

Poll: Sacramento Residents Satisfied and Optimistic Despite Deep Concerns about Traffic, Affordable Housing, Population Growth, Flood Control, and Public Education

Amy Qiaoming Liu, Ph. D.

Lisa Hood, Debra Matessino, Angela Pyara, and Kara Smith  
California State University, Sacramento

(Embargoed until 12:01 a.m., Friday August 18, 2006)

Sacramento has become one of the fastest-growing regions in California, as measured by its percentage gain of population. This tremendous growth has brought serious challenges to the community. More than two-thirds of residents in the region (70%) view traffic congestion as a big problem. This is equal to the situation observed in the Bay Area where traffic has often been regarded as the number one concern (Bay Area Council Poll 2006). Moreover, residents indicate serious concerns about affordable housing (51%), population growth and development (45%), and air pollution (42%). This population growth has also increased pressure on the public education system (46%) and affordable healthcare (41%) in the region.

Sacramento's growth has been fueled largely by the relocation of a large number of Bay Area residents seeking more affordable housing. According to the 2006 Bay Area Council poll, 40 percent of Bay Area residents were thinking about moving away, and 70 percent claimed high housing costs as the major reason. To meet the demand for affordable housing, a large number of new homes in the Sacramento region have been built. However, those new developments are often located in areas likely to flood. With the devastating flood in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, many area residents have realized that flood protection is a very important regional issue. In fact, after Governor Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency for the levees on February 24, 2006, flood control has been considered more problematic than affordable housing, quality of public education, population growth, air pollution, and affordable healthcare.

Despite all these worries, the vast majority of Sacramento region residents (83%) are satisfied with the overall quality of life in the region. Compared with other Californians, they are much happier with the direction the region is heading (59% in Sacramento vs. 32% in California overall) (Baldassare February 2006). They have been happy for the past four years: (62% in Sacramento vs. 35% in California in 2005; 60% in Sacramento vs. 35% in California for 2004, 58% in Sacramento vs. 28% in California for 2003, and 65% in Sacramento vs. 56% in California for 2002). The public are also more optimistic about the future economy for the Sacramento region (60% in Sacramento vs. 42% in California). This pattern also holds true for the past four years (65% in Sacramento vs. 38% in California for 2005, 60% in Sacramento vs. 43% in California for 2004, 32% in Sacramento vs. 20% in California for 2003, and 72% in Sacramento vs. 46% in California for 2002) (Baldassare April 2005; Baldassare February 2004; Baldassare February 2003; Baldassare February 2002; Liu, Hofer, and Sheley 2005; Liu and Sheley 2004; Liu and Sheley 2003; Liu 2002).

These are some of the results from *The 2006 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*, conducted from February 4 through March 5, 2006, by the Institute for Social Research (ISR), California State University, Sacramento.

**Traffic congestion: A top concern for the Sacramento region since 2002**

Sacramento region residents have some serious concerns regarding a wide range of local issues, with traffic congestion on major roads topping their list. An overwhelming majority (94%) view traffic congestion as a problem, with 70 percent thinking it is a big problem and 24 percent considering it somewhat of a problem. Traffic congestion has remained at the top of Sacramento region residents' list of concerns for the past five years (70% in 2006, 66% in 2005, 67% in 2004, 58% in 2003, and 73% in 2002).

Moreover, the concern for traffic congestion is widely shared by the general public and registered voters regardless of their gender, racial background, and political party affiliation. In fact, when asked about several major issues facing the Sacramento region, respondents felt traffic congestion is more problematic than affordable housing (51%), quality of public education (46%), population growth and development (45%), air pollution (42%), and affordable healthcare (41%).

However, length of residence, age, and county of residence affect opinions on this issue. People who have lived in the region 20 or more years (76%), people age 41 to 64 (75%) or 65 or above (74%), and residents from Sacramento (72%) or Placer (71%) County are more likely to report that traffic congestion is a major problem.

**“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem.”**

*Comparison among 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002*

	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Traffic congestion on major roads					
Big problem	70%	66%	67%	58%	73%
Somewhat of a problem	24	26	27	35	21
Not a problem	5	8	5	6	5
Don't know	1	0	1	1	1
Affordable housing <sup>1</sup>					
Big problem	51%	48%	50%	51%	47%
Somewhat of a problem	26	27	31	33	33
Not a problem	22	23	16	14	18
Don't know	1	2	3	2	2
Quality of public education					
Big problem	46%	46%	46%	50%	37%
Somewhat of a problem	37	37	39	36	41
Not a problem	12	14	12	12	18
Don't know	5	3	3	2	4

