The State of Wellbeing in Atlanta

A BASELINE ANALYSIS

Data derived from the
Gallup National Health and
Well-Being Index™ 2009-2018

NLC
NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
CITIES STRONG TOGETHER

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
Wellbeing Research Centre

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The State of Wellbeing in Atlanta

01 /04   **WHAT IS WELLBEING?**
And why does it matter?

02 /04   **THE STATE OF WELLBEING IN ATLANTA**
A | Descriptive statistics and trends
B | Maps and ZIP-code ranking

03 /04   **WELLBEING DRIVER ANALYSIS**
What matters most for wellbeing in Atlanta?

04 /04   **APPENDIX**
A | Driver analysis methodology and variable groupings
B | Data caveats

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01

What Is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing is about how we are doing as *individuals* and *communities* and, in turn, how that makes us feel about the way *our* lives are going.

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Why Does Wellbeing Matter?

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Research
Centre

Our wellbeing and the wellbeing of our families and community is what ultimately matters.

A recent large-scale survey shows that more than three-quarters (78%) of people globally now feel strongly that happiness and wellbeing should be prioritized over money.*

This demand for change is championed by younger members of society, with the 25-34-year-old age group representing the highest percentage of responses in favor of change.

Creating the best possible conditions for wellbeing is not just the right thing to do philosophically — it is also the smart thing to do, since happier individuals live longer and healthier lives, are more pro-social and more productive, and show greater support for incumbent government leaders.

*Unilever Wall's 2020 Happiness Research
https://www.unilever.com/Images/walls-manifesto_tcm244-558473_en.pdf

78%

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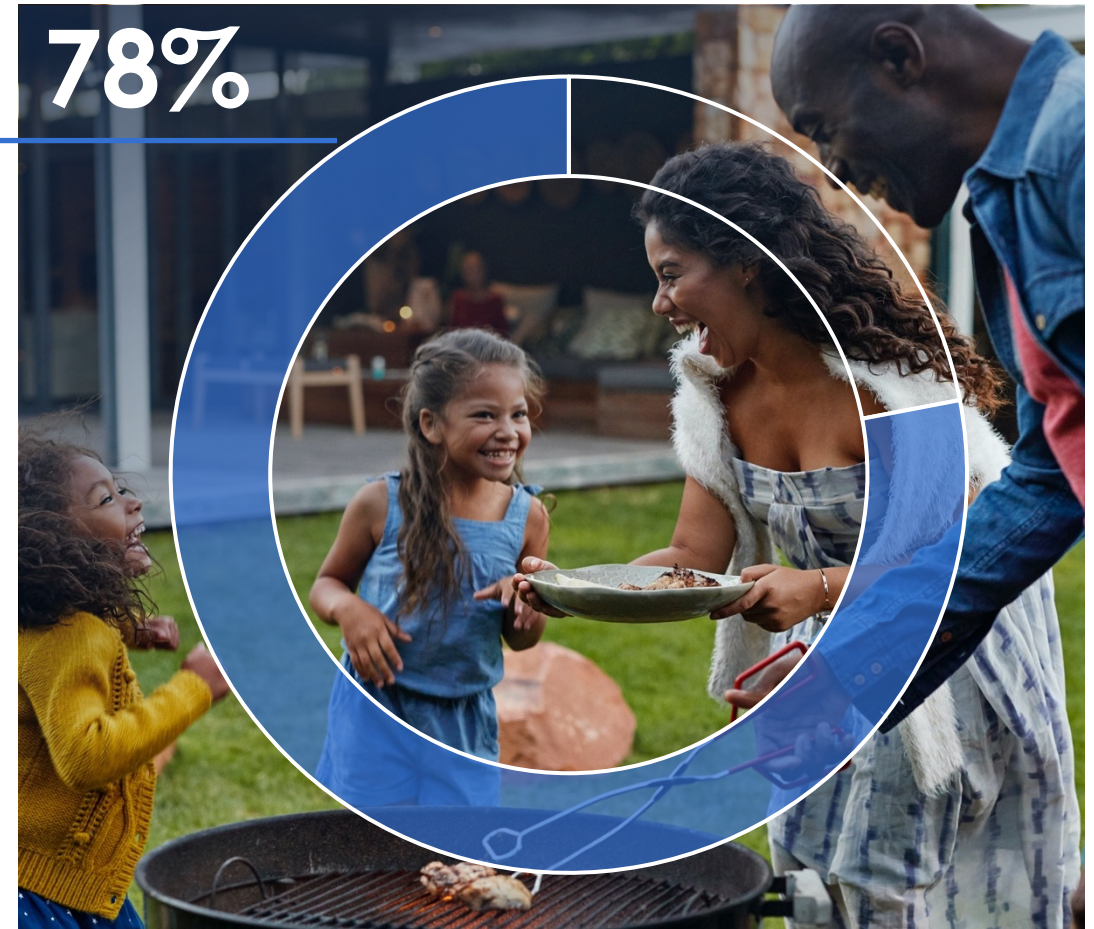
Wellbeing as the North Star in Evidence-Based Policymaking

The scientific study of wellbeing has made much progress over the past few decades and is now sufficiently developed to make population wellbeing a feasible policy aim.
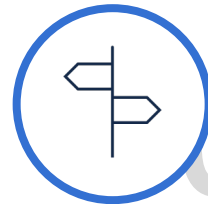
THREE OBVIOUS POLICY USES FOR WELLBEING DATA STAND OUT:

01 To monitor progress in terms of the wellbeing of people

02 To serve as a basis for policy formulation and prioritization given limited budget resources

03 To inform policy evaluation

Wellbeing measurement naturally lends itself to being the overarching North Star or "common currency" that brings together policy action on essential drivers of wellbeing, such as *health*, *education*, *economic opportunities* and *racial equity*.

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How to Measure Wellbeing?

The primary measure for wellbeing asks survey respondents to evaluate the quality of their life. This is normally done by asking respondents to rate their life satisfaction on a scale from 0 to 10.

0 ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● 10

The Gallup survey asks the following variant of the life satisfaction question:

"Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at

the bottom to ten at the top. The top of the ladder represents the

best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the

worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say

you personally feel you stand at this time?"

How to Measure Wellbeing?

Secondary measures for wellbeing also survey optimism and positive and negative emotions.

Predicted future life satisfaction:

Ask the life ladder question followed by,

"On which step do you think you will stand about five years from now?"

NEGATIVE AFFECT

"Did you experience the following feelings during a lot of the day yesterday? How about _____?"

*MEAN OF // **STRESS & WORRY***

POSITIVE AFFECT

"Did you experience the following feelings during a lot of the day yesterday? How about _____?"

*MEAN OF // **ENJOYMENT & HAPPINESS***

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02

The State of Wellbeing
in Atlanta

A | DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND TRENDS

B | MAPS AND ZIP-CODE RANKING

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Data Source

2009-2018

all data analyses in this report draw on the Gallup National Health and Well-Being Index, which ran between 2009 and 2018

93 ZIP codes

associated with the city of Atlanta

6,998

available observations for the city of Atlanta (5,750 with nonmissing values)

39,997

available observations for Atlanta MSA (32,534 with nonmissing values)

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Comparing Wellbeing in the City of Atlanta to the U.S.

Life Satisfaction (%)

Legend: Atlanta, Rest of U.S.
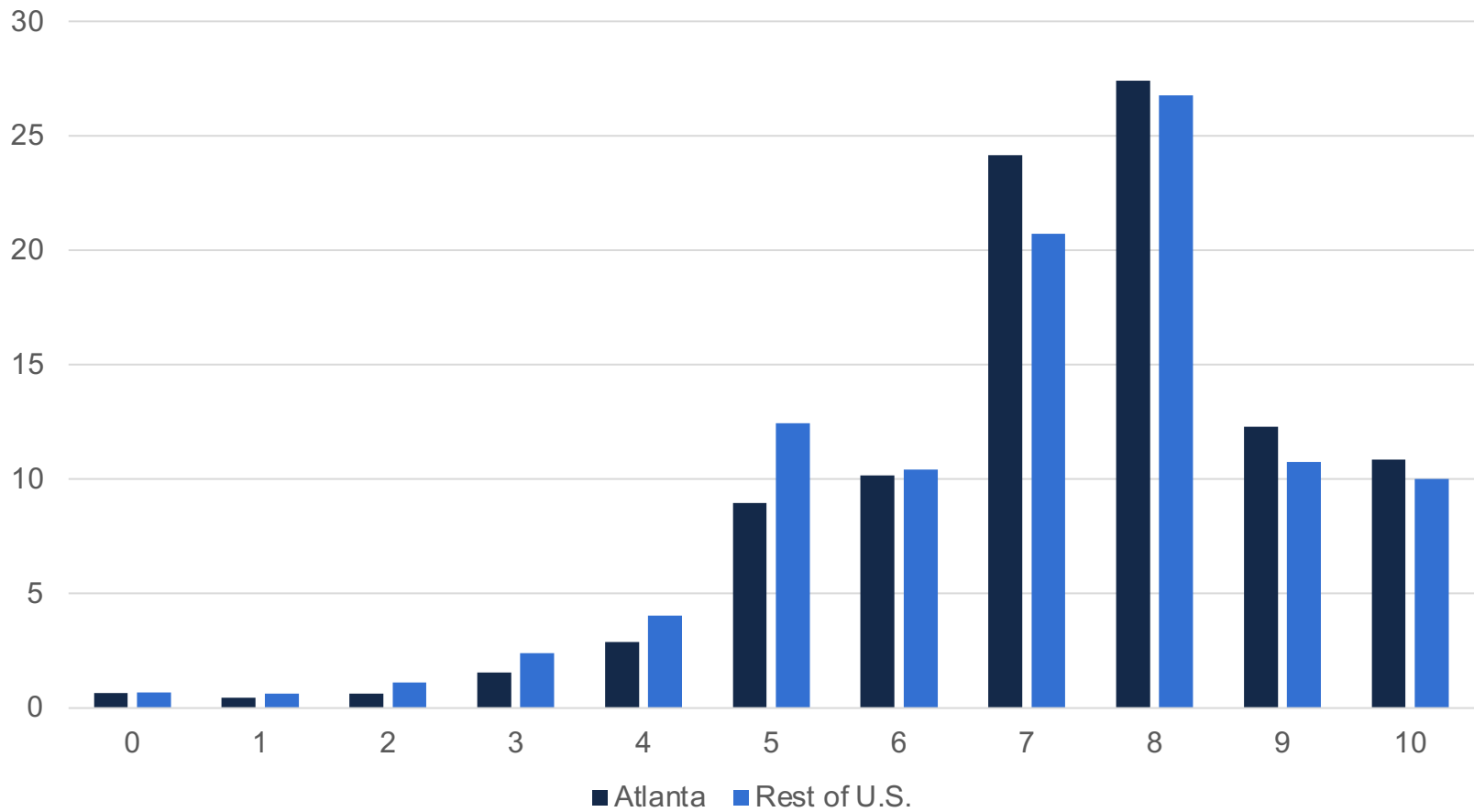
Average wellbeing in Atlanta is

