

# Who Does the LAPD Protect and Serve? – An Examination of Black Angelenos & Their Perceptions of the LAPD



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### Background

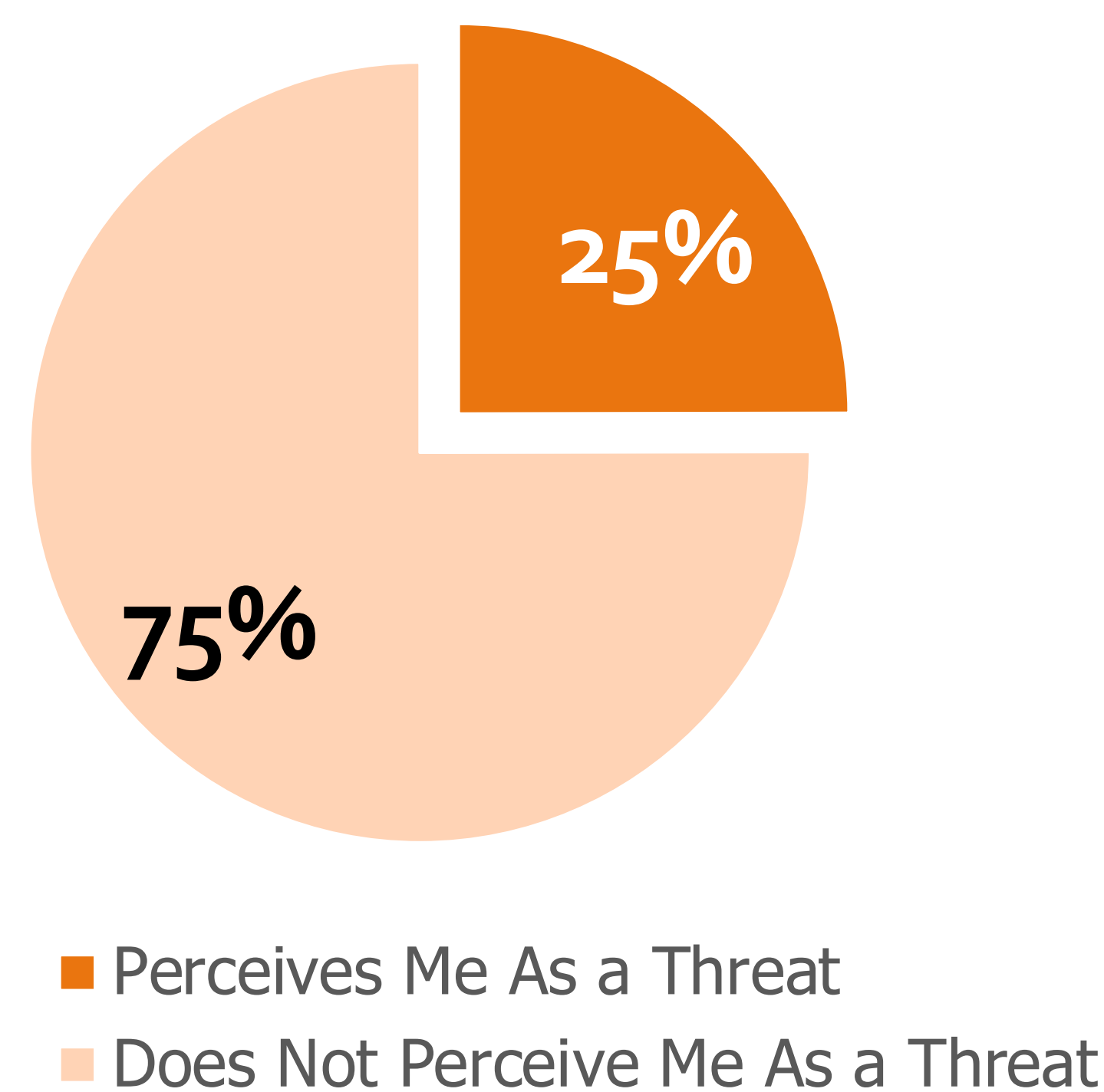
The motto of the LAPD is “To Protect and Serve,” and as the department describes on their website, it is not only a slogan – but *a way of life* for police officers that guides their treatment of LA residents and communities. However, the LAPD’s historic neglect and abuse toward Black people proves otherwise. Coupled with the more recent uptick in awareness of police brutality and state violence after the murder of George Floyd in June 2020, there is a heightened recognition, city-wide, of the LAPD’s treatment of Black and Brown communities. This research aims to examine the difference between Black and Latina/o residents in how they view LAPD’s perception of them as a **threat**, and in whether they feel LAPD **serves to protect people like themselves**. Furthermore, it goes on to consider how those opinions compare to that of Asian and White demographics.

