GALLUP POLL
SOCIAL AUDIT

# Black-White Relations
# in the United States
# *2001 Update*

Report on Findings
Presented by

## THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION

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# Introduction and Design of the Research

## Overview

The Gallup Poll Social Audit on Black/White Relations in the United States provides an update on American's opinion of the state of race relations today. The project systematically updates long-term Gallup Poll trends on race relations and covers new ground for tracking over time. Gallup uses a rigorous RDD stratified telephone sampling design to interview large samples of black and white respondents. This research design permits detailed subgroup analysis.

The Gallup Poll Social Audit data are intended to be used as the basis for discussion, debate, and as input to policy-making, journalism and scholarship on race-related issues.

The Gallup Poll Social Audit series on Black/White Relations has been funded solely by The Gallup Organization. The most recent survey, conducted from March 23-May16, 2001 included 2,004 telephone interviews with a randomly selected sample of adults in the continental United States. For results based on a sample of this size, the margin of sampling error at the 95% confidence level is $\pm$ 4 percentage points. The parallel margins of sampling error for the key racial subgroups are $\pm$ 4 percentage points for the sample of 895 white respondents and $\pm$ 5 percentage points for the sample of 1,003 black respondents.

For a more detailed description of the sample design, refer to the technical appendix to this report.

# Executive Summary

Large differences between the views of white and black Americans persist on key measures of the state of race relations in the US. One in four white Americans—and one in ten black Americans—believes that blacks are treated the same as whites in the United States. While one in three U.S. adults feels that race relations have improved in the past year, nearly half of whites and two-thirds of blacks think that race relations will always be a problem in this country. Perceptions of unequal opportunity in education and housing, and of unfair treatment of blacks – especially by police – illustrate the concerns of many black Americans.

## PERCEPTIONS OF BLACK/WHITE RELATIONS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

While nearly seven in ten whites (69%) say that blacks are treated "the same as whites" in their own community, this view is held by only 41% of blacks. The gap between black and white opinion on this question is a long-term fixture of American racial opinion that has shown only a modest narrowing in the past thirty-five years.

Similar differences exist between whites' and blacks' assessments of equal educational and housing opportunities for blacks in their local communities. Eight in ten whites but only half of blacks view the educational opportunities for black and white children as equal. On this question, the opinions expressed by white and black Americans—and the 36-percentage point gap between them—are almost identical to those expressed nearly forty years ago. The gap between blacks' and whites' perceptions of on equal housing opportunities for blacks has grown over the past decade. In 1989, a 20-percentage point gap was recorded. Today the gap stands at 35 points, with 83% of whites but only 48% of blacks perceiving equal housing opportunities for blacks in their community.

Blacks are much more likely than whites to perceive unfair treatment of blacks in several settings in their local communities. In particular, 35% of white adults believe that blacks are treated less fairly by the police in their community, compared to 66% of blacks.

## PERCEPTIONS OF BLACK/WHITE RELATIONS IN THE NATION

Black Americans' assessments of the <u>current</u> state of race relations in the U.S have been slightly more negative in each of the last two surveys, (37% currently characterize them as "somewhat" or "very" bad, compared to 27% in the Fall of 1998). White evaluations have been stable over this period, with 29% currently giving a negative evaluation.

Nearly four in ten whites, but only 9% of blacks say that blacks are treated the same as whites in the <u>nation</u>. A majority of blacks express pessimism about whether a solution to the problems of black/white relations in the United States will <u>ever</u> be worked out. Indeed, black Americans are as pessimistic as they have been since the question was first asked in 1993, with 66% claiming that race relations will always be a problem in this country. At the same time, white Americans express less pessimism about the future of black/white relations than at any time since 1993. Currently, 45% of whites say that race relations will always be a problem, and the 21 point gap between white and black Americans' expectations for the future of race relations is the largest that Gallup has recorded.

## PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION

Nearly half of black Americans (47%) feel that they were treated unfairly in at least one of five common situations in the past month because they were black. More than one in four blacks (27%) say they feel they have been treated unfairly in the past month while shopping in a store. Reports of unfair treatment in the past thirty days at the hands of the police are reported by 21% of black adults overall, and by 31% of black men.

