

E·R·A·S·E



E D U C A T I O N  
R E S E A R C H  
A D V O C A C Y &  
S U P P O R T T O  
E L I M I N A T E  
R A C I S M

**BLACK AND LATINO EXPERIENCES  
WITH  
DISCRIMINATION ON LONG ISLAND**

**Report Prepared for ERASE Racism by  
STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY  
CENTER FOR SURVEY RESEARCH  
November 21, 2008**

## **BLACK AND LATINO EXPERIENCES WITH DISCRIMINATION ON LONG ISLAND**

ERASE Racism’s new report *The Racial Equity Report Card: Fair Housing on Long Island* reveals that housing discrimination is both severe and deeply rooted. There are problems with laws, with their enforcement (or lack of enforcement), with the policies and practices of government agencies (federal, state and local) and with the practices of real estate and other businesses. [View the full report at [www.eraseracismny.org](http://www.eraseracismny.org).]

Recently, a poll of Long Islanders was conducted by the Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research which included samples of African -American and Latino residents who were asked questions about their experiences with different kinds of discrimination. The findings underscore the clear existence of racial and ethnic discrimination on the Island, including housing discrimination. Six in ten blacks and four in ten Latinos report direct experience with at least one of four kinds of discrimination asked about in the survey.

Just under 4 in 10 blacks (39%) said that they or an immediate family member had experienced housing discrimination perpetrated either by real estate agents, or white landlords or homeowners. Twenty-one percent of Latinos reported a similar experience with housing discrimination. Over four in ten African-Americans (42%) and under 2 in 10 Latinos (19%) felt they had been stopped by the police because of their race or ethnic background. Sixteen percent of both blacks and Latinos said they had been verbally or physically harassed by a neighbor because of their race or ethnicity.

Black and Latino males were almost twice as likely as black and Latino females to report that they had been stopped by the police because of their race or ethnicity. But direct experience with these different forms of discrimination was spread quite evenly across gender, age, education levels, and household income. Overall, 60% of African American and 40% of Latinos reported at least one of these experiences.

It is important to note that black and Latino Long Islanders interviewed as part of the poll are long-term residents of Long Island for the most part. Almost 80% of African-Americans and 70% of Latinos had lived on Long Island for more than 10 years. 23% of blacks and 9% of Latinos had lived on Long Island their entire life.

**Table 1: Experience with Local Discrimination**

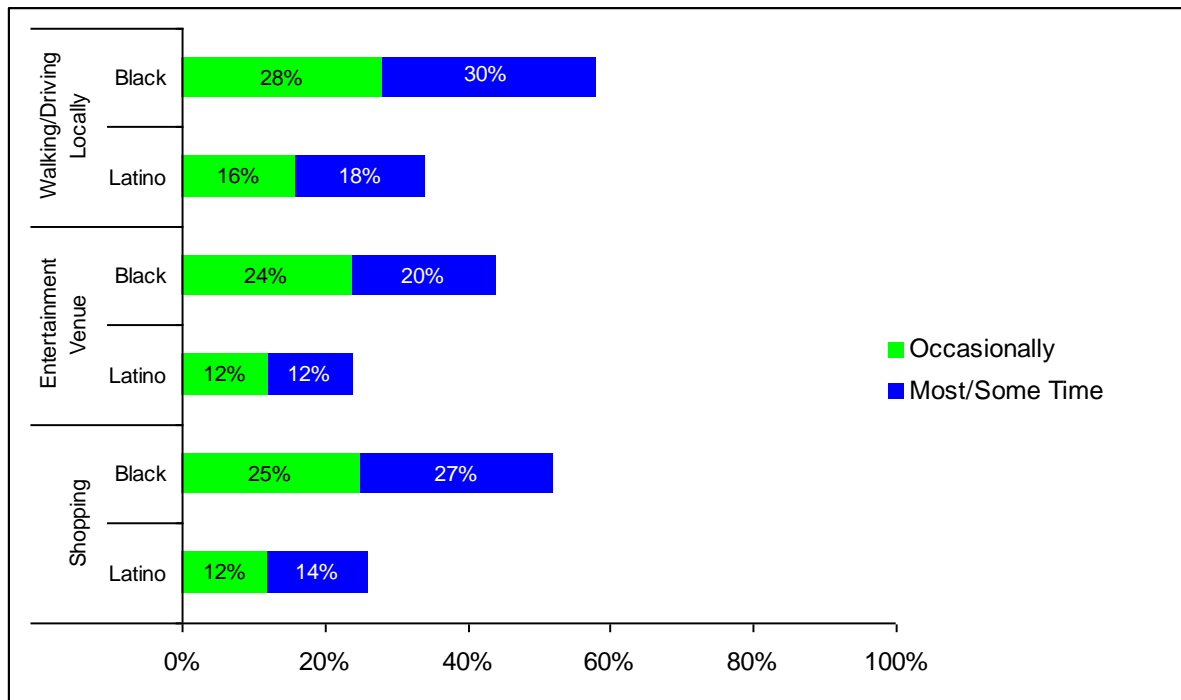
	<b>Black</b>	<b>Latino</b>
Missed out on housing because of a real estate agent (Q37)	34%	15%
Missed out on housing because of a White landlord/home owner (Q39)	31%	12%
<i>Experienced some form of housing discrimination(Q37 or Q39)</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>21%</i>
Stopped by the police because of race/ethnicity (Q44)	42%	19%
Verbally/physically harassed by neighbor (Q43)	16%	16%
<b><i>Experienced at least one of 4 forms of discrimination (Q37, Q39, Q43, Q44)</i></b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>

