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# **LONG ISLAND'S RACIAL DIVIDE: THE EDUCATION ATTAINMENT GAP**

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## I: PROLOGUE: LONG ISLAND'S RACIAL DIVIDE–THE EDUCATION ATTAINMENT GAP

To place the importance of educational attainment levels in perspective, to differing degrees, what was happening in segregated Long Island communities were that each was confronting the dual challenge of erosion in their social fabric and economic infrastructure. During the past 20 years, communities of color have had to confront the economic impact caused by the regional stagnation of the construction industry, the disappearance of Long Island's prime military and aerospace defense contractors, the closing of Pilgrim State Psychiatric Hospital, and the shrinking of the machine shop and technology sectors. Many Long Islanders who worked as engineers in regional defense prime contractors such as Sperry, Grumman, Fairchild-Republic, and Eaton lost their jobs and left Long Island never to return, taking with them their critical high economic multiplier jobs. Others, less skilled, lost employment at Pilgrim State.

As the ripple effect of these lost high economic multiplier jobs percolated through the Long Island economy, those who lost their jobs did not find it easy to get new ones, while others lacking the skills heavily influenced by the requirements of the global economy were unable to access the jobs being created in the regional economy. Many moved from their communities, while those who were untrained for jobs now required of the global economy were left economically behind.

The topic of this paper, "Long Island's Racial Divide - The Education Attainment Gap" is the first in a series of white papers to be issued by the Long Island Economic and Social Policy Institute at Dowling College on policy concerns critical to the future of Long Island.

Uneven educational attainment levels, and a growing higher education attainment gap between the races certainly meets the criteria of being critical to the long-term sustainability of the regional economy, especially since quantifiable differences exist between white communities and communities of color in how they adapted to the job skills and intellectual demands of the global economy.

Educational attainment is not a new concern for communities of color, especially when recollections of long-time North Amityville residents who came to Long Island after World War II note, "when the schools had more white children attending they were better." They observed that when local schools had become primarily black, the education had grown progressively worse. One reason they offered is that North Amityville, originally a larger multi-racial school district, had been broken into three districts, Copiague, Farmingdale and North Amityville, with blacks concentrated into North Amityville. After the district breakup educational achievement of the students in North Amityville began to deteriorate.<sup>1</sup>

Another influential factor is the racism prevalent in post World War II suburbia, such as Levittown's exclusion of Blacks from living there. Returning veterans and their families were relegated to communities where inequitable property tax systems would continuously underfund school systems responsible for educating and influencing generations of blue-collar and service sector workers. Yet despite these inequities, Long Islanders were able to sustain family budgets from blue-collar jobs found in the region's many machine shops that supported Long Island's long gone prime military contractors. Long Island's economy has restructured since then, making higher education more important now than ever before.

Why education attainment matters is that as Long Island has continued to evolve and grow, external global economic pressures have become more of an impact on Long Island's employment base, and the wages earned by the region's lower educated blue-collar workforce. These external pressures include: the contraction of the defense industry brought about by the end of the cold war which cost regional blue-collar jobs, and the technology that made commerce between nations more efficient created new jobs that required skills and educational attainment levels that were quite different from those required of earlier workforces.

As compared to the well paying tool and dye and blue-collar economy of the post World War II Era, today's global economy is fundamentally based on technology and computers, requiring a workforce possessing greater intellectual skills and capabilities. Employees having the skills to fill these higher wages jobs are desired by employers, especially if they possess higher levels of educational attainment. Despite this obvious workforce need, the primary obstacles of education and opportunity stubbornly remain for communities of color to overcome in order to access these higher paying jobs.

Additionally, the current trend of low unemployment levels and dismal job growth data suggests that these trends are unlikely to change. With the regional economy hanging in the balance, and headed to a point where it may not be able to sustain itself, a replacement for the aging baby boomers needs to be identified.

The potential workforce of young people educated on Long Island, seem not to be the answer since they leave the region in numbers that the Rauch Foundation's "Long Island Index" reports exceed the national average. Attracting new jobs is more difficult and costs more to generate than the costs of creating a new workforce from the untapped regional manpower that is currently not generating its maximum economic impact potential. That workforce is in communities that did not fare well economically, have lower levels of educational attainment that works counter to what is needed to access the higher paying jobs being created in the regional economy, and a continuing trend of lower household incomes. That workforce is in communities where higher education attainment is weakest, and these communities, which already exist on Long Island, are predominately communities of color.



<sup>1</sup> Cantor, Martin R. *Long Island, The Global Economy and Race: The Aging of America's First Suburb*. Page 4. Long Island Development Corp. Bethpage, New York. September 2006.

The following discussion reflects on how Long Island, America's first suburb fared, as seen by examining four communities, during the transformation of the economy between 1970 through 2000. This was a period of consuming reliance on computers and technology, which transformed global commerce to an economic system base on real time transaction, causing real changes and demands in the skills of Long Island's workforce.