### RACIAL PROFILING

Large differences between black and white Americans' perceptions of the fairness on the part of the police underscore the importance of this issue in understanding the racial divide in the U.S. Nearly nine out of ten whites feel that they are treated fairly by state or local police, compared to just over half of blacks. This gap in perceptions of treatment by the police is significantly larger than the one recorded in 1999, when blacks were much less likely to claim unfair treatment. Forty-four percent of blacks feel that the police have stopped them at some time in their life because of their race or ethnic background. The practice of "racial profiling" is believed to be widespread by 83% of blacks, but only 55% of whites.

**GOVERNMENT'S ROLE/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

Blacks are more likely than whites to believe that the government in Washington should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks and other minority groups. A majority of blacks (57%) favors an increase in affirmative action programs, while whites prefer to keep them at current levels (3%6) or decrease them (33%). Although our trend on this question only extends back to 1995, there is modest evidence of convergence between black and white Americans' views on this issue. Blacks are slightly less eager to increase affirmative action programs, while whites are slightly less eager to decrease them.

## BEST GROUP FOR SOLVING COMMUNITY PROBLEMS, RACE RELATIONS

When asked to evaluate the job that each of six groups is doing to solve their community's most important problems Both black and white Americans give religious organizations and local schools the highest ratings among a set of six groups that included local businesses, local, state and federal government. Blacks give significantly lower ratings than whites to all groups.

Adults were also asked which one of these groups would do the best job of improving race relations in this country. Americans are divided between those who feel religious organizations and local schools would do the best job. Blacks are more likely to choose religious organizations (26%) than local schools (17%), while whites pick local schools (30%) over religious organizations (22%).
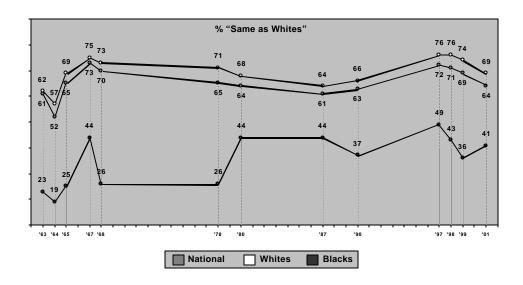
# Detailed Summary of Results

## 1. The Racial Situation in America's Local Communities/Nation

The perceptions of white and black Americans about the treatment of blacks in their own local communities continue to diverge sharply, in the most recent Gallup Poll Social Audit of Black/White Relations in the US.  Although some whites acknowledge poorer treatment of blacks, blacks themselves are much more likely to perceive unfair treatment of blacks in the communities where they live.  While nearly seven in ten whites (69%) say that blacks are treated "the same as whites" in their own community, only 41% of blacks answer the question that way.

The perception that blacks are treated the same as whites has become slightly more prevalent than it was in the early and mid 1960's—particularly among black Americans.  Nevertheless, the gap between black and white opinion on this question is a long-term fixture in American racial attitudes that, over the period of the last thirty-five years, has shown only a modest narrowing.

**Perceived Treatment of Blacks in Own Community - Trend:  1968 - 2001**
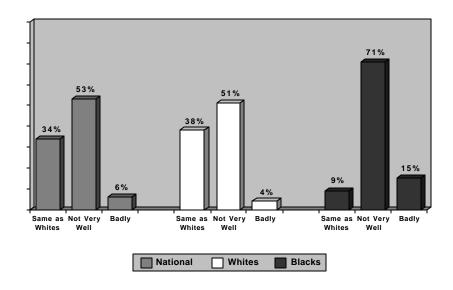


Answers to a new, similar question about treatment of blacks "in the nation as a whole" show that both black and white Americans provide more negative

assessments of the treatment of blacks outside of their own community. Only 38% of whites and 9% of blacks claim that there is equality of treatment for blacks in the nation as a whole. Compared to evaluations of fairness in their own community, this represents a decline of just over 30 percentage points for both blacks and whites. The gap of 29 points between black and white Americans' views on racial equality at the national level is almost identical to the 28-point gap for racial equality in their local community.

