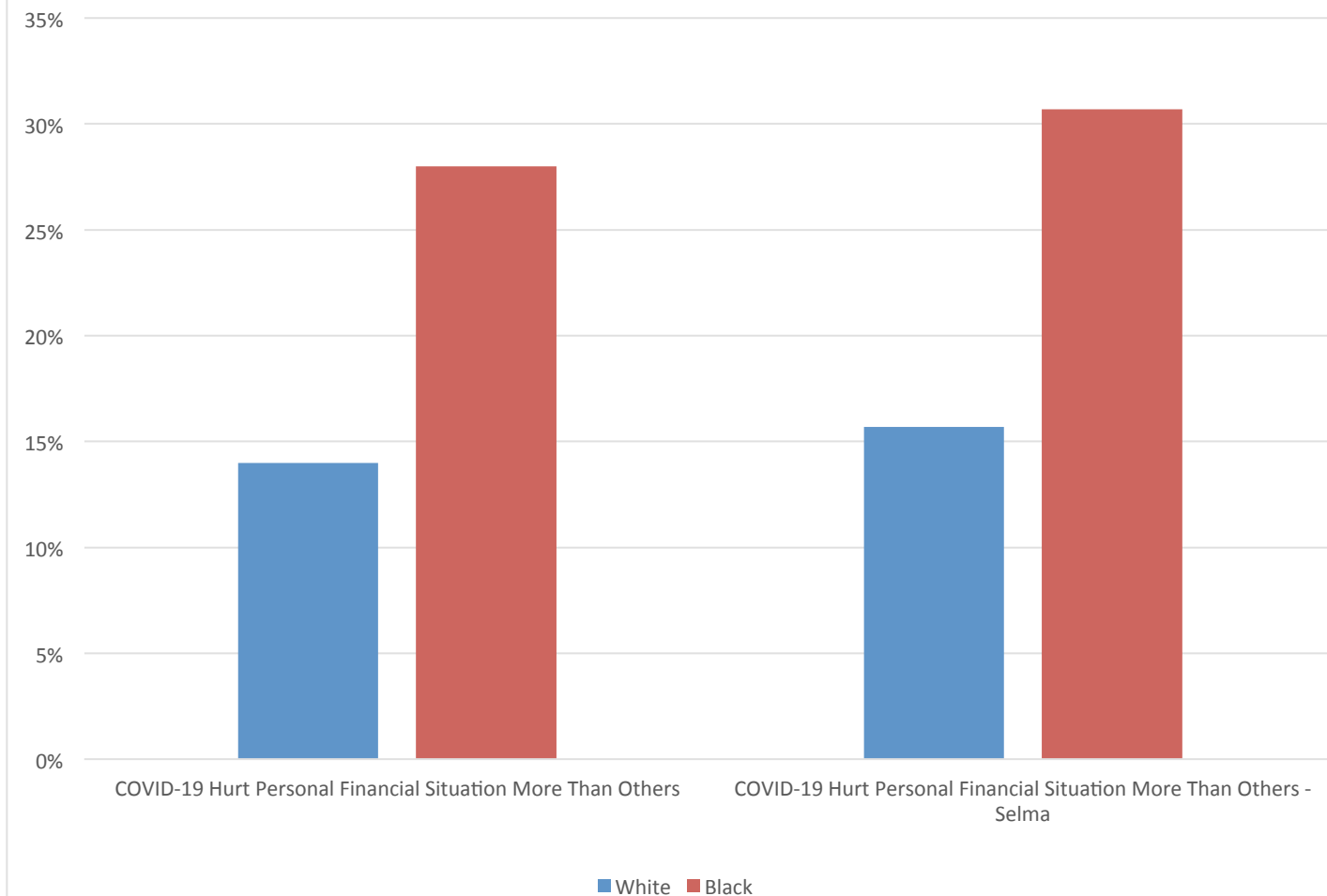
*The results measure evaluate the "major reason" why the survey participants believe there has been a racially disparate impact in COVID-19 hospitalizations.

Note: Figure 6 summarizes the data in [Table 7](#) in the full report. The findings measure opinions in 'Selma-Dallas County and the surrounding counties' about why Blacks are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 hospitalization. While Blacks and Whites both agree that the life choices of Blacks have contributed to hospitalization rates, they disagree on the other causes. Blacks compared to Whites overwhelmingly believe that the racially disproportionate impact of COVID-19 is due to systemic, institutional, and political factors.