In addition to questions about direct experiences with different forms of discrimination, African - American and Latino residents were asked about their sense of unease in different public settings on the Island. Among African-Americans, 31% had felt out of place most or some of the time while walking or driving in a local community on Long Island. This experience was reported almost twice as frequently by black males than black females. Over a quarter of African-Americans (27%) reported feeling out of place most or some of the time while shopping, and 20% felt this way in an entertainment venue.

Latinos were somewhat less likely than blacks to report feeling out of place in such venues: . 18% had felt out of place while walking or driving in a local community, 14% while shopping and 12% at an entertainment venue. Once again, there were relatively few differences in these feelings by education level, household income, age, or gender.

When those who reported feeling out of place some or most of the time in at least one of these settings is combined with individuals who reported direct housing discrimination, police profiling or harassment by a neighbor, 71% of African-Americans and 52% of Latinos have experienced direct discrimination or felt discomfort on Long Island because of their racial or ethnic background. These numbers underscore the reality of racial and ethnic discrimination on the Island.

**Figure 1: Feeling Out of Place in Various Public Venues (Q40-Q42)**



*Perceived Housing Discrimination on Long Island Across Racial and Ethnic Lines*

Sizeable minorities of blacks and Latinos had experienced some form of housing discrimination on Long Island and a majority of whites are aware that such practices exist. Just under 60% of Long Islanders believe that it is somewhat or very likely that some African-Americans or Latinos miss out on housing because real estate agents will not show them homes in good areas that they can afford. A similar percentage (58%) said that it was somewhat or very likely that white home

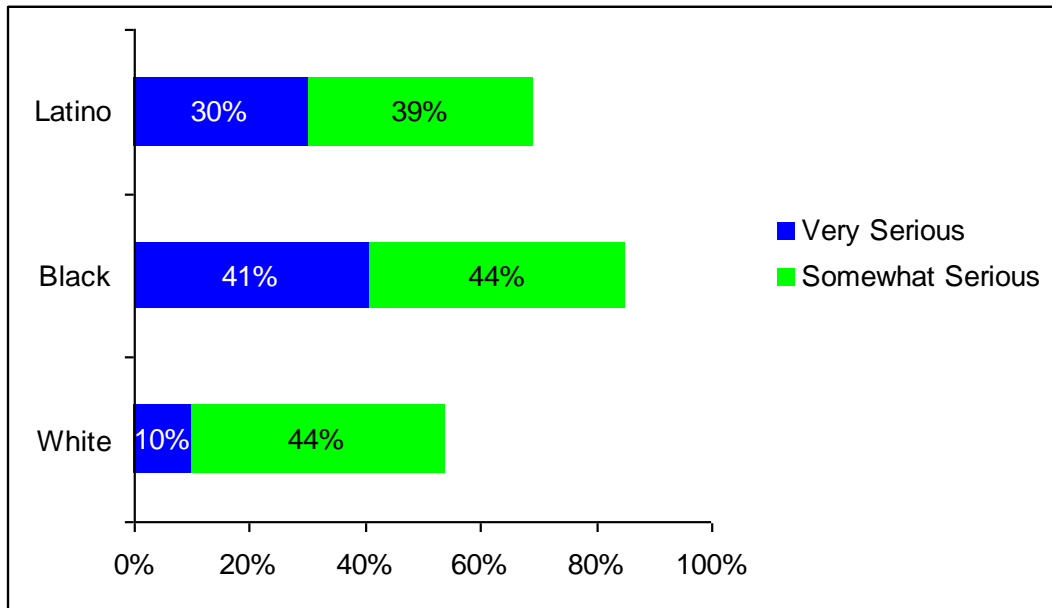
owners and landlords would not sell or rent homes to African Americans or Latinos further reducing their housing options.

But there are racial and ethnic differences in perceived local housing discrimination. Only 53% of whites thought it was somewhat or very likely that real estate agents practiced housing discrimination compared to 84% of blacks and 73% of Latinos. There were also racial differences in the intensity of this perception. Under 20% of whites (18%) thought housing discrimination by real estate agents was *very likely* compared to 54% of African-Americans and 29% of Latinos.

Political proclivities also color acknowledgement of local housing discrimination. 74% of liberals believe that real estate agents are somewhat or very likely to discriminate against blacks and Latinos compared to 46% of conservatives.

