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Poll Looks at L.A. Race Relations

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LOS ANGELES (AP) - A decade after the city's worst riots, half of residents say race relations have gotten better, but trust in the police is still shaky in minority communities, according to a Los Angeles Times poll released Monday.

Photos



AP Photo

A survey of 1,288 adults, 262 of them black, showed that 50 percent overall found race relations better, with higher marks in the white and Hispanic communities. Just 36 percent of blacks, however, found race relations better.

The rioting began 10 years ago Monday, on April 29, 1992, after four white police officers were acquitted of the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King. Fires and looting lasted four days and left 55 dead and more than 2,000 injured. The mayhem caused \$1 billion in property damage.

Although a majority of those surveyed said the Los Angeles Police Department is doing an impressive job of holding down crime, 66 percent of Hispanics and 63 percent of blacks believe that police brutality is common. Only 28 percent of whites thought so.

Another 65 percent of blacks said racist feelings were common among LAPD ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) officers, while 68 percent of Hispanics agreed. Forty-eight percent of whites believed such feelings were common among police.

The Times Poll also found that 71 percent of whites said the fires and looting were rightfully called riots, while only 35 percent of blacks and 38 percent of Hispanics thought so.

Blacks, by 55 percent, said the word rebellion best described the events, and 45 percent of Hispanics agreed.

When it came to the reason for why the riots occurred, all groups had mixed feelings, but overall 32 percent believe a "criminal element who may or may not have lived in the area took advantage of the situation to loot and destroy property." Only 18 percent of those surveyed said the riots occurred because of the King verdict and 20 percent said it was "economic injustice."

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The poll was conducted through random telephone calls from April 18-22, and the sample was weighted to conform with Census Bureau ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) figures for the city. The margin of error was 3 percentage points overall and 6 points for blacks.

On the Net:

<http://www.latimes.com/timespoll>

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