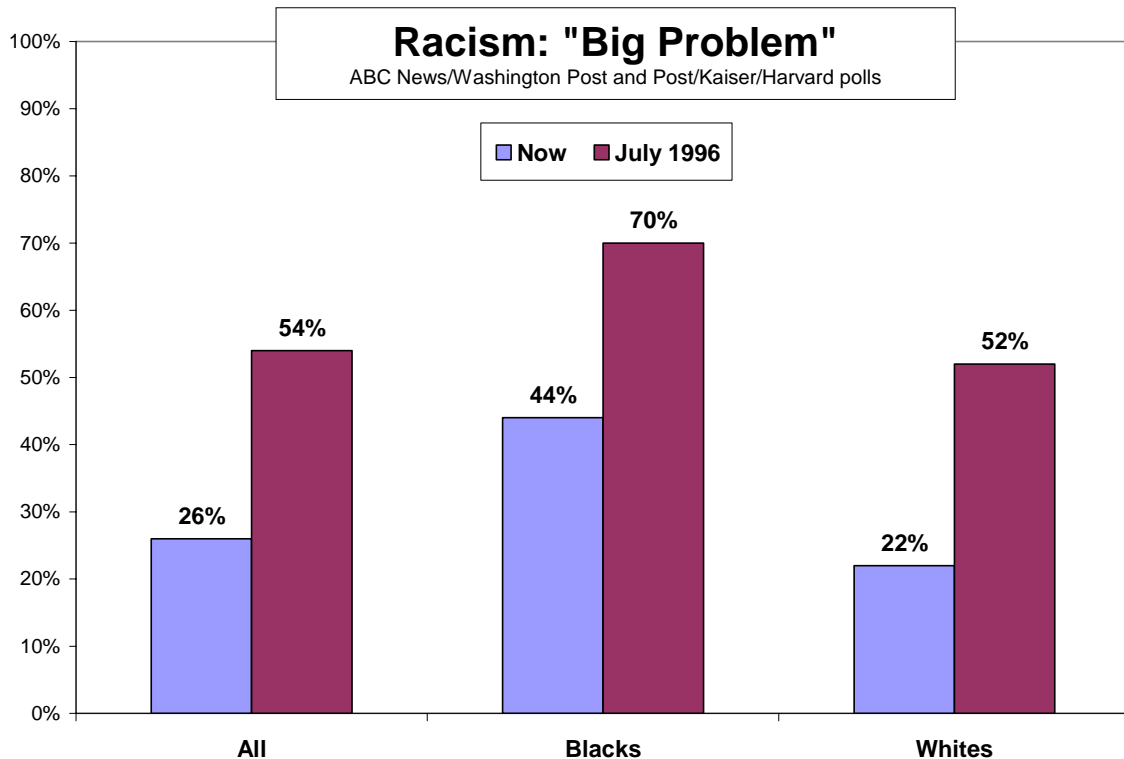


Fewer Call Racism a Major Problem Though Discrimination Remains

Views of racism as a major problem in American society have dropped sharply from a decade ago. Yet 45 years after Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech and in advance of Barack Obama's historic inauguration, many blacks still report personal experiences of racism – underscoring the challenges in race relations that remain.

