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We Don't Feel Welcome Here: African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston

By

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Executive Summary

Racial discrimination is an ongoing reality in the lives of African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston. Although the region has experienced significant growth in racial and ethnic diversity over the past several decades, racial minority groups continue to struggle for full acceptance and equal opportunity. African Americans and Hispanics report persistent discrimination in the workplace, in seeking housing, and in their day-to-day encounters with other metro area residents. Large shares of African Americans and Hispanics say they feel unwelcome in marketplaces and residential communities throughout the region. Substantial shares believe that racial discrimination in Metro Boston is a serious problem.

These sentiments arise within a region whose majority population may believe that racial discrimination is no longer a serious issue. In the mid-1970s, the city of Boston erupted in racial violence over the desegregation of its public schools. Since those turbulent times, thousands of racial and ethnic minorities have settled in the city and region. Growing diversity and the passage of time may have led to a sense among some area residents that the city of Boston's racial divisiveness is a relic of the past, and that the area's wells of racial intolerance have subsided.

Although racial strife is nowhere near the levels of the 1970s, racial intolerance and racial inequality have not fully subsided. Instead, they have taken new forms and have moved across the region. As greater numbers of racial minorities have come to reside in the region's central and satellite cities, Whites have continued their decades-long migration to the farthest reaches of the outer suburbs. Metro Boston today is thus a deeply segregated region, and such segregation has had the effect of isolating many racial minorities in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and severe social and economic distress.¹

Within this context of significant racial inequality, perceptions of racial discrimination among the region's most disadvantaged groups—African Americans and Hispanics—remain very high. This finding emerges from a poll of over 400 African American and Hispanic adults in Metro Boston. Our major findings:

- Eighty percent of African Americans and half of Hispanics in our poll say that racial discrimination in Metro Boston is a somewhat or very serious problem.
- Extremely high shares of minorities—especially African Americans—believe that fear of resident antipathy prevents members of their group from moving into communities around the region. Almost 70 percent of Hispanics and an overwhelming 85 percent of African Americans believe that members of their group miss out on good housing because they fear they will not be welcome in a particular community.

¹ This report is the tenth in a series issued by the Metro Boston Equity Initiative, which has examined the extent and ramifications of racial segregation and inequality in housing, education, and employment throughout the region. For more information on this initiative and for access to the other reports in this series, see <http://www.civilrightsproject.harvard.edu/metroboston/synopsis.php>.

- Racial discrimination in ordinary, day-to-day encounters is a pervasive feature in the lives of African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston. Over half of African Americans and almost four out of ten Hispanics say they are treated with less respect, offered worse service, called names or insulted, or confronted with another form of day-to-day discrimination at least a few times a month.
- Among respondents in our poll who have attended a professional sports venue or museum in Metro Boston, a third and a fifth (respectively) say they have at least occasionally felt out of place or unwelcome in each setting because of their race. Even more troubling, close to half of African Americans and a third of Hispanics say they have felt unwelcome in Metro Boston shopping areas and restaurants.
- Minorities of higher socioeconomic status are equally as likely, and in some cases more likely, than their lower status counterparts to say they have experienced different forms of racial discrimination in Metro Boston.
- Women in our sample are more likely to perceive that major forms of discrimination are a problem in the region, while men are more likely to report personal experiences with some forms of day-to-day discrimination.
- African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston report personal discrimination in employment more often than in housing. One out of four total respondents say they have been denied a job because of their race or ethnicity in the past ten years, and one in five say they have experienced racial discrimination during their last year at work. In contrast, one out of eight say they had a personal experience of discrimination the last time they looked for housing in Metro Boston.
- Two out of three total respondents believe that discrimination by White owners and realtors continues to hinder African Americans' and Hispanics' access to good housing, although lower shares believe they have experienced housing discrimination themselves.
- More than three out of four respondents believe that the lack of affordable housing in the region hinders African Americans' and Hispanics' access to good housing. Respondents thus cite affordability more often than discrimination as a barrier to good housing in Metro Boston.
- A vast majority—over eighty percent—of African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston believe that more should be done to integrate the region's schools. Support for this position is especially strong among respondents who are young, male, never married, and with lower incomes.

High levels of perceived discrimination among minority groups have serious implications for the region. Perceptions of discrimination and sentiments of fear—even if inaccurate—are real forces that affect where people choose to live and conduct their daily lives. Perceptions of racial discrimination can affect the decisions of talented minorities within the region to stay or to leave; perceptions can also travel and affect the decisions of minorities outside the region to settle in the area. Such decisions have important social and economic consequences for a state that is currently losing population.

Research evidence also suggests that perceptions of discrimination lead to higher levels of psychological stress and negative emotional outcomes. Beliefs among minority groups that racial discrimination is a persistent phenomenon can therefore add to the public health costs of the region. In addition, social trust and positive civic interactions among majority and minority communities are likely to diminish when large numbers of minorities believe that they cannot gain full social acceptance or access to a full range of economic opportunities, even if they work hard and achieve middle class status. Inter-group tensions only worsen when Whites do not recognize the serious social and economic barriers that minority groups face, and when they do little to remedy the broader social conditions and specific behaviors that underlie minorities' claims of unequal treatment.

To lower perceptions of discrimination within the region, community leaders and individual citizens must make concerted efforts to understand the actions and behaviors within the majority community that fuel minorities' perceptions, and to end ongoing patterns of discrimination. They must take significant steps to end the racial isolation that underlies interracial ignorance, misunderstanding, and fear. Policy measures the region should take include rigorous enforcement of anti-discrimination laws in employment and housing; increased recruitment of racial minorities in all segments of the workforce; and renewed commitment to increasing affordable housing and minority access to housing across the entire region. Educators and civic leaders should maintain efforts within public schools to help young people of diverse backgrounds come together to learn to understand each other and function harmoniously within a shared community. There should be sustained efforts through community and faith-based organizations to promote inter-group conversation and interracial acceptance.