7.31 out of 10

— above the U.S. and Georgia averages.

ATL | 7.31
GEORGIA | 7.10
U.S. | 7.07

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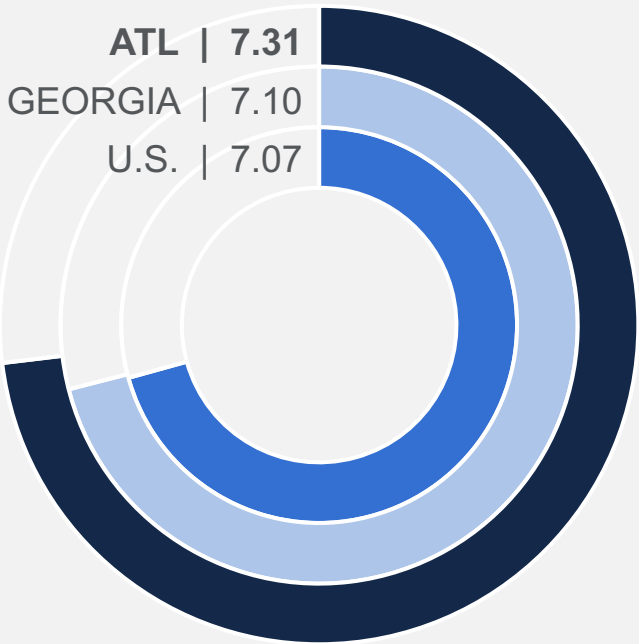
Unemployed and Under-Employed Evaluate Quality of Their Lives 15% Lower Than Employed

Life Satisfaction

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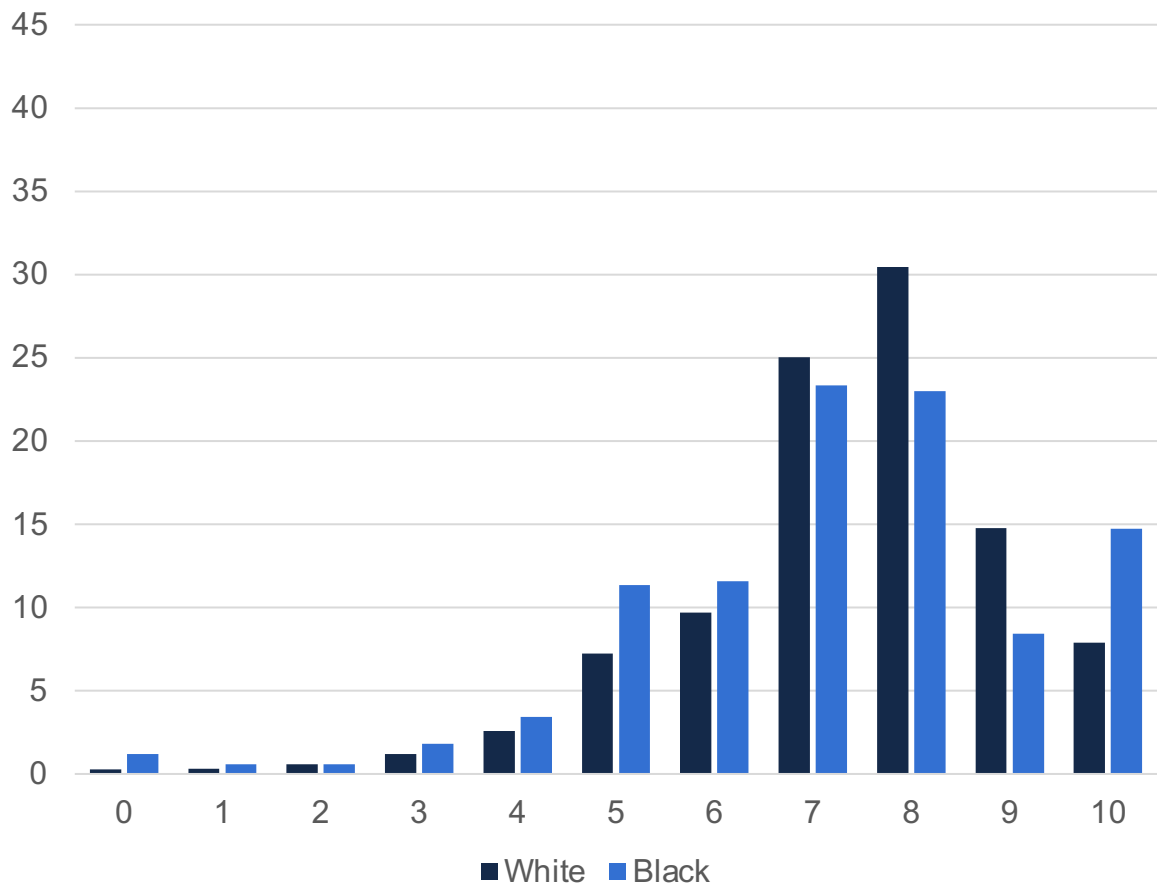# Some Inequality in Current Wellbeing by Ethnicity, but Large Differences in Optimism

