



The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

50 YEARS AFTER MARTIN LUTHER KING'S ASSASSINATION: ASSESSING PROGRESS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

On April 4, 1968, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., was assassinated in Memphis. Most Americans today say at least some of the goals of the 1960's civil rights movement that he spearheaded have been attained. But black and white Americans differ widely in how they perceive the treatment of blacks and how much it's improved in the past 50 years, according to a recent poll conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Black Americans are less inclined to see much progress, particularly with regard to law enforcement and the criminal justice system.



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In recent years, there have been many high-profile, police-involved deaths of black Americans throughout the country. Nearly three-quarters of blacks say there has been little or no improvement over the past 50 years in their treatment by the police. Two-thirds see little or no progress with regard to blacks and the criminal justice system.

Beyond law enforcement, what is the black experience in communities? Only 18 percent of blacks say blacks are treated the same as whites in their community, while 56 percent say blacks are not treated very well, and 23 percent say they are treated badly. Whites are nearly four times as likely as blacks to say that the races are treated the same in their community.

Forty-five percent of whites and 65 percent of blacks say race relations have deteriorated over the past year, and few expect an improvement in the coming year. Only 10 percent of blacks and 28 percent of whites say that the actions of President Donald Trump have been good for blacks.

Three Things You Should Know

About The AP-NORC Poll on the Civil Rights Movement

Among Americans age 18 and older:

- 1) Seventy-eight percent say at least some of the goals of the civil rights movement have been realized.
- 2) Sixty-six percent of black Americans say there has been little or no progress over the past 50 years in how they are treated by the criminal justice system; 73 percent say there has been little or no progress in getting fair treatment from police.
- 3) Sixty-five percent of blacks and 45 percent of whites say race relations have deteriorated over the past year.

The nationwide poll was conducted February 15-19, 2018, using the AmeriSpeak Panel, the probability-based panel of NORC at the University of Chicago. Online and telephone interviews using landlines and cell phones were conducted with 1,337 adults. For purposes of analysis, blacks were sampled at a higher rate than their proportion of the population, then weighted back to their proper proportion in the survey, according to the most recent census. The overall margin of sampling error for the 388 completed interviews with blacks is +/- 7.3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect.

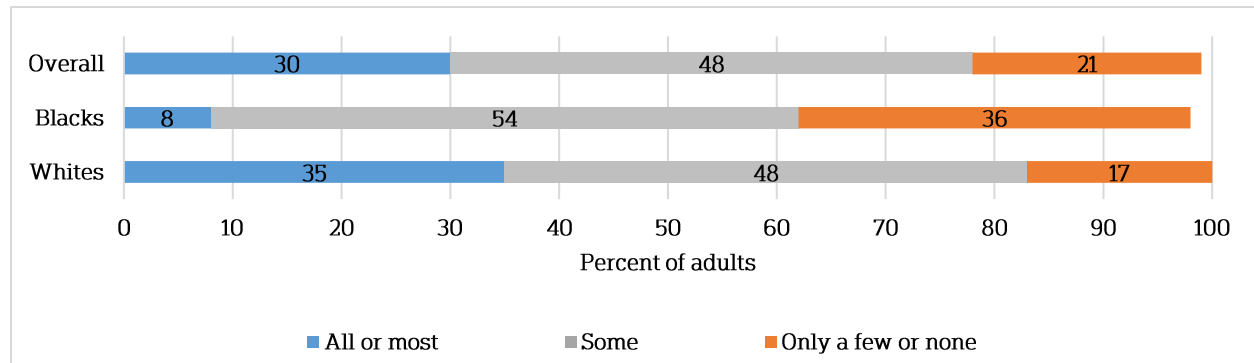
Key findings from the poll include:

