

Race relations

A quality of life survey finds that race relations are under strain in the Gauteng city-region.

Trust between racial groups is under strain according to a recent large sample survey conducted in Gauteng. The survey asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement: "Blacks and whites will never really trust each other". Six out of ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

The survey, conducted by the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) in late 2009, asked respondents from across Gauteng and parts of adjacent provinces a host of questions on their perceived quality of life, satisfaction with government, and social attitudes. Poor race relations was one of the key findings from the survey.

"Race relations are of serious concern in the Gauteng city-region," said GCRO Senior Researcher Annsilla Nyar. "Trust among races is generally low, but of greatest concern seems to be deteriorating black attitudes to whites. When similar questions were asked in social surveys in the 1990s, whites were mistrustful of blacks, and black respondents were more likely to say that race groups would learn to trust each other. This survey shows a reversal in those results."

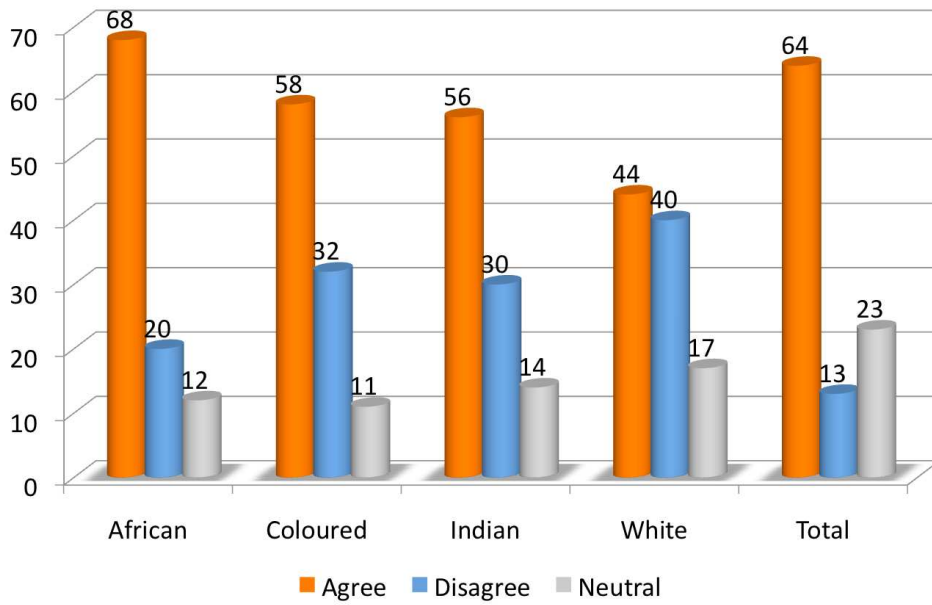
According to the survey four out of ten whites seem to believe that trust between blacks and whites will develop over time, with 42% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement "Blacks and whites will never really trust each other". By contrast, only a fifth (20%) of Africans disagreed with the idea that blacks and whites will never really trust each other. "There is a clear hardening of attitudes amongst black respondents, who were far more tolerant towards whites in the early 1990s," said Nyar. "This suggests a growing polarisation of attitudes between blacks and whites in the Gauteng city-region, something that should be of grave concern to all residents."

While the polarization amongst blacks and whites is clear, the scores amongst minority groups are far less definite. About half of 'coloured' and Indian respondents agreed or strongly agreed that blacks and whites will never really trust each other, compared to two thirds of Africans and roughly one third of whites.

Poor attitudes towards other races appears to be shared relatively evenly amongst male and female respondents in the survey. 60% of male respondents agreed or strongly agreed that blacks and whites will never trust each other. The response of female respondents was slightly higher, at 66%.

More unemployed respondents (71%) believed that racial groups could not learn to trust each other than those respondents who had employment (59%).

According to Nyar says, "These findings suggest significant implications for political stability. The racial attitudes expressed by survey respondents run against the opening lines of the ANC's most important policy document, the Freedom Charter: *South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black or white*. It indicates that there is a lot of work to be done to improve race relations and give real substance to the notion of non-racialism."



To what extent do you agree or disagree that blacks and whites will never really trust each other