Population growth and development <sup>2</sup>					
Big problem	45%	40%	40%	43%	39%
Somewhat of a problem	35	39	35	32	36
Not a problem	18	19	23	22	22
Don't know	2	2	2	3	3
Air pollution					
Big problem	42%	42%	43%	43%	43%
Somewhat of a problem	43	46	45	42	42
Not a problem	14	12	12	14	14
Don't know	1	0	0	1	1
Affordable healthcare <sup>3</sup>					
Big problem	41%	38%	46%	49%	42%
Somewhat of a problem	30	30	32	33	34
Not a problem	27	30	17	14	20
Don't know	2	2	5	4	4

<sup>1</sup>The wording in our 2005 and 2006 surveys is slightly different from our 2002, 2003, and 2004 surveys. The exact wording in the previous years is, "I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem . . . the availability of affordable housing?" However, in 2005 and 2006, we ask about "the availability of housing you can afford?"

<sup>2</sup>The wording in our survey has changed. In 2002, respondents were asked whether they felt *urban sprawl* was a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. In 2003 and 2004, respondents were asked whether they felt *urban sprawl or growth* was a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. In 2005 and 2006, respondents were asked whether they felt *population growth and development* was a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem.

<sup>3</sup>The wording in our 2005 and 2006 surveys is slightly different from our 2002, 2003, and 2004 surveys. The exact wording in the previous years is, "I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem or not a problem: availability of affordable healthcare?" However, in 2005 and 2006, we ask about "the availability of healthcare you can afford?"

**"I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem . . ."**

*Comparison among 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002*

	Sac. Region (2006)	Sac. Region <sup>1</sup> 2005	Sac. Region <sup>2</sup> 2004	Sac. Region <sup>3</sup> 2003	Sac. Region <sup>4</sup> 2002
Traffic Congestion					
Big problem	70%	66%	67%	58%	73%
Somewhat of a problem	24	26	27	35	21
Not a problem	5	8	5	6	6
Don't know	1	0	1	1	1

<sup>1</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

<sup>2</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

<sup>3</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

<sup>4</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming. 2002.

*Comparison among People with Different Length of Residence in the Region*

	6 or Less Years	7 to 19 Years	20 or More Years
Traffic Congestion			
Big problem	58%	65%	76%
Somewhat of a problem	31	30	19
Not a problem	10	5	4
Don't know	1	0	1

*Comparison among People of Different Ages*

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Traffic Congestion			
Big problem	58%	75%	74%
Somewhat of a problem	33	23	17
Not a problem	8	2	6
Don't know	1	0	3

*Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region*

	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Traffic Congestion				
Big problem	62%	71%	72%	58%
Somewhat of a problem	28	24	23	28
Not a problem	10	4	4	12
Don't know	0	1	1	2

**Increased awareness of flood risk after declaration of state emergency for the levees**

On February 22, Governor Schwarzenegger inspected the levees in Sacramento and the Central Valley with federal and local officials. They found out that many levees in California are in need of repairs. On Feb. 24, Governor Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency for these levees so he could obtain more funding from the state and federal governments to speed up the repair work. This is because many of these levees are supposed to protect the Sacramento region, but may pose the risk for a Katrina-like disaster.

Public awareness of the flood risk in the region has increased after the Governor declared a state of emergency for the levees in the Central Valley. Before Feb. 24, a majority of the people in the region were not too concerned about flood control. Only 38 percent thought flood control was a big problem. Thirty-seven percent regarded it as somewhat a problem, 20 percent believed it is not a problem, and 5 percent didn't know. This perception has changed since Feb. 24. A majority of the residents (54%) are now very concerned about flood control and think it is a big problem. Thirty-two percent regard it as somewhat a problem. Only 11 percent believe it is not a problem, and three percent don't know. Flood control has become the second most important regional issue (54%)

after traffic congestion (70%), and is considered more problematic than issues of affordable housing (51%), quality of public education (46%), population growth and development (45%), air pollution (42%), and affordable healthcare (41%).

**“Next, I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me whether you think it is a big problem, somewhat a problem, or not a problem. Flood control?”**

*Comparison before and after the Governor’s Declaration of the State Emergency*

	Before Declaration (Before Feb. 24)	After Declaration (After Feb. 24)
A big problem	38%	54%
Somewhat a problem	37	32
Not a problem	20	11
Don’t know	5	3

### **Great concerns about other growth related issues**

#### ***Affordable housing***

Affordable housing, population growth and development, and air pollution are other growth related issues of concern to the public in the Sacramento region. The majority of Sacramento residents (77%) believe it is a problem, with 51 percent viewing it as a big problem and 26 percent considering it somewhat of a problem. For the fifth year in a row, the availability of affordable housing has remained one of the top concerns (51% in 2006, 48% in 2005, 50% in 2004, 51% in 2003, and 47% in 2002). Although this level of concern has fluctuated slightly over the past four years, it has consistently remained as the second or third top concern among region residents, who view it as more problematic than the quality of public education (46%), population growth and development (45%), air pollution (42%), or affordable healthcare (41%).