These job skill factors, in particular, impacted Long Island's many machine shops, leading to workforce reductions that impacted much of the regions less skilled and less educated workers. At the same time, demand for more skilled and more educated workers was growing in Long Island's emerging high technology industries, as well as in the growing financial and banking sector resulting largely from the globalization of economic activity between 1970 and 1990. That trend continues.

All did not share in these new higher paying jobs, with the distribution more to higher educated Whites. One important reason is that as the following data indicates, many Long Island Black individuals had not achieved the same levels on educational attainment as Whites.

The fact is that for whatever the reason, in the new Global Economy, the result is that in Long Island communities of color, the income gap has widened between the haves and have-nots, and has usually fallen along racial and educational attainment lines. The following is an analysis of the higher education gap existing between the communities-of-color of North Amityville, Roosevelt and Huntington Station, their respective home county of Nassau or Suffolk, and with the predominantly White community of Port Washington.

## II: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND INCOME QUINTILES

Why educational attainment matters is that because of low levels of education, unskilled workers tend to be out of work or poorly paid, with others facing the threat of job displacement. For example, jobs created to develop new computer operated machine tools also eliminated jobs for those trained only for manual assembly-line work, and advances in word processing increased the demand for those who not only can type but who also can operate specialized software, often eliminating routine typists and secretaries.<sup>2</sup> This disappearance of work, caused by the structural changes of the global economy, subsequently impacting the distribution of jobs and the level of education required to obtain employment, resulted in the simultaneous occurrence of increasing joblessness and declining real wages for low-skilled workers. The decline of the mass production system, the decreasing availability of lower-skilled blue-collar jobs, and the growing importance of training and education in the higher-growth industries adversely affected the employment rates and earnings of low-skilled black workers.<sup>3</sup> The skills still taught in the public schools in the United States were principally designed to provide low-income native and immigrant students with the basic literacy and numeracy skills required for routine work in mass production factories, service industries, or farms. The interaction between technological and international competition demanded by the global economy has eroded the basic institutions of the mass production system, which has now become reliant on productivity improvements where human capital costs have been replaced by technology and the few educated professional, technical, and managerial workers necessary for production.<sup>4</sup> These relationships, in particular those of income and education, are presented in the following discussion.

The relationship between education and training and income distribution is complex, in as education's effect on income distribution is dependent not only on the way education is planned, developed and financed, but is also contingent upon such socioeconomic factors as employment probabilities, educational composition of the labor force, wage structure, and economic base. However, education does create a more skilled labor force which results in a shift from lower paid unskilled employment, to higher paid skilled employment. This shift produces higher labor incomes, a reduction in skill differentials, and an increase in the share of wages in total output. The increase in the number of more educated and skilled people will increase the ratio of such people in the total labor force while decreasing the ratio of less educated people.<sup>5</sup>

According to the World Bank, schooling, after controlling for the rate of economic growth, contributes significantly to a more equal income distribution in developing countries. As levels of schooling of the labor force increase, the income shares of both the bottom 40 percent and middle 40 percent of the population rise. Also important is that as the labor force gets more educated, income is redistributed from the top income quintile to the bottom 80 percent of the population.<sup>6</sup> Table 1 expresses the relationship between money income levels and educational attainment for families in the United States. Tables 1 and 2 suggest that there are higher paying jobs being created in the Long Island economy that require a higher degree of education, and by attaining that level of education a worker may be able to earn that higher paying job.

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<sup>2</sup>William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears, The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), p.152.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 151.

<sup>5</sup>Jandhyala B.G. Tilak, *Education and Its Relation to Economic Growth, Poverty, and Income Distribution* (Washington:The World Bank, May 1980), p. 29-32.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 77.



**Table 1: Relationship Between 1998 Family Income Level and Educational Attainment**  
**Income Levels (\$1,000's)**

Families	Total	Under \$10,000	\$10,000 to \$14,999	\$15,000 to \$24,999	\$25,000 to \$34,999	\$35,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$74,999	\$75,000 and Over
Total	71,551	4,593	3,799	8,811	9,052	11,995	15,427	17,874
With Education	68,309	3,846	3,427	8,088	8,562	11,539	15,111	17,736
% of Total	95%	84%	90%	92%	95%	96%	98%	99%
Below 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7%	17%	20%	14%	9%	5%	2%	1%
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade. No Diploma	9%	23%	19%	17%	12%	10%	5%	2%
High School Grad	32%	34%	35%	37%	41%	37%	34%	19%
Some College (1-3 Years)	18%	15%	15%	17%	19%	21%	21%	16%
Assoc. Degree	8%	4%	5%	6%	7%	9%	10%	9%
College Grad	17%	5%	4%	7%	9%	13%	20%	31%
Post Grad Deg.	9%	2%	2%	2%	3%	5%	8%	22%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of The United States:2000: Table 746. Money Income of Families-Distribution by Family Characteristics and Income level: 1998