**Figure 7. Race and COVID-19
(Only Selma-Dallas County Participants)**

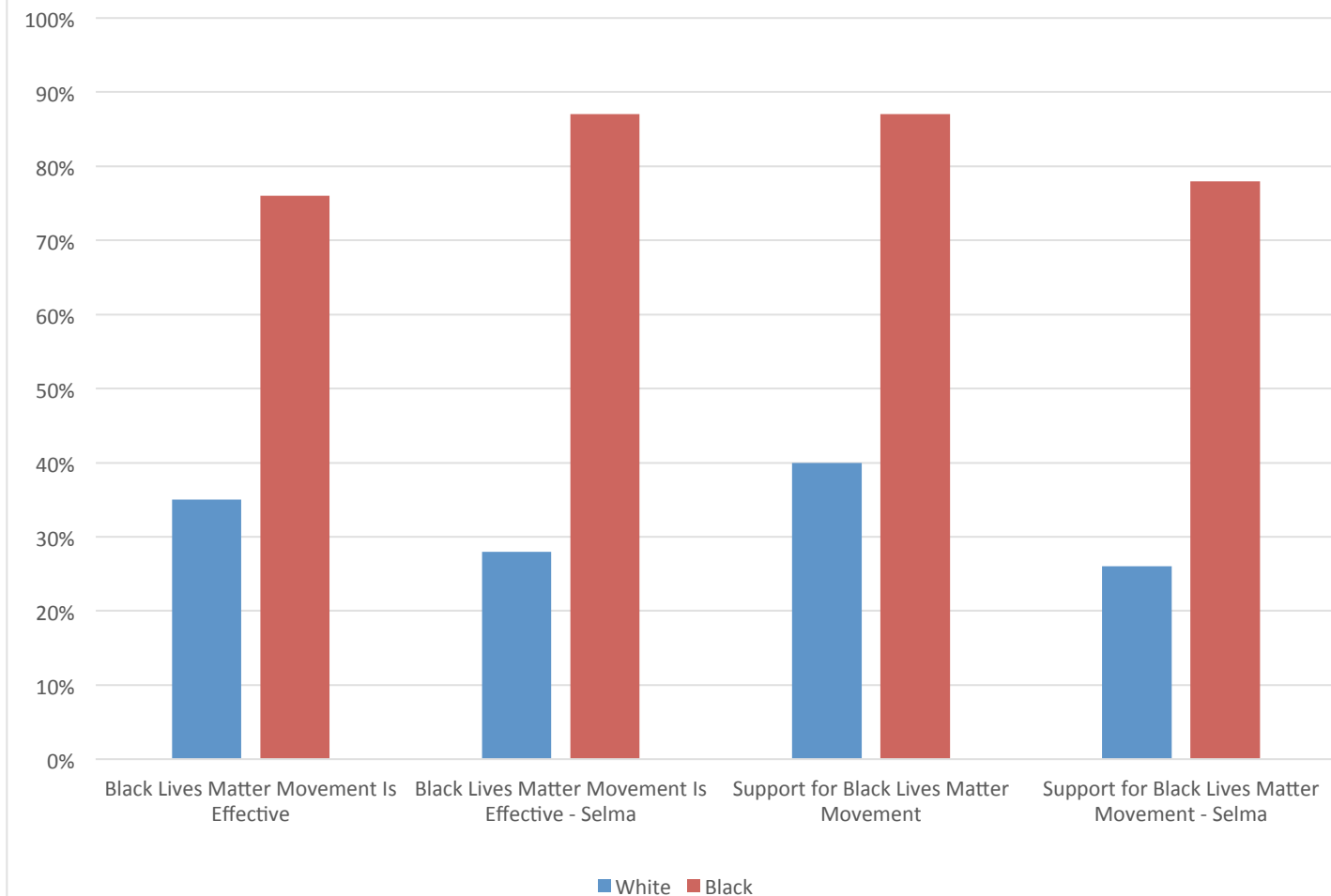


Note: Figure 7 summarizes the data in [Table 7](#) in the full report. The findings measure opinions for only ‘Selma-Dallas County’ respondents about why Blacks are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 hospitalization. While Blacks and Whites both agree that the life choices of Blacks have contributed to hospitalization rates, they disagree on the other causes. Blacks compared to Whites overwhelmingly believe that the racially disproportionate impact of COVID-19 is due to systemic, institutional, and political factors.

