

April 29, 2002 — Study #470

# ◆◆◆◆ LOS ANGELES TIMES® POLL ALERT ◆◆◆◆

## HOW THE POLL WAS CONDUCTED

The Times Poll contacted 1,163 adults in the city of Los Angeles by telephone April 18–22. The main sample was supplemented with an additional sample of 125 African Americans, increasing that subgroup to 262, which was then weighted to its proportionate share in the city. Telephone numbers were chosen from a list of all exchanges in the city of Los Angeles. Random-digit dialing techniques were used so that listed and unlisted numbers could be contacted. The entire sample was weighted slightly to conform with census figures for sex, race, age, education and area of city. The margin of sampling error for the city of Los Angeles is plus or minus 3 percentage points; for African Americans it is 6 points. For certain subgroups the error margin may be somewhat higher. Poll results can also be affected by other factors such as question wording and the order in which questions are presented. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Asians were interviewed as part of the entire sample, but there were not enough to break out as a separate subgroup.

## NOTES

All answer frequencies are given in percentages.  
Totals may exceed 100% in questions where more than one response was accepted. Totals may be less than 100% where some answer categories are not shown.  
“–” indicates less than 0.5%.  
The wording of some questions has been abridged.

## SELECTED RESULTS FROM THE TIMES POLL SURVEY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES April 18–22, 2002

*(A full summary of results will be available at a later date through the Los Angeles Times Poll)*

## GUIDE TO COLUMN HEADINGS

ALL	All adult residents of the city of Los Angeles
WHT	Whites
BLK	Blacks
LAT	Latinos
<10	Lived in Los Angeles for less than 10 years
10+	Lived in Los Angeles for 10 years or longer
WES	Westside residents
SFV	San Fernando Valley residents
CEN	Central city residents
SOU	South city residents

**All things considered, would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied these days with the community in which you live?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Satisfied	84	85	74	88	81	85	90	85	80	85
Neither (Vol.)	1	2	2	–	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dissatisfied	14	12	23	12	18	13	8	13	19	13
Don't know	1	1	1	–	–	1	1	1	–	1

**Overall, would you say the quality of life in your community is getting better, or getting worse, or is it staying about the same?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Better	25	22	24	28	25	24	20	15	39	23
Worse	16	16	22	13	13	17	19	16	17	13
About the same	57	60	51	56	58	57	60	68	38	63
Don't know	2	2	3	3	4	2	1	1	6	1

**In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing the city of Los Angeles today? (ACCEPTED UP TO TWO REPLIES) (TOP SIX RESPONSES SHOWN)**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Crime	33	33	37	31	34	33	24	41	30	33
Gangs	17	7	15	35	6	19	14	9	17	29
Traffic/Congestion	15	25	7	5	21	13	22	18	14	6
Education/Schools	14	16	10	7	13	14	23	14	12	11
Too much growth	7	13	3	3	7	7	13	9	6	2
Drugs	7	4	15	10	2	8	1	4	8	14

**Would you describe the state of your own personal finances these days as secure or shaky?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Secure	66	73	57	54	62	67	69	61	67	68
Shaky	31	24	43	43	31	31	28	36	27	31
Don't know	3	3	–	3	7	2	3	3	6	1

**How would you rate the availability of jobs and economic opportunities in your community? Would you call them excellent, good, not so good or poor?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Excellent	3	2	8	2	2	3	2	2	3	4
Good	40	51	26	28	48	38	51	38	43	30
Not so good	32	24	35	40	33	32	27	25	34	43
Poor	17	11	28	24	12	18	12	24	14	16
Don't know	8	12	3	6	5	9	8	11	6	7

**How would you rate race relations in Los Angeles today? Are they excellent, good, not so good or poor?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Excellent	3	3	3	5	4	3	3	1	1	9
Good	43	48	27	40	51	42	43	42	46	42
Not so good	42	38	46	46	33	44	45	46	42	35
Poor	9	8	22	4	11	8	7	8	7	12
Don't know	3	3	2	5	1	3	2	3	4	2

