

FOR RELEASE JULY 1, 2020

Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak

About four-in-ten U.S. adults say it has become more common for people to express racist views toward Asians since the pandemic began

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RECOMMENDED CITATION

Pew Research Center, July 2020, "Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak"

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How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to understand Americans' personal experiences with racial and ethnic discrimination since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, as well as opinions about whether racist views toward different groups have become more common. For this analysis, we surveyed 9,654 U.S. adults from June 4-10, 2020. Everyone who took part is a member of Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. This way, nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about the [ATP's methodology](#).

See here to read more about the [questions used for this report](#) and the report's [methodology](#).

Terminology

References to white, Black and Asian adults include only those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

All references to party affiliation include those who lean toward that party. Republicans include those who identify as Republicans and independents who say they lean toward the Republican Party. Democrats include those who identify as Democrats and independents who say they lean toward the Democratic Party.

References to college graduates or people with a college degree comprise those with a bachelor's degree or more. "Some college" includes those with an associate degree and those who attended college but did not obtain a degree.

Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak

About four-in-ten U.S. adults say it has become more common for people to express racist views toward Asians since the pandemic began

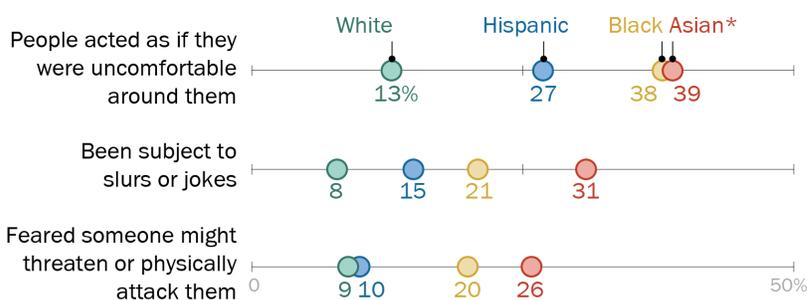
The [coronavirus outbreak](#) continues to have far-reaching [health](#) and [economic](#) consequences for the American public. But for many, especially Black and Asian Americans, the effects extend beyond medical and financial concerns. About four-in-ten Black and Asian adults say people have acted as if they were uncomfortable around them because of their race or ethnicity since the beginning of the outbreak, and similar shares say they worry that other people might be suspicious of them if they wear a mask when out in public, according to a new Pew Research Center survey.

Black and Asian Americans are also more likely than their white and Hispanic counterparts to say they have

been [subject to slurs or jokes](#) because of their race or ethnicity, but Asian adults are the most likely to say this has happened to them since the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak. About three-in-ten Asian adults (31%) say they have been subject to slurs or jokes because of their race or

Asian and Black Americans more likely than other groups to report negative experiences because of their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak

% saying each of the following has happened to them because of their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak



% saying they _____ because of their race or ethnicity a great deal or a fair amount



*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 4-10, 2020.

"Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak"

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ethnicity since the outbreak began, compared with 21% of Black adults, 15% of Hispanic adults and 8% of white adults. This aligns with some reports of [incidents of discrimination](#) against Asian Americans since the virus outbreak [first emerged in China](#) and then started spreading in the United States.

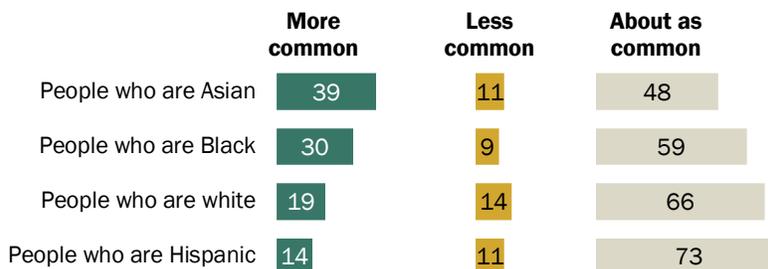
At the same time, about half of Black Americans (51%) say they have heard expressions of support because of their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak; about three-in-ten Hispanic (29%) and Asian (28%) adults say the same. The survey was conducted during a time [when demonstrations continued](#) across the country to protest the death of George Floyd, a Black man killed while in Minneapolis police custody.