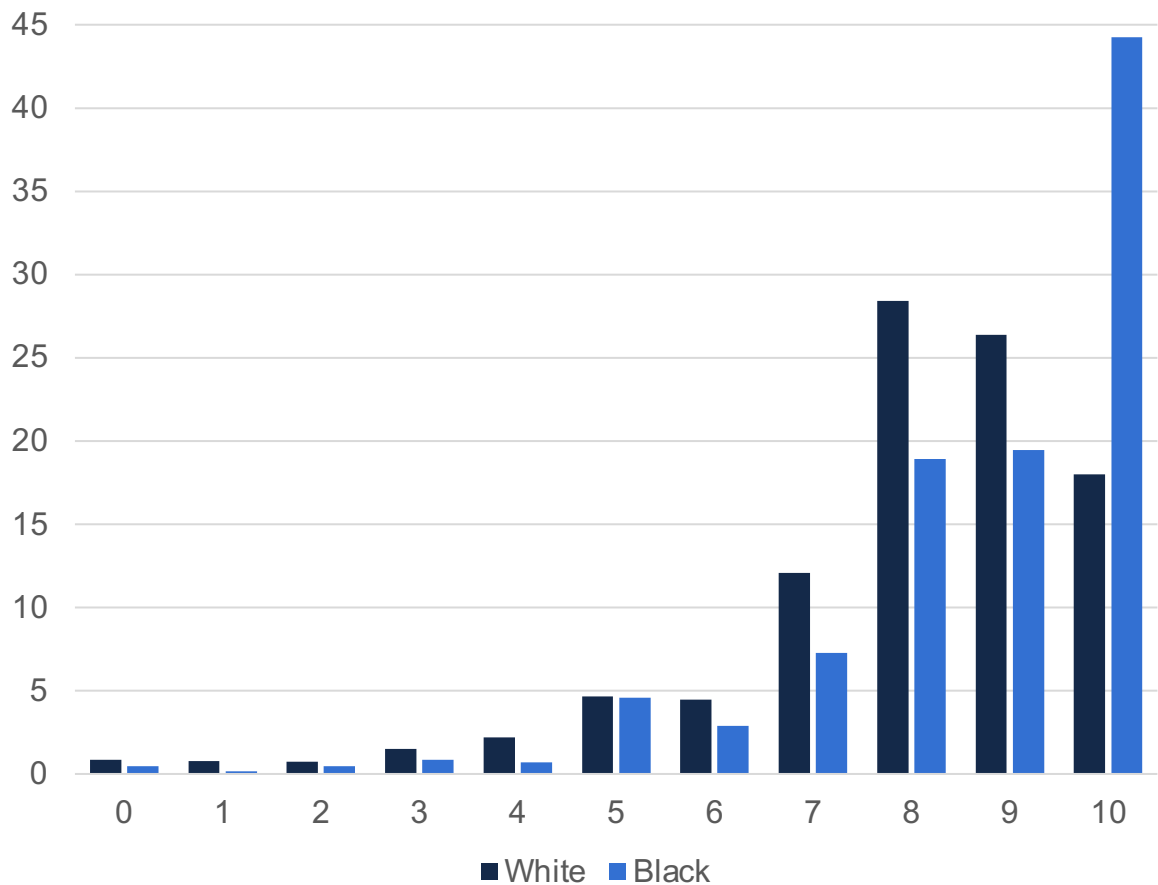POWERED BY **GALLUP**®
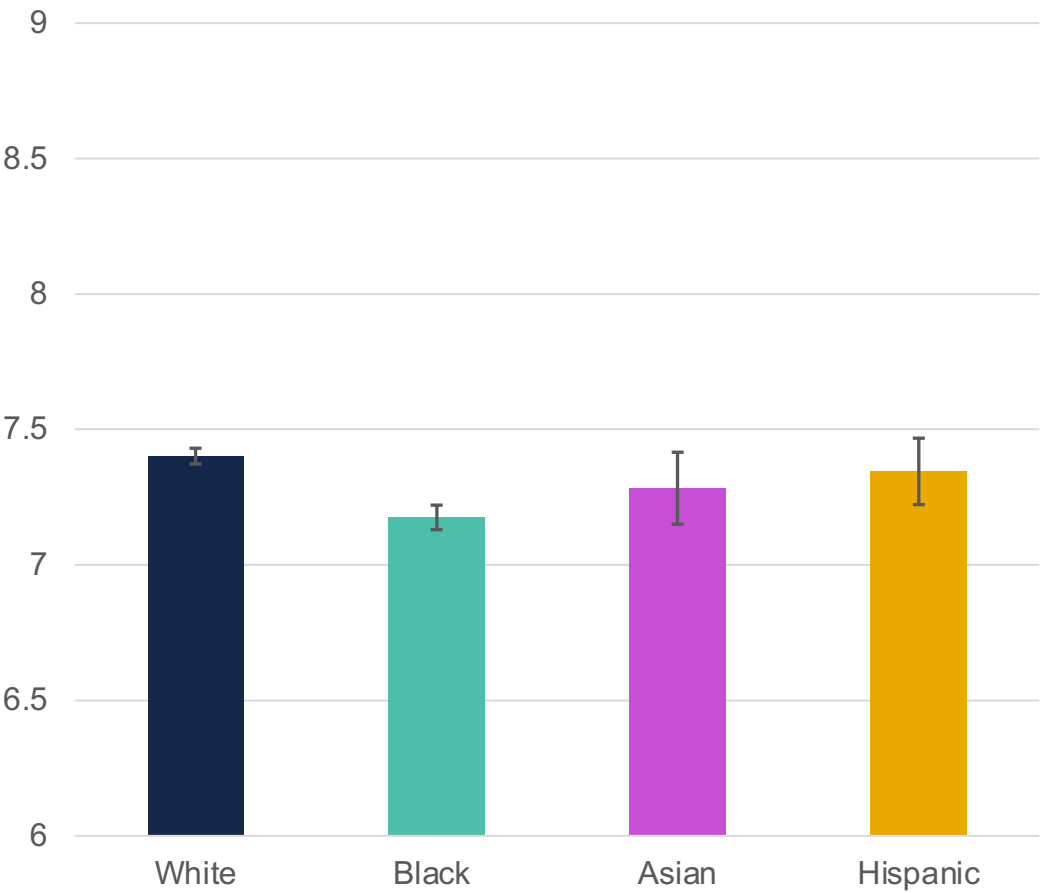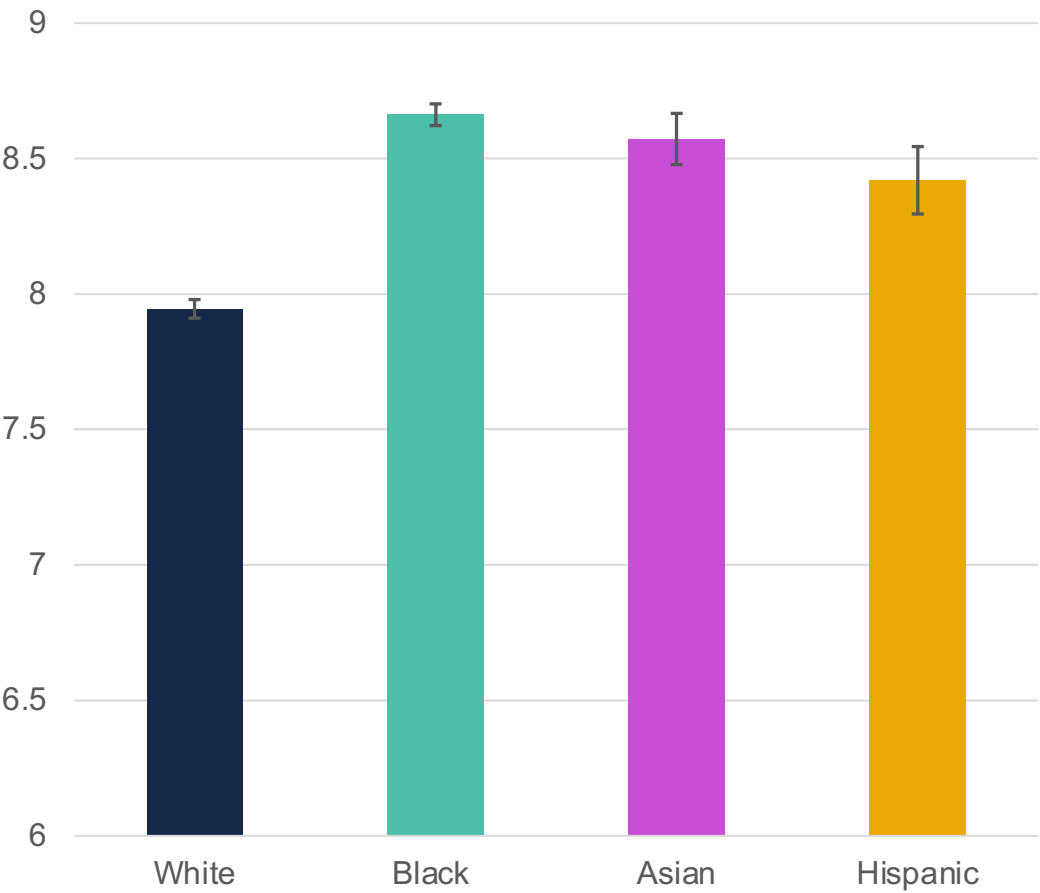
Large Disparities in Wellbeing Among Atlanta's African American Population, but All Are Highly Optimistic About Their Future Wellbeing

Life Satisfaction (%)

Life in 5 Years (%)

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Younger Generations in Atlanta Are Particularly Less Happy and Experience More Negative Emotions (Worry, Stress)