**Compared to 10 years ago, do you think race relations in Los Angeles have gotten better, gotten worse or have race relations stayed about the same?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Gotten better	50	52	36	57	47	52	53	51	50	49
Gotten worse	12	9	25	14	6	14	8	13	12	15
Stayed the same	28	26	35	26	16	31	27	29	25	31
Didn't live in L.A.										
10 years ago (Vol.)	6	8	2	3	27	—	10	2	10	1
Don't know	4	5	2	—	4	3	2	5	3	4

**Compared to five years ago, do you think race relations in Los Angeles have gotten better, gotten worse or have race relations stayed about the same?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Gotten better	30	31	20	28	30	30	32	26	38	25
Gotten worse	10	8	16	12	7	11	7	9	14	8
Stayed the same	53	50	62	55	42	56	54	58	39	64
Didn't live in L.A.										
5 years ago (Vol.)	3	7	1	—	14	1	5	3	5	—
Don't know	4	4	1	5	7	2	2	4	4	3

**Los Angeles has many different racial and ethnic groups that make up the overall city's population. I would like you to think about the overall racial and ethnic makeup of the city and give me your best guess as to what percentage of the city is white, black, Latino and Asian...**

**First, what is your best guess on the percentage of whites that make up the overall population in the city of Los Angeles?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Less than 30%	28	17	32	43	23	29	16	15	34	45
30% (Correct)	16	19	16	10	19	15	8	20	18	14
31% to 40%	20	28	19	6	32	17	34	20	19	12
41% to 50%	13	19	11	5	8	14	19	15	11	7
More than 50%	14	13	10	22	13	15	17	21	7	13
Don't know	9	4	12	14	5	10	6	9	11	9

**What is your best guess on the percentage of blacks that make up the overall population in the city of Los Angeles?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Less than 11%	16	15	17	23	11	18	9	13	24	17
11% (Correct)	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
12%	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2
13% to 15%	11	16	5	6	14	10	22	10	12	2
16% to 20%	21	26	17	8	28	20	24	22	24	15
21% to 30%	22	23	24	19	36	18	20	24	17	25
31% to 40%	12	10	18	15	7	13	11	7	9	23
41% to 50%	3	2	7	5	2	3	1	1	4	7
More than 50%	6	1	4	15	—	8	7	12	2	2
Don't know	7	4	7	8	1	8	3	8	7	7

**What is your best guess on the percentage of Latinos that make up the overall population in the city of Los Angeles?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Less than 30%	23	21	15	28	24	22	25	16	29	21
30% to 40%	33	48	31	13	41	32	47	36	29	26
41% to 46%	7	8	5	8	3	8	2	6	8	10
47% (Correct)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
48% to 70%	21	18	27	22	26	20	15	19	20	29
More than 70%	9	1	14	21	1	11	8	15	5	8
Don't know	7	4	8	8	5	7	3	8	9	6

**And, what is your best guess on the percentage of Asians that make up the overall population in the city of Los Angeles?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Less than 10%	25	30	22	22	14	27	20	24	23	31
10% (Correct)	23	24	20	19	39	19	33	21	26	15
11% to 15%	14	14	13	13	19	13	13	12	15	15
16% to 20%	13	16	14	9	13	13	11	14	17	10
21% to 30%	7	7	10	7	13	6	15	5	8	6
More than 30%	11	4	11	22	1	13	5	14	5	16
Don't know	7	5	10	8	1	9	3	10	6	7

**Do you think Los Angeles is primarily a segregated city—by that I mean, different racial and ethnic groups each living in their own neighborhoods—or do you think Los Angeles is an integrated city—by that I mean, different racial and ethnic groups living together in mixed neighborhoods?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Segregated	42	50	47	34	49	41	58	33	42	45
Integrated	36	30	38	38	29	38	25	37	38	41
Some of both (Vol.)	19	17	12	26	18	19	14	28	16	11
Don't know	3	3	3	2	4	2	3	2	4	3

**Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Los Angeles Police Department is handling its job?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Approve	62	65	51	60	69	61	62	56	75	54
Disapprove	31	26	42	37	25	32	31	35	21	37
Don't know	7	9	7	3	6	7	7	9	4	9

**When it comes to holding down crime, what is your impression of the Los Angeles City Police Department's activities in your neighborhood?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Favorable	81	84	69	85	87	80	82	79	82	80
Unfavorable	17	13	28	15	11	18	15	19	15	18
Don't know	2	3	3	-	2	2	3	2	3	2