Figure 8. Impact of COVID-19 on Personal Financial Situation

*The results combine "very effective" and "somewhat effective" and "strong support" and "somewhat support" responses in the dataset.

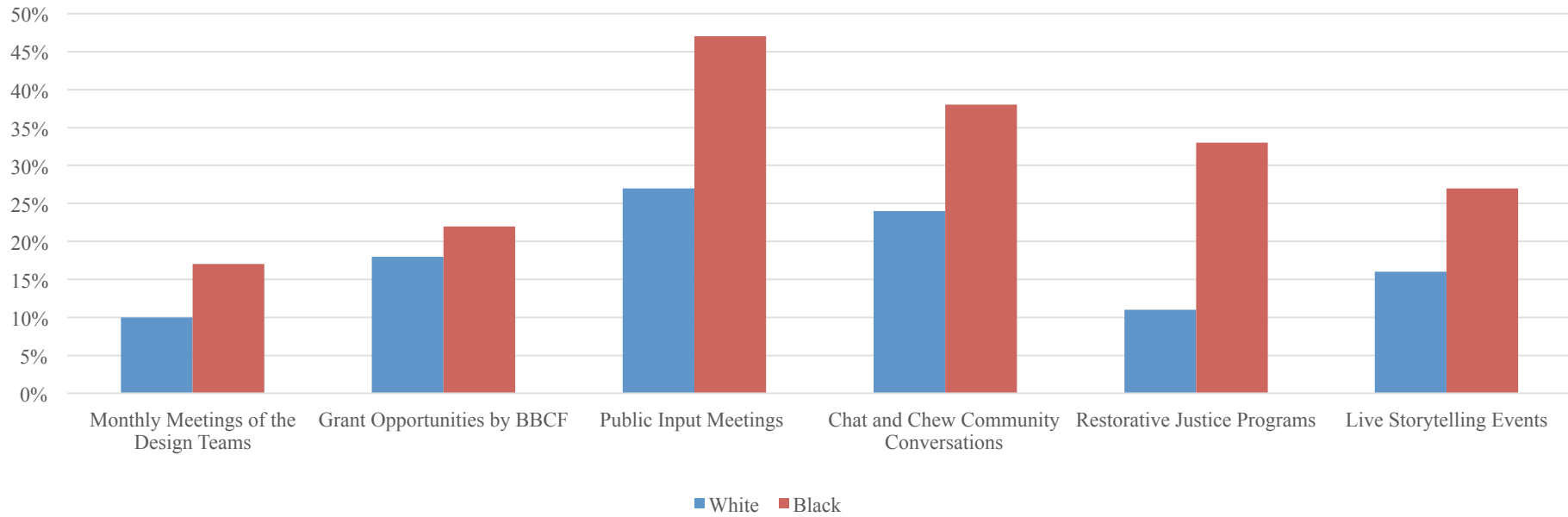
Note: Figure 8 summarizes the data in [Table 7](#) in the full report. The findings show that Blacks are twice as more likely than Whites to say that their personal financial situation was made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 9. Black Lives Matter Movement

*The results combine "very effective" and "somewhat effective" and "strong support" and "somewhat support" responses in the dataset.