There are also racial and ethnic differences in the perceived seriousness of discrimination on Long Island. 54% of white see it as a somewhat or very serious problem compared to 84% of blacks and 69% of Latinos. Nonetheless, a plurality of all racial and ethnic groups are optimistic about the future. When asked to look ahead to ten years from now, 53% of whites, and 49% of both blacks and Latinos believe that life for blacks and Latinos will be better on Long Island.

**Figure 2: Perceived Seriousness of Racial Discrimination (Q45)**



## METHODOLOGY

The Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research conducted this survey by telephone between September 15 and November 15, 2008. A list-assisted method of random-digit-dialing (RDD) was used to obtain phone numbers in the sample. Within selected households, individuals 18 years and over were selected at random for participation. Up to 7 contact attempts were made at each household phone number. In order to assure a representative sample, all households and individuals who were initially unwilling to participate in the survey were contacted again, and an attempt was made to persuade them to participate.

A total of 813 interviews were conducted in the general population of Long Island, with 401 completed interviews with residents of Nassau County and 412 completed interviews with residents of Suffolk County. In addition, two separate oversamples were drawn, and interviews were conducted with 202 African-American and 200 Hispanic residents of Long Island.

The results for Nassau and Suffolk Counties were tabulated both separately and jointly. The young adult oversamples of Long Island residents were included in all comparisons of responses by age.

Margin of error for the Long Island sample is +/- 3.4%.

The results were weighted on gender, age, educational attainment, Hispanic/Latino origin and race/ethnicity, based on the 2007 U.S. Census American Community Survey county level data. Weighting was done using an iterative process that has been developed to estimate joint weights for any number of demographic variables for which population percentages are known only individually, not jointly.

**STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR SURVEY RESEARCH**

**Sept 15-Nov 15, 2008**

**Question Q36**

How likely do you think it is that some African-Americans or Latinos miss out on housing on Long Island because REAL ESTATE AGENTS will not show, sell, or rent them homes in good areas that they can afford?

	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
	<b>%</b>		
Very Likely	19	50	37
Somewhat likely	34	34	36
Somewhat unlikely	21	5	11
Very unlikely	15	8	8
Don't know	11	2	8
Refused	0	1	0

[Note: Due to rounding, the numbers may not add up to 100%]

*Q37 was asked only of African American and Latino Respondents*

**Question Q37**

Have you or a member of your immediate family ever missed out on housing on Long Island because a real estate agent would not show, sell, or rent you a home in a good area that you could afford?

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Yes	34	15
No	60	80
Don't know	5	5
Refused	1	0

**Question Q38**

How likely do you think it is that some African-Americans or Latinos miss out on housing on Long Island because white HOME OWNERS and LANDLORDS will not sell or rent them homes?

[IF NECESSARY: This means homes that they could afford to rent or buy.]

	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Very Likely	18	54	29
Somewhat likely	36	32	37
Somewhat unlikely	22	7	14
Very unlikely	14	5	13
Don't know	9	1	8
Refused	1	0	0

Q39-Q44 were asked only of African American and Latino Respondents

**Question Q39**

Have you or a member of your immediate family ever missed out on housing on Long Island because a white home owner would not sell or rent you a home that you could afford?

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Yes	31	12
No	65	86
Don't know	3	1
Refused	1	2

**Question Q40**

How often, if ever, have you felt out of place on Long Island while walking or driving in a local community because of your race or ethnic background?

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Most of the time	15	5
Some of the time	19	13
Occasionally	29	15
Almost never	36	65
Don't know	0	2

**Question Q41**

How often, if ever, have you felt out of place or unwelcome at a movie theater, sports venue, fast food outlet, or restaurant on Long Island because of your race or ethnic background?

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Most of the time	6	5
Some of the time	15	7
Occasionally	27	12
Almost never	52	74
Don't know	0	2

**Question Q42**

How often, if ever, have you felt out of place or unwelcome while shopping on Long Island because of your race or ethnic background?

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Most of the time	11	2
Some of the time	17	12
Occasionally	28	11
Almost never	43	73
Don't know	0	2

**Question Q43**

Have you ever been verbally or physically harassed by a neighbor on Long Island because of your race or ethnic background?

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Yes	16	16
No	84	82
Don't Know	0	2

**Question Q44**

Have you ever felt that you were stopped by the police on Long Island because of your race or ethnic background?

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Yes	42	19
No	57	79
Don't Know	1	2

**Question Q45**

How serious a problem do you think racial discrimination against African Americans and Latinos is on Long Island?

	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Very serious	10	40	30
Somewhat serious	44	44	39
Not too serious	29	10	18
Not at all serious	12	4	12
Don't know	5	1	2
Refused	1	0	0

**Question Q46**

Looking ahead ten years from now, do you think that life for blacks and Latinos on Long Island will be better, worse, or about the same as now?

	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
Better	53	49	49
Worse	5	13	17
About the same	34	32	30
Don't know	8	6	3