**When it comes to reaching out to the community, what is your impression of the Los Angeles City Police Department's activities in your neighborhood?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Favorable	63	62	48	74	67	63	51	67	71	57
Unfavorable	29	27	48	21	26	30	41	24	22	37
Don't know	8	11	4	5	7	7	8	9	7	6

**Do you think incidents of police brutality involving the Los Angeles Police Department are common or uncommon?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Common	46	28	63	66	39	48	39	40	48	58
Uncommon	44	62	33	25	45	43	52	52	37	34
Don't know	10	10	4	9	16	9	9	8	15	8

**How common do you think racist feelings are among Los Angeles police officers: Are they common or uncommon?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Common	57	48	65	68	53	58	56	55	47	72
Uncommon	33	38	30	28	39	32	33	36	40	21
Don't know	10	14	5	4	8	10	11	9	13	7

**This April 29th will be the tenth anniversary of the riots that occurred after four white Los Angeles police officers accused of beating black motorist Rodney King were found not guilty by a primarily white jury.**

**People used different words to describe the civil disturbances that occurred in Los Angeles 10 years ago after the announcement of the Rodney King beating trial verdict. Some people thought those incidents were rightfully called a "riot," others thought they should have been rightfully called a "rebellion." Which word do you now think better describes the civil disturbances that occurred in Los Angeles 10 years ago?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Riot	54	71	35	38	50	55	58	60	53	44
Rebellion	33	19	55	45	21	36	28	32	30	41
Neither (Vol.)	1	2	2	-	2	1	2	1	1	1
Other (Vol.)	1	2	1	-	-	1	3	2	-	1
Both (Vol.)	4	2	2	8	11	3	3	3	6	5
Don't know	7	4	5	9	16	4	6	2	10	8

**Regardless of whether you call the civil disobedience a riot or a rebellion, what do you think was the primary cause of the disturbance? Was it to protest the not guilty verdict of the white police officers in the beating trial of black motorist Rodney King, or were the people who took part in the riot protesting broader economic injustice within the minority communities, or was it an opportunity for a small criminal element who may or may not have lived in the area to take advantage of the situation to loot and destroy property?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Protest verdict	18	17	27	16	19	18	19	15	15	24
Economic injustice	20	22	29	12	26	19	27	20	16	20
Criminal element	32	32	18	41	17	35	19	39	33	29
All of the above (Vol.)	20	23	11	23	15	21	28	19	20	14
Other reason (Vol.)	2	2	7	1	4	2	1	1	2	6
Don't know	8	4	8	7	19	5	6	6	14	7

**Do you think Los Angeles has healed itself from the divisions and conflicts caused by the Rodney King beating, or have those conflicts and divisions gotten worse, or have things stayed about the same?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Healed itself	39	35	29	48	34	40	36	37	46	35
Gotten worse	6	4	15	5	4	6	3	6	5	9
Stayed the same	50	56	52	42	50	50	57	53	40	51
Don't know	5	5	4	5	12	4	4	4	9	5

**Were you living in Los Angeles at the time of the Rodney King beating trial verdict 10 years ago, or not? (IF YES) Did the rioting occur in the neighborhood where you lived at that time, or was there rioting close to your neighborhood, or was the rioting nowhere near your neighborhood?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Lived in L.A. (Net)	79	75	87	83	9	96	76	84	68	90
Riots in neighborhood	16	12	43	11	2	20	14	12	14	27
Riots close	25	19	30	29	3	30	28	13	26	40
Riots nowhere near	38	44	14	43	4	46	34	59	28	23
Didn't live in L.A.	20	24	13	17	91	4	23	16	31	9
Don't know	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1

*Alternative break:*

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Didn't live in L.A.	20	24	13	17	91	4	24	16	31	9
Lived in/near riots (Net)	41	31	73	40	5	50	41	25	40	67
Riots in neighborhood	16	12	43	11	2	20	14	12	14	27
Riots close	25	19	30	29	3	30	28	13	26	40
Lived not near riots	38	44	14	43	4	46	34	59	28	23
Don't know	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1

(ASKED OF THOSE LIVING IN OR NEAR AREAS WHERE RIOTING OCCURRED)

**How would you describe the level of damage to stores, businesses and property in your immediate neighborhood 10 years ago, right after the Rodney King beating trial verdict?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	*	10+	*	SFV	CEN	SOU
None	16	31	11	6		17		30	12	9
Damage (Net)	84	68	89	94		83		69	88	91
Extensive	47	16	58	80		47		20	54	64
Moderate	13	17	17	5		11		18	12	10
Light	24	35	14	9		25		31	21	17
Don't know	-	1	-	-		-		1	-	-

\* Base for this question is too small to break out some subgroups.