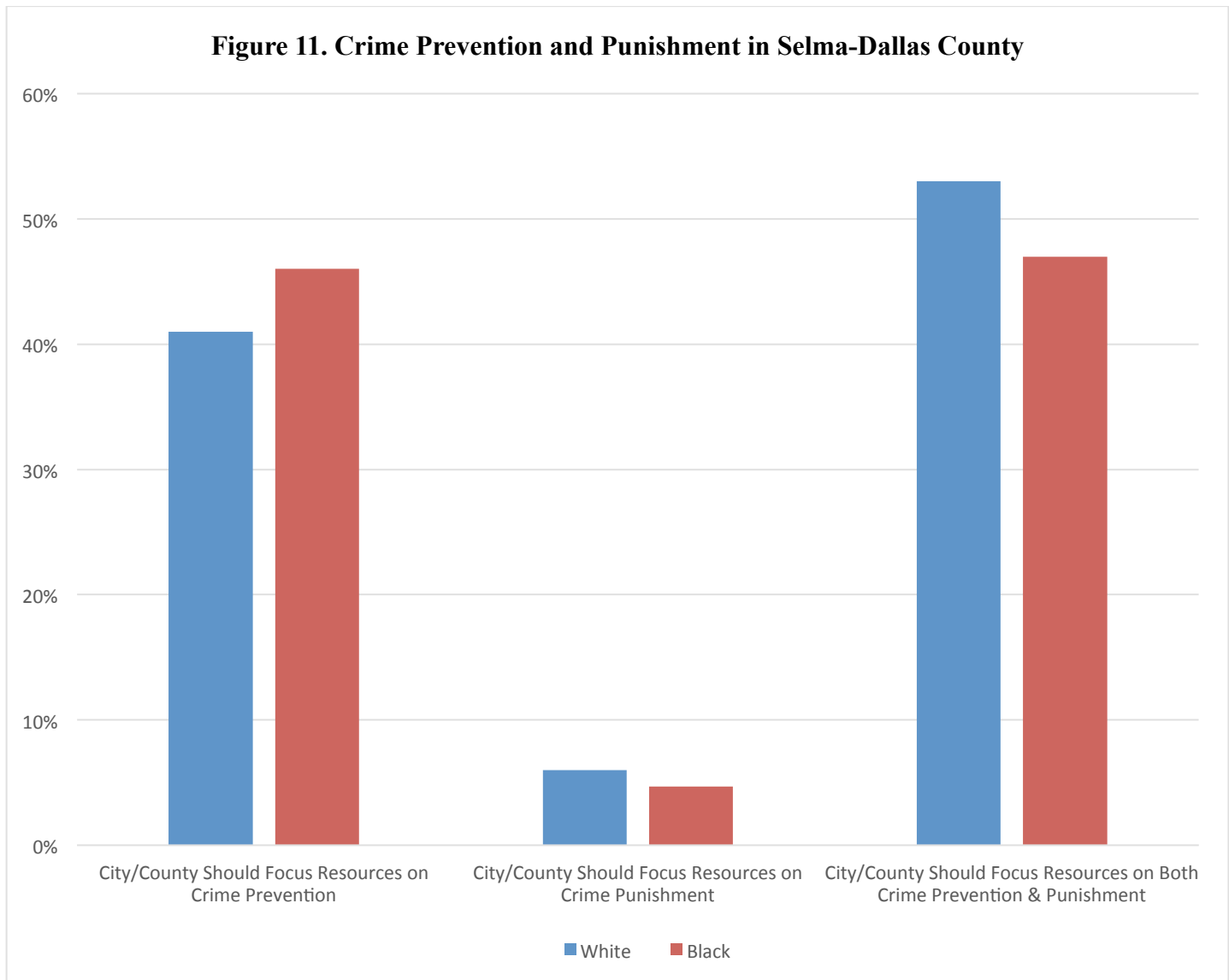
Note: Figure 9 summarizes the data in Table 8 in the full report. The findings show that Blacks and Whites have different conclusions about the effectiveness of the Black Lives Matter Movement and that Blacks are overwhelmingly more supportive of the movement.