Even though housing sales have slowed down dramatically in the past year, residents at all income levels increasingly view affordable housing as a problem. Now almost two-thirds (63%) of residents with household income less than \$50,000 believe affordable housing is a big problem, which is six percent higher than 2005 (57%). More than half (52%) of those making \$50,000 to less than \$100,000 share this concern, which is also higher than a year ago (49%). Even people who are making \$100,000 or more are more likely to think this is the case this year, when compared to a year ago (41% in 2006 vs. 37% in 2005).

Homeownership status makes a major difference in perception of affordable housing. More than two-thirds (67%) of the non-homeowners find affordable housing a big problem, while only 45 percent of homeowners think so. Furthermore, more than half of the non-whites (57%), those younger than 65 (52% for those between 41 and 64, and 55% for those 40 or younger), Democrats (56%), and other voters (52%) share this

concern as well.

The perception of affordable housing doesn't vary significantly by length of residence in the region any more. Almost half of long-time residents (51%) and 48 percent of newer residents are likely to think that affordable housing is a big problem. This is quite different from a year ago when length of residence made a big difference. In 2005, residents who had lived in the region for a long time were much more likely to perceive it as a big problem. More than half of the long-term residents (52% living 20 or more years), 47 percent of those living between 7 to 19 years, and 39 percent of those who had stayed six years or less reported affordable housing was a big concern (Liu and Livingston 2005).

**“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem.”**

*Comparison among the Sacramento Region*

	Sac. Region <sup>1</sup> (2006)	Sac. Region <sup>2</sup> (2005)	Sac. Region <sup>3</sup> (2004)	Sac. Region <sup>4</sup> (2003)	Sac. Region <sup>5</sup> (2002)
Affordable housing					
Big problem	51%	48%	50%	51%	47%
Somewhat of a prob.	26	27	31	33	33
Not a problem	22	23	16	14	18
Don't know	1	2	3	2	2

<sup>1</sup>The wording in our 2006 and 2005 survey is slightly different from our 2002, 2003, and 2004 surveys. The 2002, 2003 and 2004 surveys asked about the “availability of affordable housing,” while this year uses “the availability of housing you can afford”, the same as the PPIC surveys.

<sup>2</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

<sup>3</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

<sup>4</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

<sup>5</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming. 2002.

*Comparison between Homeowners and Others*

	Homeowners	Non-homeowners
Affordable housing		
Big problem	45%	67%
Somewhat of a problem	28	22
Not a problem	26	10
Don't know	1	1

*Comparison among People with Different Household Income*

	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to less than \$100,000	\$100,000 or more
<b>2006</b>			
Affordable housing			
Big problem	63%	52%	41%
Somewhat of a problem	19	26	32
Not a problem	17	21	26
Don't know	1	1	1
<b>2005</b>			
Affordable housing			
Big problem	57%	49%	37%
Somewhat of a problem	25	26	29
Not a problem	17	23	33
Don't know	1	2	1

*Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups*

	White	Other Racial Groups
Affordable housing		
Big problem	48%	57%
Somewhat of a problem	28	24
Not a problem	23	18
Don't know	1	1

*Comparison among People with Different Age*

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 or Plus
Affordable housing			
Big problem	55%	52%	41%
Somewhat of a problem	29	28	17
Not a problem	15	19	40
Don't know	1	1	2

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Affordable housing			
Big problem	41%	56%	52%
Somewhat of a problem	28	24	31
Not a problem	30	19	17
Don't know	1	01	0

*Comparison among People with Different Length of Residence in the Region*

	6 Years or Less	7 to 19 Years	20 Years or Longer
<b>2006</b>			
Affordable housing			
Big problem	48%	51%	51%
Somewhat of a problem	31	27	25
Not a problem	21	20	23
Don't know	0	2	1
<b>2005</b>			
Affordable housing			
Big problem	39%	47%	52%
Somewhat of a problem	31	30	24
Not a problem	28	22	22
Don't know	2	1	2

***Population growth and development***

Sacramento region residents are more concerned about population growth and development than other Californians (45% in the Sacramento region vs. 27% in California, Baldassare December 2005). Concern over this issue has increased 5 percent from the last few years except for 2003 (45% in 2006, 40% in 2005, 40% in 2004, 43% in 2003, and 39% in 2002).