Other research has shown that income is closely related to the level of education, as is the widening income gap. Robert Reich, in *The Works of Nations*, points out that a male with a high school diploma but no college education who is employed and earning \$27,733 in 1987, will find that fourteen years earlier in 1973, someone with the same education would have earned \$31,677, as expressed in 1987 dollars. Thus, with no more than a high school education, real earnings actually declined by 12 percent. That same male, if he had dropped out of high school and was working in 1987 would have earned \$16,094, as compared to the \$19,562 (expressed in 1987 dollars) he would have earned in 1973, a decline of 18 percent. For a graduate from a four-year college the earnings comparison would be different. The 1987 earnings of \$50,115 would be comparable to the \$49,531 (expressed in 1987 dollars) earned by a four-year college graduate in 1973. While a college degree does not guarantee that one will earn more, without it the chances are very slim that one will.<sup>7</sup>

The widening gap between rich and poor appears to be related to a growing divergence in how much money people receive for the work that they do, and that divergence appears to have something to do with education. As suggested by Table 1, if one graduated from college, earnings improved, if one did not, one tended to get poorer. Basic causes include, deindustrialization, technology replacing what manual labor once provided, and the global economy.<sup>8</sup> How these factors impacted various Long Island communities between 1970 and 2000 will be evaluated, beginning with North Amityville, and followed by Huntington Station, Roosevelt, and Port Washington.

**III: NORTH AMITYVILLE**

**Table 2: North Amityville Educational Attainment - over 25 years of age**

Suffolk County	1970	%	1990	%	Increase (Decrease)	%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	123,459	21%	47,922	6%	(75,537)	(61%)
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade No Diploma	115,312	20%	99,245	12%	(16,067)	(14%)
High Schl Graduate	212,082	36%	278,407	33%	66,325	31%
College 1-3 years	61,603	11%	222,606	26%	161,003	261%
College Grad +	69,959	12%	195,333	23%	125,374	179%
Total	582,415	100%	843,513	100%	261,098	45%

Source: 1970 U.S. Census Table P-2, 1990 U.S. Census Tables 152 and 17.

North Amityville	1970	%	1990	%	Increase (Decrease)	%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	2,067	34%	839	10%	(1,228)	(59%)
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade No Diploma	1,591	26%	1,702	20%	111	7%
High Schl Graduate	1,650	27%	2,912	34%	1,262	76%
College 1-3 years	493	8%	2,182	26%	1,689	343%
College Grad +	346	5%	826	10%	480	139%
Total	6,147	100%	8,461	100%	2,314	38.0%

Source: 1970 U.S. Census Table P-2, 1990 U.S. Census Tables 152 and 17.



<sup>7</sup> Robert B. Reich, *The Works of Nations* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), P. 205-206

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 207.

In 1970, an **educational attainment gap** was developing between Suffolk County and North Amityville. While 52 and 51 percent of the respective 1970 Suffolk County and North Amityville populations had completed some level of schooling, 59 percent of those over 25 years of age in Suffolk County had graduated high school or gone on to higher education as compared to 40 percent in North Amityville. By 1990, while North Amityville showed improvement, the education attainment gap continued to widen. Those over 25 years of age having attained some level of education had grown to 64 and 61 percent of the respective Suffolk County and North Amityville populations, with 82 percent of those in Suffolk County having graduated high school and gone on to higher education as compared to 70 percent in North Amityville. Furthermore, those in Suffolk County over 25 years of age attending school increased by 45 percent between 1970 and 1990, as compared to 38 percent in North Amityville.

The importance of this education attainment gap is that it occurred when changes in the global economy restructured the job market from jobs requiring a lesser degree of education and skills to jobs requiring a higher level. While there was comparable growth in college and post college education attainment, the 36 percent of North Amityville residents attaining higher education levels still lagged behind the 49 percent in greater Suffolk County, drawing the correlation that a greater proportion of the North Amityville population was employed in lower paying jobs, resulting in lower family income.

**IV: HUNTINGTON STATION**

**Table 3: Huntington Station Educational Attainment - over 25 years of age**

<b>Suffolk County</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Increase (Decrease)</b>	<b>%</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	50,547	5.9%	41,038	4.3%	(9,509)	(18.8%)
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade No Diploma	101,571	11.9%	89,136	9.5%	(12,435)	(12.2)
High Schl Graduate	281,557	32.9%	294,953	31.3%	13,396	4.8%
College 1-3 years	225,073	26.3%	258,410	27.4%	33,337	14.8%
College Grad +	196,295	23.0%	258,864	27.5%	62,569	31.9%
Total	855,043	100%	942,401	100%	87,358	10.2%
Source: 1990 U.S. Census Table DP-2, 2000 U.S. Census Table DP-2.						
<b>Huntington Station</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Increase (Decrease)</b>	<b>%</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	1,324	7.1%	1,579	8.0%	255	19.3%
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade. No Diploma	2,592	13.8%	2,401	12.1%	(191)	(7.4%)
High School Graduate	5,393	28.8%	5,563	28.1%	170	3.0%
College 1-3 years	4,767	25.4%	4,732	23.9%	(35)	(.7%)
College Grad +	4,679	24.9%	5,516	27.9%	837	17.9%
Total	18,755	100%	19,791	100%	1,036	5.5%
Source: 1990 U.S. Census Table DP-2, 2000 U.S. Census Table DP-2.						