Life Satisfaction
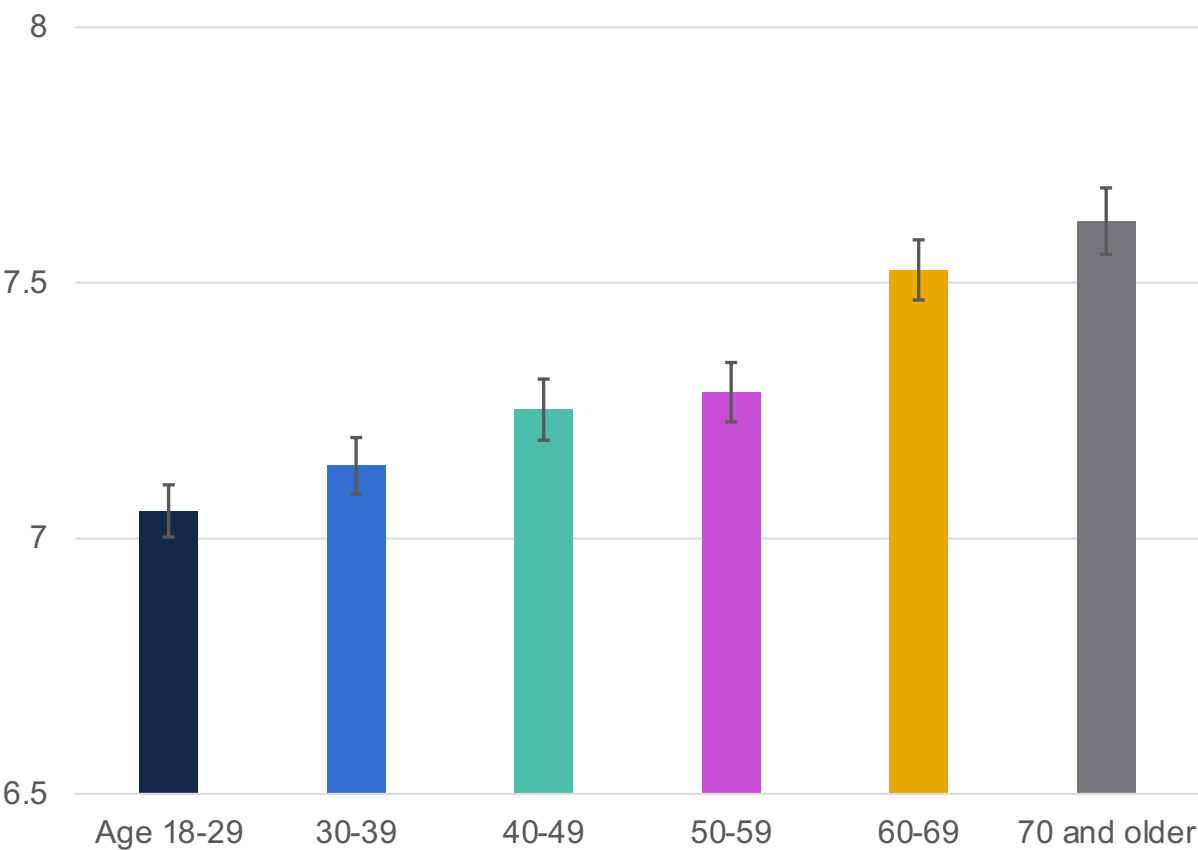
Negative Affect (%)
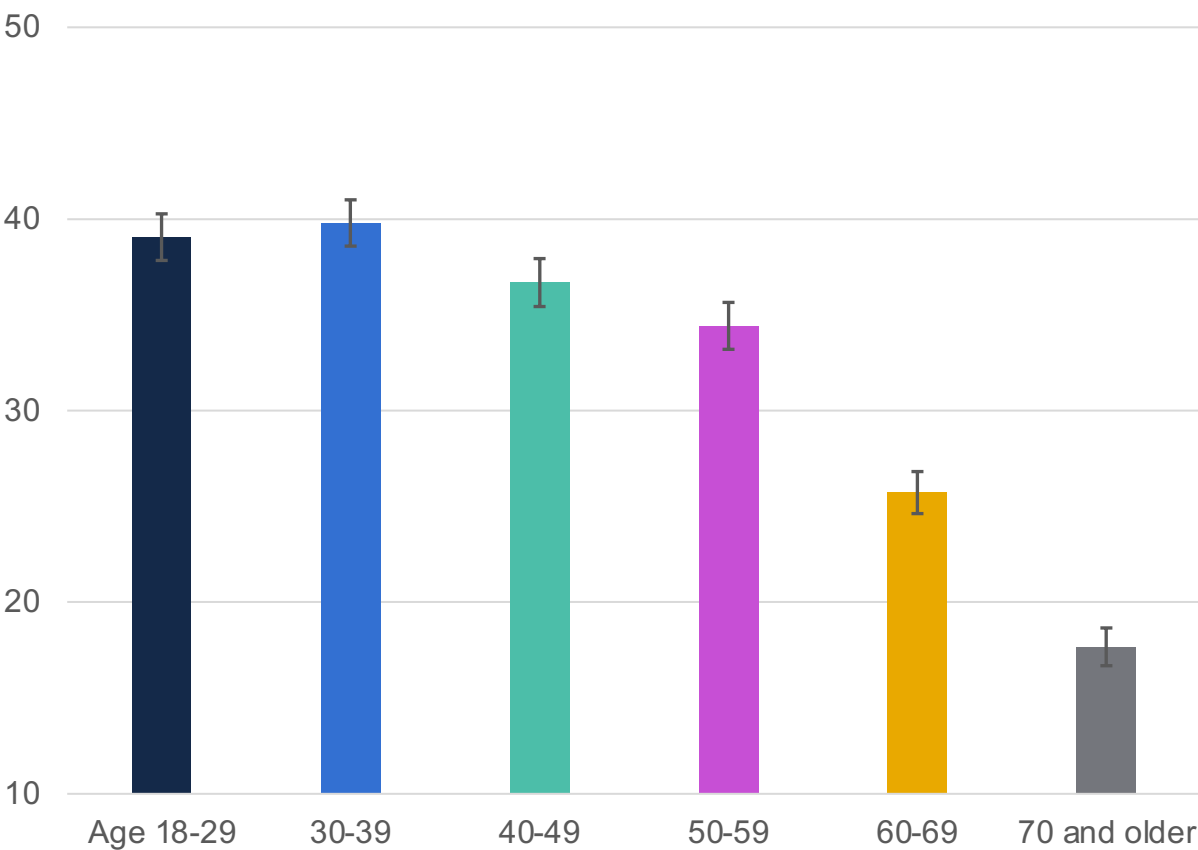
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02

The State of Wellbeing in Atlanta

A | DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND TRENDS

B | MAPS AND ZIP-CODE RANKING

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Life Satisfaction in Atlanta Is Relatively High and Stable, but the General Trend Hides Serious Inequalities

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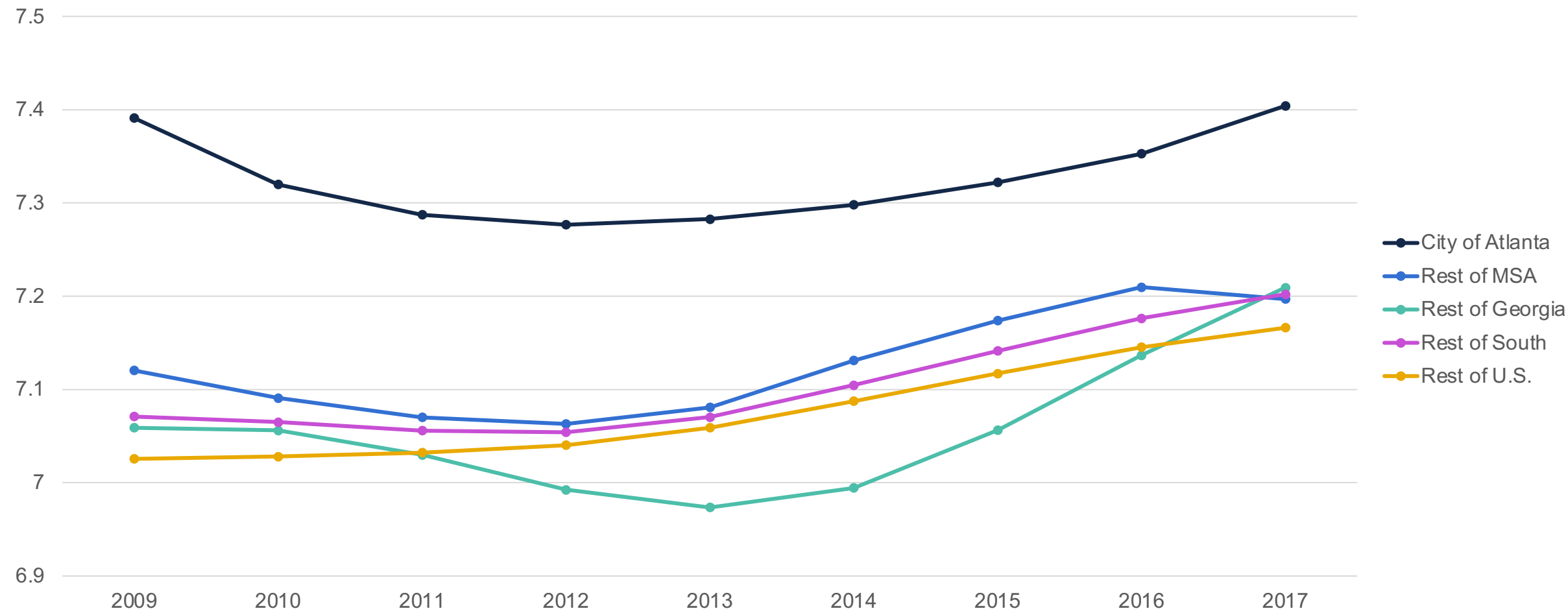
African Americans Have Seen Meaningful Drops in Wellbeing and Optimism Over the Past Decade