Figure 10. Evaluations of TRHT programs in Selma-Dallas County

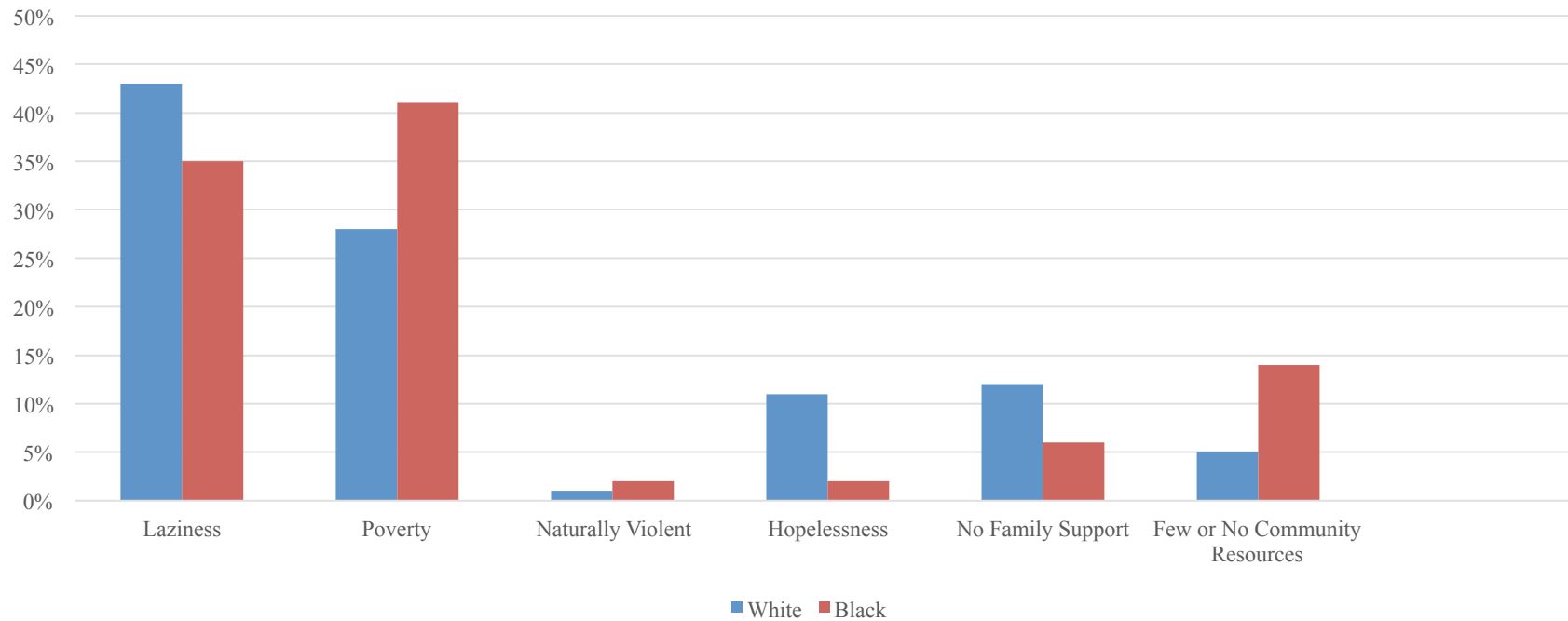


*The results evaluate whether Selma-Dallas County residents "heard" about TRHT programs.

Note: Figure 10 summarizes the data in [Table 9](#) in the full report. The TRHT programs that reached the most Whites have been the Public Input meetings and “Chat and Chew” community conversations. The Public Input meetings, Live Storytelling events, “Chat and Chew” community conversations, and restorative justice programs had their greatest appeal among Blacks.



Note: Figure 11 summarizes the data in Table 9 in the full report. The findings show considerable support for crime ‘prevention strategies’ in Selma-Dallas County to address crime. There is little support for ‘punishment’ as the sole remedy to resolving crime.

Figure 12. Root Causes of Violence in Selma-Dallas County

Note: Figure 12 summarizes the data in [Table 9](#) in the full report. Blacks and Whites believed “laziness” was a root cause of violence in Selma-Dallas County. Blacks were also more likely to state that poverty and the lack of community resources are root causes of violence.

Appendix B (Survey)

[1] Which of the following do you believe are the key economic players in X LOCATION/X County?

1. X LOCATION Economic Development Authority
2. Chamber of Commerce
3. Community College in your area
4. State legislators
5. City or County officials
6. Large businesses
7. Small businesses
8. X LOCATION City Schools
9. Other:

[2] Please indicate whether or not you are aware of the following career and workforce development programs in X LOCATION/X County (select all that apply):

1. X LOCATION Career Center offerings
2. X County Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act
3. Community College in your area
4. Skills training in other schools
5. Career counseling in various schools
6. Youth internship or apprenticeship programs
7. Programs to support entrepreneurs
8. Other (please list)

[3] Studies have shown that budgets in Alabama cities and counties, even with the same population sizes, have different budgets than your city and county governments. Do you think your city or county budget should be increased, stay the same, or decreased?

1. Increased a great deal
2. Increased a moderate amount
3. Decreased a little
4. Decreased a great deal

[4] We would like you to tell us if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly?

Strongly	Agree	Neither	Somewhat	Strongly
Agree	Somewhat		Disagree	Disagree

There have been too many political leaders who neglect the interests of people who live in rural areas.

1	2	3	4	5
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[5] Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement: Most government administrators can be trusted to do what is best for the country.

1. Strongly agree

2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

[6] How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in your area to do what is right -- just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or almost ever?

1. Just about always
2. Most of the time
3. Some of the time
4. Almost never

[7] How much influence do you think people like you can have over local government decisions -- a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or none at all?

