

# Two-thirds of African Americans know someone mistreated by police, and 22% report mistreatment in past year

June 19 2020

## Unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police

■ White, Non-Hispanic 
 ■ Hispanic/Latino/LatinX 
 ■ All People of Color 
 ■ Black/African American, non-Hispanic

ever



within the past year



Credit: Tufts University

Sixty-eight percent of African Americans say they know someone who has been unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police, and 43% say they personally have had this

experience—with 22% saying the mistreatment occurred within the past year alone, according to survey results from Tufts University's Research Group on Equity in Health, Wealth and Civic Engagement.

Forty-two percent of Latinos and 27% of whites also say they know someone who was unfairly stopped by [police](#), with 23% of Latinos and 13% of whites reporting that they personally have had these experiences.

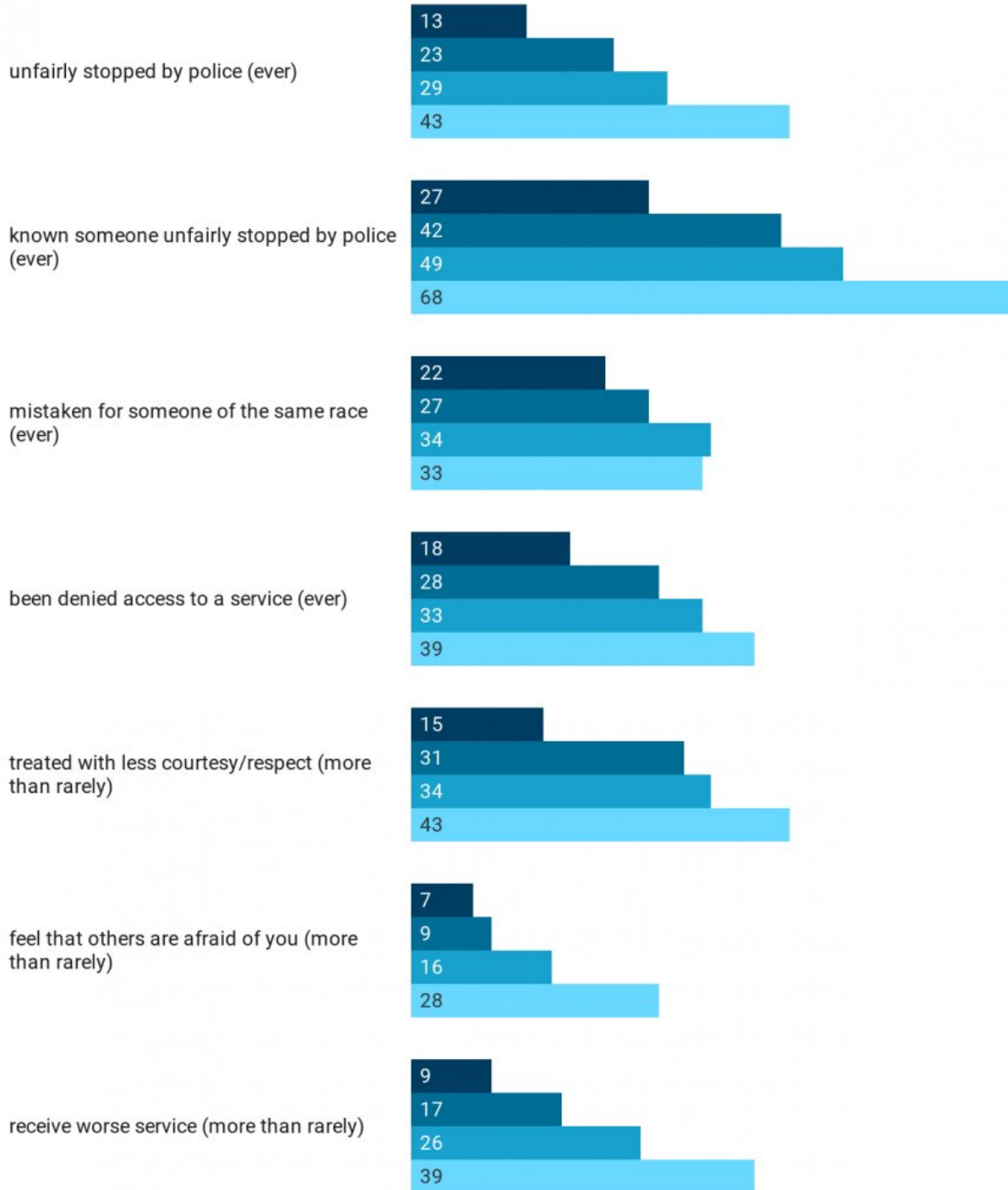
The nationally representative survey of adults, conducted between May 29 and June 10, also looked at other forms of [discrimination](#), and found that, in all types except one, higher percentages of African Americans report being subjected to discrimination than other groups. The survey was designed and analyzed by Tufts University's Research Group on Equity in Health, Wealth and Civic Engagement.