By 1990, an educational attainment gap anomaly had developed between Suffolk County and Huntington Station. While 64.7 and 66.4 percent of the respective 1990 Suffolk County and Huntington Station populations had completed some level of schooling, 82.2 percent of those over 25 years of age in Suffolk County had graduated from high school or gone on to higher education as compared to 79.1 percent in Huntington Station. By 2000, while Huntington Station maintained previous educational attainment levels, the population education attainment gap had disappeared. Those who had attained some level of education were now 66.4 and 66.2 percent of the respective Suffolk County and Huntington Station populations. However, the higher education attainment gap for those over 25 years of age had now widened, with 86.2 percent of those in Suffolk County having graduated from high school and gone on to higher education as compared to 79.9 percent in Huntington Station. One explanation for the widening of the gap was that those in Suffolk County over 25 years of age attaining some level of education increased by 10.2 percent between 1990 and 2000, nearly twice the 5.5 percent growth rate in Huntington Station.

As evident in the communities of North Amityville and Roosevelt, a higher education attainment gap emerged as changes in the global economy restructured Long Island’s job market from jobs requiring a lesser degree of education and skills to jobs requiring a higher level. By 2000, growth in college and post college education attainment for Suffolk County had increased more than 2.7 times that of Huntington Station. A further indication of the higher education gap is that the 34.3 percent of Huntington Station residents in 2000 who attained higher education levels was slightly higher than the 33.4 percent in 1990, and lagged slightly behind the 36.4 percent in greater Suffolk County, which grew from 31.9 percent in 1990.



**V: ROOSEVELT**

**Table 4: Roosevelt Educational Attainment - over 25 years of age**

<b>Nassau County</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Increase (Decrease)</b>	<b>%</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	52,599	6.0%	47,776	5.2%	(4,823)	(9.2%)
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade No Diploma	86,546	9.8%	72,962	8.0%	(13,584)	(15.7%)
High Schl Graduate	266,264	30.2%	243,454	26.8%	(22,810)	(8.6%)
College 1-3 years	211,557	24.0%	223,180	24.6%	11,623	5.5%
College Grad +	264,071	30.0%	321,321	35.4%	57,250	21.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>881,037</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>908,693</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>27,656</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
Source: 1990 U.S. Census Table DP-2, 2000 U.S. Census Table DP-2.						

  

<b>Roosevelt</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Increase (Decrease)</b>	<b>%</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	736	8.2%	1,194	12.6%	458	62.2%
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade No Diploma	1,772	19.9%	1,593	16.8%	(179)	(10.1%)
High Schl Graduate	2,824	31.7%	2,914	30.8%	90	3.2%
College 1-3 years	2,443	27.4%	2,413	25.5%	(30)	(1.2%)
College Grad +	1,147	12.8%	1,357	14.3%	210	18.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,922</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9,471</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>6.2%</b>
Source: 1990 U.S. Census Table DP-2, 2000 U.S. Census Table DP-2.						

By 1990, an educational attainment gap had developed between Nassau County and Roosevelt. While 68.4 and 59.4 percent of the respective 1990 Nassau County and Roosevelt populations had completed some level of schooling, 84.2 percent of those over 25 years of age in Nassau County had graduated high school or gone on to higher education as compared to 71.9 percent in Roosevelt. By 2000, while Roosevelt maintained educational attainment levels, the education attainment gap had grown by 3.9 percent. Those over 25 years of age having attained some level of education had grown to 68.1 and 59.7 percent of the respective Nassau County and Roosevelt populations, with 86.8 percent of those in Nassau County having graduated high school and gone on to higher education as compared to 70.6 percent in Roosevelt. While the educational attainment gap had widened, those in Nassau County over 25 years of age attending school increased by 3.1 percent between 1990 and 2000, lagging behind the 6.2 percent growth in Roosevelt.

One observation is that the Roosevelt workforce had difficulty accessing better paying jobs requiring a lesser degree of education and skills because those jobs had disappeared and were now replaced by jobs demanded by the global economy that now required a higher education attainment level. While there was comparable growth in college and post college education attainment, the 23.8 percent of Roosevelt residents attaining higher education levels still lagged behind the 40.8 percent in greater Nassau County, drawing the correlation that a greater proportion of the Roosevelt population was employed in lower paying jobs, resulting in lower family income.