### Methodology

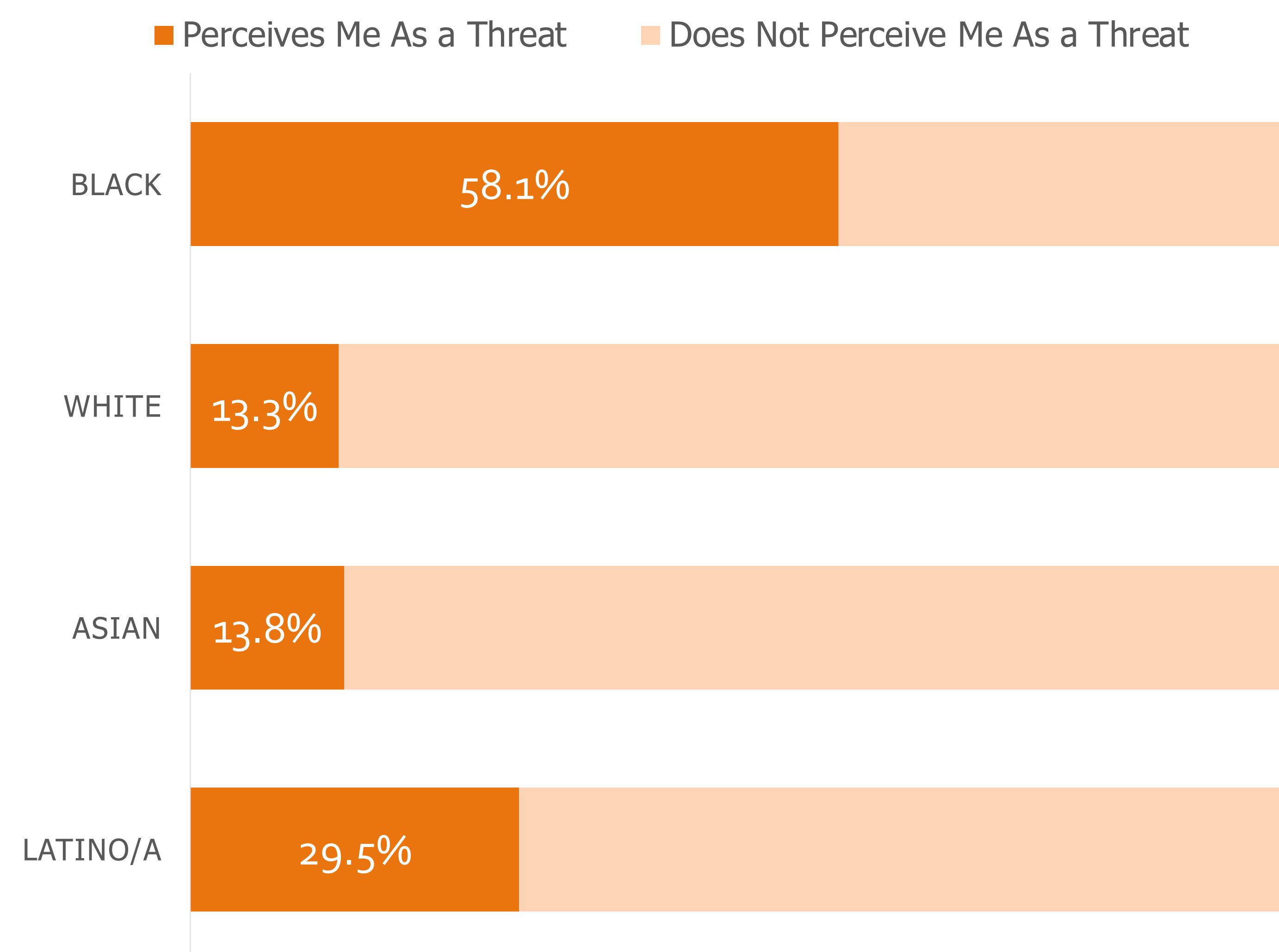
The research analyzes data from the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles’ (StudyLA) 2020 Police and Community Relations Survey to gauge the opinion of Los Angeles residents and their perceptions of LAPD. The 2020 Police and Community Relations Survey surveyed 1,753 adult residents of the city of Los Angeles between August-November 2020; it was mixed-mode survey research administered through 20-minute telephone calls as well as in-person and online surveying. The results of the data have a ±2.5% margin of error and significance tests were run across all data tables to prove that race is a significant variable and demographic that does impact whether or not Angelenos believe they are perceived as a threat by LAPD and whether or not LAPD serves to protect people like themselves.

### Results

75% of Angelenos believe that the LAPD does not perceive them as a threat while only 25% indicate the opposite. While this trend may appear favorable on the surface; when we take an in-depth look at the responses by racial demographic, the conclusions reveal a much different and notably divisive reality.