- There are deep racial divisions in the public's views of race relations, progress toward equal treatment for blacks in American society, and the Trump administration's relationship with black Americans.
- Thirty percent of Americans say all or most of the goals of the 1960's civil rights movement have been accomplished, and another 48 percent say some have been achieved. Twenty-one percent think few or none of those objectives have been attained.
- Only 8 percent of blacks believe the civil rights objectives have been realized over the past 50 years, although 54 percent say some goals have been reached.
- Looking at specifics, 57 percent of Americans say a great deal or a lot of progress has been made in achieving voting rights for blacks. At the other end of the spectrum, only 23 percent think there has been much progress in getting fair treatment from the police or equal treatment from the criminal justice system for blacks. Again, blacks are less positive about gains made since Dr. King's assassination. A third say there has been much progress with voting rights, and only 3 percent say there has been considerable improvement regarding fair treatment for blacks by the police.
- Nearly half of blacks and about a quarter of whites think things have deteriorated for blacks in the last five years. In addition, 65 percent of blacks and 45 percent of whites say the country's race relations have worsened over the past year.
- Ninety-one percent of blacks disapprove of how Trump is handling race relations, and 76 percent think his actions as president have been harmful for black Americans. In comparison, 58 percent of whites disapprove of Trump's handling of race relations, and 38 percent think his actions are bad for blacks.
- Fifty-two percent of whites and 86 percent of blacks say that whites have an advantage in American society. In comparison, only 28 percent of whites and 10 percent of blacks say the same about blacks.

WHAT'S CHANGED SINCE THE 1960'S?

Most Americans say at least some of the goals of the 1960's civil rights movement have been attained, including 30 percent who say all or most have been achieved and 48 percent who say some have been accomplished. Twenty-one percent say few or none have been reached.

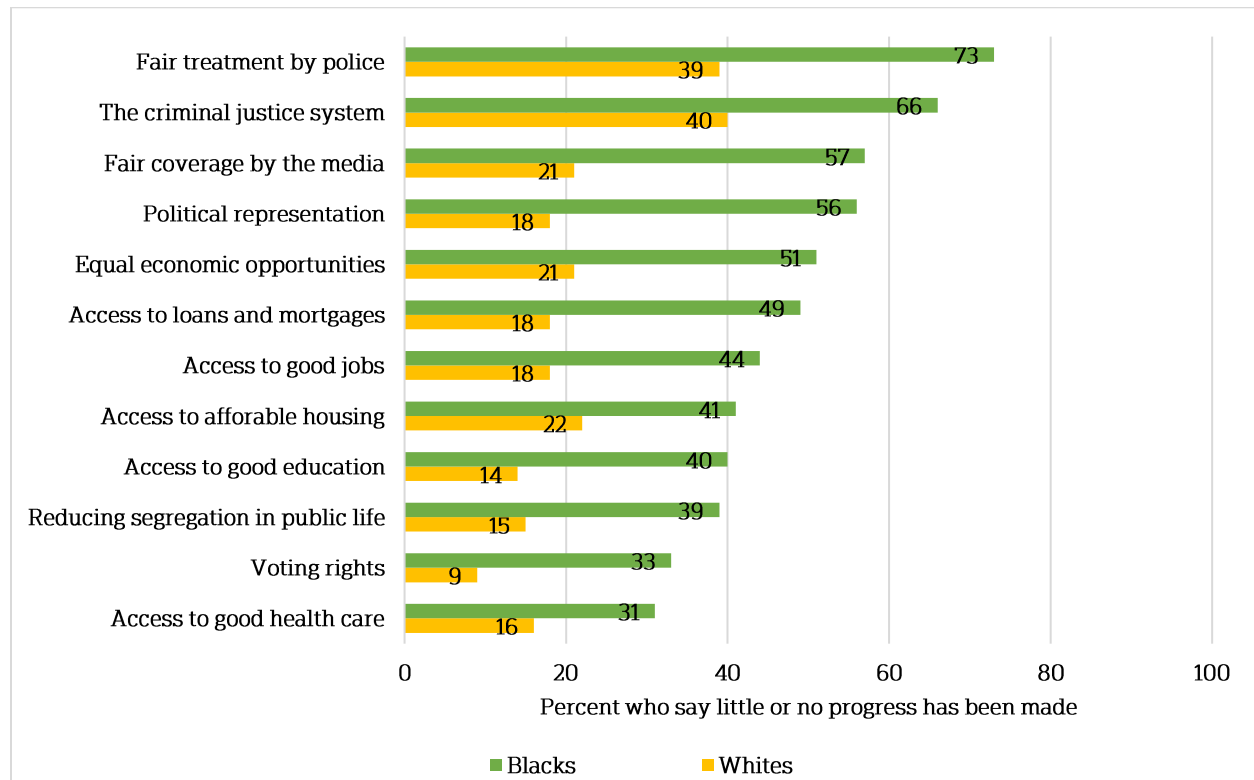
Among whites, about a third say all or most goals of the civil rights movement have been attained, but less than 10 percent of blacks agree.