Perceptions regarding this issue don't differ significantly by race or income, but do vary by length of residence in the region, age, party affiliation, and county of residence. Residents who have lived in the region 20 or more years (53%) are much more likely to have serious concerns about population growth and development than those who have lived here 7 to 19 years (39%) or 6 years or less (30%). People who are age 65 and older (52%), Democrats (51%), and residents from El Dorado (49%), Sacramento (46%), and Yolo (45%) counties are more likely to regard population growth as a big problem.

*Comparison between California and the Sacramento Region*

	Californ. <sup>1</sup>	Sac. Region (2006)	Sac. Region <sup>2</sup> (2005)	Sac. Region <sup>3</sup> (2004)	Sac. Region <sup>4</sup> (2003)	Sac. Region <sup>5</sup> (2002)
Big problem	27%	45%	40%	40%	43%	39%
Somewhat of a prob.	34	35	39	35	32	36
Not a problem	37	18	19	23	22	22
Don't know	2	2	2	2	3	3

<sup>1</sup> Baldassare, Mark. December 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming. 2002.

*Comparison among People with Different Length of Residence in the Region*

	6 Years or Less	7 to 19 Years	20 or More Years
Population Growth & Development			
Big problem	30%	39%	53%
Somewhat of a problem	37	40	31
Not a problem	28	19	14
Don't know	5	2	2

*Comparison among People of Different Ages*

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Population Growth & Development			
Big problem	34%	50%	52%
Somewhat of a problem	35	37	31
Not a problem	27	12	16
Don't know	4	1	1

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters
Population Growth & Development			
Big problem	51%	41%	47%
Somewhat of a problem	34	37	33
Not a problem	12	21	18
Don't know	3	1	2

*Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region*

	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Population Growth & Development				
Big problem	49%	38%	46%	45%
Somewhat of a problem	33	39	34	32
Not a problem	15	22	17	22
Don't know	3	1	3	1

***Air pollution***

Concerns about air pollution have remained quite consistent among region residents over the past five years (42% in 2006 and 2005, and 43% in 2004, 2003, and 2002). However, there are significant differences by political party affiliation, age, length of residence, and gender. Among the registered voters, Democrats (51%) are much more concerned about air pollution than Republicans (33%) or other voters (42%). Among the general public, middle aged residents (41 years old to 64, 47%), people who have lived in the region 7 or more years (44%), females (44%), and residents from Yolo (46%) or Sacramento (44%) counties are more likely to view air pollution as a big problem than those residents 65 or

older (35%), those 40 or younger (37%), people who have lived in the region 6 or fewer years (35%), males (38%), and residents from Placer (33%) or El Dorado (37%) counties.

*Comparison between California and the Sacramento Region*

	Sac. Region (2006)	Sac. Region <sup>1</sup> (2005)	Sac. Region <sup>2</sup> (2004)	Sac. Region <sup>3</sup> (2003)	Sac. Region <sup>4</sup> (2002)
<b>Air Pollution</b>					
Big problem	42%	42%	43%	43%	43%
Somewhat of a problem	43	46	45	42	42
Not a problem	14	12	12	14	14
Don't know	1	0	0	1	1

<sup>1</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

<sup>2</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

<sup>3</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

<sup>4</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming. 2002.

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters
<b>Air Pollution</b>			
Big problem	51%	33%	42%
Somewhat of a problem	40	48	44
Not a problem	8	18	13
Don't know	1	1	1

*Comparison among People with Different Age*

	40 or younger	41 to 64	65 and above
<b>Air Pollution</b>			
Big problem	37%	47%	35%
Somewhat of a problem	46	41	46
Not a problem	15	11	18
Don't know	2	1	1

*Comparison among People with Different Length of Residence in the Region*

	6 Years or Less	7 to 19 Years	20 or More Years
<b>Air Pollution</b>			
Big problem	35%	44%	44%
Somewhat of a problem	45	43	43
Not a problem	19	13	12
Don't know	1	0	1

*Comparison between Males and Females*

	Males	Females
Air Pollution		
Big problem	38%	44%
Somewhat of a problem	44	43
Not a problem	17	12
Don't know	1	1

*Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region*

	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Air Pollution				
Big problem	37%	33%	44%	46%
Somewhat of a problem	45	51	42	36
Not a problem	18	15	13	18
Don't know	0	1	1	0

**Public remains concerned about quality of public education**

People in the Sacramento region are just as concerned over public education (46%) as they were in 2005 and 2004 (46%). Although this level of concern is slightly lower than that seen in 2003 (50%), it is much higher than that from 2002 (37%). Moreover, half of the middle aged residents (41 to 64 years old, 50%) and those people who have lived in the region for 20 or more years (50%) consider the quality of public education as a big problem. However, compared to other Californians, residents of the Sacramento region are less worried about this issue (58% in California vs. 46% in the Sacramento region) (Baldassare April 2006).