1. A lot
2. A moderate amount
3. A little
4. None at all

[8] If you had some complaint about a local government activity and took that complaint to a member of the local government council or commission, would you expect him or her to pay a lot of attention to what you say, some attention, very little attention, or none at all?

1. A lot of attention
2. Some attention
3. Very little attention
4. None at all

[9] Please indicate whether the following statements are true or false in regard to your personal and financial circumstances.

1. I own at least one business in X County
2. I own the place where I live
3. I rent the place where I live
4. I own land in X County (other than land where my home is located)
5. I own stocks or bonds
6. I have a retirement plan
7. I have received or expect to receive an inheritance
8. I have more than \$500 saved

[10] A living wage is the hourly rate that an individual in a household must earn to support his or herself and/or their family. Research shows that the living wage in Alabama is \$11/hour for a single adult with no dependents (Q19). Please tell us how much you would support or oppose a city or county policy that required the city to pay a living wage to all city employees?

1. Strongly support
2. Somewhat support
3. Neither support or oppose
4. Somewhat oppose
5. Strongly oppose

[11] There is a proposal called economic cooperatives, which are businesses owned all or in part by workers, community members, producers, or others. From what you've heard or read, do you support or oppose economic cooperatives, or haven't you heard enough to have an opinion?

1. Strongly support
2. Somewhat support
3. Neither support or oppose
4. Somewhat oppose
5. Strongly oppose

[12] Read the following the statement. We would like you to tell us if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly.

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. The leadership and government in your area reflects the racial makeup of our community.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I feel included and have a voice in decisions made by the leaders in my area.	1	2	3	4	5
c. I believe schools in my area racially segregated.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Social events in our community reflect racial diversity and recognizes various backgrounds and heritages	1	2	3	4	5
e. Social events in my area build a sense of community.	1	2	3	4	5
g. The average person in my area benefits from tourism.	1	2	3	4	5

(Only Ask Residents of Selma and Dallas County)

[13] You may know about some initiatives taking place in Selma. Have you heard about a project called the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT) Selma that is coordinated by the Black Belt Community Foundation (BBCF) and the Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth & Reconciliation (with funding from the Kellogg Foundation)?

1. Yes
2. No

3. Not Sure

[14] If you are familiar with the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Selma, please tell me your thoughts about it (only answer the next question if you heard of this initiative):

1. I heard good things about the project.
2. I heard bad things about the project.
3. I heard neither good or bad things about the project.

[15] If you are familiar with the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Selma, have you participated in any of its programs, meetings, or events?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not Sure

[16] Next, let's take a look at several programs and projects coordinated by the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Selma. Tell me if you have heard about these projects and knew if they were coordinated by Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Selma.

Have heard of the event	Know Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Selma put on this event	Have Not Heard of It
a. Monthly meetings, also called "Design Teams" that focus on the three areas of law, economy and separation		
1	2	3
b. Re-granting through Black Belt Community Foundation to community organizations (around \$175,000 over 3 years)		
1	2	3
c. Public input meetings such as Bosco(for ex., at Bosco in Aug. of 2018) to get input about Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation		
1	2	3
d. Regular "Chat & Chew" community conversations that have happened at the Coffee Shoppe and in other neighborhoods in Selma		
1	2	3
e. A restorative justice program, such as the one that took place at RB Hudson, that helps young people and others talk through their problems as an alternative to punishment and school suspension?		
1	2	3
f. Live storytelling events such as the growing up in Selma activity called Tenx9 that took place in November 2019.		
1	2	3

[17] If you had to choose, do you think your city and county need to focus more resources on preventing crime and violence or on punishing crime and violence?

1. On preventing crime and violence
2. On punishing crime and violence
3. Both punishment and prevention are best
4. Something else/Other: [open end]

[18] What do you think the primary root cause or causes are of violence in Selma and Dallas County? People who are involved in violence have the problem(s) of (check one or more):

1. Laziness
2. Poverty
3. Naturally violent
4. Hopelessness
5. No family support
6. Few or no community resources

[19] Where in Selma or Dallas County do you call home:

1. Old Towne
2. East Selma
3. Valley Grande
4. Selmont
5. Orville
6. West Selma
7. Smoky City
8. Other within Selma city limits
9. Other in Dallas County

[20] From what you've read and heard, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the Black Lives Matter movement?