One-third of blacks say only a few or none of the goals of the civil rights movement have been achieved.

Question: Thinking about the goals of the 1960's civil rights movement, do you think all have been achieved, most have been achieved, some have been achieved, only a few, or none of the goals have been achieved?

Source: AP-NORC Center Poll conducted February 15-19, 2018, with 1,337 adults nationwide

Few believe there has been a great deal or a lot of progress made in achieving equal treatment for blacks in several specific arenas of American society. Of a list of 12 items, voting rights is the only one in which a majority (57 percent) of Americans say a great deal or a lot of progress has been made. Forty-eight percent say a great deal or a lot of progress has been made in access to good education, and 47 percent say that about reducing segregation in public life. Just 23 percent say a great deal or a lot of progress has been made in reducing inequalities in the criminal justice system or fair treatment by police.

Blacks and whites view the progress that has been made toward achieving racial equality in strikingly different ways.

Question: Over the last 50 years, how much progress do you think has been made in achieving equal treatment for African Americans in the following areas?

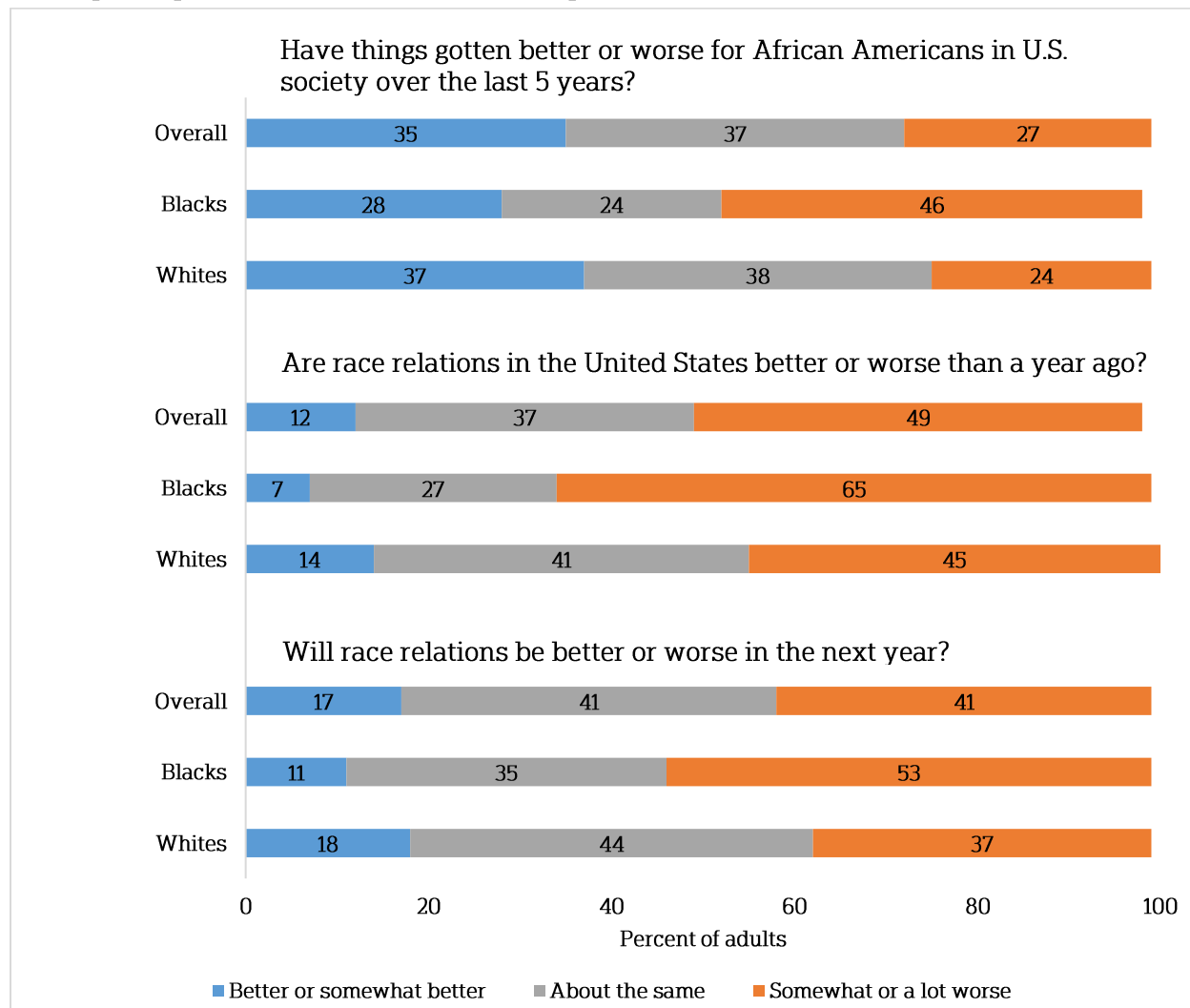
Source: AP-NORC Center Poll conducted February 15-19, 2018, with 1,337 adults nationwide