(ASKED OF THOSE WHOSE NEIGHBORHOODS WERE DAMAGED)

**Are there businesses in your neighborhood that still have not reopened or have not been replaced since the riots 10 years ago, or not?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	*	10+	*	*	CEN	SOU
Yes, still not reopened	33	13	65	35		33			24	55
No	58	72	32	57		58			72	39
Don't know	9	15	3	8		9			4	6

\* Base for this question is too small to break out some subgroups.

(ASKED OF EVERYONE)

**Generally speaking, do you think Los Angeles has recovered emotionally from the riots after the Rodney King beating trial verdict, or not? (IF RECOVERED) Has L.A. recovered totally or only somewhat?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Recovered totally	22	28	11	21	28	22	18	25	27	17
Recovered somewhat	55	50	56	64	50	56	57	57	51	57
Not recovered at all	17	18	30	12	15	18	18	16	14	23
Don't know	6	4	3	3	7	4	7	2	8	3

**Do you agree or disagree with this statement: "The riots after the Rodney King beating trial verdict were not just about the not guilty verdict of the four white police officers, but the culmination of injustices felt by most blacks every day living in the city of Los Angeles"?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Agree	73	75	78	69	65	75	75	77	64	77
Disagree	16	17	16	17	11	17	18	16	14	16
Don't know	11	8	6	14	24	8	7	7	22	7

**Do you think Los Angeles has changed for the better, or for the worse, or has Los Angeles remained about the same since the riots 10 years ago after the Rodney King beating trial verdict?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Better	51	55	43	51	52	51	57	55	45	51
Worse	6	8	9	3	4	7	7	7	5	5
Same	36	33	46	38	23	39	32	35	35	41
Don't know	7	4	2	8	21	3	4	3	15	3

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO SAY L.A. CHANGED FOR THE BETTER)

**In what way has Los Angeles changed for the better?**  
(ACCEPTED UP TO TWO REPLIES) (TOP SIX RESPONSES SHOWN)

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Less racial tension	36	32	25	51	34	37	27	54	24	33
Crime/Violence down	14	8	10	27	8	15	13	9	13	22
Police more accountable	14	10	22	17	17	13	9	13	21	12
Jobs/Business growth	11	14	12	9	4	13	14	5	10	19
More community spirit	11	14	24	6	16	10	9	12	6	17
Public more aware	10	13	9	1	10	10	11	8	9	12

(ASKED OF THOSE WHO SAY L.A. CHANGED FOR THE WORSE)

**In what way has Los Angeles changed for the worse?**  
(ACCEPTED UP TO TWO REPLIES) (TOP SIX RESPONSES SHOWN)

	ALL*
Racial polarization increasing	26
Crime/Violence worse	22
Police racist	16
Police scandals/Rampart	10
Not enough jobs/business	9
No one cares about city	9

\* Caution: This question was asked of only 91 respondents.

(ASKED OF EVERYONE)

**Do you think about the riots often?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Often	7	8	15	5	7	8	15	5	6	8
Not often	91	90	84	95	88	92	84	95	91	90
Don't know	2	2	1	-	5	-	1	-	3	2

**Do you agree or disagree with the jury's verdict of not guilty against the police officers accused of beating Rodney King 10 years ago? (IF AGREE OR DISAGREE) Was that (agree/disagree) strongly or (agree/disagree) somewhat?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Agree (Net)	18	20	5	23	14	19	11	29	18	9
Agree strongly	11	11	3	16	8	12	4	21	10	4
Agree somewhat	7	9	2	7	7	7	7	8	8	5
Disagree (Net)	67	63	88	66	58	69	71	57	63	82
Disagree somewhat	19	20	11	20	16	20	28	19	17	16
Disagree strongly	48	43	77	46	41	49	43	38	46	66
Don't know	15	17	7	11	28	12	18	14	19	9