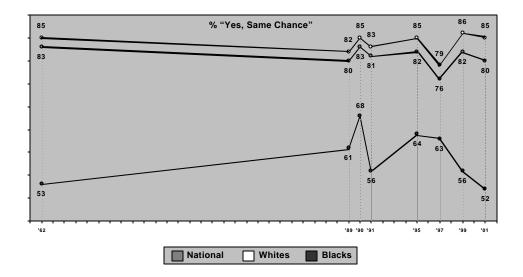**Perceived Treatment of Blacks in Nation - Same as Whites or Not - 2001**

*Now, let's talk about the nation as a whole. In your opinion, how well do you think blacks are treated in the United States - the same as whites are, not very well, or badly?*



Similar gaps between the views of whites and blacks persist in perceptions of the opportunities for blacks in the local community to get a good education, and to get any housing they can afford.
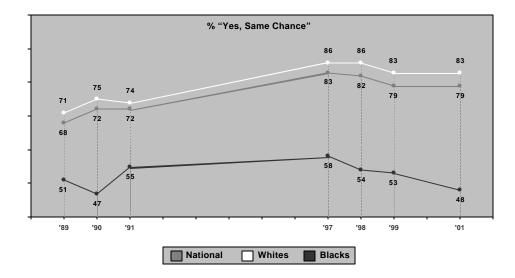
More than eight out of ten whites said that black children had as good a chance as white children to get a good education in their local community, when this question was first asked nearly forty years ago. In contrast, only about half of blacks at that time (1962) said that black children had the same opportunity, resulting in a gap of 32 percentage points. Although the gap between black and white opinion has narrowed to half this size on several occasions over the past several decades, it has broadened again over the most recent measurements, as black Americans' perceptions of educational equality for black children have declined. Remarkably, black and white Americans' opinions on this issue—and the significant gap between them—stand almost exactly where they stood nearly forty years ago.

**Do Black Children Have Same Chance as White Children to Get a Good Education in Own Community - Trend:  1962 - 2001**
*continued*



On the question of whether blacks have as good a chance as whites in their community to get any housing they can afford, the gap between black and white opinion has actually increased over the past decade.  Black Americans are no more likely to perceive fairness in housing opportunities than they were in 1989, when the question was first asked.  During the same period, whites' perceptions of fair housing opportunity for blacks increased.  In 1989, a 20 percentage point gap existed between blacks and whites on this question.  Today the gap stands at 35 points, with 83% of whites but only 48% of blacks claiming that blacks and whites have equal housing opportunities in their community.

**Do Blacks have Same Chances as Whites to Get Affordable Housing in Own Community - Trend: 1989 - 2001**

**% "Yes, Same Chance"**

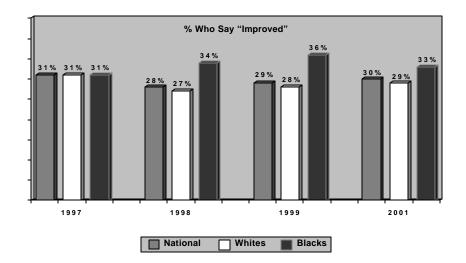| | '89 | '90 | '91 | '97 | '98 | '99 | '01 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Whites | 71 | 75 | 74 | 86 | 86 | 83 | 83 |
| National | 68 | 72 | 72 | 83 | 82 | 79 | 79 |
| Blacks | 51 | 47 | 55 | 58 | 54 | 53 | 48 |

**National** ☐ **Whites** ■ **Blacks**

A set of questions about unfair treatment of blacks in six specific situations in their local communities highlight persistent gaps of twenty-six points or more between the opinions of black and white adults. Only in the context of public transportation—where perceptions of unfair treatment are relatively rare—is the difference more muted. The questions focus on the following situations:

- In dealings with the police, such as traffic incidents
- In stores downtown or in the shopping mall
- On the job or at work
- In restaurants, bars, theatres, or other entertainment places
- In neighborhood shops
- On public transportation

The percent of blacks who feel that they are treated less fairly than whites ranges from a low of 17% for public transportation to a high of 66% for dealings with the police.  By comparison, only 6% of whites say that blacks are treated less fairly on public transportation and only 35% perceive less fair treatment for blacks when dealing with the police.  The question about dealings with the police has yielded the highest number of "unfair treatment" answers by both blacks and whites since the beginning of our trend in 1997.

