

Institutional Racism

A Closer Look: How Race and Class Contribute to
Inequalities on Long Island, Then and Now





Historical Factors

“Those empowered, either not being aware that this is an issue or being aware and not caring that this is an issue. And if they’re not affected then it doesn’t hit home and I think this speaks to the whole issue of power and privilege... and aren’t really aware of the complexities of the issues that create power and privilege.”

Sonia - White Professor



Overview of Research Questions

- Living and working on Long Island
- Experiences of equity and inequities
- Experience of segregation
- Key players
- Should wealthier communities help to uplift communities with limited resources
- Overcoming challenges/solutions





Participants

- Camilla – Latina High School Educator
- Bryan – White Historian and Professor
- Ruby – Black Director of Advocacy Agency
- Donna – Black Director of Advocacy Agency
- Alyssa – Mixed Race Education Organizer
- Tonia – Black Director
- Tara – White Organizer and Activist
- Amelia – White Organizer and Activist
- Isabella – Black Activist and Author
- Tiffany – Chinese Program Coordinator
- Alexa – Latina Educator and Organizer
- Michael – White Professor
- Sonia – White Professor
- Dee – Haitian Agency Director
- Ericka – White Director and Activist
- Deidre – White Director and Activist
- Dolores – Black Educator
- Ruth – White Organizer and Activist
- Rosalyn – Black Director and Activist
- Rosa – White Historian and Director

Recurring Themes Among Interviewees

- Historical racism
- Inequities in housing
- Segregation
- Governance
- Solutions





Racism Defined

- According to Beverly Tatum (2018), author of *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, racism is defined as a system of advantage based on race. A system which involves institutions and those institutional policies, practices, beliefs and actions of individual people.
- This is not a new issue.
- Exclusion was built in the foundation of Long Island.
- The research compiled from our study shows Long Island continues to have severe issues with institutional racism.



Slavery on Long Island

“We are trying to solve racism without ever acknowledging that slavery happened here. We can’t do that. It’s not going to work. We have to ingest the information about what actually happened here and not always make it something that happens somewhere else.”

Rosa - White Historian and Education Director

- 1620 to 1827
- Largest slave state in the North
- 1770 = 19,000 enslaved people
- African American people
- Accommodate people of influence
- Tom Gall and Jupiter Hammon

In 1790
In the Town of Oyster Bay Census records
16% were African-Americans,
381 enslaved people and 302 free people.

How did we get here?

“Levitt said, experience has shown that if I sell to non- white families, 90% of White people will not invest in the community and buy a home.”

Bryan- White Historian and Professor

- Planned communities
- Garden City
- Levittown
- Covenants
- FHA loans
- Blockbusting
- Substandard housing



25. THE TENANT AGREES NOT TO PERMIT THE PREMISES TO BE USED OR OCCUPIED BY ANY PERSON OTHER THAN MEMBERS OF THE CAUCASIAN RACE BUT THE EMPLOYMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF OTHER THAN CAUCASIAN DOMESTIC SERVANTS SHALL BE PERMITTED.

Dr. Van Wie: A Historian's View



Housing

“Buying a house was not a difficult time.”

Ericka, White Director and Activist

“ When we finally did buy a house, we bought a two family because it was so expensive. We wanted to have that rental income. So for a short period of time we lived in the entire house. And now we're back to renting half and living in half, because my kids are older now and they don't live at home. So I've always lived in nice towns, I thought they were nice towns. And a lot of the time I lived in the Oyster Bay in Oyster Bay Village.”

Rosa, White Historian and Director



Housing

“He was very swift about the way in which he showed me the homes and talked about it. He downed the ones that were on the border and I didn't know at the time because I didn't know that much about the community. I didn't know that there was another community, Garden City as compared to Hempstead.”

Isabella- Black Activist and Author

“When he called with his American, Long Island accent the property was still available. So, it happened about 3 or 4 times. When I called with my accent, we were denied to see the property.”

Camilla- Latina High School Educator



Segregation

"In the deed, it prohibited owners not only from buying, if you happen to be an African American who was a Tuskegee Airmen, or had served in the war, the second World War. They could not buy there, nor could an owner sell to somebody who was not Caucasian."