WHAT ABOUT PROGRESS LATELY?

While most adults overall say at least some of the civil rights movement's objectives have been achieved compared with 50 years ago, blacks are not quite so upbeat when considering the recent past. Nearly half of blacks say their place in American society has deteriorated over the past five years. About a quarter of whites agree.

Just under half of all Americans say race relations in the United States are worse than they were a year ago, and few are optimistic race relations will improve in the year ahead. Blacks express more pessimistic views when it comes to race relations, both over the past year and in the year ahead.

Few express optimism that race relations will improve in the near future.



Questions: What about the last five years? Looking back over the last five years, do you think things today for African Americans in U.S. society have gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?

Do you think race relations in the United States are better than they were a year ago, worse than a year ago or about the same?

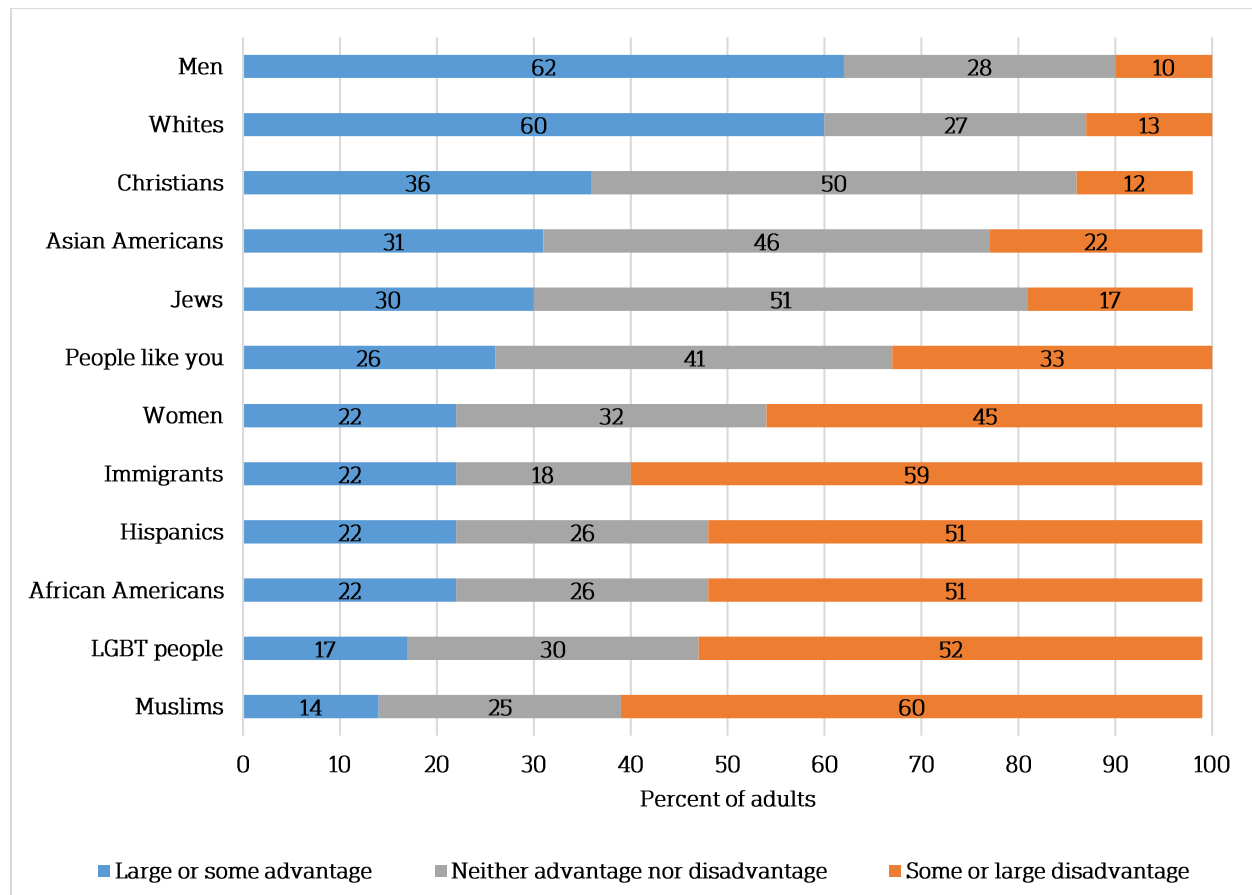
In the next year, do you think race relations in the United States will get better, get worse, or stay about the same?