**Black-White Relations:  Have They Improved or Gotten Worse Over Last Year? - Trend**

The percent of black Americans saying that blacks are treated less fairly than whites while in downtown stores or in malls, on the job or at work, in restaurants and entertainment places and in neighborhood shops ranges between 38 and 46. The percent of whites that perceive that blacks are treated less fairly in these situations is between 26-34 points lower.

**Are Blacks in Your Community Treated Less Fairly than Whites in Selected Situations? - 2001**



% "Yes, Treated Less Fairly"

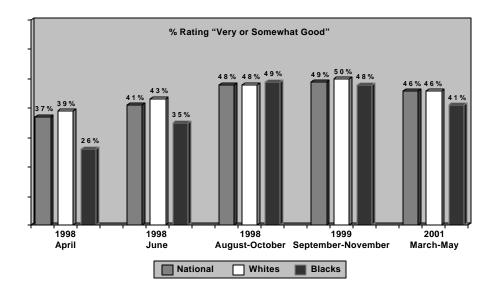| | In Dealings with Police | In Stores Downtown/ Shopping Mall | On Public Transit | In Restaurants/ Bars/Theaters | At Job/Work | In Neighborhood Shops |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| National | 39% | 21% | 8% | 16% | 16% | 16% |
| Whites | 35% | 16% | 6% | 12% | 10% | 12% |
| Blacks | 66% | 46% | 17% | 39% | 44% | 38% |

## 2. General Perceptions of the Racial Situation

When asked whether relations between whites and blacks have improved, remained the same, or gotten worse over the past year, similar proportions of blacks (33%) and whites (29%) say that relations have improved. This question about recent changes in black/white relations has shown remarkably small gaps between perceptions of black and white respondents, and recent readings have been less negative than the first measurement in 1997, when the O.J. Simpson trial dominated headlines.

When asked to reflect on the current state of race relations in the U.S., 37% of black Americans characterize them as either "somewhat" or "very" bad, and this number has been increasing slowly since the Fall of 1998, when 27% gave one of these answers. White perceptions have been more stable over this period, with 29% currently saying that race relations are "somewhat" or "very" bad.
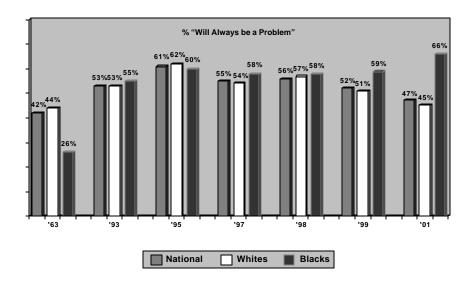
**Rating State of Race Relations in U.S., Today - Trend**



% Rating "Very or Somewhat Good"

| | 1998 April | 1998 June | 1998 August-October | 1999 September-November | 2001 March-May |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| National | 37% | 41% | 48% | 49% | 46% |
| Whites | 39% | 43% | 48% | 50% | 46% |
| Blacks | 26% | 35% | 49% | 48% | 41% |

Looking to the future, a majority of blacks express pessimism about the likelihood that a solution to the problems of black/white relations in the United States will ever be worked out.  Indeed, black Americans are as pessimistic as they have ever been with 66% claiming that race relations will always be a problem in this country.  At the same time, white Americans express less pessimism about the future of black/white relations than they have since Gallup first asked this question in 1993.  Currently, 45% of whites say that race relations will always be a problem.  The divergence between white and black Americans' expectations for the future of race relations stands at an all-time high of 21 percentage points, and is especially acute among those over the age of 50.  Among this older segment, the belief among blacks that race relations will always be a problem has risen to 69%, while among whites of this age it has fallen to 40%.  In contrast, over the three previous surveys, the levels of pessimism among blacks and whites in this age bracket had been within 4 percentage points of one another.