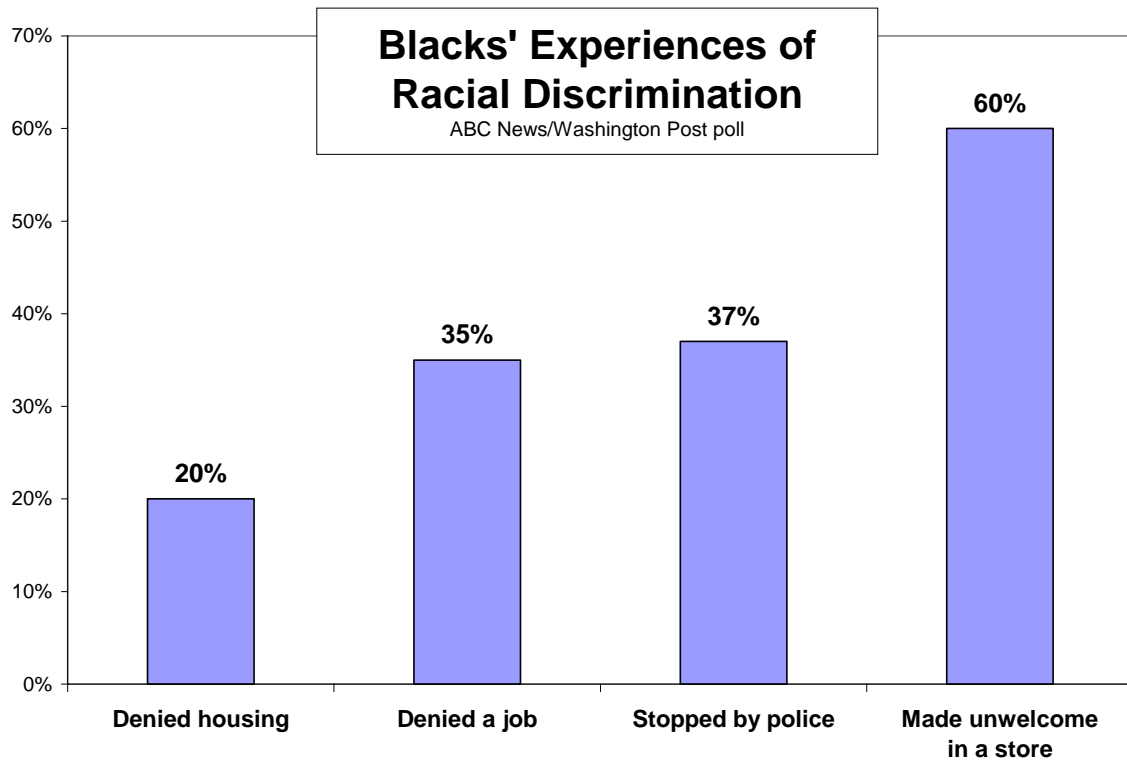
Twenty-six percent of Americans call racism a "big problem" in the United States, half what it was, 54 percent, in a 1996 poll, and down sharply among blacks and whites alike. At the same time, barely over one in three say blacks have in fact achieved racial equality, the goal King expressed in a speech at the Lincoln Memorial on Aug. 28, 1963.

Blacks, moreover, remain twice as likely as whites to call racism a big problem (44 percent vs. 22 percent), and only half as likely to say African-Americans have achieved equality. A key reason: Three-quarters of blacks in this ABC News/Washington Post poll personally have experienced racial discrimination. Far fewer whites, but still 30 percent, say the same; it rises to 68 percent of other non-whites.



For African-Americans those experiences include so-called “shopping while black” and “driving while black”: In the most common one, 60 percent have felt that a storekeeper or shop clerk was trying to make them feel unwelcome solely because of their race.

Thirty-seven percent also say they’ve been stopped by the police because of their race. Thirty-five percent say they’ve been denied a job because of their race; 20 percent, denied housing. Others say these have occurred to a family member or friend.



In all, 74 percent of blacks report personal experience of discrimination in at least one of these areas; 44 percent, in two or more of them. And these experiences are more prevalent among blacks than they are among other non-white Americans.

Tomorrow, the day after Martin Luther King Day, Obama will become the nation’s first African-American president, taking the oath of office on the Bible used by Abraham Lincoln at his inauguration in 1861. Among other expectations, an ABC poll earlier this month found that 58 percent of Americans think Obama will improve race relations.