Source: AP-NORC Center Poll conducted February 15-19, 2018, with 1,337 adults nationwide

WHO GETS THE ADVANTAGE IN THE UNITED STATES?

When it comes to having an advantage in the United States, 6 in 10 adults believe that whites and men have an advantage, while far fewer than half say other racial, religious, or other minority groups are at an advantage. Six in 10 say that Muslims and immigrants are disadvantaged. About half say blacks, LGBT people, and Hispanics are at a disadvantage. Whites are twice as likely as blacks to say that people like them have an advantage (31 percent vs. 14 percent).

Most Americans believe that men and whites have an advantage in society today.



Question: Please tell us your thoughts on whether people from the following groups have an advantage or disadvantage, or neither an advantage nor disadvantage for getting ahead in the United States.

Source: AP-NORC Center Poll conducted February 15-19, 2018, with 1,337 adults nationwide

While about 6 in 10 of both blacks and whites agree that men have a head start to getting ahead, they diverge on racial advantages and disadvantages. Eight-six percent of blacks say whites have an easier time succeeding in this country, and 79 percent say blacks have a harder time. In comparison, just 52 percent of whites say they have the advantage, and 44 percent say blacks are disadvantaged.

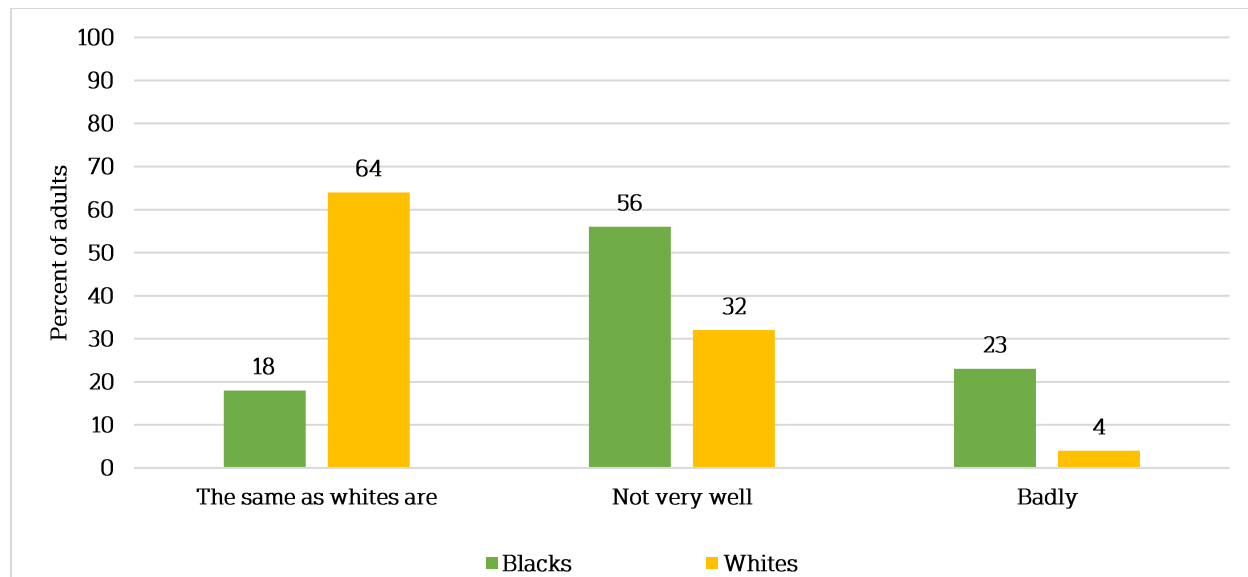
Women are more likely than men to say men have an advantage (67 percent vs. 57 percent), but are no more likely than men to say women have a disadvantage.