Beyond the personal experiences of various groups, about four-in-ten U.S. adults (39%) say it is more common for people to express racist or racially insensitive views about people who are Asian than it was before the coronavirus outbreak, while 30% say it has become more common for people to express these views toward people who are Black. Smaller shares say that, compared with before the outbreak, it is more common for people to express racist or racially insensitive views about people who are Hispanic (19%) or white (14%). Asian Americans, who account for 6% of the U.S. population, are the [fastest growing major racial or ethnic group](#) in the U.S. Hispanics make up [18% of the population](#) overall, while [Black Americans](#) are 12%.

A majority of Asian adults (58%) say it is more common for people to express racist or racially insensitive views about people who are Asian than it was before the coronavirus outbreak; roughly four-in-ten white, Black and Hispanic adults say this is more common now. A sizable share of Black adults (45%) also say it is more common for people to express racist views about Black

About four-in-ten Americans say it is more common for people to express racist views about people who are Asian than before COVID-19

% saying it is ___ for people to express racist or racially insensitive views about each of the following groups in our society compared to before the coronavirus outbreak



*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 4-10, 2020.

"Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak"

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people than before the outbreak, more than the shares of white, Hispanic and Asian adults who say the same.

These are among the findings of a Pew Research Center survey of 9,654 U.S. adults conducted from June 4-10, 2020, using the Center's [American Trends Panel](#).¹

A note about the Asian sample

This survey includes a total sample size of 278 Asian Americans. The sample includes English-speaking Asian Americans only and, therefore, may not be representative of the overall Asian American population (74% of our weighted Asian American sample was born in another country, compared with 77% of the Asian American adult population overall). Despite this limitation, it is important to report the views of Asian Americans on the topics in this study. As always, Asian Americans' responses are incorporated into the general population figures throughout this report. Because of the relatively small sample size and a reduction in precision due to weighting, we are not able to analyze Asian American respondents by demographic categories, such as gender, age or education. For more, see "[Polling methods are changing, but reporting the views of Asian Americans remains a challenge.](#)"

¹ For more details, see the [methodology](#) section of the report.

Asian and Black Americans are more likely to report adverse experiences due to their race or ethnicity since the pandemic began

About four-in-ten Asian (39%) and Black (38%) adults – and 27% of Hispanic adults – say someone has acted uncomfortable around them because of their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak. Only 13% of white adults say this has happened to them.

When asked about other negative situations they may have experienced because of their race or ethnicity since the pandemic, Asian and Black adults are more likely than Hispanic and white adults to say that they have been the subject of slurs or jokes or feared someone might threaten or physically attack them because of their race or ethnicity.

Black and Asian Americans most likely to report adverse experiences due to their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak began

% saying each of the following has happened to them because of their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak

	People acted as if they were uncomfortable around them	Been subject to slurs or jokes	Feared someone might threaten or physically attack them	Someone expressed support for them
All adults	20	12	11	24
White	13	8	9	18
Black	38	21	20	51
Hispanic	27	15	10	29
Asian*	39	31	26	28

*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 4-10, 2020.

"Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak"

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Asian Americans are more likely than any other group to say they have been subject to slurs or jokes because of their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak: 31% say this has happened to them, compared with 21% of Black adults, 15% of Hispanic adults and 8% of white adults. About a quarter (26%) of Asian Americans and 20% of Black Americans say they feared someone might threaten or physically attack them, more than the shares of white and Hispanic Americans.