**VI: PORT WASHINGTON**

**Table 5: Port Washington Educational Attainment - over 25 years of age**

<b>Nassau County</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Increase (Decrease)</b>	<b>%</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	52,599	6.0%	47,776	5.2%	(4,823)	(9.2%)
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade No Diploma	86,546	9.8%	72,962	8.0%	(13,584)	(15.7%)
High Schl Graduate	266,264	30.2%	243,454	26.8%	(22,810)	(8.6%)
College 1-3 years	211,557	24.0%	223,180	24.6%	11,623	5.5%
College Grad +	264,071	30.0%	321,321	35.4%	57,250	21.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>881,037</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>908,693</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>27,656</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
Source: 1990 U.S. Census Table DP-2, 2000 U.S. Census Table DP-2.						

  

<b>Port Washington</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Increase (Decrease)</b>	<b>%</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	1,145	5.8%	974	4.8%	(171)	(14.9%)
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade No Diploma	1,387	7.0%	947	4.7%	(440)	(31.7%)
High Schl Graduate	4,366	21.9%	3,753	18.6%	(613)	(14.0%)
College 1-3 years	3,216	16.2%	3,761	18.7%	545	16.9%
College Grad +	9,780	49.1%	10,727	53.2%	947	9.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,894</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20,162</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
(b) Infoshare.org. 1990 U. S. Census Table: Educational Attainment25+ yrs; 2000 U.S. Census Table: Educational Attainment for Persons 25+ Yrs by Sex.						



By 1990, a 3 percent educational attainment gap had developed between Port Washington and Nassau County. While 68.4 and 70.4 percent of the respective 1990 Nassau County and Port Washington populations had completed some level of schooling, 84.2 percent of those over 25 years of age in Nassau County had graduated high school or gone on to higher education as compared to 87.2 percent in Port Washington. By 2000, those over 25 years of age having attained some level of education remained basically unchanged at 68.1 and 70.6 percent of the respective Nassau County and Port Washington populations. By 2000, Port Washington's higher education attainment gap had grown to 3.7 percent, with 86.8 percent of those in Nassau County graduating high school and going on to higher education, as compared to 90.5 percent in Port Washington. More revealing is the increase in the Port Washington higher educational attainment gap. By 2000 those in Port Washington attaining college were 71.9 percent of total educational attainment, increasing from 65.3 percent in 1990. In contrast, those in Nassau County over 25 years of age attaining college increased from 54.0 percent in 1990 to 60 percent by 2000. The gap between Port Washington and Nassau County had grown by 5 percent from 11.3 percent in 1990 to 11.9 percent by 2000. As to the higher education attainment gap there was comparable growth in college and post college educational attainment between Port Washington and Nassau County. The 50.7 percent of Port Washington residents attaining higher education levels by 2000 exceeded the 40.8 percent of the Nassau County population, drawing the correlation that a greater proportion of the Port Washington population was employed in higher paying jobs, resulting in greater family. Census data confirms this fact.<sup>9</sup>

**VII:COMMUNITY COMPARISON:HIGHER EDUCATION ATTAINMENT GAP**

While there was clear evidence of a higher education attainment gap between each of the reviewed communities of color and their surrounding counties, the following analysis explores the relationships between 1990 and 2000 of each community with each other.

Each community shows growth in higher education attainment yet the percentage gap between the communities of color and their surrounding county continued to widen. Conversely, the higher education levels in predominantly white Port Washington not only exceed that of Roosevelt and Huntington Station, but also surrounding Nassau County.

**Table 6: 1990 Educational Attainment Percentages - over 25 years of age**

Attainment Level	Port Washington	Roosevelt	Huntington Station
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	5.8%	8.2%	7.1%
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade. No Diploma	7.0%	19.9%	13.8%
High School Graduate	21.9%	31.7%	28.8%
College 1-3 years	16.2%	27.4%	25.4%
College Grad +	49.1%	12.8%	24.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: (a) 1990 U.S. Census Table DP-2, 2000 U.S. Census Table DP-2. (b) Infoshare.org. 1990 U. S. Census Table: Educational Attainment25+ yrs; 2000 U.S. Census Table: Educational Attainment for Persons 25+ Yrs by Sex.

Table 6 indicates that in 1990 the highest percentage of the over 25-year-old population that had completed some college, graduated college and/or received advanced degrees was in Port Washington 65.3%, which contrasted sharply with the both Huntington Station's 50.3% and Roosevelt's 40.2%. Furthermore, registered high school graduates, not college graduates, exhibited the largest percentage increases in educational attainment of Roosevelt with 31.7% and Huntington Station with 28.8%. Additionally, both communities have significantly higher percentages that haven't received a high school diploma than Port Washington.

