

# **Public Opinion Presentation: Evaluating Racial Attitudes using the General Social Survey (GSS)**

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# Outline & Comments

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## Question Topics:

- Discrimination (Generally)
- Housing Discrimination
- School Busing
- Government Aid
- Affirmative Action

## GSS Comments:

- Same questions asked over many years
- Antiquated racial groupings and terms in longest running questions

# Discrimination

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Question: Discrimination [RACDIF1] (p. 522 GSS Codebook)

On the average (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are mainly due to discrimination?

Responses: Yes, No, Don't Know, No Answer

# Discrimination

## Majority Says No in 2016

- 41% think discrimination is the main source.
  - 36.5% of Whites
  - 58.2% of Blacks
  - 47.4% of the rest of respondents

## Non-Whites View Discrimination as Main Source

- Over 10 pt. decrease among Blacks since 1985
- Recent increase among all groups in 2016

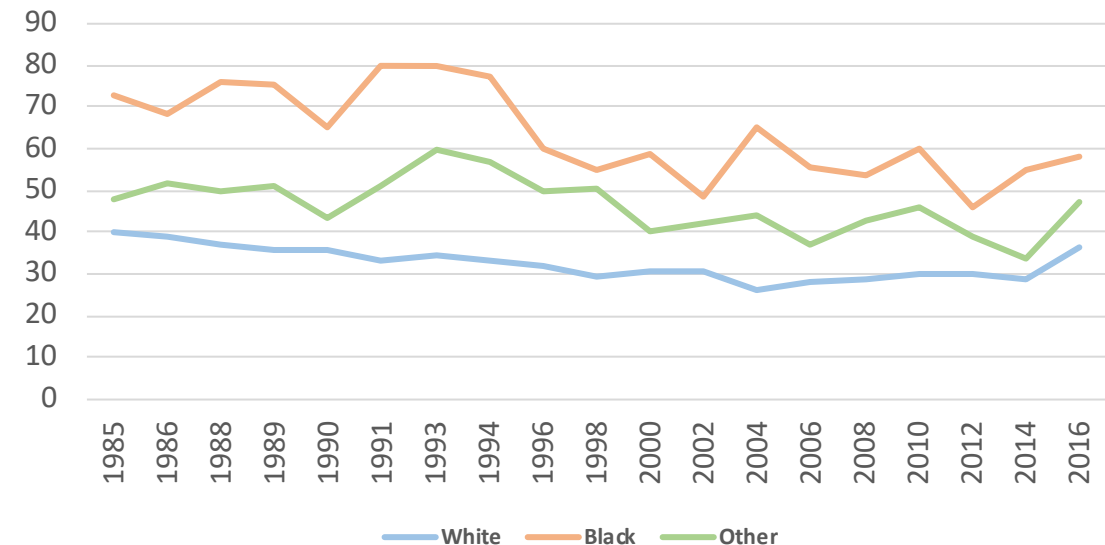
### Racial Differences and Discrimination in 2016

Do you think these differences are mainly due to discrimination?

	White	Black	Other	Total
<b>Yes</b>	<b>36.5 %</b>	<b>58.2</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>41.0</b>
	N = 509	172	93	775
<b>No</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>47.3</b>	<b>55.3</b>
	841	110	93	1,044
<b>Don't Know/No Ans.</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>
	44	14	10	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	1,395	297	197	1,888

Note: GSS Variable: RACDIF1. Values weighted by WTSSALL

Discrimination as Main Source of Differences  
(% Agree by Group)



# Housing Discrimination

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## Question: Housing Discrimination [RACOPEN] (p. 362 GSS Codebook)

Suppose there is a community-wide vote on the general housing issue. There are two possible laws to vote on. Which law would you vote for?

### Response:

- A. One law says that a homeowner can decide for himself whom to sell his house to, even if he prefers not to sell to (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans)
- B. The second law says that a homeowner cannot refuse to sell to someone because of their race or color
- C. Neither
- D. Don't Know
- E. No Answer

# Housing Discrimination

## Majority Oppose Housing Discrimination in 2016

- 75.5 % of Whites
- 80.8 % of Blacks
- 82.6 % of remaining respondents

## Increasing Opposition Over Time

- White respondents near convergence
- Those who identify as race other than White or Black converge nearly 25 years prior