1. Strongly support
2. Somewhat support
3. Somewhat oppose
4. Strongly oppose

[21] How effective do you think the Black Lives Matter Movement is in helping blacks achieve equality in the country--very effective, somewhat effective, not too effective or not at all effective?

1. Very effective
2. Somewhat effective
3. Not too effective
4. Not at all effective

[22] How would you rate the job that police or law enforcement in your community are doing when it comes to each of the following:

Very Unfavorable	Somewhat Unfavorable	Neither	Favorable	Very Favorable
a. Holding officers accountable when misconduct occurs				
1	2	3	4	5
b. Using the right amount of force for each situation				
1	2	3	4	5
c. Treating racial and ethnic groups equally				
1	2	3	4	5
d. Protecting people from crime				
1	2	3	4	5

[23] Do you think race relations in the United States are getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

1. Getting better
2. Getting worse
3. Staying about the same
4. No answer

[24] Please tell us how fair or unfair you believe Blacks in your community are treated compared to Whites?

	Blacks Treated More Fairly	Blacks and Whites Are Treated the Same	Blacks Are Treated More Unfairly
1. On the job or at work	1	2	3
2. In stores or restaurants	1	2	3
3. Treatment by hospitals	1	2	3
4. In dealing with the police	1	2	3
5. In the courts	1	2	3
6. In local public schools	1	2	3
7. When voting in elections	1	2	3

[25] Just your impression, how would you describe the coronavirus outbreak's impact on your [YOU OR SOMEONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD] own personal financial situation? The outbreak has:

1. Hurt my finances MORE than those of most
2. Hurt my finances LESS than those of most other
3. Impacted my finances about the same as it has most other people
4. [The outbreak has not impacted my personal financial situation]

[26] As you may know, different news organizations and scientists suggest that Black people in our country have been hospitalized with COVID-19 at higher rates than other racial or ethnic

groups. Do you think the reasons why Black people in our country have been hospitalized with COVID-19 at higher rates than other racial or ethnic groups is because....Major Reason, Minor Reason, Not a Reason.

	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
a. Black people's choices and lifestyles, or circumstances?	1	2	3
b. Black people are more likely to work in industries that require contact with the public?	1	2	3
c. Black people are less likely to have access to adequate health care?	1	2	3
d. Government leaders do not care about preventing deaths among black Americans?	1	2	3
e. Government leaders did not provide enough testing for black communities?	1	2	3
f. It is beyond people's control	1	2	3

[27] Are you, yourself, now covered by any form of health insurance or health plan? This would include any private insurance plan through your employer or that you purchase yourself, as well as a government program like Medicare or Medicaid (check one or more):

1. Medicare
2. Medicaid
3. Private or Employer-Based Insurance
4. Accessed Health Care Through the Affordable Care Act
5. No Insurance

[28] Thinking about this past November election for President... did you to vote for Donald Trump, Joe Biden, or some other candidate?

1. Donald Trump/Mike Pence
2. Joe Biden/Kamala Harris
3. Some other candidate
4. Did not vote

[29] Do you have children?

1. Yes
2. No

[30] Are you now serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces -- the U.S. Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, or Navy -- or have you previously served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces, or have you never served on active duty in the U.S. armed forces?

1. Now serving on active duty

2. Previously served on active duty but not now on active duty
3. Have never served on active duty

[31] Are you currently married, living with a partner, divorced, separated, widowed or have you never been married?

1. Married
2. Living with a partner
3. Divorced
4. Separated
5. Widowed
6. Never been married

[32] In what year were you born? _____

[33] Are you male or female?

1. Male
2. Female

[34] What racial or ethnic group best describes you?

1. White
2. Black
3. Hispanic/Latino
4. Asian
5. Native American
6. Middle Eastern
7. Mixed Race
8. Other

[35] What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1. No high school degree
2. High school graduate
3. Some college, but no degree (yet)
4. 2-year college degree
5. 4-year college degree
6. Postgraduate degree

[36] Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

1. Working full time now
2. Working part time now
3. Temporarily laid off
4. Unemployed
5. Retired

6. Permanently disabled
7. Taking care of home or family
8. Student
9. Other

[37] Thinking back over the last year, what was your family's annual income?

1. Less than \$20,000
2. \$20,000 - \$29,999
3. \$30,000 - \$50,000
4. \$50,000 - \$70,000
5. \$70,000 - \$100,000 -
6. \$100,000 - \$150,000
7. \$150,000 - or more

[38] Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a...?