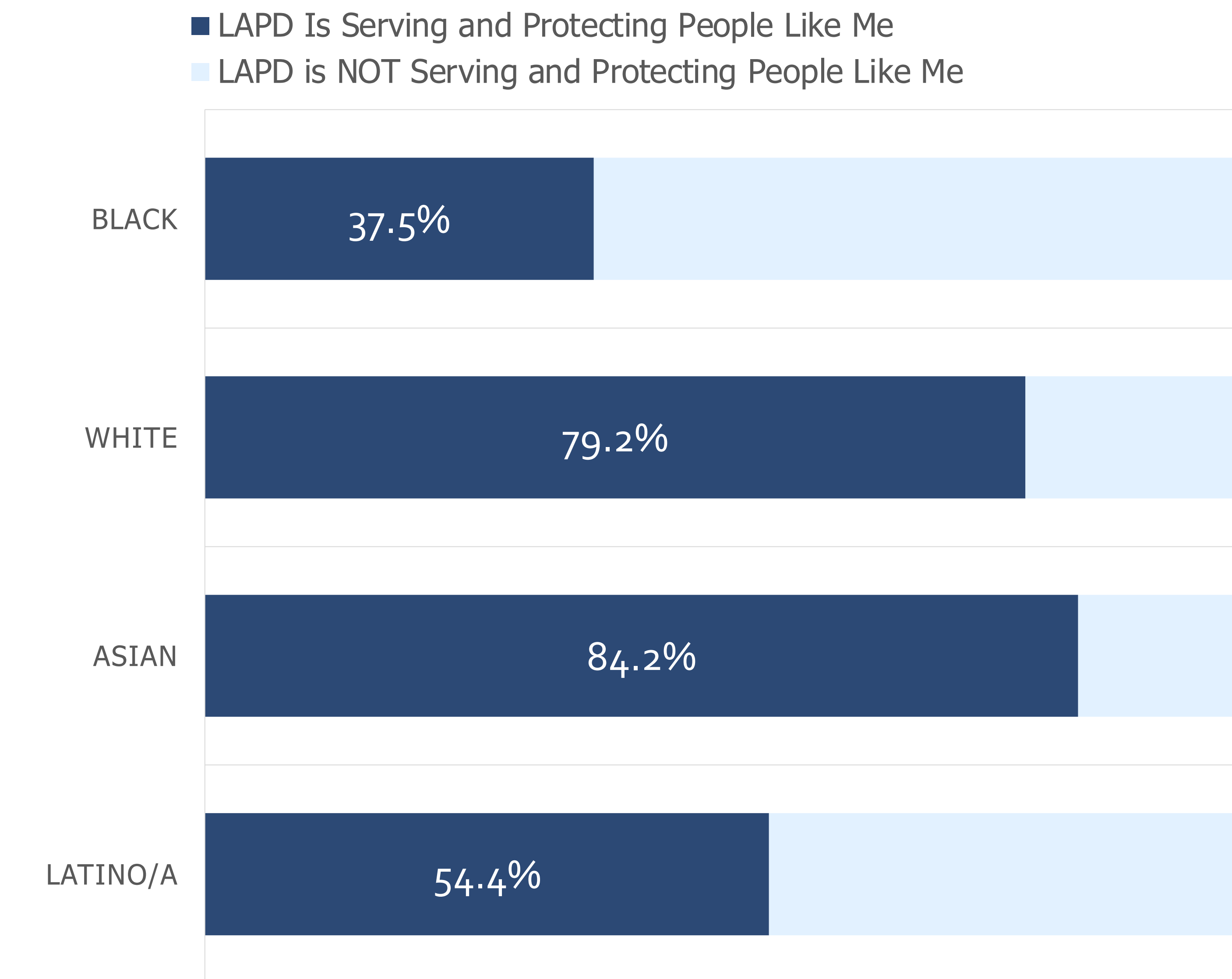
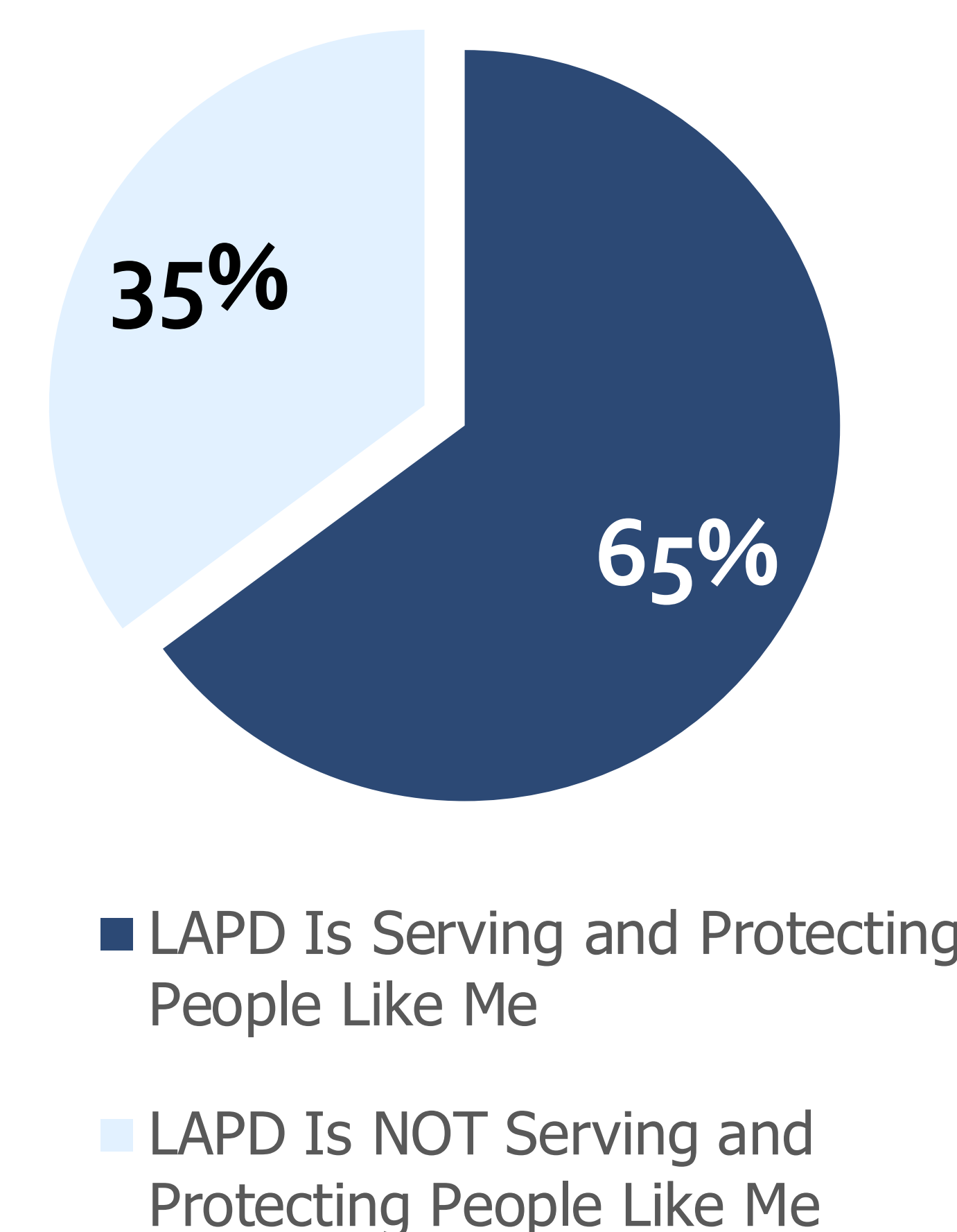