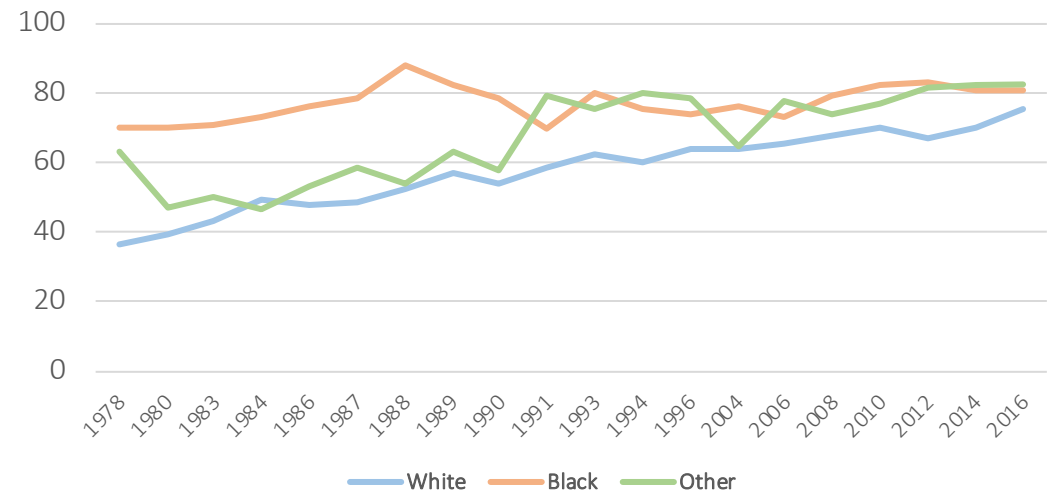
### Housing Discrimination in 2016

Can a homeowner discriminate when selling a house?

	White	Black	Other	Total
<b>Owner Decides</b>	<b>20.8 %</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>18.7</b>
	N = 289	39	26	353
<b>Can't Discriminate</b>	<b>75.5</b>	<b>80.8</b>	<b>82.6</b>	<b>77.1</b>
	1,051	242	164	1,457
<b>Neither</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>3.1</b>
	40	14	5	59
<b>Don't Know / No Answer</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.1</b>
	12	5	4	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	1,391	299	199	1,889

Note: GSS Variable: RACOPEN Values weighted by WTSSALL

Opposition to Housing Discrimination



# School Busing

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Question: School Busing [BUSING] (p. 367 GSS Codebook)

In general, do you favor or oppose the busing of (Negro/Black/African-American) and white school children from one school district to another?

Response: Yes, No, Don't Know, No Answer

Note: Question no longer asked after 1996.

# School Busing

## In 1996 Majority Opposed Busing

- 62.1 % of Whites Opposed
- 58.7 % of Blacks Favored
- 58.0 % of remaining respondents opposed

## Some Increase in Support Over Time

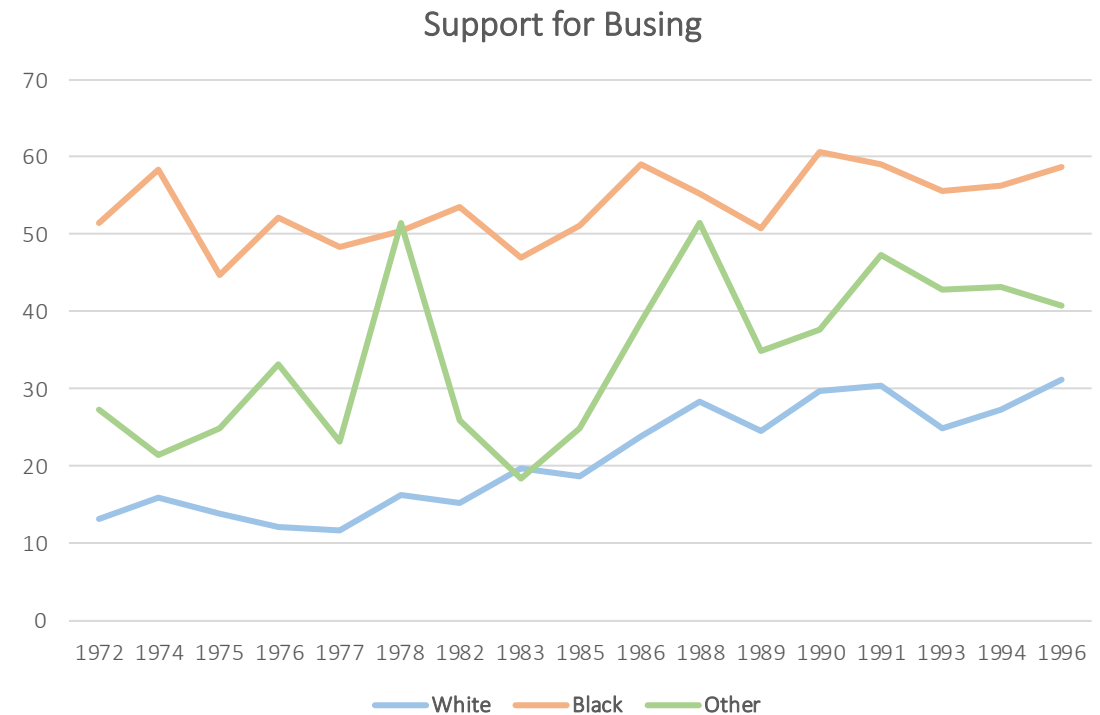
- Large response variance among those who do not identify as either White or Black.

