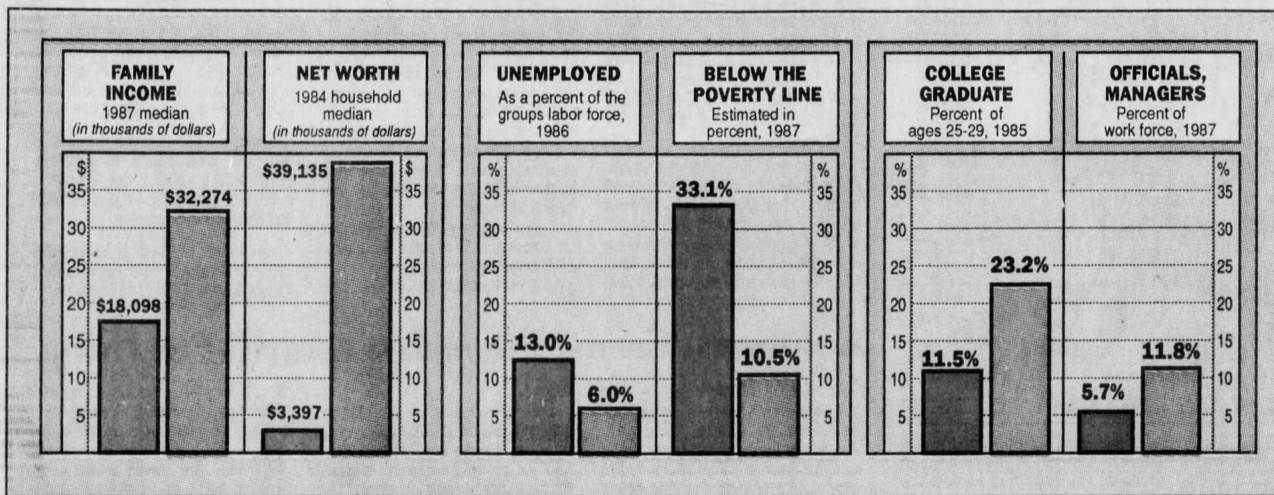


## Gaps Remain Between Blacks And Whites (U.S.)

■ BLACKS ■ WHITES



SOURCES: Bureau of the Census; Joint Center for Political Studies; U.S. Labor Department

Post-Dispatch Graphic

# Many Gains Of '60s Slipping Away

**T**wo decades after inner-city ghettos across the United States were set ablaze in a display of blacks' frustration over civil rights, warnings of trouble about the economic status of blacks are rumbling through the St. Louis area.

The fires of the 1960s, sparked in part by the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., led to widespread economic and social progress for blacks and to a substantial expansion of the black middle class.

But in 1988, the drive for black economic advancement has stalled — and in some cases is sliding back — thus widening the economic gulf between whites and blacks.

Partly to blame for the gap, experts say, is the history of "institutional racism" — discrimination enforced by law, such as segregated work places, shops and schools.

In the 1960s, blacks made substantial progress in several areas, including voting and access to public places, said Gerald W. Patton, former chairman of African and Afro-American studies at Washington University.

But Patton said, "The greatest unfulfilled promise of the 1960s was the promise of parity of economics for black Americans compared to white Americans."

If that promise is left unfulfilled for too long, close

## BLACKS IN THE ECONOMY

### PART ONE

This story was reported by: Leslie J. Allen, Ann Scales Cobbs, Gregory B. Freeman, Patrick E. Gauen, Jerri Stroud and Cynthia Todd, all of the Post-Dispatch staff.  
It was written by: Gauen.

observers of the situation say, common sense suggests that it could fuel a heightened level of violence within — and spilling out of — black areas.

Said James H. Buford, president of the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis: "Economically deprived blacks are going to say, 'We're not going to take it any more.' That can be translated into violence. I think at least you are going to have boycotts and demonstrations."

### Consider these signals:

■ The proportion of blacks going to college in Missouri is declining, whereas the demand for workers with advanced technical skill is growing.

Some experts believe this may lead to an era in which many blacks will be denied better jobs because they lack higher education.

■ The black middle class here grew substantially in the last 20 years but has begun to shrink as the manufacturing jobs that helped it to expand have dried up.

■ The area's unemployment rate for blacks is almost four times higher than that for whites. Observers say the number of blacks in the permanently impoverished "underclass" is growing faster than the number of whites.

■ A substantial number of blacks have given up any hope of a brighter future for themselves or for their children.

Those frustrations are similar in magnitude to the ones that boiled over into violence in some U.S. cities — but not St. Louis — 20 years ago, said Martin M. "Mickey" Rosen. He is assistant director of the Human Development Corp., an agency here that adminis-

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