Whites, Blacks, Hispanics Assess Race Relations in the U.S.

Blacks slightly more negative about black-white relations this year

by Joseph Carroll

GALLUP NEWS SERVICE

PRINCETON, NJ -- Gallup's annual Minority Rights and Relations survey updates Americans' beliefs about how various racial and ethnic groups are getting along.

The most recent survey finds that overall, Americans are positive in their assessments of black-white, Hispanic-white, and -- in particular -- white-Asian relations. Americans are less positive in their views of relations between Hispanics and blacks. These general perceptions do not hold across all racial and ethnic groups. For example, blacks are much less positive about black-white relations than are whites, and blacks' views of these relations are the most negative they have been in the past six years. Also, both blacks and Hispanics rate black-Hispanic relations more positively than do whites, mainly because many whites do not have an opinion of how these groups get along.

The poll was conducted June 4-24, 2007, interviewing 2,388 adults nationwide, including 868 non-Hispanic whites, 802 non-Hispanic blacks, and 502 Hispanics. The total sample is weighted to reflect the proper proportions of each group in the U.S. population. About one-quarter of the interviews with Hispanics were conducted in Spanish, with the remainder in English.

The poll asked Americans to rate their views of relationships between four pairs of groups: whites and blacks; whites and Hispanics; whites and Asians; and blacks and Hispanics. All of these questions have trends going back to 2001. The analysis here looks at the overall pattern in Americans' views of these four relationship pairs, and also delves into the more complex process of tracking how various subgroups of the American population view these relationships.

Black-White Relations

Overall, 71% of Americans say relations between whites and blacks are "very" or "somewhat" good at this time, while only 28% say they are bad. The "good" percentage is on the high end of what Gallup has found over the past six years; still, since 2001, at least 63% of Americans have described black-white relations positively.

A majority of both whites and blacks say relations between whites and blacks are good, although blacks are somewhat less positive in their views of black-white relations, with 55% saying relations are good and 43% bad. Hispanics are also positive in their assessments of black-white relations.
Blacks’ overall views of black-white relations in this country are down this year, to their lowest levels since Gallup first asked this question in 2001. That year, a high of 70% of blacks described black-white relations as good. Aside from a slight increase between 2003 and 2004, blacks' perceptions of black-white relations have become more negative since 2001. (Blacks’ views on other measures are also more negative this year. For more information, read Senior Editor Lydia Saad's article on the subject in the "Related Items" section).

Blacks' Perceptions of Black-White Relations

Three in four whites (75%) say relations between whites and blacks are good, while only 25% say they are bad. Contrary to the trend observed among blacks, the white "good" percentage is now at its highest point to date, albeit by only one percentage point. Since 2001, at least 62% of whites have described black-white relations as good.
Fifty-nine percent of Hispanics say relations between whites and blacks are good. Hispanics’ views on this measure have been quite stable in recent years.

**Hispanic-White Relations**

Two in three Americans (66%) describe relations between whites and Hispanics as good; 28% describe them as bad. Views of Hispanic-white relations are slightly higher than the 60% measured last year, but are still lower than Gallup measured from 2003 through 2005, when at least 70% of Americans said Hispanic-white relations were good.

Similar percentages of non-Hispanic whites (68%) and Hispanics (70%) describe Hispanic-white relations as good. Blacks are more negative in their views: 53% describe relations between whites and Hispanics as good and 41% as bad.

Although a majority of blacks have consistently said Hispanic-white relations are good since 2001, blacks have been more negative than other groups about these relations in each of the past six surveys. Whites have been fairly consistent in their views of Hispanic-white relations.
since 2001, with the exception of a slight dip (to 61%) last year. Hispanic perceptions peaked in 2003, when 84% rated relations as good; this gradually declined to the 67% to 70% range over the past three years.

**Black-Hispanic Relations**

Americans are more positive than negative in their views of black-Hispanic relations in the country at this time -- 49% say they are good, while 36% say they are bad. These results are essentially the same as Gallup found last year. Still, the percentage of Americans describing these relations as good was higher from 2002 through 2005, ranging between 53% and 62%.

Roughly two in three blacks (68%) say relations between blacks and Hispanics are good, while 29% say they are bad. Hispanics are also positive in their assessments of black-Hispanic relations, but not to the extent that blacks are. Fifty-nine percent of Hispanics describe these relations positively. At the same time, non-Hispanic whites are much less positive in their views about black-Hispanic relations: 46% say they are good, while 35% say bad and 19% say they have no opinion.
There have been some variations in this trend over the past six years:

**Trend in Views of Black-Hispanic Relations**

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- The percentage of blacks who describe black-Hispanic relations as good is at its lowest point to date. However, it is not much lower than it has been at various times in the past six years.
- Hispanics' views of black-Hispanic relations were more positive from 2001 through 2004 than they have been in the last three years.
- The current results among whites differ little from last year. But whites were much more likely to rate black-Hispanic relations positively from 2003 through 2005, with between 53% and 58% saying these relations were good at that time. The latest results are more similar to Gallup's 2001 and 2002 surveys. Since 2001, a significant percentage of whites -- between 12% and 19% -- have said they do not know enough about this issue to give an opinion.

**White-Asian Relations**

The vast majority of Americans, 80%, say relations between whites and Asians are good, while only 10% say they are bad. Americans' views of these relations have been quite stable over the past six years.

Whites, blacks, and Hispanics have always been very positive in their views of the relations between whites and Asians in this country. In many years, all three racial and ethnic groups have been more positive about white-Asian relations than about relations between other groups in society. In the current poll, 83% of whites say relations between whites and Asians are good, while 69% of blacks and 72% of Hispanics share this point of view.
Perceptions of white-Asian relations have shown only modest variations among these three racial groups over the past six years.

This poll does not break out the views of Asians on this topic because the sample size involved is too small to provide meaningful estimates.

**Survey Methods**

Results are based on telephone interviews with 2,388 national adults, aged 18 and older, conducted June 4-24, 2007, including oversamples of blacks and Hispanics that are weighted to reflect their proportions in the general population. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is ±5 percentage points.

For results based on the sample of 868 non-Hispanic whites, the maximum margin of sampling error is ±7 percentage points.

For results based on the sample of 802 blacks, the maximum margin of sampling error is ±6 percentage points.

For results based on the sample of 502 Hispanics, the maximum margin of sampling error is ±6 percentage points (138 out of the 502 interviews with Hispanics were conducted in Spanish).

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.
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