

## Attitudes toward African-Americans have worsened since 2008, research finds

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(Phys.org)—This might not be a "post-racial" era after all.

New research indicates that [racial attitudes](#) toward African-Americans have worsened since the election of President [Barack Obama](#).

Many people described America as accepting of all races after Obama was voted as the country's first black president in 2008. However, a new

poll shows that anti-black sentiments became more common in the last four years.

Since 2008, explicit racism was more common among Republicans than Democrats. In 2012, the proportion of people expressing anti-black attitudes was 79 percent among Republicans, 48 percent among independents and 32 percent among Democrats.

If the findings hold during next week's [presidential elections](#), Obama's race may play a factor in voters' choices.

The study's authors include Josh Pasek, assistant professor of [communication studies](#) at the University of Michigan; Jon Krosnick, professor of communication and [political science](#) at Stanford University; and Trevor Tompson, director of the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research at the University of Chicago.

"It appears that the Obama administration has not been a time of decline in anti-black attitudes in America," the researchers wrote. "Indeed, these data suggest that anti-black attitudes have become slightly more prevalent over those years, especially during the last two years."

Using data from surveys done in 2008, 2010 and 2012, the researchers found that:

- Sizable proportions of both [Democrats and Republicans](#) manifested anti-black attitudes, though anti-black attitudes were more common among Republicans than among Democrats.
- People who identified themselves as Republicans in 2012 expressed anti-black attitudes more often than did Republican identifiers in 2008.
- People with more [negative attitudes](#) toward African-Americans were less likely to approve of Obama's job performance.

- If both anti-black and pro-black attitudes had been converted to be neutral, the proportion of Americans disapproving of Obama's job performance would have been 1 to 3 percentage points lower in both 2010 and 2012.
- In 2012, holding negative attitudes toward African-Americans increased the likelihood of voting for Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney and not voting at all, and decreased the likelihood of voting for Obama.
- When testing for implicit attitudes, the scores for anti-black sentiment increased from 49.3 percent in 2008 to 51.1 percent in 2010 and 55.7 percent in 2012.

Overall, the expected influence of anti-black [attitudes](#) on the election mirrored what we found in a similar examination in 2008, Pasek said.

"In an election projected to be this close, the two-point margin we attribute to prejudice may play a critical role in determining our next president," he said.

**More information:** [joshpasek.com/news/racism-in-the-2012-elections](http://joshpasek.com/news/racism-in-the-2012-elections)

Provided by University of Michigan

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