In Table 7, continuing the pattern from 1990, these characteristics indicate a developing trend in communities of color of an under educated population without the requisite skills required by locally created jobs generated by the global economy. By 2000, the educational attainment gap between Port Washington other the communities of color continued to grow. With over 53 % of those over 25 years of age achieving a college education including advanced degrees, Port Washington has continued its trend of a higher percentage of its population graduating from college.

**Table 7: 2000 Educational Attainment Percentages - over 25 years of age**

Attainment Level	Port Washington	Roosevelt	Huntington Station
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	4.8%	12.6%	8.0%
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade no diploma	4.7%	16.8%	12.1%
High School Graduate	18.6%	30.8%	28.1%
College 1-3 years	18.7%	25.5%	23.9%
College Grad +	53.2%	14.3%	27.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: (a) 1990 U.S. Census Table DP-2, 2000 U.S. Census Table DP-2. (b) Infoshare.org. 1990 U. S. Census Table: Educational Attainment25+ yrs; 2000 U.S. Census Table: Educational Attainment for Persons 25+ Yrs by Sex.



<sup>9</sup> Cantor, Martin R. *Long Island, The Global Economy and Race: The Aging of America's First Suburb*. Long Island Development Corp. Bethpage, New York. September 2006.

The Roosevelt community did not fare as well as Port Washington. In 2000, as with 1990, the lowest percentage of the population of the three communities completing a college education is Roosevelt with 14.3%. This is outdistanced by the largest portion of its population (30.8%) receiving a high school diploma as the highest level of educational attainment. In 2000 Roosevelt had the largest educational attainment gap between Huntington Station and Port Washington.

Table 8 examines the percentage change of the three communities between 1990 and 2000. Although representing the lowest percentage of its over 25 year old population completing higher education, Roosevelt shows a dramatic percentage increase of 18.3% in those completing college and advanced degrees. However, while Roosevelt's percentage of higher educational attainment growth was the highest, the 62.2% of its population not making it to 9th grade or above was also the largest of the communities reviewed. Roosevelt has become an education attainment community of extremes.

Huntington Station does not fare much better than Roosevelt. Although, the percentage changes are less extreme, there is a significant 17.9% increase in its over 25 population completing college/advanced degrees, while at the same time 19.3% of the same population did not achieve beyond an 8th grade education.

**Table 8: Changing Educational Attainment Percnt-over 25 years of age (1990-2000)**

<b>Attainment Level</b>	<b>Port Washington</b>	<b>Roosevelt</b>	<b>Huntington Station</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	(14.9%)	62.2%	19.3%
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade. No diploma	(31.7%)	(10.1%)	(7.4%)
High School Graduate	(14.0%)	3.2%	3.0%
College 1-3 years	16.9%	(1.2%)	(.7%)
College Grad +	9.7%	18.3%	17.9%
Total	1.4%	6.2%	5.5%

Source: (a) 1990 U.S. Census Table DP-2, 2000 U.S. Census Table DP-2. (b) Infoshare.org. 1990 U. S. Census Table: Educational Attainment25+ yrs; 2000 U.S. Census Table: Educational Attainment for Persons 25+ Yrs by Sex.

Port Washington, although having the highest percentage of its over 25 years of age population completing college/advanced degrees, between 1990 and 2000 it also reported the lowest aggregate percent increase in education attainment. However, Port Washington showed a steady increase in highly educated people over 25 years of age as well as a decrease in under-educated people.

Port Washington contrasts sharply with Roosevelt and Huntington Station, which although showing large percentage increases in those completing college and above, still show significant percentage increases in those not moving beyond 8th grade.

**VIII: LONG ISLAND'S RACIAL DIVIDE: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

From 1990 to 2000, as shown in Table 9, the White population on Long Island has shown a marginal decrease in overall education attainment for those over 25 years of age. Of the .1% decrease of 835 individuals, the largest percentage of educational attainment growth was with those reaching college and beyond with a 17.1% increase or 90,914 people. Increases were also noted in those completing some college, with approximately 9,891 people representing a 3.5 percent increase from 1990 to 2000 criteria.

However, between 1990 and 2000, there was a significant 24.0 percentage decrease in those completing between 9th and 12th grade without a diploma, and a 7.3% decrease in those graduating high school. As demonstrated by Table 9, the largest result was the 30.7% decrease of whites completing 8th grade or less. What makes this important is where is the future workforce going to come, especially if there hasn't been a significant increase in the white population over 25 years old. Of those that are over 25 years of age, shifts in educational attainment have occurred, where whites have taken advantage of higher education opportunities, allowing them to fill the higher paying jobs being created in the regional economy.

Table 9 also illustrates a more positive picture of Long Island's Black population over 25 years of age, where there has been a 21.2% increase between 1990 and 2000 of the education attainment levels. More significant is that the largest increase of 53.5% was in those completing college and/or advanced degrees. Also, similar to the White population, the largest decrease for Blacks was in those not reaching beyond an 8th grade education.