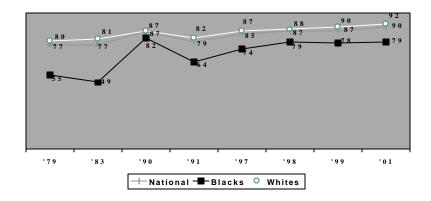**Will Relations Between Blacks and Whites Always be a Problem - Trend**

*continued*



% "Will Always be a Problem"

| | '63 | '93 | '95 | '97 | '98 | '99 | '01 |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| National | 42% | 53% | 61% | 55% | 56% | 52% | 47% |
| Whites | 44% | 53% | 62% | 54% | 57% | 51% | 45% |
| Blacks | 26% | 55% | 60% | 58% | 58% | 59% | 66% |

Legend: ☐ National  ☐ Whites  ■ Blacks
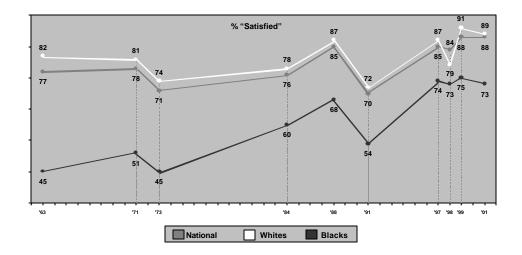
## 3. Measures of Satisfaction

Significant black and white differences continue to exist in satisfaction with a number of aspects of personal life in the U.S. today – including standard of living, employment, and safety from physical harm or violence. Despite the fact that large majorities of both races express satisfaction with their personal lives, a 13-percentage point gap exists between whites and blacks on this measure. Although significant, this gap is only about half the size of those recorded during the late 1970's and early 1980's.

**Satisfaction with "Way Things are Going" in Personal Life - Trend: 1979-2001**
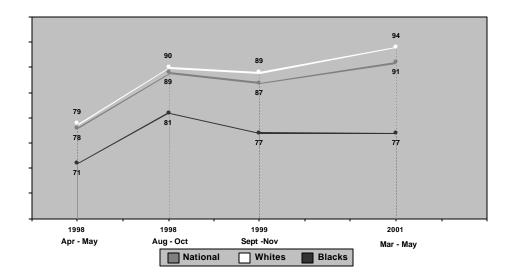


A similar pattern emerges on the question of satisfaction with one's standard of living. The gap currently stands at 17 percentage points—90% of whites express satisfaction, compared with 73% of blacks—but was twice as large in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

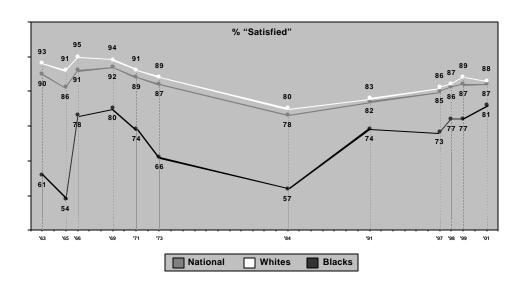**Satisfaction with Standard of Living - Trend: 1963 - 2001**

Satisfaction with one's safety from physical harm or violence stands at 77% for blacks and 94% for whites. Gallup first asked this question in 1998, but the divergence between the assessments of blacks and whites has increased modestly during this relatively short period of time, during which official national rates of violent crime have continued to decline to historically low levels.

**Satisfaction with One's Personal Safety from Physical Harm or Violence - Trend: 1998 - 2001**



A question on satisfaction with "your job or the work you do" showed gaps of more than 30 percentage points between blacks and whites in the early and mid 1960's, but job satisfaction among black Americans improved markedly in the late 1960's. This gap has dwindled to only 7 points in the most recent survey, with 81% of blacks and 88% of whites expressing satisfaction.