*Comparison between California and the Sacramento Region*

	California <sup>1</sup> (2006)	Sac. Region (2006)	Sac. Region <sup>2</sup> (2005)	Sac. Region <sup>3</sup> (2004)	Sac. Region <sup>4</sup> (2003)	Sac. Region <sup>5</sup> (2002)
Big problem	58%	46%	46%	46%	50%	37%
Somewhat of a pro.	27	37	37	39	36	42
Not a problem	11	12	14	12	12	18
Don't know	4	5	3	3	2	4

<sup>1</sup> Baldassare, Mark. April 2006. The wording in the PPIC survey is slightly different from ours. The exact wording of the PPIC survey is, "Next, how much of a problem is the quality of education in California's k-12 public schools today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?" The wording in our survey is, "I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem . . . the quality of public education?"

<sup>2</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming. 2002.

*Comparison between People of Different Ages*

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Public Education			
Big Problem	44%	50%	41%
Somewhat of a problem	37	36	39
Not a Problem	14	11	13
Don't Know	5	3	7

*Comparison among People with Different Lengths of Residence in the Region*

	6 Years or Less	7 to 19 Years	20 or More Years
Public Education			
Big problem	34%	46%	50%
Somewhat of a problem	38	36	37
Not a problem	18	14	10
Don't know	10	4	3

**Increased concern about affordable healthcare**

Concern about affordable healthcare in the region has fluctuated over the past five years (41% in 2006, 38% in 2005, 46% in 2004, 49% in 2003, and 42% in 2002). Compared to last year (38% in 2005), residents in the Sacramento region are somewhat more likely to view affordable healthcare as a major problem (41%). However, this level of concern stays about the same as five years ago (42%).

Income, age, and political party affiliation significantly affect the public's perception of affordable healthcare. People with a household income less than \$75,000 per year (47% for less than \$30,000 and 48% for \$30,000 to less than \$75,000) and people who are under 65 (45% for those between 41 to 64 years old, and 42% for those 40 years or younger) express more concern over this issue. In addition, Republican voters (31%) are much less likely than Democrats (45%) and other voters (39%) to consider the availability of affordable healthcare as a big regional problem.

*Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes*

	Sacramento Region	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to less than \$75,000	\$75,000 and above
Affordable Healthcare				
Big problem	41%	47%	48%	33%
Somewhat of a problem	30	28	25	34
Not a problem	27	23	26	30
Don't know	2	2	1	3

*Comparison among People of Different Ages*

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Affordable Healthcare			
Big problem	42%	45%	30%
Somewhat of a problem	33	30	23
Not a problem	22	23	43
Don't know	3	2	4

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Democrat	Republican	Other
Affordable Healthcare			
Big problem	45%	31%	39%
Somewhat of a problem	30	32	35
Not a problem	23	35	24
Don't know	2	2	2

**Majority residents satisfied with quality of life in the Sacramento region**

In spite of all these worries, the majority of the public in the Sacramento region (83%) are satisfied with their overall quality of life, with 29 percent stating they are very satisfied and 54 percent indicating they are somewhat satisfied. This level of satisfaction is similar to the levels seen in 2005 (85%), 2004 (85%), and 2003 (84%), although it has decreased slightly from the high of 89 percent reported in 2002 (Liu and Sheley 2004; Liu, Hofer, and Sheley 2005).

Satisfaction with quality of life doesn't differ significantly by gender or length of residence in the region. However, county of residence, income, homeownership, and race do make a difference. Residents in Placer and El Dorado counties (36%) are much more likely than people in Sacramento and Yolo counties (26%) to be very satisfied with the overall quality of life. Those making \$75,000 or more (36%), homeowners (31%), and white people (31%) are more likely than people making less than \$30,000 (23%), non-homeowners (20%), or people from other racial groups (22%) to be very content.

**“How satisfied are you with the overall quality of life in the Sacramento region?  
Are you . . .”**

*Comparison among 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002*

	2006	2005 <sup>1</sup>	2004 <sup>2</sup>	2003 <sup>3</sup>	2002 <sup>4</sup>
Very satisfied	29%	29%	29%	30%	37%
Somewhat satisfied	54	56	56	54	52
Somewhat dissatisfied	12	11	12	13	9
Very dissatisfied	4	3	3	3	2
Don't know	1	1	0	0	0

<sup>1</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming. 2002.

*Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region*

	Placer/El Dorado	Sacramento/Yolo
Very satisfied	36%	26%
Somewhat satisfied	49	56
Somewhat dissatisfied	10	13
Very dissatisfied	4	4
Don't know	1	1

*Comparison among People with Different Incomes*

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to less than \$75,000	\$75,000 and above
Very satisfied	23%	26%	36%
Somewhat satisfied	51	56	53
Somewhat dissatisfied	20	13	8
Very dissatisfied	5	4	3
Don't know	1	1	0

*Comparison between Homeowners and Others*

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners
Very satisfied	20%	31%
Somewhat satisfied	57	54
Somewhat dissatisfied	16	11
Very dissatisfied	6	3
Don't know	1	1

*Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups*

	White	Other Racial Groups
Very satisfied	31%	22%
Somewhat satisfied	54	57
Somewhat dissatisfied	12	14
Very dissatisfied	3	6
Don't know	0	1

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters
Very satisfied	26%	35%	24%
Somewhat satisfied	57	52	54
Somewhat dissatisfied	12	9	16
Very dissatisfied	4	4	5
Don't know	1	0	1

**Happy with the direction the Sacramento region is heading**

About 60 percent (59%) of the public in the Sacramento region believe that things in the Sacramento region are going in the right direction. This perception doesn't differ significantly from that reported in 2005 (62%), 2004 (60%), or 2003 (58%). Despite a dip in 2003 (58%) from 2002 (65%), the Sacramento region has gradually recovered from the low observed in 2003 (Liu and Sheley 2004). Now, residents in the Sacramento area are much happier with the direction the region is heading, compared to California as a whole (59% in Sacramento vs. 32% in California) (Baldassare February 2006). This positive regional outlook on the future contrasts sharply with that observed statewide over the last five years of surveys (32% in 2006, 35% in 2005, 35% in 2004, 28% in 2003, and 56% in 2002).

Happiness with the direction of the region doesn't differ significantly by gender, race, county of residence, or homeownership. However, age, household income, and political affiliation do make a difference. Residents aged 40 or younger (67%), those who have an annual household income of \$75,000 or more (66%), and Republicans (66%) are more likely to agree that things in the Sacramento region are generally going in the right direction than people 65 or older (51%), families with household income of less than \$30,000 (46%), and Democrats (55%).

**“Do you think things in the Sacramento region are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?”**

*Comparison between California and the Sacramento Region*

	California <sup>1</sup> (2006)	Sac. Region (2006)	Sac. Region <sup>2</sup> (2005)	Sac. Region <sup>3</sup> (2004)	Sac. Region <sup>4</sup> (2003)	Sac. Region <sup>5</sup> (2002)
Right direction	32%	59%	62%	60%	58%	65%
Wrong direction	58	27	25	29	31	21
Don't know	10	14	13	11	11	14

<sup>1</sup>Baldassare, Mark. February 2006.

<sup>2</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

<sup>3</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

<sup>4</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

<sup>5</sup>Liu, Amy Qiaoming 2002.

*Comparison between California and the Sacramento Region*

	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	Don't Know
<b>2006</b>			
California <sup>1</sup>	32%	58%	10%
Sacramento Region	59%	27%	14%
<b>2005</b>			
California <sup>2</sup>	35%	53%	12%
Sacramento Region <sup>3</sup>	62%	25%	13%
<b>2004</b>			
California <sup>4</sup>	35%	51%	14%
Sacramento Region <sup>5</sup>	60%	29%	11%
<b>2003</b>			
California <sup>6</sup>	28%	60%	12%
Sacramento Region <sup>7</sup>	58%	31%	11%
<b>2002</b>			
California <sup>8</sup>	56%	36%	8%
Sacramento Region <sup>9</sup>	65%	21%	14%

<sup>1</sup> Baldassare, Mark. February 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Baldassare, Mark. April 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Baldassare, Mark. February 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Baldassare, Mark. February 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Baldassare, Mark. February 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming. 2002.

*Comparison among People with Different Ages*

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 or Older
Right direction	67%	57%	51%
Wrong direction	18	31	32
Don't know	15	12	17

*Comparison among People with Different Incomes*

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to less than \$75,000	\$75,000 or plus
Right direction	46%	61%	66%
Wrong direction	35	24	25
Don't know	19	15	9

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters
Right direction	55%	66%	59%
Wrong direction	32	23	29
Don't know	13	11	12

**Optimistic about future economy**

Sixty percent of Sacramento region residents think that financially, during the next twelve months, the region will have good times. Republicans (73%), those households making \$75,000 or more (71%), residents in Placer or El Dorado counties (67%), homeowners (65%), middle age-residents (41 to 64 years old, 63%), and white residents (63%) are much more optimistic about the future. In fact, people here (60%) are much more optimistic about their future economic conditions when compared to residents in California as a whole (42%, Baldassare February 2006), even though the assessment (60%) is five percent lower than 2005 (65%).