**Generally speaking, thinking back to the riots 10 years ago after the Rodney King beating trial verdict, do you think the riots that occurred on the streets of Los Angeles in the aftermath of the verdict were totally justified, partially justified or totally unjustified?**

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Totally justified	4	5	8	3	3	5	2	5	5	3
Partially justified	30	27	26	33	32	30	40	31	24	29
Totally unjustified	58	62	59	58	48	60	54	58	59	61
Don't know	8	6	7	6	17	5	4	6	12	7

During the riots, Rodney King appealed to the people of the city of Los Angeles by saying, "Can't we all just get along?" What do you think? Over the last 10 years, do you think the different racial and ethnic groups in the city have made a lot of progress in getting along with each other, or some progress, or not too much progress, or have the different racial and ethnic groups in the city made no progress at all in getting along together?

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
A lot/Some (Net)	69	74	70	60	67	70	69	75	61	69
A lot	7	11	9	-	7	7	8	6	8	7
Some	62	62	60	60	60	62	61	69	53	62
Not much/None (Net)	26	21	30	35	18	28	29	22	28	28
Not too much	20	18	15	31	12	22	24	19	20	20
None at all	6	4	16	4	5	6	4	3	8	8
Don't know	5	5	-	5	15	2	2	3	11	3

Since the riots 10 years ago, do you think the civic leaders in the city of Los Angeles have been effective in getting to the roots of the problems to improve the situation of blacks and other minorities that led to the riots?

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Effective	48	54	52	42	45	49	60	54	39	43
Not effective	41	37	44	47	34	43	36	38	41	50
Don't know	11	9	4	11	21	8	4	8	20	7

Do you think the riots that occurred in the aftermath of the King beating trial verdict were mostly limited to criminal types or did many people who do not normally behave in a criminal way join in the riots?

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Mostly criminal types	21	23	21	21	12	23	11	34	16	15
Non-criminals joined in	69	69	69	70	65	70	81	58	70	75
Don't know	10	8	10	9	23	7	8	8	14	10

What sort of effect do you think the Rodney King beating incident had on the police department? Would you say that the Los Angeles Police Department has become a better institution because of the Rodney King beating incident 10 years ago, or has it become a worse institution, or didn't the incident change the department one way or another?

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Better	45	46	46	41	44	45	44	39	48	49
Worse	11	8	8	18	4	13	6	11	13	13
Same	33	32	40	33	29	33	40	38	23	30
Don't know	11	14	6	8	23	9	10	12	16	8

How would you describe the racial and ethnic makeup of the neighborhood where you live? Would you say it is mostly white, or mostly black, or mostly Latino, or mostly Asian, or is it mostly some other ethnic/racial group, or would you say the racial and/or ethnic makeup is pretty evenly mixed?

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Mostly white	28	52	9	7	35	26	55	40	16	6
Mostly minorities (Net)	34	15	55	46	33	34	20	19	45	52
Mostly black	6	1	29	2	4	6	2	-	2	21
Mostly Latino	22	11	24	36	15	24	15	16	26	30
Mostly Asian	4	1	1	3	10	2	1	2	10	1
Mostly other	2	1	1	4	4	2	2	1	6	-
Pretty evenly mixed	35	33	36	41	29	37	25	40	35	35
Don't know	3	-	-	6	3	3	-	1	4	7

Have you lived in Los Angeles for less than 10 years, or for more than that?

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Less than 10	19	23	13	13	100	-	24	13	28	10
10 or more	81	76	87	87	-	100	76	86	71	90
Don't know	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-

Thinking for a moment of blacks, whites, Latinos and Asians, do you yourself currently work or go to school or go to religious services with a person or persons of another race or not? (ACCEPTED "DON'T WORK/GO TO SCHOOL/GO TO RELIGIOUS SERVICES" AS A VOLUNTEERED RESPONSE)

	ALL	WHT	BLK	LAT	<10	10+	WES	SFV	CEN	SOU
Yes	75	74	83	77	77	74	81	80	71	65
No	13	16	10	11	14	13	7	12	14	21
Doesn't apply (Vol.)	12	10	7	12	9	13	12	8	14	13
Don't know	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1

Tables compiled by RAY ENSLOW