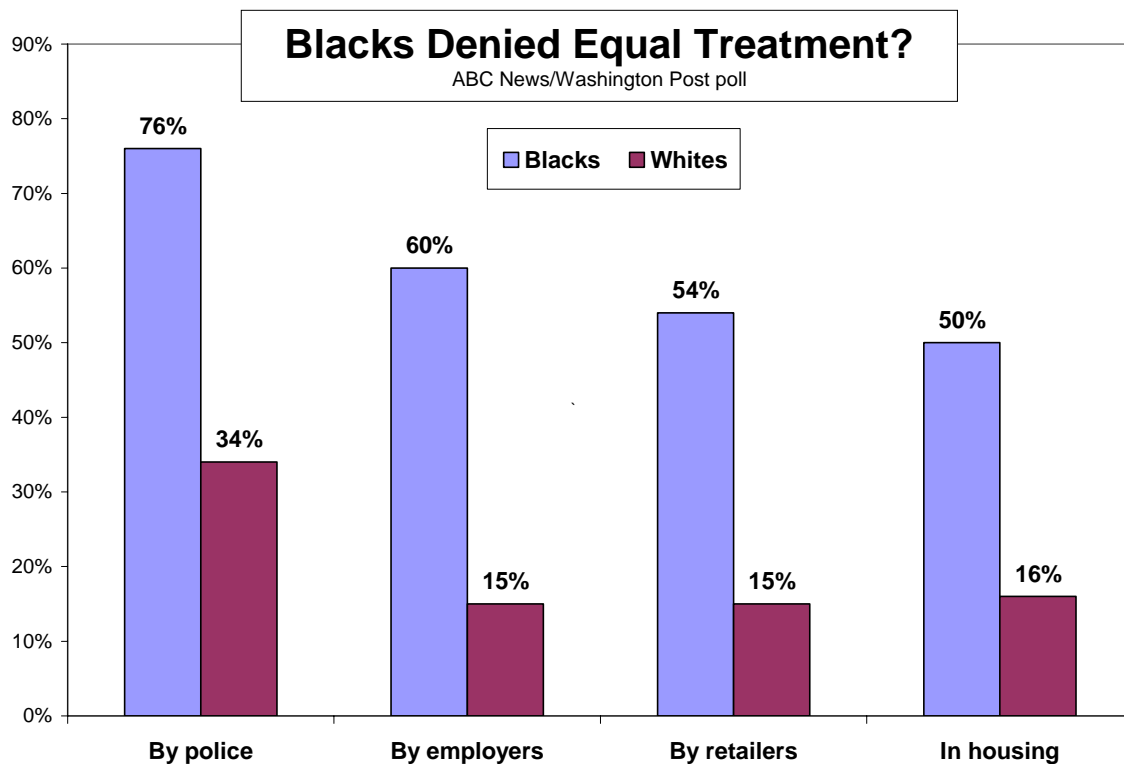
DISCONNECT – In addition to the experience of racism, there’s a disconnect between blacks and whites in the perception of racial equality within their own community. Large majorities of whites think blacks in their area receive equal treatment in housing, hiring, shopping and criminal justice. Far fewer blacks say the same.

The gaps are vast: In hiring, 83 percent of whites think blacks in their area have an equal chance to get a job for which they’re qualified; just 38 percent of blacks agree. Eighty-

one percent of whites see equal opportunity in housing; that drops to 47 percent of blacks. In shopping, again 83 percent of whites see equal treatment, vs. 44 percent of blacks.

When it comes to criminal justice, substantially fewer whites – 60 percent – say blacks in their community receive equal treatment by the police. But the fewest blacks – only 22 percent – share that view.