**Satisfaction with Job/Work - Trend:  1963 - 2001**



## 4.  Experiencing Discrimination

Nearly half of black Americans (47%) feel that they were treated unfairly in at least one of five common situations in the past month because they were black.  The situations probed include:
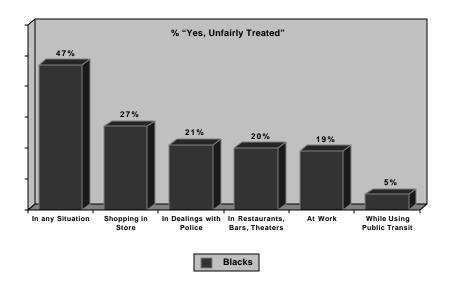
- While shopping
- At work
- In a restaurant, bar, theater or other entertainment place
- In dealings with the police, such as traffic incidents
- While using public transportation

Shopping in a store is the most frequently cited situation—more than one in four blacks (27%) say they feel they have been treated unfairly while shopping in the past month.  Reports of unfair treatment in this situation reach 32% among black men, and among blacks under 35 years of age.

Although unfair treatment is seldom reported on public transportation (5%), one in five black adults claims unfair treatment in the past month in each of the remaining three situations.
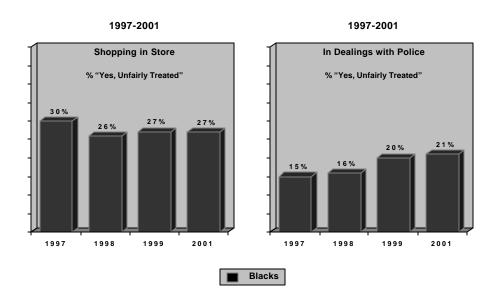
**Blacks: Perceived Unfair Treatment in Selected Situations Within Last 30 Days - 2001**

*Can you think of any occasion in the last thirty days when you felt you were treated unfairly in the following places because you were Black? How about in a store where you were shopping?*

**% "Yes, Unfairly Treated"**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 47% | 27% | 21% | 20% | 19% | 5% |
| In any Situation | Shopping in Store | In Dealings with Police | In Restaurants, Bars, Theaters | At Work | While Using Public Transit |

■ **Blacks**

Reports of unfair treatment at the hands of the police are reported by 21% of black adults overall, but substantial differences exist by age and gender. Claims of unfair treatment by the police in the past month, which have been edging upward over the past several years, are made by 27% of blacks under 35 years of age, and by 31% of black men.

**Blacks: Perceived Unfair Treatment in Selected Situations Within Last 30 Days - Trend**

**1997-2001**

**Shopping in Store**

**% "Yes, Unfairly Treated"**

| 30% | 26% | 27% | 27% |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2001 |

**1997-2001**

**In Dealings with Police**

**% "Yes, Unfairly Treated"**

| 15% | 16% | 20% | 21% |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2001 |

■ **Blacks**

## 5. Racial Profiling

Nearly nine out of ten whites feel that they are treated fairly by state or local police, compared to just over half of blacks – over a 30 point gap in perceived treatment. This represents an increase over the gaps reported in 1999, when these questions were first asked, and blacks reported significantly higher levels of fair treatment.
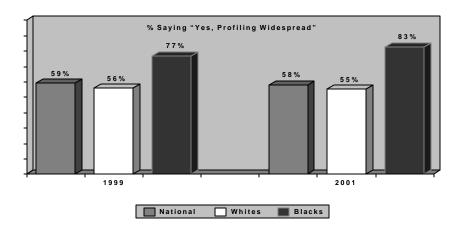
**Is Treatment Considered Fair or Unfair  - by State Police/Troopers in Your State - by Local Police in Your Area - Trend 1999-2001**



Forty-four percent of Blacks feel that the police have stopped them at some time in their life because of their race or ethnic background.  Only 7% of whites, but 29% of those of Hispanic origin or descent make this claim.

"Racial profiling" is believed to be widespread by 55% of whites, but by 83% of blacks.  This large gap in perceptions between whites and blacks underscores the broad sense from our data that the law enforcement establishment is associated with perceptions of racial division.  This question was asked first in 1999, and while perceptions of whites have not changed in the intervening year and a half, perceptions of widespread racial profiling among blacks have inched up from 77% to 83%.