We found that a **majority of Black residents think the LAPD perceives them as a threat**. Additionally, **more than half of Black women** believe the LAPD perceives them as a threat. The study also highlights that 30% of Latino/a residents believe they are perceived as a threat by LAPD. This is an alarming contrast in comparison to the 14% of Asian residents and the similar 13% of White residents that think LAPD perceives them as a threat..



### Results (Cont’d.)

When asked whether the LAPD is serving and protecting people like themselves, 65% of respondents indicated that they do believe LAPD is serving and protecting people like themselves while 35% think the opposite. While it may seem that most Angelenos are satisfied with LAPD’s ability to serve and protect, again, when examine the opinions by racial demographics, there are significant disparities between Black, White, Asian, and Latino/a LA city residents.



- **6 out of every 10 Black residents do not believe that the LAPD is serving and protecting people like themselves**
- Latino/a residents are divided on whether the LAPD is serving and protecting their population
- 8 out of 10 Asian and White Angelenos -an *overwhelming* majority- agree that LAPD is serving and protecting people who look like them

### Conclusion

There is an undeniable disparity in the way Black residents feel they are treated and perceived by the LAPD in comparison to all other racial demographics. However, we must not assume that these results are merely “notions” or “opinions.” Instead, we must regard these findings as evidence that Black Angelenos are treated disproportionately worse than all other city residents. These results show the **consequences** of systematic oppression, abuse, and negligence at the hands of the LAPD. The goal of this research is to alert the LAPD and the Los Angeles government that they can no longer avoid and ignore the suffering of Black communities. If the LAPD’s self-proclaimed, *way of life* is to protect and serve all Los Angeles communities, there needs to be considerable reevaluation and investigation into how they realize this statement each day.