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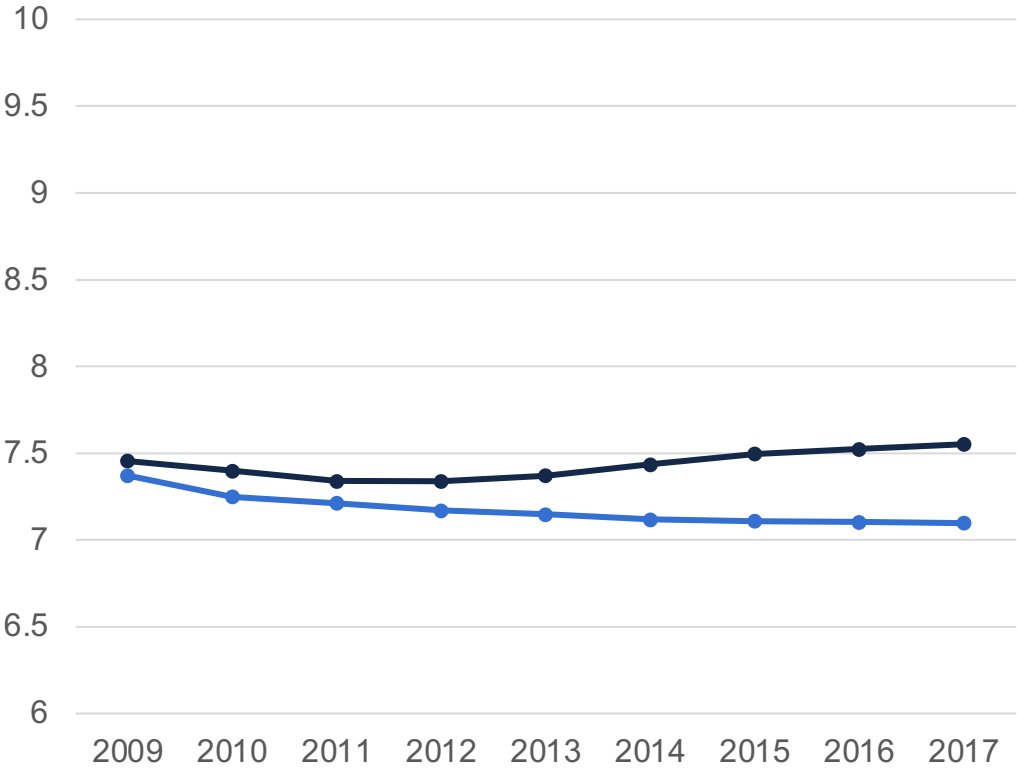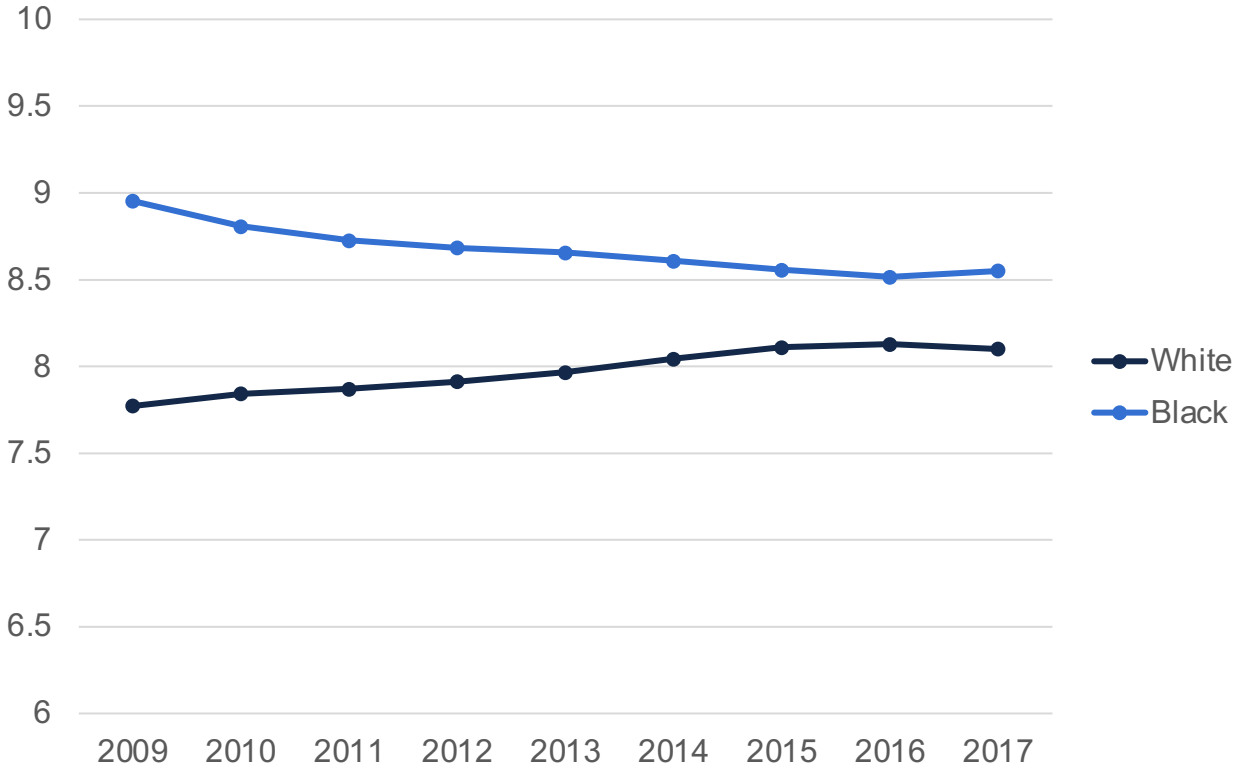
Negative Emotions (Worry, Stress) Are on the Rise and Atlanta Performs No Better Than GA or the U.S.
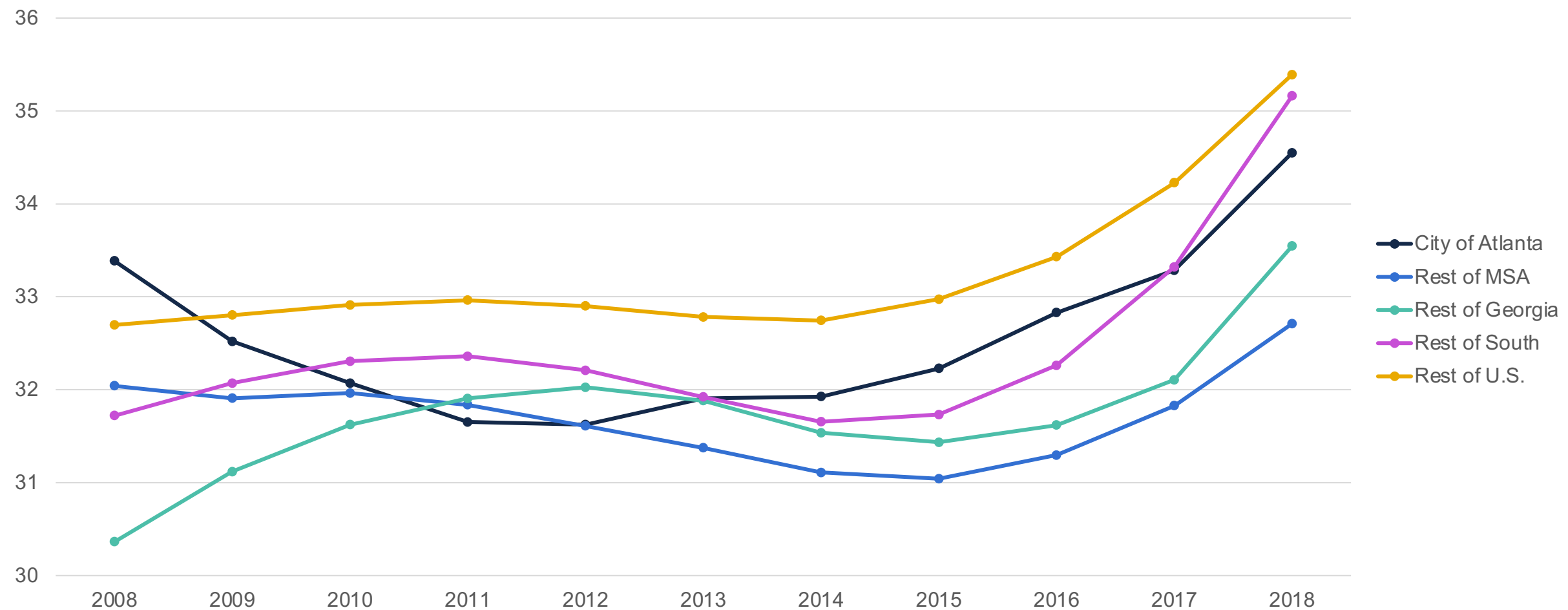
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02

State of Wellbeing in Atlanta

A | DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND TRENDS

B | MAPS AND ZIP-CODE RANKING

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There Are Large Spatial Inequalities in Wellbeing in the City of Atlanta
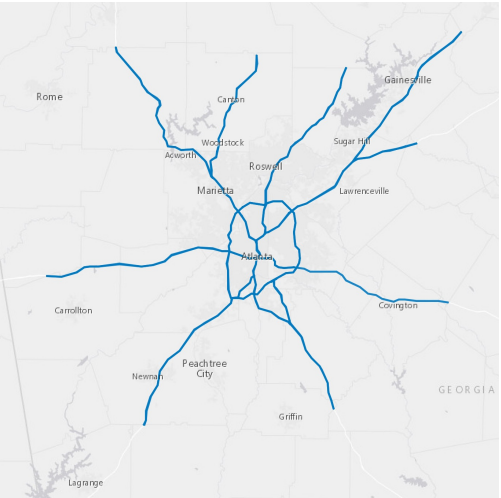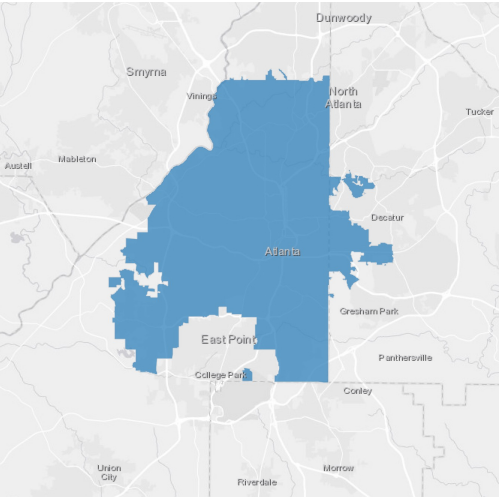
Life Satisfaction
SCORE OUT OF 10
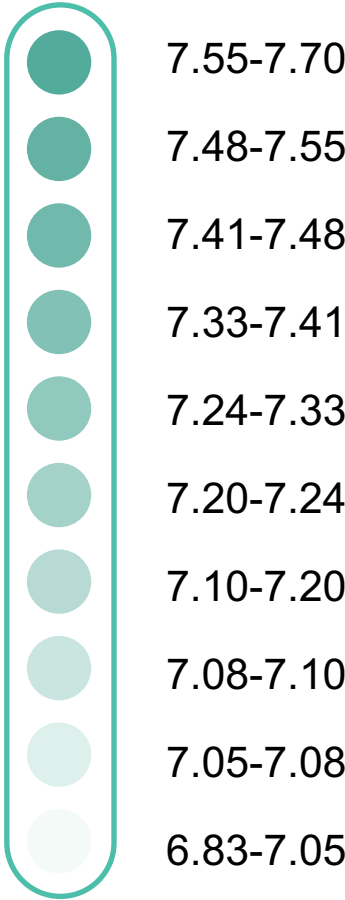
- 7.55-7.70
- 7.48-7.55
- 7.41-7.48
- 7.33-7.41
- 7.24-7.33
- 7.20-7.24
- 7.10-7.20
- 7.08-7.10
- 7.05-7.08
- 6.83-7.05