WHAT ARE THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY?

Overall, 53 percent of Americans say, in their local community, blacks are treated the same as whites, 38 percent say they are treated not very well, and 8 percent say blacks in their community are treated badly.

Blacks and whites differ widely in how they perceive the treatment of blacks in their community. Whites are nearly four times as likely as blacks to say that blacks in their community are treated the same as whites.

Few blacks say they are treated the same as whites.



Question: In your opinion, how well do you think blacks are treated in your community?

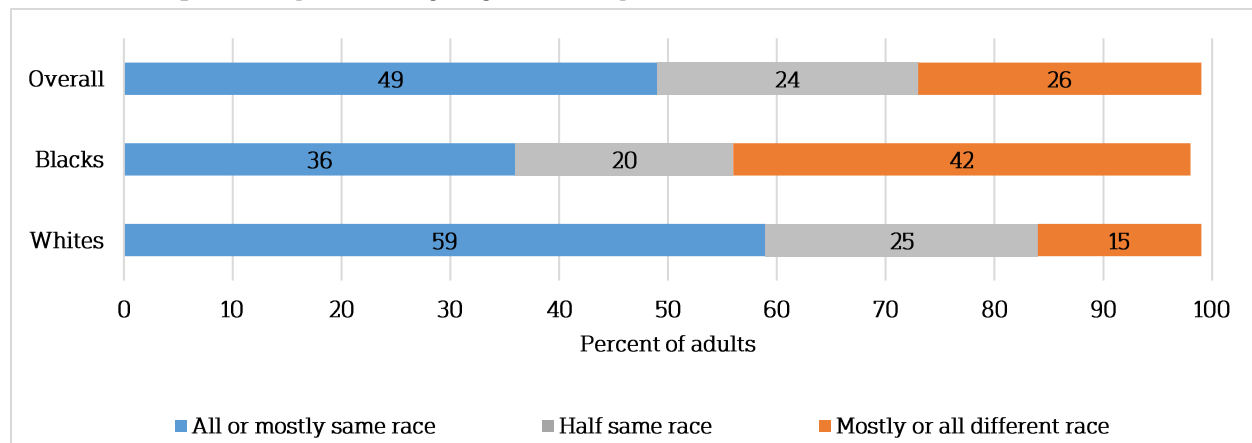
Source: AP-NORC Center Poll conducted February 15-19, 2018, with 1,337 adults nationwide

Whites who live in mostly white communities or in mostly non-white communities don't perceive any difference in treatment between whites and blacks. Among black Americans, however, those who are living in mixed-race communities are three times as likely as those who are living in mostly black communities to say blacks are treated the same as whites (34 percent vs. 10 percent).

Adults age 44 and older are more likely than younger adults to say blacks are treated the same as whites are in their community (64 percent vs. 40 percent).

INTEGRATION IN 2018

Overall, half of Americans say they live in segregated neighborhoods, and about a quarter each say they live in neighborhoods that are half the same race as themselves or in neighborhoods that are mostly or all a different race than themselves. This varies significantly by race: blacks are nearly three times as likely as whites to report they live in neighborhoods that are composed of a mostly or completely different race. Six in 10 whites report living in neighborhoods that are all or mostly white; about a third of blacks report living in neighborhoods that are all or mostly black.

Few whites report living in non-majority white neighborhoods.

Question: Are the people in your neighborhood all the same race as you, mostly the same race as you, about half the same race, mostly a different race than you, or all a different race than you?

Source: AP-NORC Center Poll conducted February 15-19, 2018, with 1,337 adults nationwide

American workplaces and public schools are perceived as slightly less segregated than neighborhoods. Among those who have a workplace, 41 say they work with people all or mostly the same race as them, while 24 percent say half the people they work with are the same race as them, and 33 percent say they're mostly or all a different race. Fifty-five percent of whites have all or mostly white colleagues, while blacks are more likely to be a minority where they work; 51 percent say most or all of the people they work with are a different race.