Ruth- White Organizer and Activist

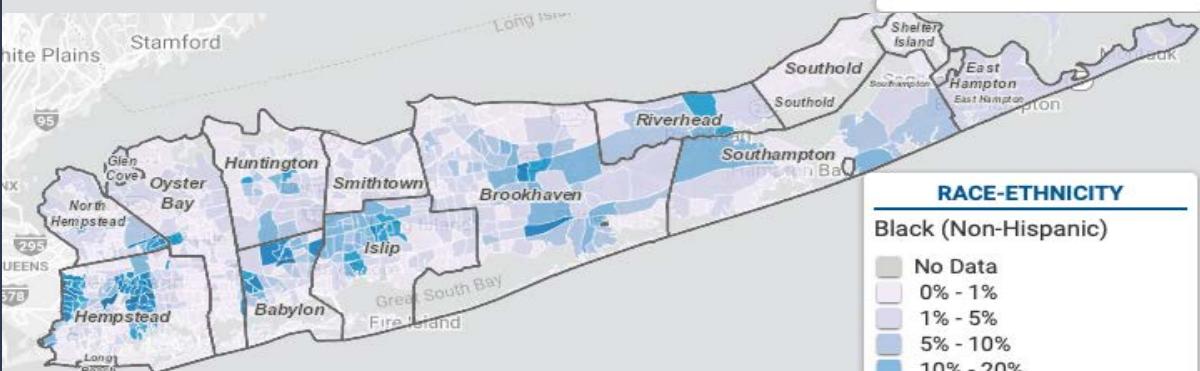
"I really did not think it was possible...I was familiar with it. But I never thought that segregation could be so blatant."

Camila- Latina High School Educator

Demographics: [Long Island Historic Census](#)



Population of Black residents on Long Island in 1970

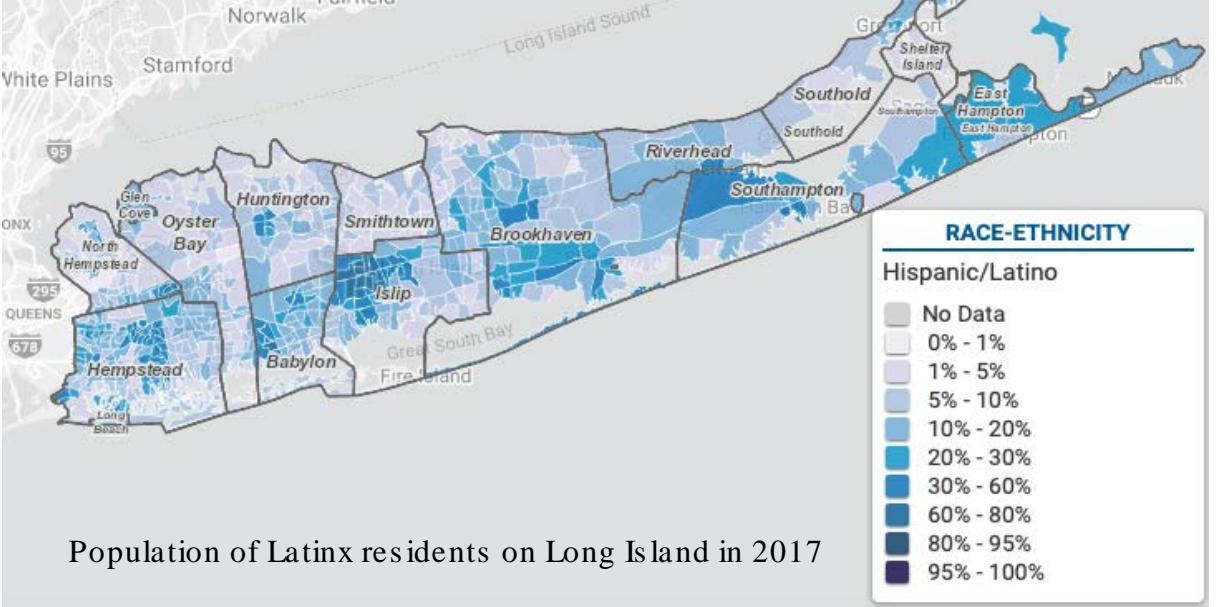


Population of Black residents on Long Island in 2017

Segregation

"I just know that in this very vicinity, the demographics have changed considerably. Certainly a lot more Latinos in the region."

Michael- White Professor



And for those Majority “Minority” districts that are Intensely Segregated, the number of students attending has nearly tripled.