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Wellbeing in the City of Atlanta by ZIP Code

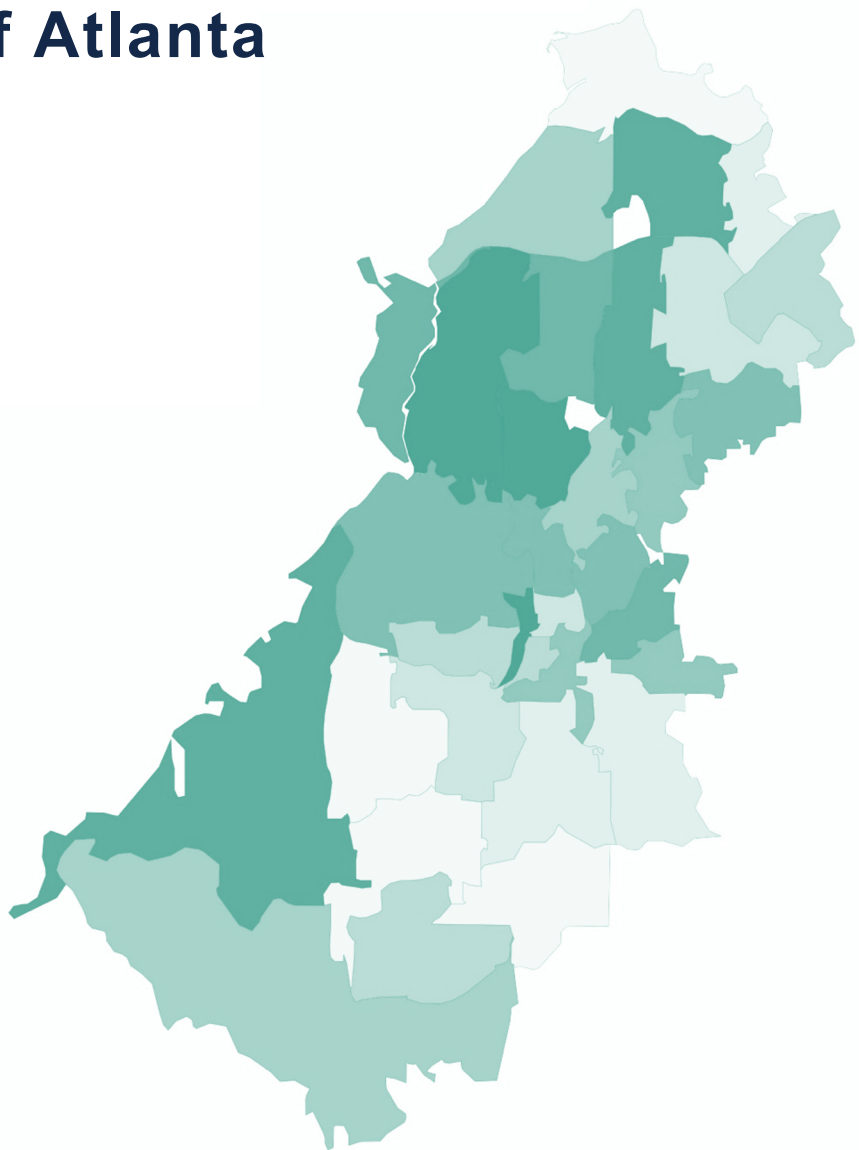| ZIP CODE	30327	30305	30346	30313	30338	30331	30319	30363	30342	30339	30307	30306	30309	30345	30318	30312	30317	30329	30324	30349	30328	30340	30337	30314	30303	30341	30310	30308	30316	30315	30360	30350	30311	30326	30354	30344
LIFE SATISFACTION	7.70	7.66	7.57	7.56	7.55	7.53	7.52	7.52	7.48	7.46	7.42	7.41	7.39	7.38	7.35	7.33	7.32	7.25	7.24	7.22	7.22	7.20	7.16	7.15	7.12	7.10	7.10	7.09	7.08	7.08	7.07	7.05	7.04	7.03	7.03	6.83
LIFE IN 5 YEARS	8.03	8.17	9.03	8.97	7.86	8.62	7.93	8.70	8.35	8.22	8.17	8.10	8.24	8.01	8.52	8.68	8.43	8.08	8.15	8.84	7.68	8.05	8.85	8.63	8.41	7.75	8.43	8.34	8.37	8.15	7.74	7.90	8.32	7.75	8.56	8.46

LIFE IN 5 YEARS		
7.50-7.99	8.00-8.49	8.5+

Wellbeing in the City of Atlanta by ZIP Code

ZIP CODE	30327	30305	30346	30313	30338	30331	30319	30363	30342	30339	30307	30306	30309	30345	30318	30312	30317	30329	30324	30349	30328	30340	30337	30314	30303	30341	30310	30308	30316	30315	30360	30350	30311	30326	30354	30344
NEGATIVE AFFECT	32.5	30.2	30.6	35.7	29.9	23.3	33.9	40.4	31.3	33.4	36.2	33.7	38.3	30.5	35.1	30.7	32.5	34.0	33.2	26.2	33.3	31.2	25.0	29.4	30.0	39.2	30.4	41.2	36.4	32.2	37.0	34.1	32.1	36.1	23.9	31.6
POSITIVE AFFECT	88.5	92.7	97.0	89.1	91.0	88.4	89.7	83.3	90.8	93.1	93.4	87.3	87.2	88.6	84.3	88.8	86.8	89.8	88.4	87.6	91.2	93.1	88.4	81.8	80.3	85.8	85.3	81.3	87.4	84.0	86.9	91.3	85.0	79.6	85.2	85.3

NEGATIVE AFFECT			POSITIVE AFFECT		
20-29	30-39	40+	80-84	85-89	90+

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Wellbeing in the City of Atlanta by ZIP Code

LIFE IN 5 YEARS			NEGATIVE AFFECT			POSITIVE AFFECT		
7.50-7.99	8.00-8.49	8.5+	20-29	30-39	40+	80-84	85-89	90+

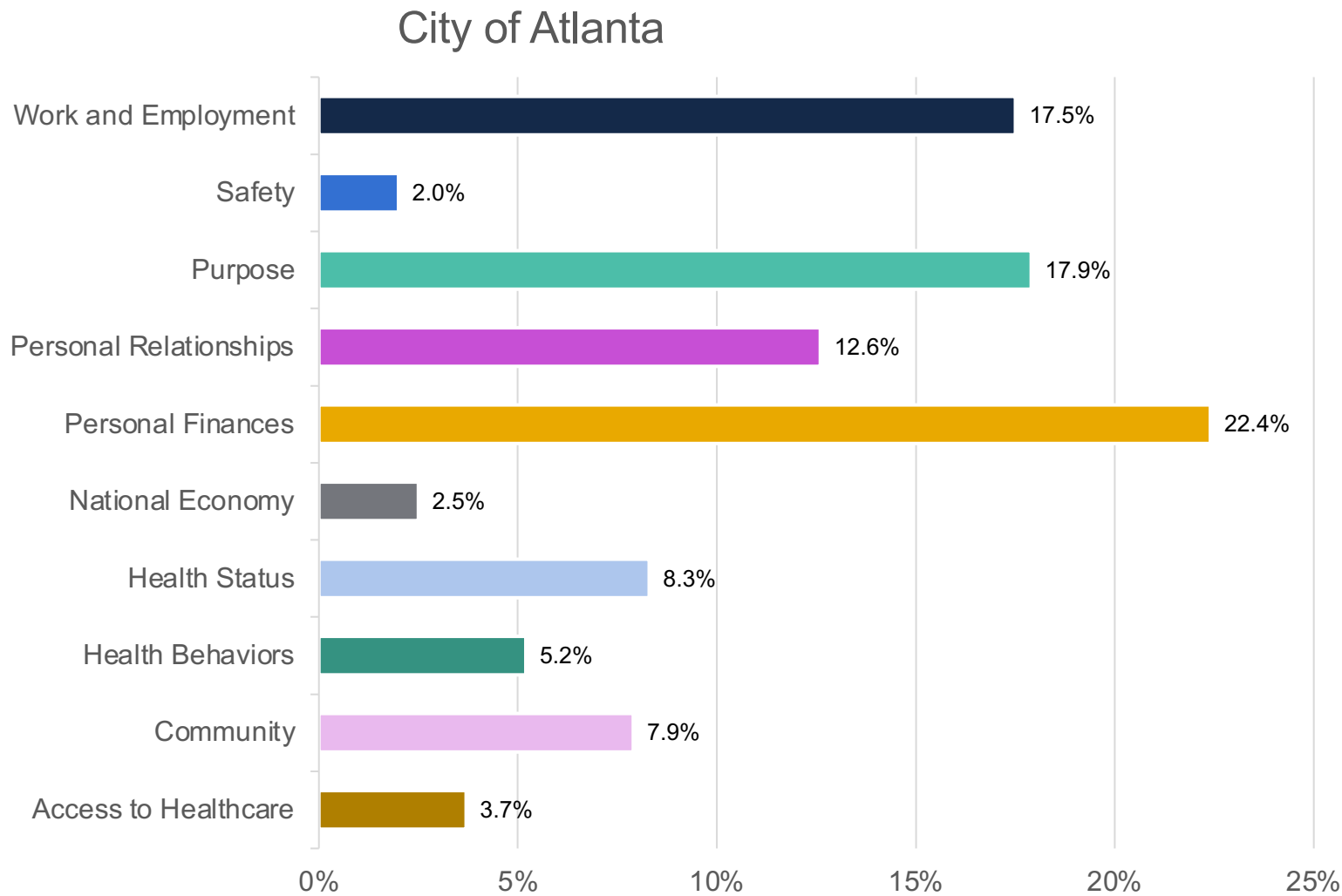| ZIP CODE	LIFE SATISFACTION	LIFE IN 5 YEARS	NEGATIVE AFFECT	POSITIVE AFFECT
30327	7.70	8.03	32.5	88.5
30305	7.66	8.17	30.2	92.7
30346	7.57	9.03	30.6	97.0
30313	7.56	8.97	35.7	89.1
30338	7.55	7.86	29.9	91.0
30331	7.53	8.62	23.3	88.4
30319	7.52	7.93	33.9	89.7
30363	7.52	8.70	40.4	83.3
30342	7.48	8.35	31.3	90.8
30339	7.46	8.22	33.4	93.1
30307	7.42	8.17	36.2	93.4
30306	7.41	8.10	33.7	87.3
30309	7.39	8.24	38.3	87.2
30345	7.38	8.01	30.5	88.6
30318	7.35	8.52	35.1	84.3
30312	7.33	8.68	30.7	88.8
30317	7.32	8.43	32.5	86.8
30329	7.25	8.08	34.0	89.8
30324	7.24	8.15	33.2	88.4
30349	7.22	8.84	26.2	87.6
30328	7.22	7.68	33.3	91.2
30340	7.20	8.05	31.2	93.1
30337	7.16	8.85	25.0	88.4
30314	7.15	8.63	29.4	81.8
30303	7.12	8.41	30.0	80.3
30341	7.10	7.75	39.2	85.8
30310	7.10	8.43	30.4	85.3
30308	7.09	8.34	41.2	81.3
30316	7.08	8.37	36.4	87.4
30315	7.08	8.15	32.2	84.0
30360	7.07	7.74	37.0	86.9
30350	7.05	7.90	34.1	91.3
30311	7.04	8.32	32.1	85.0
30326	7.03	7.75	36.1	79.6
30354	7.03	8.56	23.9	85.2
30344	6.83	8.46	31.6	85.3