### School Busing in 1996

Do you favor or oppose busing?

	White	Black	Other	Total
Favor	31.2 % N = 248	58.7 75	40.6 28	35.4 351
Oppose	62.1 493	37.97 49	48.44 34	58.02 575
Don't Know /No Answer	6.68 53	3.38 4	10.94 8	6.55 65
Total	100 794	100 128	100 69	100 991

Note: GSS Variable: BUSING. Values weighted by WTSSALL





# Government Aid

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## Question: Government Aid [HELPBLK] (p. 579 GSS Codebook)

Some people think that (Blacks/Negroes/African-Americans) have been discriminated against for so long that the government has a special obligation to help improve their living standards. Others believe that the government should not be giving special treatment to (Blacks/Negroes/African-Americans).

Response: Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you made up your mind on this?

1. Government help
- 2.
3. Agree with both
- 4.
5. No special treatment

Note: "Don't Know" and "No Answer" were also recorded responses.

# Government Aid

## Majority Agree With Help of Some Level

- 47.4 % of Whites
- 79.9 % of Blacks
- 60.4 % of the rest of respondents

### Government Aid in 2016

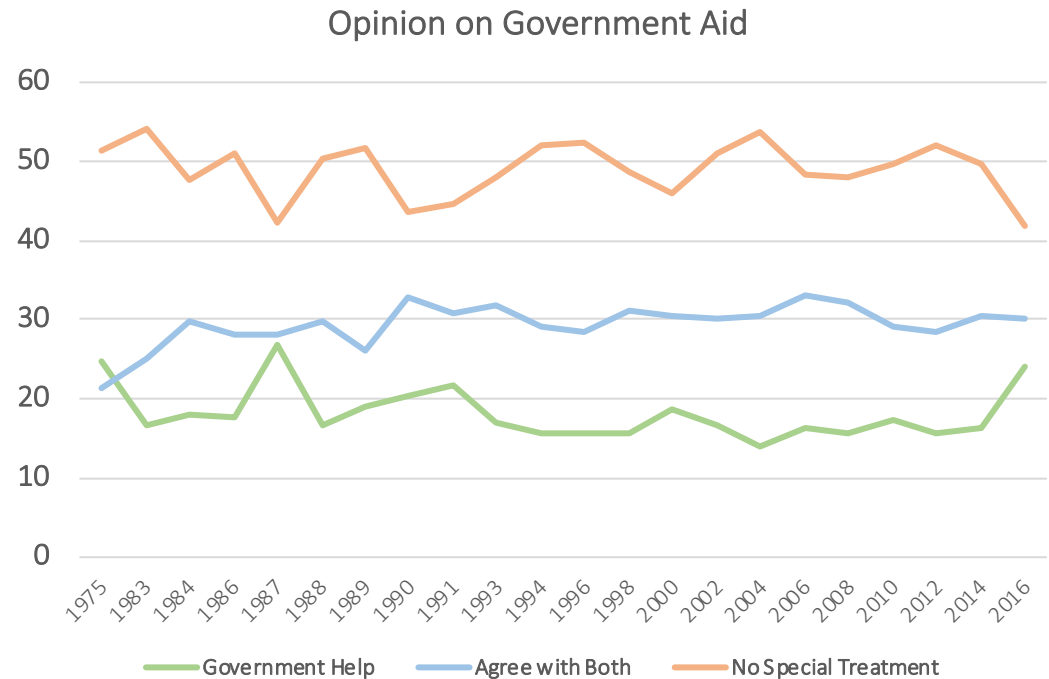
Where would you place yourself on this scale?

	White	Black	Other	Total
Government Help	8.4 %	31.9	12.4	12.8
	N = 121	105	24	250
2	11.1	12.9	9.7	11.3
	159	42	19	220
Agree with Both	27.9	34.8	38.3	30.1
	398	115	75	588
4	23.3	7.0	12.9	19.5
	333	23	25	381
No Special Treatment	26.0	7.2	21.0	22.4
	372	24	41	437
Don't Know/No Answer	3.3	6.2	5.7	4.0
	47	21	11	78
Col Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	1429	329	196	1954

Note: GSS Variable: HELPBLK. Values weighted by WTSSALL

## Recent Decline in No Special Treatment Response

- Accompanied by increase in government help
- Potentially a cyclical nature to “no special treatment”



# Affirmative Action

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## Question: Affirmative Action [AFFRMACT] (p. 378 GSS Codebook)

Some people say that because of past discrimination, blacks should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of blacks is wrong because it discriminates against whites. What about your opinion -- are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of blacks?