**Table 9: White Educational Attainment on Long Island 1990-2000**

<b>WHITE</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Increase (Decrease)</b>	<b>%</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	85,883	5.5%	59,486	3.8%	(26,397)	(30.7%)
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade No Diploma	160,918	10.3%	122,273	7.8%	(38,645)	(24.0%)
High Schl Graduate	502,364	32.1%	465,766	29.8%	(36,598)	(7.3%)
College 1-3 years	283,136	18.1%	293,027	18.8%	9,891	3.5%
College Grad +	532,131	34.0%	623,045	39.8%	90,914	17.1%
Total	1,564,432	100%	1,563,597	100%	(835)	(.1%)

Source: (a) 1990 U.S. Census Table SF-3, 2000 U.S. Census Table DP-2. (b) 2000 U.S. Census Table SF-3, 2000 U.S. Census Table DP-2. Table: SEX BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR THE POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER (WHITE ALONE) - Universe: White alone population 25 years and over

<b>BLACK</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Increase (Decrease)</b>	<b>%</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade or less	9,526	8.6%	7,266	5.4%	(2,260)	(23.7%)
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade. No Diploma	20,192	18.1%	20,321	15.1%	129	.6%
High School Graduate	33,691	30.3%	39,499	29.3%	5,808	17.2%
College 1-3 years	22,705	20.4%	29,161	21.6%	6,456	28.4%
College Grad +	25,154	22.6%	38,616	28.6%	13,462	53.5%
Total	111,268	100%	134,863	100%	23,595	21.2%

Source: (a) 1990 U.S. Census Table SF-3, 2000 U.S. Census Table DP-2. (b) 2000 U.S. Census Table SF-3, 2000 U.S. Census Table DP-2. Table: SEX BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR THE POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER (Black/African American ALONE) - Universe: White alone population 25 years and over

**VIII: CONCLUSION**

What is clear is that there are distinct differences in education attainment levels between the communities of color of North Amityville, Roosevelt, and Huntington Station, the white population of Port Washington, and each one's respective county. There where noticeable higher education attainment gaps, and even more noticeable was that as each community went from Black to predominantly White Port Washington, that gap totally disappeared, and was replaced by a gap where Port Washington did better than Nassau County.

Why the higher education attainment gap matters is that the higher educational attainment level that a person achieves can be directly related to an individual's ability to gain the higher paying jobs being created by the Long Island economy. This is important when a potential source of economic activity is necessary to replace the retiring baby boomers if the Long Island economy is to be sustained. The untapped potential fill this need are in the region's communities of color. The presented analysis suggests that potential for tapping that resource and closing the higher educational attainment gap lies in the 17.2% increase of those in the Black population over 25 years who have graduated high school and the 28.4% who have completed some college. The impacts of all these factors on the communities evaluated in this paper are presented in Table 10.

**Table 10: Summary of Conclusions****NORTH AMITYVILLE AND SUFFOLK COUNTY-1970 TO 1990:**

17% White in 1990.

Gap In Higher Education Attainment:

- ◆ Suffolk County -vs- North Amityville in 1970 23% to 13%, a Gap of 10%: by 1990 Gap expanded by a third to 13% (49% to 36%).
- ◆ slower growth in college enrollment, greater enrollment in elementary and high school, and slower growth in post secondary education attainment.
- ◆ decreases in entrepreneurs, private sector employment, and in the higher paying professional, craft, construction jobs; and increases in lower-paying service and sales jobs.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



## HUNTINGTON STATION AND SUFFOLK COUNTY: 1990 TO 2000

71.5% White in 1990.

Gap in Higher Education Attainment:

- ◆ Suffolk County -vs- Huntington Station in 1990 49.3% to 50.3%, a Gap of -1%: by 2000 the Gap expanded to 3.1% (54.9% to 51.8)
- ◆ greater negative growth in college enrollments than Suffolk County, equivalent enrollment growth in elementary and high school, and significantly slower growth in post-secondary education attainment.
- ◆ relative consistency regarding educational attainment, yet approximately 20% of its population has less than a high school diploma.
- ◆ a significant decrease in entrepreneurs, marginal increase in private sector employees, with comparable distribution of higher paying jobs, and similar increases in lower paying service, clerical and sales jobs.<sup>11</sup>

## ROOSEVELT AND NASSAU COUNTY: 1990 TO 2000

8% White in 1990.

Gap In Higher Education Attainment:

- ◆ Nassau County -vs- Roosevelt in 1990 54% to 40.2%, a Gap of 13.8%; by 2000 the Gap expanded to 20.2 (60% to 39.8%)
- ◆ slower growth in college enrollments, greater enrollment in elementary and high school, and slower growth in post-secondary education attainment.
- ◆ a 62.2% increase in those receiving less than a 9th grade education.
- ◆ a decrease in entrepreneurs, an increase in private sector employment, and a decrease to negligible growth in higher paying professional, craft, construction and machine operator jobs; and an increase in lower paying service, clerical and sales job.<sup>12</sup>

## PORT WASHINGTON AND NASSAU COUNTY: 1990 AND 2000

83.8% White in 1990.