**“Think about economic conditions in the Sacramento region. Do you think that, financially, during the next 12 months we will have good times or bad times?”**

*Comparison between California and the Sacramento Region*

	California <sup>1</sup> (2006)	Sac. Region (2006)	Sac. Region <sup>2</sup> (2005)	Sac. Region <sup>3</sup> (2004)	Sac. Region <sup>4</sup> (2003)	Sac. Region <sup>5</sup> (2002)
Good times	42%	60%	65%	60%	32%	72%
Bad times	45	31	27	31	61	18
Don't know	13	9	8	9	7	10

<sup>1</sup> Baldassare, Mark. February 2006. The wording in our survey is slightly different than the PPIC survey. The exact wording of the PPIC survey is, “Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?”

<sup>2</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming. 2002.

*Comparison between California and the Sacramento Region*

	Good Times	Bad Times	Don't Know
<b>2006</b>			
California <sup>1</sup>	42%	45%	13%
Sacramento Region	60%	31%	9%
<b>2005</b>			
California <sup>2</sup>	38%	51%	11%
Sacramento Region <sup>3</sup>	65%	27%	8%

<b>2004</b>			
California <sup>4</sup>	43%	44%	13%
Sacramento Region <sup>5</sup>	60%	31%	9%
<b>2003</b>			
California <sup>6</sup>	20%	71%	9%
Sacramento Region <sup>7</sup>	32%	61%	7%
<b>2002</b>			
California <sup>8</sup>	46%	47%	7%
Sacramento Region <sup>9</sup>	72%	18%	10%

<sup>1</sup> Baldassare, Mark. February 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Baldassare, Mark. April 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Baldassare, Mark. February 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Baldassare, Mark. February 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Baldassare, Mark. February 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Liu, Amy Qiaoming. 2002.

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters
Good times	53%	73%	60%
Bad times	38	19	28
Don't know	9	8	12

*Comparison among People with Different Household Income*

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to less than \$75,000	\$75,000 or plus
Good times	43%	57%	71%
Bad times	42	34	23
Don't know	15	9	6

*Comparison between Placer/El Dorado and Sacramento/Yolo Residents*

	Placer / El Dorado	Sacramento / Yolo
Good times	67%	57%
Bad times	24	34
Don't know	9	9

*Comparison between Placer/El Dorado and Sacramento/Yolo Residents*

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners
Good times	46%	65%
Bad times	42	27
Don't know	12	8

*Comparison among People with Different Ages*

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Good times	57%	63%	57%
Bad times	34	29	28
Don't know	9	8	15

*Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups*

	White	Other Racial Groups
Good times	63%	51%
Bad times	28	40
Don't know	9	9

**Survey methods**

The above results are based on our fifth annual survey, *The 2006 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*<sup>1</sup>. This study is a computer-assisted telephone interview of 1122 adult residents age 18 and older from randomly selected households in the Sacramento region, which includes Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado counties. The objective of this project is to assess quality of life and public opinion regarding a wide range of important local and national issues in the Sacramento region.

More than 30 students conducted phone interviews in English and Spanish from February 4 to March 5, 2006, at the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. The sample is representative of the four counties in the Sacramento region and comparable to the 2000 U.S. Census (68% residents in the Census vs. 65.4% in the sample in Sacramento County, 14% in the Census vs. 16.3% in the sample in Placer County, 9% in the Census vs. 8.2% in the sample in Yolo County; and 9% in the Census vs. 10.1% in the sample in El Dorado County). The margin of error for the survey is approximately  $\pm 3$  percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. The error for group comparisons in the Sacramento region would be higher than  $\pm 3$  percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

This survey has compared the Sacramento region findings with those from other California regions, the state, and the nation. Data cited regarding the state and other California regions often comes from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Surveys. Nationwide data often comes from Gallup polls.

The College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies (SSIS), Department of Sociology, the Office of Public Affairs, the Office of Community Collaboration at California State University (CSU), Sacramento, and CSU, Office of Community Service Learning sponsored this project. Dr. Joseph Sheley is actively involved in this project and has made great contributions.

<sup>1</sup> This study was called Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region.