03

Wellbeing
Driver Analysis

WHAT FACTORS BEST EXPLAIN
DIFFERENCES ACROSS PEOPLE IN
WELLBEING IN ATLANTA?

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What Makes People (Un)happy in Atlanta?

City of Atlanta

Category	Percentage
Work and Employment	17.5%
Safety	2.0%
Purpose	17.9%
Personal Relationships	12.6%
Personal Finances	22.4%
National Economy	2.5%
Health Status	8.3%
Health Behaviors	5.2%
Community	7.9%
Access to Healthcare	3.7%

(x-axis: 0%, 5%, 10%, 15%, 20%, 25%)

About **40%** of the variance in wellbeing across Atlanta is explained by way of **employment** and **personal finances.**

Community and **personal relationships** explain about **20%.**

Purpose and **health-related drivers** each explain about **18%.**

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What Makes People (Un)happy in Atlanta?

City of Atlanta

Legend:
- Access to Healthcare
- Community
- Health Behaviors
- Health Status
- National Economy
- Personal Finances
- Personal Relationships
- Purpose
- Safety
- Work and Employment

Chart values:
- 3.7%
- 7.9%
- 5.2%
- 8.3%
- 2.5%
- 22.4%
- 12.6%
- 17.9%
- 2.0%
- 17.5%

About **40%** of the variance in wellbeing across Atlanta is explained by way of **employment** and **personal finances.**

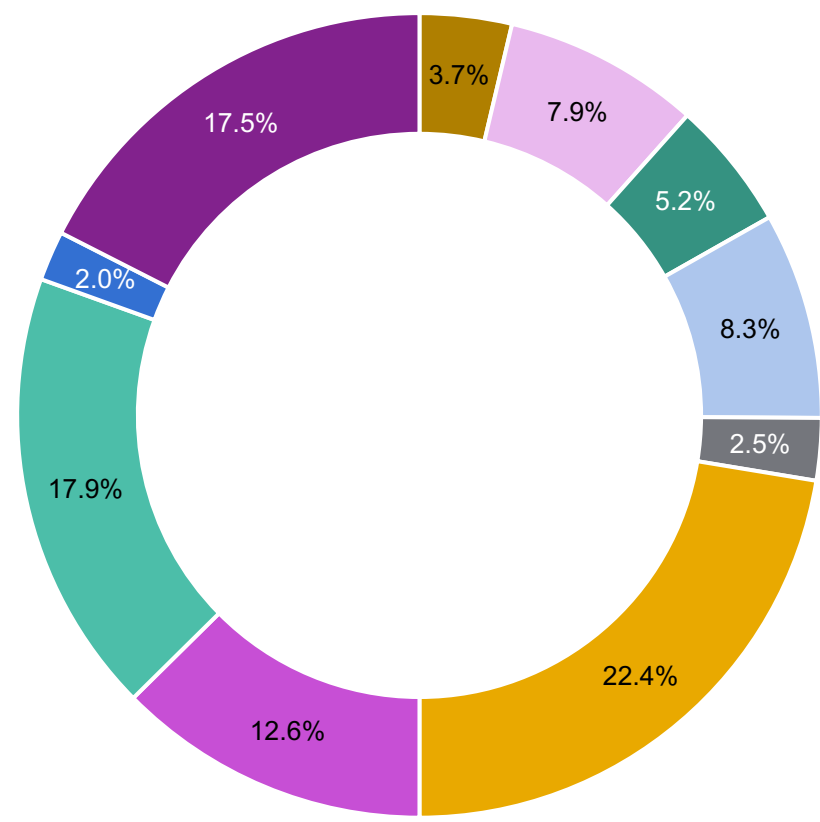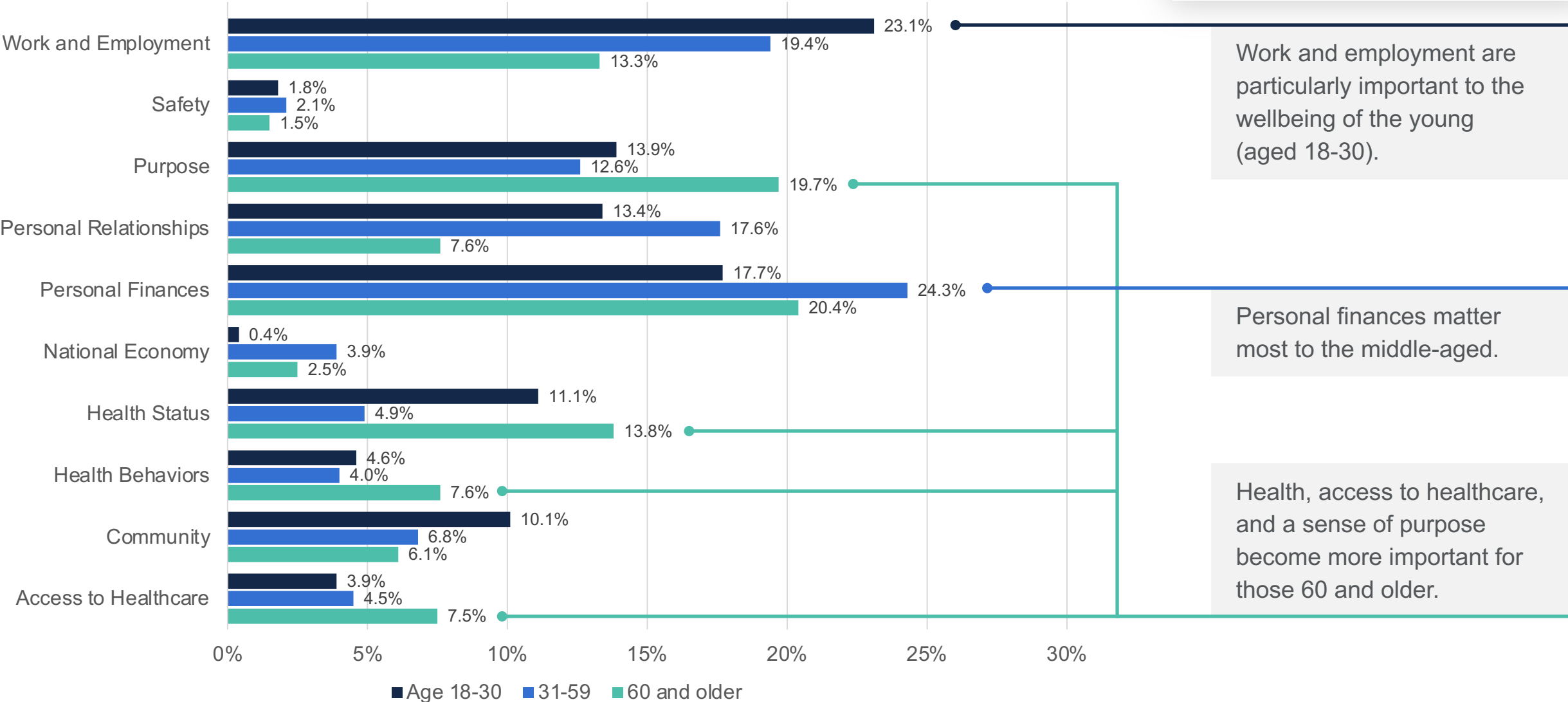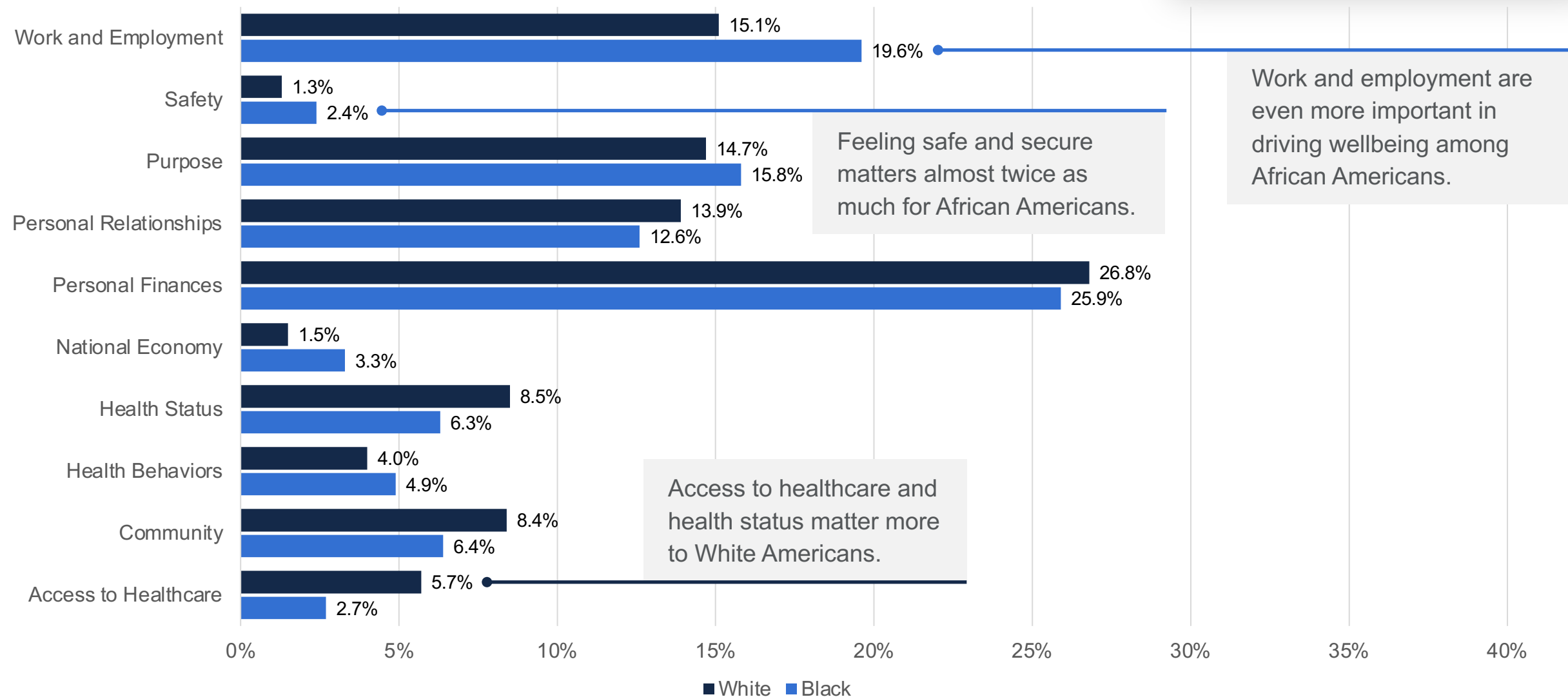**Community** and **personal relationships** explain about **20%.**