Black adults younger than 50 are more likely than older Black adults to say they have had each of these experiences. For example, 44% of Black adults in the younger age group say people have

acted as if they were uncomfortable around them since the pandemic began, compared with 30% of Black adults ages 50 and older. About three-in-ten Black adults under 50 (28%) say they have feared someone might threaten or physically attack them (vs. 9% of older Black adults) and 25% say they have been subject to slurs or jokes because of their race or ethnicity since the coronavirus outbreak (vs. 15%).²

Black men (49%) are more likely than Black women (31%) to say someone acted as if they were uncomfortable around them. Black men are also more likely to say they have feared being threatened or physically attacked because of their race or ethnicity (27% vs. 15% of Black women).

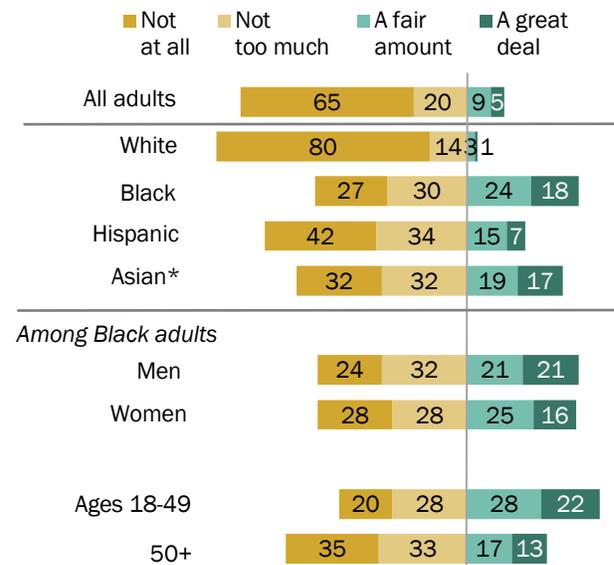
The survey also asked about expressions of support since the coronavirus outbreak. About half of Black adults (51%) say someone has expressed support for them because of their race or ethnicity during this period, more than any other racial group. In particular, younger Black adults say they received this support (55% vs. 44% among those ages 50 and older). This survey was conducted at a time when Americans were following [news coverage](#) of George Floyd's killing while in custody of Minneapolis police nearly as closely as they were following news related to COVID-19.

Sizable shares of Black and Asian adults say they worry other people might be suspicious of them if they wear a mask in public

About four-in-ten Black Americans (42%) and 36% of Asian Americans say they worry a great deal or a fair amount that other people might be suspicious of them because of their race or ethnicity if they wear a mask or face covering

Black, Asian adults are more likely than white, Hispanic adults to worry people will be suspicious if they wear a mask

% saying they worry ___ that other people might be suspicious of them because of their race or ethnicity if they wear a mask or face covering when in stores or other businesses



*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 4-10, 2020.

"Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak"

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² Because of the relatively small size of the Asian American sample and a reduction in precision due to weighting, results for Asian Americans cannot be analyzed by age or other demographic categories.

when in stores or other businesses. About a quarter of Hispanic adults (23%) and just 5% of white adults say they worry about this.

Despite these concerns, majorities of Black (69%) and Asian (80%) adults – as well as white (62%) and Hispanic (74%) adults – say they’ve worn a mask or a face covering all or most of the time in the past month when out in stores or other businesses.

Black men and women are about equally likely to say they worry that other people might be suspicious of them because of their race or ethnicity if they wear a mask or a face covering in stores or other businesses. About four-in-ten in each group say they worry at least a fair amount, with 21% of Black men and 16% of Black women saying they worry a great deal (this 5 percentage point difference is not statistically significant).

Concern among Black adults varies considerably by age. About half of Black Americans younger than 50 (51%) say they worry about people being suspicious of them because of their race or ethnicity if they wear a mask or face covering; 30% of Black adults ages 50 and older say the same.

Three-in-ten or more U.S. adults say racist views about Asian and Black Americans are more common than before the pandemic

A majority of Asian Americans (58%) and 45% of Black Americans say that it is more common for people to express racist views toward their group since the coronavirus outbreak. Smaller shares of Hispanic (21%) and white (18%) Americans say the same about people expressing racist views toward people who are Hispanic or white, respectively.