This research is directed by Amy Q. Liu, Ph.D., Department of Sociology and Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. Dr. Liu is an expert in public opinion polls, and has conducted over 20 surveys in the past nine years, including:

- 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002 Annual Surveys of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region
- Survey of Iowa Business about Eldercare and Eldercare Needs
- Story County Conservation Board Survey
- Grundy County Youth Needs Assessment

Direct all correspondence to Dr. Amy Q. Liu, Department of Sociology, California State University, Sacramento, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95819-6005; 916-278-7572 (phone); 916-278-6281 (fax); [amyliuus@yahoo.com](mailto:amyliuus@yahoo.com). Please visit our web site ([www.csus.edu/ssis/](http://www.csus.edu/ssis/)) for the executive summaries and full reports for the 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002 annual surveys in the Sacramento region.

**References:**

Baldassare, Mark. April 2006. *Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Survey: Special Survey on Education*. San Francisco, CA.

Baldassare, Mark. February 2006. *Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Survey: Californians and the Environment*. San Francisco, CA.

Baldassare, Mark. December 2005. *Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Survey: Special Survey on Population*. San Francisco, CA.

Baldassare, Mark. April 2005. *Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Survey: Special Survey on Education*. San Francisco, CA.

Baldassare, Mark. January 2005. *Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Survey: Special Survey on the California State Budget*. San Francisco, CA.

Baldassare, Mark. November 2004. *Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey: Special Survey on Californians and Their Housing*. San Francisco, CA.

Baldassare, Mark. February 2004. *Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government*. San Francisco, CA.

Baldassare, Mark. February 2003. *Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government*. San Francisco, CA.

Baldassare, Mark. February 2002. *Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government*. San Francisco, CA.

Bay Area Council Poll. 2006. "40 Percent Bay Area Residents Thinking Leaving, Largely Due to High Housing Costs, Bay Area Council Poll Shows." Retrieved on July

10, 2006 (<http://www.bayareacouncil.org/atf/cf/%7B2F567EB5-67C0-4CDA-9DD3-EC4A129D3322%7D/BA%20Poll%20Mon%20Housing%20Release%20FINAL.pdf>).

Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Britte H. Livingston. 2005. *Affordable Housing a Serious Challenge: Almost Half Can't Buy New Homes and One-third Forced to Consider Relocation*. Sacramento, CA: California State University, Sacramento.

Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. June 17, 2005. *Poll: Satisfied, Optimistic, but Deeply Concerned about Traffic, Affordable Housing, Public Education, Air Pollution, Population Growth, and Affordable Healthcare*. Sacramento, CA: California State University, Sacramento.

Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2004. *The 2004 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region: Executive Report for Regional Issues*. Sacramento, CA: California State University, Sacramento.

Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2003. *The Full Report for the 2003 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region*. Sacramento, CA: California State University, Sacramento.

Liu, Amy Qiaoming. 2002. *The Full Report for the 2002 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region*. Sacramento, CA: California State University, Sacramento.

## **Appendix I: The 2006 Annual Survey Research Team Members and Sponsors**

Director: Amy Qiaoming Liu, Ph. D.  
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology  
California State University, Sacramento  
6000 J. Street, Sacramento, CA 95819-6005  
916-278-7572 (phone),  
916-278-6281 (fax)  
[amyliuus@yahoo.com](mailto:amyliuus@yahoo.com) (e-mail)

Advisor: Otis Scott, Ph. D.  
Dean, College of Social Science and Interdisciplinary Studies  
California State University, Sacramento  
916-278-6504 (phone),  
scottol@csus.edu (email)

Data Collection Supervisors: Jessica Hayes, Alicia VanHoy,  
Patty Crosby, Sandra Sutherland, and Ernest Cowles  
Institute for Social Research  
California State University, Sacramento

Editors: Britte H. Livingston  
California State University, Sacramento

Graphic Designer: California State University, Sacramento

Team Members: Manuel Barajas, Richalyn'nico Abbate, Susannah M Bartz,  
Ginger Bennet, Jessica Bigornia, Kerby Boschee, Kenneth  
Bowerman, Kelley Burton, Oscar Cardenas, Maria  
Guaicochea, Jennifer Heu, Leora Holbann, Michaela Jegede,  
Amy Justice, Jensen Kile, Kristin Kafouros, Ashley Ludwig,  
Jason Marable, Vince Mostoufi, Jasmine Pettis, Ashley  
Phillips, Angela Pyara, Jennie Reiken, Shanina Ross, Richard  
Small, Kara Smith, Ken Smith, Lana Sumati, Tara Travers,  
Melinda Theroux, Tess Wendling, and Jonathan Wong

Sponsors: College of Social Science and Interdisciplinary Studies  
Department of Sociology  
Office of Public Affairs  
Office of Community Collaboration  
California State University, Sacramento  
CSU, Office of Community Service Learning