1. Democrat
2. Republican
3. Independent
4. Other
5. Not sure

[39] Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a...?

1. Strong Democrat
2. Not very strong Democrat
3. Lean Democrat
4. Independent
5. Lean Republican
6. Not very strong Democrat
7. Strong Republican
8. Other _____
9. Not sure

[40] Are you registered to vote?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

[41] In general, how would you describe your own political viewpoint?

1. Very liberal
2. Liberal
3. Moderate

4. Conservative
5. Very conservative
6. Not sure
7. Don't know

[42] People practice their religion in different ways. Outside of attending religious services, how often do you pray?

1. Several times a day
2. Once a day
3. A few times a week
4. Once a week
5. A few times a month
6. Seldom
7. Never
8. Don't know

[43] What is the zip code for your current residential location?

zip code: _____

Notes

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⁴ Megan L. McKenna, et. al, “Human Intestinal Parasite Burden and Poor Sanitation in Rural Alabama,” *Am. J. Trop. Med. Hyg.*, vol. 97, no. 5 (2017), 1623–1628.

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⁷ Daniel T. Lichter and David L. Brown, “Rural America in an Urban Society: Changing Spatial and Social Boundaries,” *Annual Review of Sociology* , 2011, vol. 37, 570-571.

⁸ Ann R. Tickamyer, Jennifer Sherman and Jennifer Warlick, “Immigration Trends and Immigrant Poverty,” in *Rural America Rural Poverty in the United States*, eds. Shannon M. Monnat, Raeven Faye Chandler and J. Celeste Lay (New York: Columbia University Press), 168-201; Movement Advancement Project, *Where We Call Home: LGBT People of Color in Rural America*, <https://www.arcusfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/MAP-lgbt->

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¹⁰ Mark H. Harvey and Rosalind P. Harris, “Racial Inequalities and Poverty,” in *Rural America Rural Poverty in the United States*, eds. Shannon M. Monnat, Raeven Faye Chandler and J. Celeste Lay (New York: Columbia University Press), 141-167.

¹¹ New South Research is a marketing research firm with over five decades of experience. It conducts surveys through landlines, cell phones, and the internet; focus groups and mock trials, and field interviews. See <https://newsouthresearch.com/>.

¹² W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Truth, Racial Healing, & Transformation, <https://healourcommunities.org/>.

¹³ Thomas A. Arcury, Sara A. Quandt, and Linda McCauley, “Farmworkers and Pesticides: Community-Based Research,” *Environmental Health Perspectives*, vol. 108, no. 8 (August 2000), 787.

¹⁴ Steven Tenny and Ibrahim Abdelgawad, “Statistical Significance,” *StatPearls*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK459346/>, July 10, 2020.

¹⁵ The most important (statistically significant) findings are denoted by an asterisk (*) in the Tables. This means we are confident at a $p < .05$ level that the differential results are reliable. Two asterisks (**) identify results at $p < .10$. This means we are less confident, but the results may be important for us to discuss them in the findings. The plus (+) symbol indicates that the findings are not statistically significant.

¹⁶ Allan Cigler and Mark R. Joslyn, “The Extensiveness of Group Membership and Social

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¹⁸ Maxine Walters, “Good News for Uniontown, Alabama After Years of Legal Battles,” <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/environmental-law-review/blog/uniontown-alabama-legal-battles/>, November 15, 2019.

¹⁹ Claire Jean Kim, “Managing the Racial Breach: Clinton, Black-White Polarization, and the Race Initiative,” *Political Science Quarterly* vol. 117, no. 1 (Spring, 2002), 55-79.

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²³ Ramsey Archibald, “Black Belt Hit Hard as Coronavirus Cases Surge in Rural Alabama,”

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²⁷ For an example, see Michael Cooper, “In Tennessee Corner, Stimulus Meets New Deal,” *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/28/us/28county.html>, July 27, 2008. This article discusses how Governor Phil Bredesen created a Marshall Plan-type jobs program in Perry County, Tennessee. The jobs program mitigated rising unemployment in a county that has 95% White population.

²⁸ For examples of public-private partnerships, see Sekou Franklin, “Race, Class and Green jobs in Low-Income Communities in the US: Challenges for Community Development,” in *Class, Inequality and Community Development*, Mae Shaw and Marjorie Mayo, eds. (Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2016), 77-91.