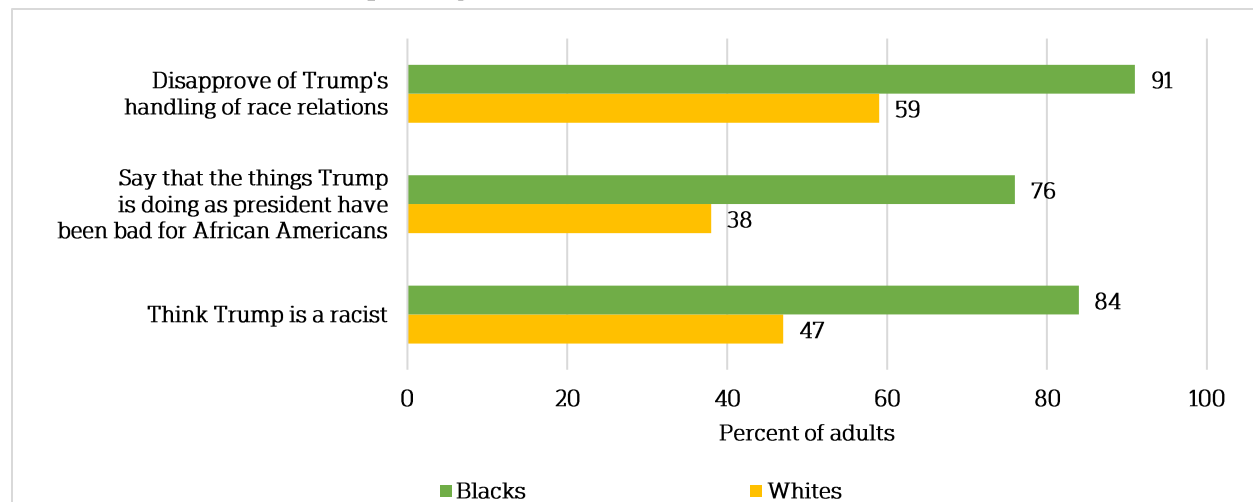
Among those who are familiar with their local public schools, 38 percent say the students in their area are all or mostly the same race as them, 27 percent say half of the students are the same race as them, and 34 percent say they're mostly or all a different race. Still, 44 percent of whites who are familiar with the schools in their area say the schools are all or mostly white; 29 percent of blacks say their local public schools are all or mostly black.

RACE RELATIONS UNDER THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Race and partisanship are closely tied to Americans' views of Trump. Two-thirds of Americans are unhappy with the way Trump is handling race relations, including 91 percent of blacks and 59 percent of whites. Democrats are also more likely than Republicans to disapprove (92 percent vs. 33 percent).

Forty-seven percent of adults say the things that Trump is doing as president have been bad for blacks. Blacks are twice as likely as whites to hold this view (76 percent vs. 38 percent), and Democrats are five times as likely as Republicans (73 percent vs. 14 percent).

Fifty-seven percent of all Americans say they believe Trump is a racist, including 84 percent of blacks and 47 percent of whites. Eighty-five percent of Democrats believe Trump is a racist, while 78 percent of Republicans say he is not.

Blacks and whites view Trump through different lenses.

Questions: Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling race relations?

Do you think that the things Donald Trump is doing as president of the United States have been good, bad, or neither good nor bad for each of the following? African Americans

Do you think Donald Trump is a racist or is not a racist?

Source: AP-NORC Center Poll conducted February 15-19, 2018, with 1,337 adults nationwide

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and with funding from The Associated Press and NORC at the University of Chicago. Data were collected using the AmeriSpeak Omnibus®, a monthly multi-client survey using NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The survey was part of a larger study that included questions about other topics not included in this report. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings.

Interviews for this survey were conducted between February 15 and 19, 2018, with adults age 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak, and 1,337 completed the survey—1,124 via the web and 213 via telephone. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference. The final stage completion rate is 21.5 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 33.7 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 88.1 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 6.4 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 3.9 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

In addition, blacks were sampled at a higher rate than their proportion of the population for reasons of analysis. The overall margin of sampling error for the 388 completed interviews with blacks is +/- 7.3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level including the design effect.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under and oversampling resulting from the study specific sample design.

Poststratification variables included age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity, and education. Weighting variables were obtained from the 2017 Current Population Survey. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of adults age 18 and over.

All differences reported between subgroups of the U.S. population are at the 95 percent level of statistical significance, meaning that there is only a 5 percent (or lower) probability that the observed differences could be attributed to chance variation in sampling.

A comprehensive listing of the questions, complete with tabulations of top-level results for each question, is available on The AP-NORC Center website: <http://www.apnorc.org>. For more information, email info@apnorc.org.

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