### If Favors:

- A. Do you favor preference in hiring and promotion strongly or not strongly?

### If Opposes:

- B. Do you oppose preference in hiring and promotion strongly or not strongly?

Note: “Don’t Know” and “No Answer” were also recorded responses.

# Affirmative Action

## Few view Affirmative Action (AA) favorably

- 43% strongly oppose AA
  - 78% of Whites view AA negatively
  - 39% of Blacks view AA favorably

### Affirmative Action in 2016

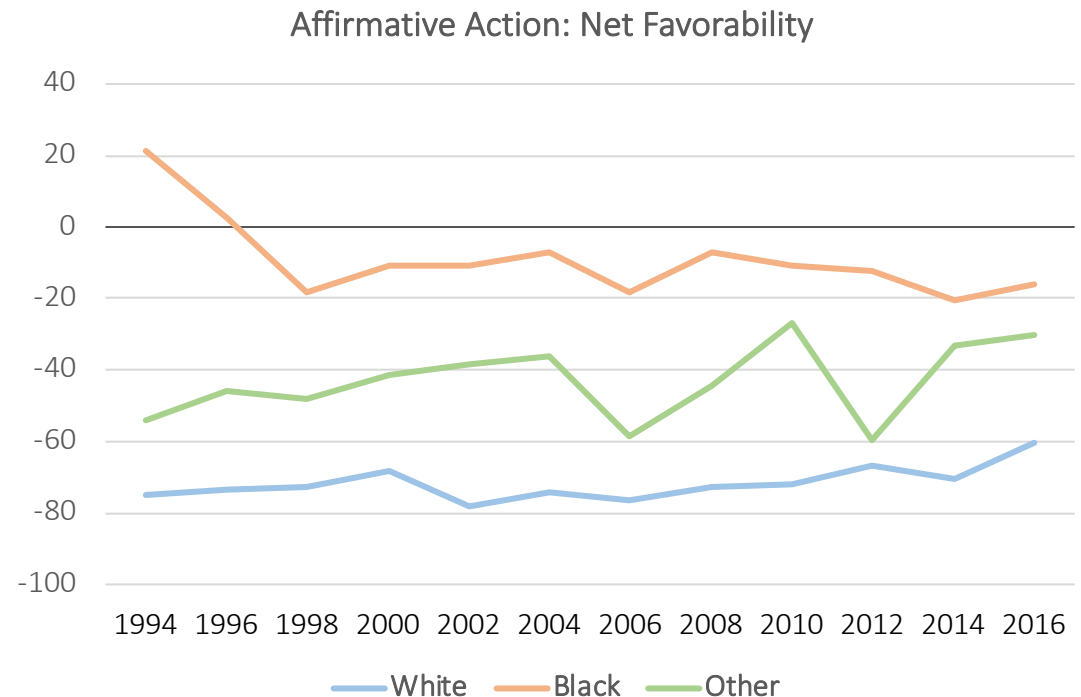
Do you favor/oppose preference in hiring and promotion strongly or not strongly?

	White	Black	Other	Total
Strongly Support	10.5 % N = 147	28.0 83	22.9 45	14.6 274
Support	6.6 92	11.3 33	7.6 15	7.5 141
Oppose	29.9 416	24.1 71	31.0 61	29.1 548
Strongly Oppose	47.7 663	31.3 93	29.9 59	43.2 814
Don't Know / No Answer	5.2 73	5.2 15	8.7 17	5.6 105
Col Total	100.0 1391	100.0 296	100.0 196	100.0 1883

Note: GSS Variable: AFFRMACT. Values weighted by WTSSALL

## Net Favorability is Negative

- Net favorability increased from 2014 – 2016



# Citations

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Smith, Tom W, Michael Davern, Jeremy Freese, and Michael Hout. *General Social Surveys, 1972-2016* [machine-readable data file] /Principal Investigator, Tom W. Smith; Co-Principal Investigator, Michael Davern; Co-Principal Investigator, Jeremy Freese; Co-Principal Investigator, Michael Hout; Sponsored by National Science Foundation. --NORC ed.-- Chicago: NORC at the University of Chiago [producer]; Storrs, CT: The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut [distributor], 2018.

1 data file (62,466 logical records) + 1 codebook (3,689.). -- (National Data Program for the Social Sciences, No. 24).