LONG ISLAND STUDENTS ATTENDING INTENSELY SEGREGATED DISTRICTS
(90-100% non-white)

2004 - 5% 22,084 students



2016 - 15% 65,215 students



Today there are more than twice as many Intensely Segregated districts as there were 12 years ago.

NUMBER OF LONG ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT ARE INTENSELY SEGREGATED DISTRICTS
(90-100% non-white)

2004
5 districts
22,084
students



2016
11 districts
65,215
students



“Well, you know, we have described it [segregation] in terms of housing. We've also had it in the schools. Which is not surprising since schools are so dependent on being fed by the neighborhoods and the neighborhood schools have practically been totally segregated on Long Island.”

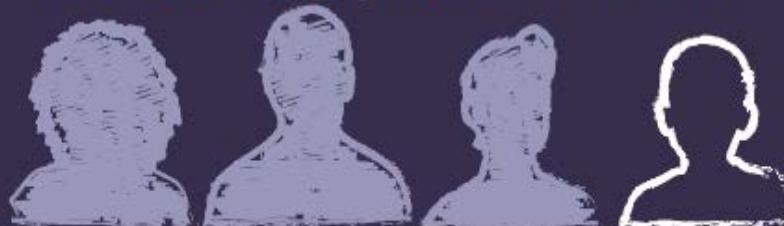
Ruth- White Organizer and Activist

Long Island Schools



The bottom line?

Shockingly, today, approximately
three out of every four black students



2016: 77% of all black students attending Majority "Minority" districts
(Up from 60% in 2004)

and **two out of every three Hispanic students**



2016: 65% of all Hispanic students attending Majority "Minority" districts
(Up from 49% in 2004)

attend a Majority "Minority" segregated school district.

“On a whole (nonprofit organization) has created policy priorities to address segregation. So we know it's an issue, we're not proud of the fact that we're still one of the top ten most segregated metropolitan areas in the country.”

Alyssa - Mixed Race Education
Organizer

Long Island Schools





Governance

“Well, nothing begins with government. It begins with will, individual and communal will..to want to solve the problems, you know, collectively. And, but everything, you know, it's not just government. From my perspective, obviously, it's the business community. It's, the leadership.”

Michael- White Professor

- Strong local governance
- The organizational culture
(This is MY town)
- Incorporated villages stifle growth
- Rising costs

“Because we are so segregated, the politician in Upper Brookville has no idea about what life is like in Roosevelt.”

Donna- Black Director of Advocacy Agency

Solutions for a More Equitable Future

"because it gives those the understanding, the less fortunate or disenfranchised communities, hope."

Tonia - Black Museum Director



Empathy (Or Just the Reality)

"Whether somebody's rich or somebody's poor, if you live in the North and I live in the South, it's still Long Island... We are connected. When there was Hurricane Sandy, it didn't choose certain houses!"

Dee - Haitian Agency Director

"Many young people don't have the opportunity to be taught and the privilege to be taught by someone different from them and that's a crime to me. What kind of ideas do you start forming and believing about groups that do not look like you? I don't live around them. Nobody comes to my community that looks like them unless they are washing dishes, being busboys, cooking, cleaning my house. So what do I start thinking about these groups."

Alexa - Latina Educator, President of Agency and Organizer

Advocacy & Involvement

“People have been told a story, which fits the narrative. I don’t know how you can go to church on Sunday and just be like those are completely separate compartmentalized things and I have no responsibility to synthesize any of that in my life.”

Tara - White Organizer and Activist

- Recognize inequities
- Creators (Key players)
- Organizers against injustice
- White advocacy (Allies)
- Education

“This committee is not getting anywhere and we need to do something. So I took a course and as a result of that, one of the things they ask at the end of the course was, what are you going to do with this information?”

Ericka - White Director of Agency and Activist



Now that we know how we got here...

- Organizing around actionable items
- Multifaceted action
- Trained organizers
- Cultural proficiency training
- Diversity courses

“I think we haven’t seen the most significant historical thing that’s going to impact race. To figure out a level playing field, to have that conversation and I think we found it because we’ve identified how much racial inequality costs the region...So it was 24 billion dollars.”

Ruby - Black Director of Advocacy Agency

“ We have a lot of those that care behind the scenes but they can’t do anything in public.”

Rosalyn - Black Director of Advocacy Agency and Activist