**Is "Racial Profiling" of Certain Racial or Ethnic Groups by Police Perceived as Widespread - Trend 1999-2001**

% Saying "Yes, Profiling Widespread"



1999    59%    56%    77%

2001    58%    55%    83%
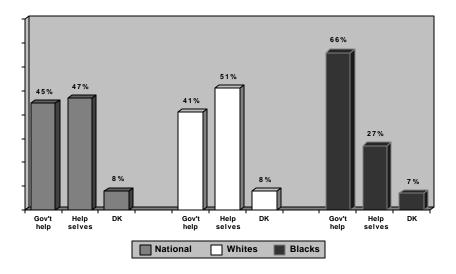
National    Whites    Blacks

## 6. Government's Role/Affirmative Action

Americans are closely divided between those who feel that the government in Washington should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks and other minority groups and those who feel that that the government should not make any special efforts (45% vs. 47%). Blacks are 25 percentage points more likely than whites to favor government efforts (66% versus 41%).

**Preferred Way to Improve Social and Economic Position of Blacks and Other Minorities - Government Help or Minorities Helping Themselves**

*Some people feel that the government in Washington, D.C. should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks and other minority groups. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help minorities because they should help themselves. How do you feel about this?*



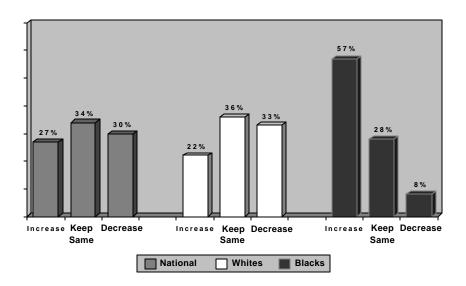| | Gov't help | Help selves | DK |
|---|---|---|---|
| National | 45% | 47% | 8% |
| Whites | 41% | 51% | 8% |
| Blacks | 66% | 27% | 7% |

National    Whites    Blacks

When asked specifically about whether affirmative action programs in this country should be increased, decreased, or kept the same, a majority (57%) of blacks favor an increase.   Whites prefer to keep them at the same level (36%) or decrease them (33%).

Although our trend on this question only extends back to 1995, there is modest evidence of convergence between black and white Americans on this issue.  Blacks are slightly less likely than in 1995 to prefer increases in affirmative action programs, while whites are slightly less likely to prefer decreases.

**Perceived Need to Increase Affirmative Action Programs - 2001**

*In general, do you think we need to increase, keep the same, or decrease affirmative action programs in this country?*
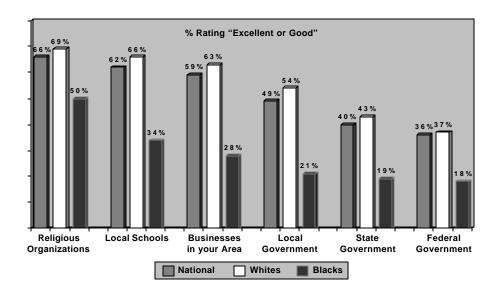


## 7.  Groups Best for Solving Problems, Race Relations

When asked about the job that each of six groups is doing to solve their community's most important problems, the nation's adults give the highest marks to religious organizations (66% "excellent" or "good"), local schools (62%) and businesses in the area (59%).  Receiving less positive ratings are local (49%), state (40%) and federal government (36%).

The ratings of blacks are less positive than those of whites for all groups.  The gaps between positive ("good" or "excellent") assessments by blacks and whites range from 19 to 35 percentage points.  With the exception of religious organizations, black adults are only half as likely as white adults to give a "good" or "excellent" rating to these groups.  Blacks give religious organizations significantly higher ratings than any of the other groups—their ability to solve important community problems is rated "good" or "excellent" by 50%.