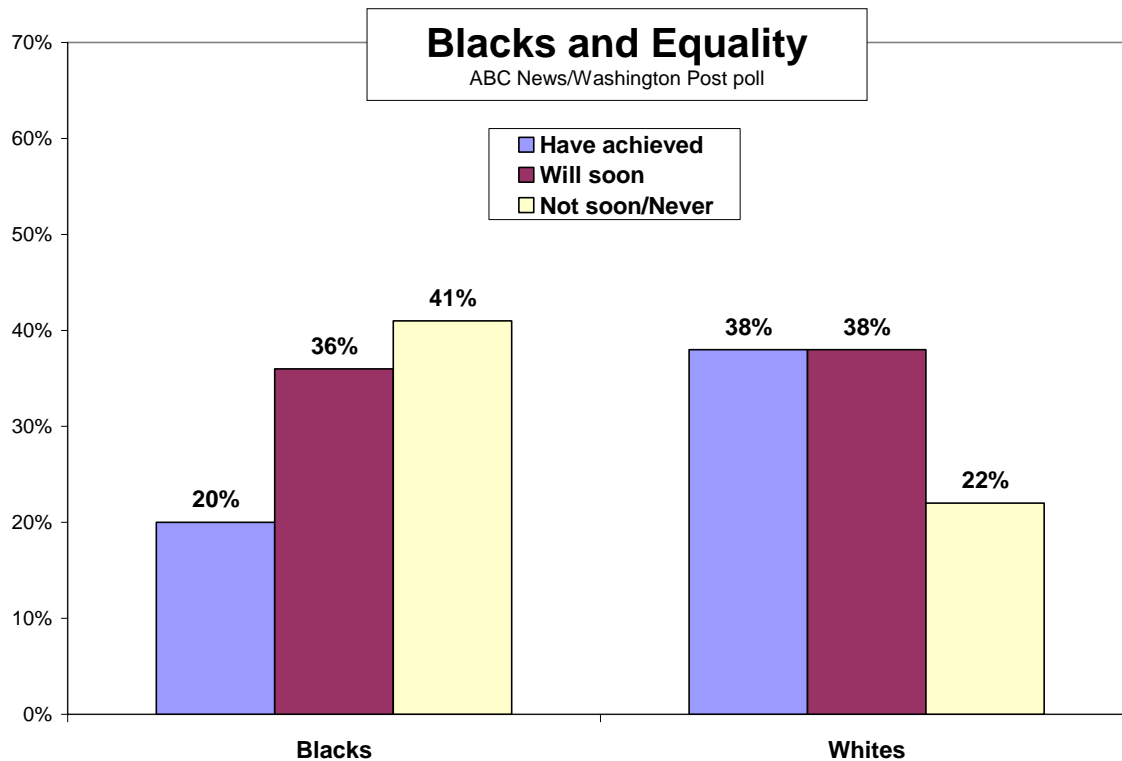
Using the negative results, 76 percent of blacks say African-Americans in their community are denied equal treatment by the police, 60 percent say they lack equal hiring opportunities, 54 percent say they're not treated equally by retailers and half say they lack equal treatment in housing.



Perceptions of racial discrimination, naturally, spike among blacks who've personally experienced it, particularly if they've experienced it in multiple areas. These African-Americans are much more likely to say racism is a big problem, to think blacks in their community are subject to racism and to be skeptical that blacks will achieve equality.

EQUALITY – There are positive views: While just 35 percent of Americans believe blacks have achieved racial equality, an additional 38 percent think they will achieve it soon – a total of 73 percent. (Most of the rest think it'll happen, but not in their lifetime.)

Among blacks only, moreover, a total of 56 percent think they have achieved equality or will soon – 20 and 36 percent, respectively. And just 18 percent think it'll never happen.



Moreover, in the ABC poll earlier this month, 55 percent of blacks said Obama’s election made them more proud to be an American. And 65 percent of all Americans, equal numbers of blacks and whites alike, saw his election as a sign of progress for all blacks – a road signposted by the achievements of Lincoln, King and now by Obama.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Jan. 13-16, 2009, among a random national sample of 1,079 adults, including landline and cell-only respondents, with an oversample of African-Americans (weighted to their correct share of the population) for a total of 204 black respondents. Results for the full sample have a 3-point error margin; for blacks, 7 points. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Peyton Craighill and Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-38 held or previously released.

39. Changing topics, how big a problem is racism in our society today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, a small problem or not a problem at all?

		----- Problem -----			----- Not a problem -----			
		NET	Big	Somewhat	NET	Small	Not at all	No opinion
1/16/09	All	74	26	48	26	22	4	*
	Blacks	85	44	41	15	11	4	0
	Whites	72	22	49	28	23	5	*
7/7/96*	All	89	54	35	11	8	3	1
	Blacks	93	70	23	6	5	*	1
	Whites	89	52	37	10	8	3	1
7/2/96	All	88	53	35	11	8	3	2
	Blacks	95	72	23	4	4	1	1
	Whites	87	50	37	11	8	3	2
10/6/95	All	84	48	36	15	9	6	1
	Blacks	94	64	30	6	3	3	0
	Whites	83	46	37	15	8	7	1
9/28/95	All	83	41	42	24	12	12	1
	Blacks	95	68	27	6	5	1	*
	Whites	83	38	45	17	13	4	1

*7/7/96 and previous: Post-Kaiser-Harvard

40. Do you think blacks (have achieved racial equality, will soon achieve racial equality, will not achieve racial equality in your lifetime, or will never achieve racial equality)?