"Some people might think that day-to-day discrimination happens primarily during routine interactions, such as shopping. But one of the eye-opening results of our survey is that [black people](#) are about as likely to report being stopped unfairly by police as they are to encounter discrimination in a store or in other interactions," said Deborah J. Schildkraut, professor and chair of Political Science in Tufts' School of Arts and Sciences.

Although African Americans are 3.3 times more likely than whites to report that they personally have been unfairly stopped by police, 34% of all Americans say that someone they know has been unfairly treated by the police, and 18% have had such experiences themselves. "Across all races and ethnicities, many people may either feel a personal stake in reforming the police or they may be primed to believe accusations that the police are racially biased because of their own experiences, or both," said Peter Levine, associate dean for academic affairs in Tufts' Tisch College of Civic Life.

## Forms of Discrimination

■ White, Non-Hispanic 
 ■ Hispanic/Latino/Latinx 
 ■ All People of Color 
 ■ African American/Black, Non-Hispanic



Credit: Tufts University

## **Other forms of discrimination are also pervasive**

The survey shows that a higher percentage of African Americans report being subjected to other forms of discrimination than other groups do. For example, 28% of African Americans sometimes or frequently feel that other people are afraid of them. By contrast, 9% of Latinos and 6% of whites also have that sense.

The only form of discrimination for which African Americans are not the highest percentage involves being mistaken for someone of the same race despite having dissimilar appearances. This experience is most common for Asian-Americans in this survey, although the sample size for Asian-Americans is small.

Most people of all races and ethnicities (76% of the whole sample) report experiencing at least one of the forms of discrimination in the survey. However, the proportions of people who say they have never experienced any of these forms of experience varies from 11% of African Americans to 27% of whites.