Purpose and **health-related drivers** each explain about **18%.**

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Drivers of Wellbeing Over the Life Course

Work and employment are particularly important to the wellbeing of the young (aged 18-30).

Personal finances matter most to the middle-aged.

Health, access to healthcare, and a sense of purpose become more important for those 60 and older.

	Age 18-30	31-59	60 and older
Work and Employment	23.1%	19.4%	13.3%
Safety	1.8%	2.1%	1.5%
Purpose	13.9%	12.6%	19.7%
Personal Relationships	13.4%	17.6%	7.6%
Personal Finances	17.7%	24.3%	20.4%
National Economy	0.4%	3.9%	2.5%
Health Status	11.1%	4.9%	13.8%
Health Behaviors	4.6%	4.0%	7.6%
Community	10.1%	6.8%	6.1%
Access to Healthcare	3.9%	4.5%	7.5%

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Drivers of Wellbeing by Ethnicity

Driver	White	Black
Work and Employment	15.1%	19.6%
Safety	1.3%	2.4%
Purpose	14.7%	15.8%
Personal Relationships	13.9%	12.6%
Personal Finances	26.8%	25.9%
National Economy	1.5%	3.3%
Health Status	8.5%	6.3%
Health Behaviors	4.0%	4.9%
Community	8.4%	6.4%
Access to Healthcare	5.7%	2.7%

Work and employment are even more important in driving wellbeing among African Americans.

Feeling safe and secure matters almost twice as much for African Americans.

Access to healthcare and health status matter more to White Americans.

■ White ■ Black

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04

Appendix

A | DRIVER ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY AND
     VARIABLE GROUPINGS

B | DATA CAVEATS

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A | Driver Analysis

We use Gallup National Health and Well-Being Index data from the City of Atlanta.

- 93 ZIP codes are associated with the city.

- Data from 2013 onwards is used for driver analysis.

Data is divided into broad categories or groupings to reduce the dimensionality of the analysis.

We conduct a relative importance analysis.

- This is often referred to as a "Shapley Value" analysis or "dominance analysis."

- This analysis decomposes the R^2 statistic for a linear regression model predicting life satisfaction today.

- In this iterative process, we bind together variables within the 10 broad categories outlined below.

- In all models during this iterative process, we hold constant demographics:

  - age, age^2, gender, race, education, number of children in the household

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Variable Groupings and Question Wordings

National Economy

How would you rate economic conditions in this country today — as excellent, good, only fair or poor?

Right now, do you think that economic conditions in this country, as a whole, are getting better or getting worse?

Personal Finances

Annual Household Income

In the last seven days, I have worried about money.

I have enough money to do everything I want to do.

Have there been times in the past twelve months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?

Work and Employment

Employment Status

At work, do you get to use your strengths to do what you do best every day, or not?

Does your supervisor at work treat you more like he or she is your boss or your partner?

Does your supervisor always create an environment that is trusting and open, or not?

Could you tell me the general category of work you do in your primary job?

In the last seven days, I have felt active and productive every day.

Safety

I always feel safe and secure.

Health Status

Would you say your own health, in general, is … Excellent, Very good, Good, Fair, Poor?

Have you ever been told by a physician or nurse that you have any of the following, or not? How about _____?

BMI greater than or equal to 30 (derived from height and weight)

Do you have any health problems that prevent you from doing any of the things people your age normally can do?

My physical health is near-perfect.

Over the last two weeks, how often have you had little interest or pleasure in doing things, nearly every day, more than half the days, several days or not at all?

How often do you use drugs or medications, including prescription drugs, which affect your mood and help you relax, almost every day, sometimes, rarely or never?

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Variable Groupings and Question Wordings (*cont*.)

Access to Healthcare

Have there been times in the past twelve months when you did not have enough money to pay for health care and/or medicines that you or your family needed?

Have you visited a dentist in the last 12 months?

Do you have a personal doctor?

Do you have health insurance coverage?

In the city or area where you live, is it easy or not easy to get medicine?

Health Behaviors

Do you smoke?

In the last seven days, on how many days did you exercise for 30 or more minutes?

In the last seven days, on how many days did you have five or more servings of fruits and vegetables

Did you eat healthy all day yesterday?

Personal Relationships

Your relationship with your spouse, partner, or closest friend is stronger than ever.

Someone in your life always encourages you to be healthy.

Your friends and family give you positive energy every day.

Community

You are proud of your community or the area where you live.

In the last 12 months, you have received recognition for helping to improve the city or area where you live.

The city or area where you live is a perfect place for you.

You can't imagine living in a better community than the one you live in today.

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the city or area where you live?

Purpose

You like what you do every day.

You learn or do something interesting every day.

In the last 12 months, you have reached most of your goals.

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B | Some Data Caveats

MISSINGNESS | To deal with issues surrounding nonresponse and missing data, we use multiple imputation.

- We impute using multivariate normal regression.
- We impute 10 datasets.
- We adjust coefficients (and standard errors) for the variability between imputations according to the combination rules by Rubin (1987).
- We use Stata 16 in order to conduct this analysis.
- Life satisfaction (today and in 5 years) stopped being collected at the end of 2017. There is nothing we can do about this.

WEIGHTING | Data is unweighted in all of our analyses.

- Weights for a single city are not available.
- The data are not perfectly representative of the target population.
- City-specific surveying will deal with this better.
- National weights are available but weighting with these weights may be just as biased as unweighted data since the target population is very different.
- This is not a "defect" of the data: the daily poll was designed to be representative of the U.S. as a whole, not of the city of Atlanta.

STANDARD ERRORS/CONFIDENCE INTERVALS | Dominance analysis does not produce standard errors in a "standard" way, as in a linear regression. To calculate standard errors, we bootstrap the (multiply imputed) dominance analysis procedure.

- We run 500 iterations to bootstrap confidence intervals around our estimates.

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