		Have achieved	Will soon	Not in lifetime	Will never	No opinion
1/16/09	All	35	38	17	6	3
	Blacks	20	36	23	18	3
	Whites	38	38	17	5	3
9/14/08	All	32	37	20	5	6
	Blacks	11	41	30	14	4
	Whites	39	36	18	2	5
	Hisp	25	41	18	7	8

41. Do you think blacks who live in your community experience racial discrimination, or not? (IF YES) Do you think it happens often, occasionally, or rarely?*

		----- Yes -----				No	No opinion
		NET	Often	Occas.	Rarely	No	No opinion
1/16/09	All	47	15	25	8	51	2
	Blacks	64	26	26	12	35	1
	Whites	43	11	25	8	55	1
9/14/08	All	49	18	23	7	48	3
	Blacks	73	35	32	6	25	2
	Whites	46	13	24	8	51	3
	Hisp	45	20	17	8	52	3
6/15/08	All	51	16	20	9	47	3
	Blacks	54	15	26	12	44	3
	Whites	48	13	27	8	49	3
1/20/03	All	45	12	27	6	52	3
	Blacks	59	23	28	7	40	1

Whites 43 10 26 7 55 3
 *Based on those with blacks in community (97 percent).

42. Have you personally ever felt that you were being discriminated against because of your race? (IF YES) Has that happened often, occasionally or rarely?

		----- Yes -----				No	
		NET	Often	Occas.	Rarely	No	opinion
1/16/09	All	41	5	20	17	59	*
	Blacks	74	13	35	26	26	0
	Whites	30	2	14	14	70	0
9/14/08	All	41	9	17	15	59	1
	Blacks	76	21	38	17	23	1
	Whites	29	3	11	15	71	0
	Hisp	58	17	24	17	41	1
6/12/05	All	26	5	10	11	73	*
	Blacks	54	13	25	17	45	1
	Whites	19	2	7	10	81	0
1/20/03	All	32	6	13	13	68	*
	Blacks	64	20	32	12	36	0
	Whites	22	3	8	11	78	*

43. (ASKED IF BLACKS IN COMMUNITY IN Q41) Do you think that blacks who live in your community DO or DO NOT [ITEM]?

a. have as good a chance as whites to get housing they can afford

		Yes	No	No opinion
1/16/09	All	76	21	3
	Blacks	47	50	3
	Whites	81	16	3
	Others	72	26	2
1/20/03	All	76	21	3
	Blacks	46	54	1
	Whites	81	15	4
	Others	68	30	3

b. have as good a chance as whites to get a job for which they're qualified

1/16/09	All	76	22	2
	Blacks	38	60	2
	Whites	83	15	2
	Others	71	25	4
1/20/03	All	73	24	3
	Blacks	39	60	1
	Whites	80	16	3
	Others	60	39	1

c. receive equal treatments as whites from the police

1/16/09	All	54	40	6
	Blacks	22	76	2
	Whites	60	34	7
	Others	52	41	8

1/20/03	All	57	35	7
	Blacks	28	69	3
	Whites	66	26	8
	Others	36	58	7

d. receive equal treatments as whites when they visit local businesses, such as stores, restaurants or banks

1/16/09	All	77	21	2
	Blacks	44	54	2
	Whites	83	15	2
	Others	74	23	3

1/20/03	All	76	21	3
	Blacks	45	53	2
	Whites	82	15	3
	Others	69	27	4

44. (ASKED OF NON-WHITES) Have you personally ever felt that [ITEM] just because of your race, or not? IF NOT: As far as you're aware, has that ever happened to a close friend or someone in your immediate family?

a. you were denied housing you could afford

		----- Yes -----			No	
		NET	Personally	Friend/ family	No	opinion
1/16/09	Blacks	36	20	16	64	*
	Other non-whites	20	14	6	80	0
1/20/03	Blacks	43	27	16	57	0

b. you were denied a job you were qualified for

1/16/09	Blacks	53	35	18	46	1
	Other non-whites	31	18	14	68	1
1/20/03	Blacks	50	34	16	49	*

c. you were stopped by the police

1/16/09	Blacks	61	37	24	39	*
	Other non-whites	44	20	24	55	1
1/20/03	Blacks	57	41	17	43	0

d. a shopkeeper or sales clerk was trying to make you feel unwelcome

1/16/09	Blacks	70	60	9	30	1
	Other non-whites	59	50	9	41	0
1/20/03	Blacks	68	61	7	32	0

END