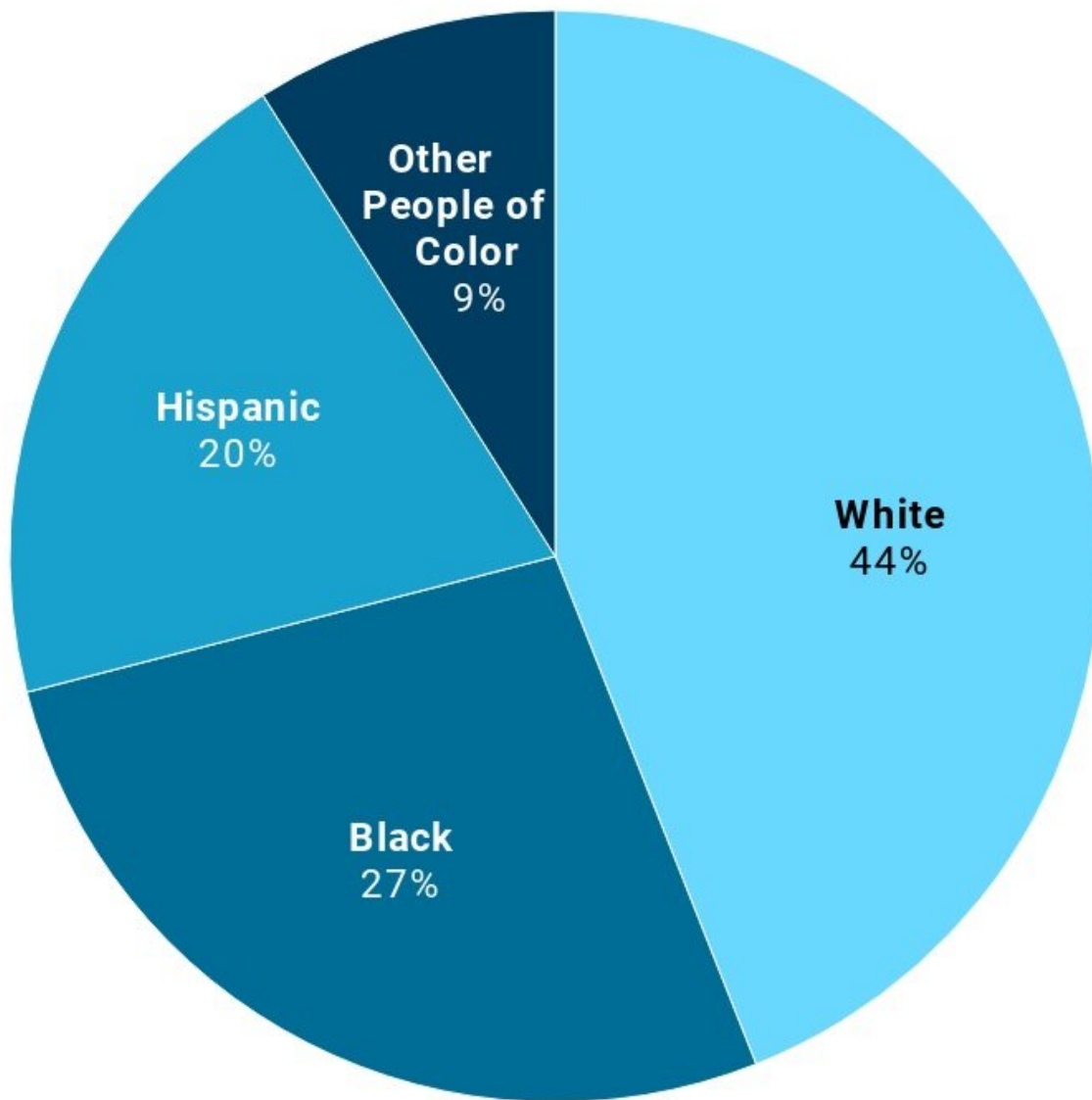
## **Personal experiences**

In addition to answering the survey's questions, respondents could type comments about their personal experiences with discrimination, and some described pervasive negative experiences based on feelings of racial isolation. For example, a Latina woman wrote, "It's hard and a bit humiliating when you try to be in a town of only white people."



# Of all those reporting police discrimination, 56% are people of color; 44% are White

White Black Hispanic  
Other People of Color



Credit: Tufts University

Several African American respondents offered stories of discrimination by the police. One man wrote, "[I was] walking home and got [stopped] by the police for no reason. He said 'hey boy where are (you) going and start laughing. pull up your shirt'. ... one said this is how you plant drugs on someone" [sic].

An African American woman wrote, "I've been [asked] to leave a public parking lot, at an apartment complex by the police, my boyfriend resided there." And another black woman wrote, "I had a cop grab me by my bra for no reason other than I was doing what was asked of me."

Forty-four percent of the people who say they have been treated unfairly by police are white. One white man, for example, described this personal experience: "Pulled over by a police officer. He asked me to get out of the car, I did. Then he slammed me on the hood of his cruiser." Another white man offered a more general observation: "The police almost everywhere think that they are better and more privileged than others. They think that the law does not apply to them and they act with utter impunity."

A smaller number of respondents also provided positive comments about the police, and two respondents who are police officers said they had faced discrimination because of their law enforcement affiliations.

By September 2020, the Research Group will launch a website at <https://equityresearch.tufts.edu> that will allow anyone to explore numerous dimensions of equity and inequity with an interactive data-

visualization tool. Tufts' Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life is funding the data-visualization tool.

The survey was fielded online by Ipsos using its KnowledgePanel. The sample was nationally representative, and the number of complete responses was 1,267. More technical information about the survey is at <https://equityresearch.tufts.edu/the-survey/>.

Provided by Tufts University

Citation: Two-thirds of African Americans know someone mistreated by police, and 22% report mistreatment in past year (2020, June 19) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-06-two-thirds-african-americans-mistreated-police.html>

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