Age and education are linked to differing perceptions of whether racist views toward Asians are now more common. About half of younger adults ages 18 to 29 (51%) say that racist views about Asian people are more common now since the coronavirus outbreak, compared with about four-in-ten or fewer among those in older age groups. Those with college degrees or more (47%) also are more likely than those with some college or less education (35%) to say the same.

Asian and Black Americans are more likely than white and Hispanic Americans to say racism toward their racial or ethnic group is more common since COVID-19

% saying it is more common for people to express racist or racially insensitive views about ___ in our society compared to before the coronavirus outbreak

	People who are Asian	People who are Black	People who are white	People who are Hispanic
All adults	39	30	19	14
White	37	26	18	10
Black	38	45	20	23
Hispanic	41	36	21	21
Asian*	58	29	18	15
Ages 18-29	51	39	22	17
30-49	42	29	19	13
50-64	33	28	19	13
65+	30	26	15	12
Some college or less	35	32	20	15
Bachelor's degree+	47	26	16	11
Rep/Lean Rep	25	27	23	8
Dem/Lean Dem	52	33	16	18

*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Note: White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. "Some college" includes those with an associate degree and those who attended college but did not obtain a degree.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 4-10, 2020.

"Many Black and Asian Americans Say They Have Experienced Discrimination Amid the COVID-19 Outbreak"

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Democrats and those who lean Democratic (52%) are more likely than Republicans and Republican leaners (25%) to say that it is more common for people to express racist views about Asian Americans since the coronavirus outbreak. This partisan gap is narrower when it comes to views about whether it is now more common for people to express racist views about people who are Black (33% of Democrats vs. 27% of Republicans say this) or Hispanic (18% vs. 8%). Meanwhile, Republicans (23%) are more likely than Democrats (16%) to say that it is more common for people to express racially insensitive views about white people.

Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Find related reports online at [pewresearch.org/socialtrends](https://www.pewresearch.org/socialtrends)

Mark Hugo Lopez, *Director, Global Migration and Demography Research*

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Rachel Minkin, *Research Associate*

Tanya Arditi, *Communications Manager*

Travis Mitchell, *Copy Editor and Digital Producer*

In addition, the project benefited greatly from the guidance of the Pew Research Center methodology team: Courtney Kennedy, Andrew Mercer, Nick Bertoni, Dorene Asare-Marfo, Nick Hatley and Arnold Lau.

Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from the panel wave conducted from June 4 to June 10, 2020. A total of 9,654 panelists responded out of 11,013 who were sampled, for a response rate of 88%. This does not include two panelists who were removed from the data due to extremely high rates of refusal or straightlining. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 4.7%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1.6%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 9,654 respondents is plus or minus 1.6 percentage points.

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	2,308
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,335
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	684
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS/web	9,396	8,778	6,407
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS/web	5,900	4,720	4,682
	Total	35,014	23,440	15,416

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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The subsample from the ATP consisted of 11,013 ATP members that responded to the Wave 57 survey and were still active.

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of which 9,942 agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a random, address-based sample (ABS) of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. For a random half-sample of invitations, households without internet access were instructed to return a postcard. These households were contacted by telephone and sent a tablet if they agreed to participate. A total of 9,396 were invited to join the panel, and 8,778 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. The same recruitment procedure was carried out on August 19, 2019, from which a total of 5,900 were invited to join the panel and 4,720 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. Of the 23,440 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 15,416 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.³ The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

Weighting

The ATP data was weighted in a multistep process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original selection probability. The next step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on the dimensions listed in the accompanying table.

Sampling errors and test of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Gender	2018 American Community Survey
Age	
Education	
Race/Hispanic origin	
Country of birth among Hispanics	
Years lived in the United States among Hispanics	
Home internet access	
Region x Metropolitan status	2019 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2017 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	Average of the three most recent Pew Research Center telephone surveys.

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total US adult population.

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³ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling."

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	9,654	1.6 percentage points
White	6,602	1.8 percentage points
Black	737	5.3 percentage points
Hispanic	1,645	4.5 percentage points
Asian	278	8.2 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are non-Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

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