Gap in Higher Education Attainment:

- ◆ Nassau County -vs- Port Washington in 1990 54% to 65.3%, a Gap of -11.3%; by 2000 the negative Gap (equates to more college attainment in Port Washington than region) has grown to -11.9% (60% to 71.9%)
- ◆ -slower growth in college enrollments, greater enrollment in elementary and high school, comparable growth in post-secondary education attainment with greater higher education attainment gap.
- ◆ consistent increases in its higher educated population, increasing 9.7% from 1990 to 2000. In 2000 over 53% of Port Washington's 25 year old + population had received college and/or advanced degrees.
- ◆ a dramatic increase entrepreneurs, a significant decrease in private sector employment and increase in government employment. Similar decreases in higher paying professional, managerial and administrative jobs, with dramatic increases in lower paying service, clerical, and sales jobs.<sup>13</sup>



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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

**LONG ISLAND: WHITES BETWEEN 1990 AND 2000:**

whites over 25 years of age having a level of educational attainment basically remained the same, decreasing by .1%.

report a 17.1% in higher educated attainment, with the largest population component over 25 years of age having achieved higher education attainment.

**LONG ISLAND: BLACKS BETWEEN 1990 AND 2000:**

the Long Island Black population over 25 years of age having some level of education significantly increased by 21.2%.

higher education attainment increased by 53.5%, with decreases of 23.7% in the undereducated populations of less than 9th grade educational attainment.

-High School graduates and those with some college education increased by 17.2% and 28.4% respectively.

“Long Island’s Racial Divide-The Education Attainment Gap,” is the first in a series of white papers from the Long Island Economic and Social Policy Institute at Dowling College that will foster debate of the critical issues confronting the region’s future.

We have defined an important and growing weakness in Long Islanders’ ability to financially sustain their households, made more complicated by rising costs and by the global economy, now heavily reliant upon a person’s level of educational attainment. What is also clear is that there is a higher education attainment racial divide in Long Island’s population, and if that divide continues, the greater Long Island economy may be unable to maintain the workforce necessary to sustain the regional economy as it grows and ages during the next twenty years.



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### **ABOUT MARTIN R. CANTOR, Director, Long Island Economic and Social Policy Institute at Dowling College**

Martin R. Cantor has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting from Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, and a Master of Arts Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from Hofstra University. He has served as Suffolk County (New York State's largest suburban county) Economic Development Commissioner ; Chief Economist, New York State Assembly Subcommittee for the Long Island Economy; Senior Fellow at the White Plains, New York based Institute for Socioeconomic Studies; a Suffolk County building trades labor/management arbitrator; a faculty member in the Brooklyn College Department of Economics; Executive Director of the Patchogue Village Business Improvement District; Revitalization Citizen Advisory Panel; and Director of Economic Development and Chief Economist for Sustainable Long Island and the Long Island Fund for Sustainable Development, providing financial, and technical assistance to Long Island's underserved communities, businesses and not-for-profit organizations; His work is included in the National Tax Rebate-A New America With Less Government, and has prepared downtown revitalization plans for Long Island and New York City neighborhoods featuring arts districts, economic restructuring, waterfront projects and community organizing. He was the architect of the Nassau County Comptroller's debt restructuring plan for resolving Nassau County's fiscal crisis; has been a Long Island Business Journal columnist; and has authored: federal, state and local legislation; economic impact analyses; socio-economic profiles of the New York City and Long Island economic, employment and educational bases; annual reports on the State of the Long Island Economy; and a convention center feasibility study.

He is a Certified Public Accountant in private practice; a consulting economist and economic development and planning consultant to counties, towns, villages, Industrial Development Agencies, and communities; the economic development advisor to the Suffolk County Executive; chairman of the Suffolk County Legislature Downtown Revitalization Citizen Advisory Panel; Chief Economist for the Long Island Development Corp.; and chairman of the Suffolk County Judicial Facilities Agency. He provides economic and business commentary on television and radio; is a columnist for the Long Island Business News, Long Island's largest business weekly; has appeared in the New York Times and Newsday, and some of his work has been syndicated nationally by Newsday, Bridge News and Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service. He is an Honorary Member of Delta Mu Delta - The National Honor Society in Business Administration and his work has been recognized by the National Association of Counties for innovative uses of Industrial Revenue Bonds, for international trade promotion initiatives, and down revitalization. He was invited by Dr. William Julius Wilson of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government to present his paper entitled Race Neutral Sustainable Economic Development, a jobs, skills and employment policy; and he is the author of *Long Island, The Global Economy and Race: The Aging of America's First Suburb*.