**Rating of Various Groups for Helping Solve Their Community's Most Important Problems? - 2001**
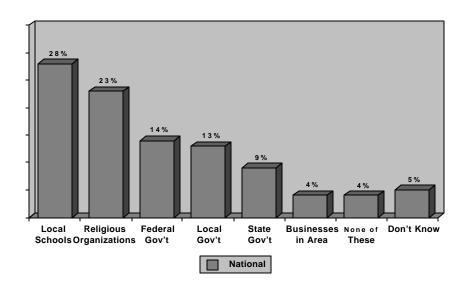
*continued*



% Rating "Excellent or Good"

| | Religious Organizations | Local Schools | Businesses in your Area | Local Government | State Government | Federal Government |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| National | 66% | 62% | 59% | 49% | 40% | 36% |
| Whites | 69% | 66% | 63% | 54% | 43% | 37% |
| Blacks | 50% | 34% | 28% | 21% | 19% | 18% |

Adults were also asked which one of these groups would do the best job of improving race relations in this country. Americans are divided between those who feel religious organizations and local schools would do the best job. Blacks are more likely to choose religious organizations (26%) than local schools (17%), while whites pick local schools (30%) over religious organizations (22%).

**Group Perceived as Likely to do Best Job of Improving Race Relations, Nationally - 2001**

*Which one of these groups do you think could do the best job of improving race relations in this country?*



| Local Schools | Religious Organizations | Federal Gov't | Local Gov't | State Gov't | Businesses in Area | None of These | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28% | 23% | 14% | 13% | 9% | 4% | 4% | 5% |

National

# Detailed Methodology

## Overview

Between March 23 and May 16, 2001, 2,004 adults selected from households in the continental United States were interviewed by telephone. The survey design included an over-sampling of blacks. Of the total sample of interviews, 1,003 were conducted with respondents who identified themselves as black, and 895 with those identifying themselves as white.

### Calling Design

The survey employed a calling design that required interviewers to make a minimum of five dialing attempts (if necessary) in order to complete an interview with a selected adult within the household.

### Respondent Selection

The "most recent birthday" method was used to randomize the selection of a respondent within the household. When a household was contacted, interviewers asked to speak with the adult in the household with the most recent birthday. If this person was not home, interviewers attempted to ascertain when the respondent would be available, and scheduled a call for that time. Prior to household contact, or in the absence of information about the availability of the selected respondent, calls were scheduled according to a computerized algorithm designed to maximize the probability of contacting a household member.

A final disposition was coded for all telephone numbers dialed, and the distribution of these dispositions is available upon request. Interviewers gained cooperation in 54% of households contacted.

### Weighting

The data collected for this survey have been weighted to allow for the projection of survey conclusions to the population of adults living in telephone households in the continental United States. Two kinds of weighting adjustments were employed for this survey. Sampling weights were applied in order to correct for unequal probabilities of selection in the sampling of telephone exchanges. Additional sampling weights were applied to correct for the over-representation of households with multiple voice lines, and for disproportional representation of households with

varying numbers of resident adults (since only one adult was selected to be interviewed, regardless of the number residing in the household).  In addition to these sampling weights, demographic post-stratification weights were applied, in order to bring the demographic characteristics of respondents in the final weighted sample of completed interviews into alignment with estimates obtained in the annual Current Population Survey (CPS), conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.  The sample was adjusted to conform to CPS targets for household size, gender, age, education, race, Hispanic ethnicity and census region.

## Survey Design and Statistical Precision of Survey Estimates

The sample design involved stratification, a strategy that generally improves the precision of survey estimates (i.e., leads to a reduction in estimates of the "margin of sampling or random error").  Nevertheless, weighting adjustments applied to correct the disproportionate design of the sample and to align the demographic characteristics of the sample of completed interviews can lead to variances that exceed those associated with simple random samples of the same size.  An overall "design effect" was calculated for the survey in order to account for the effects of sample design on the precision of survey estimates.  The square root of this design effect can be used as a simple multiplier to inflate simple random sample estimates of standard errors, when employing tests of statistical significance.  The resulting estimate of the maximum margin of sampling error at the 95% level of confidence is $\pm$ 4 percentage points for the total national sample of 2004 respondents.  The parallel margins of sampling error are $\pm$4 percentage points for the sample of 895 white respondents, and $\pm$5 percentage points for the sample of 1003 black respondents.