Finally, researchers and journalists have an ongoing responsibility to report on the deep racial inequalities that exist in the region, and to help the public understand and discuss the broader social contexts that contribute to these inequalities. As the region continues to grow more racially and ethnically diverse, and as the White population continues to shrink, the future social, economic, and civic health of the region will depend on the ability of all the people in Metro Boston to live and work alongside each other with interracial understanding and trust. Within a rapidly changing Metro Boston population, ignorance of persistent minority disadvantage across the region and passive acceptance of its multiple social causes may only heighten racial polarization.

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Introduction

When aides began rounding up the parents for their trip home, Rachel was more than ready to leave. But she wasn't prepared for the roar which went up from the crowd on the Monument grounds. If anything, the crowd had grown during the past two hours, and this time, as the parents boarded the bus, they were met by jeers and catcalls. "That's right," people were shouting. "Go home, niggers! Keep going all the way to Africa!" Rachel hunched down in her seat, away from the bus windows, which she feared might shatter at any moment. Outside, she could hear the police radio crackling with urgent communications, then the whine of the sirens as patrol cars joined the procession. All the way down the hill and across the bridge, she thought to herself: My God, what kind of hell am I sending my children into?

—J. Anthony Lukas, *Common Ground*

The city of Boston exploded in the fall of 1974, as the city began to implement a federal court-ordered busing plan to desegregate its public schools. Through media and written accounts of the unfolding events, the nation witnessed Boston police marching in riot gear to patrol local high schools, White mothers praying and kneeling in protest within city streets, and angry crowds hurling rocks and racial epithets at school buses carrying Black children to and from White city neighborhoods. The nation's "Cradle of Liberty" from the times of the American Revolution, and a historic center for the White abolitionist movement before the Civil War, Boston revealed to the world a violent, racist underside in its attempts to desegregate its schools. Images from that period helped to tar Boston as a racist place — a reputation that the city continues to battle to this day.

Since the incendiary events of the mid-1970s, Boston and the surrounding metro region¹ have undergone dramatic population changes. In the 1970s, minorities were seven percent of the region's population, and Blacks comprised two-thirds of the region's minorities.² Consequently, dynamics between Blacks and the majority White population were a main focus for those concerned with race relations in the region at that time. Today, Boston and the surrounding metro area are multiethnic. The 2000 U.S. Census reveals that Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians comprise 5 percent, 7 percent, and 4 percent (respectively) of the region's population, and racial and ethnic minorities now constitute a majority of the population in the city of Boston.

Over the past decades, the region has also experienced significant transformations in its spatial structure and economy. In the middle of the last century, Boston was more

¹ In this paper we define Metro Boston as the Massachusetts portion of the Boston New England County Metropolitan Area (NECMA), as outlined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. This area consists of Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk, and Worcester counties.

² Barry Bluestone and Mary Huff Stevenson, *The Boston Renaissance: Race, Space, and Economic Change in an American Metropolis* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000), 10. Note: Bluestone and Stevenson define Metro Boston as the Greater Boston Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA)—a slightly smaller area than the one used in this study.

truly the demographic “hub” of the region, with a population of over 801,000 in 1950. As population and business activity moved out of the center city into surrounding suburbs and beyond, the city of Boston’s population fell below 563,000 in 1980 and began to rise after that point primarily from the growth in foreign immigration.³ In recent years, the region has been dubbed a “polynuclear” metropolitan area,⁴ with the central city containing only 11 percent of the region’s total population, and with the emergence of numerous satellite cities (such as Lowell, Lynn, and Brockton) as large urban centers with significant minority populations. These changes have accompanied major shifts in the region’s economy, as manufacturing jobs declined and as knowledge-based industries boomed in the 1980s and 1990s.⁵

Greater racial and ethnic diversity, a more decentralized metropolitan structure, and economic growth have not brought, however, greater levels of racial integration within the region. Indeed, segregation between Blacks and Whites in Metro Boston remains at strikingly high levels, while segregation between Whites and Hispanics as well as between Whites and Asians has grown. The city of Boston, numerous satellite cities, and several inner suburbs have become homes to increasing numbers of the region’s racial and ethnic minority groups, while White families continue a trend that began in the 1950s of moving ever further into outlying suburbs. These trends have isolated growing numbers of minorities — especially Blacks and Hispanics — in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, marked by high-poverty schools, high unemployment rates, and little job growth.

Such transformations raise questions about the state of race relations in Metro Boston today. This study focuses on the region’s most disadvantaged racial and ethnic minority groups, African Americans and Hispanics, and poses the following questions: 1) *Do these groups perceive significant racial discrimination in Boston and the surrounding area?* and 2) *Considering Boston’s tumultuous history and the high levels of segregation that currently exist across the region’s schools, how much support do these groups give the goal of racial integration in public schools?*

Answers to these questions can help assess the current racial climate in Metro Boston, offering a gauge for how well people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds are getting along and partaking in the region’s resources as the region continues to grow more diverse. Perceptions of discrimination help indicate the extent to which minority groups attribute social disadvantage to larger social forces rather than to individuals’ traits; attitudes toward integration shed light on the levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction that minority groups may feel over their segregated circumstances. Both perceptions of discrimination and attitudes toward integration therefore provide a barometer for the potential support that minority groups may offer to broader policy efforts that aim to combat existing racial divisions.

³ Bluestone, 15-16.

⁴ Guy Stuart, *Boston at the Crossroads* (Cambridge: Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston, Harvard University, 2004), 2, Working Paper 12.

⁵ Bluestone, 12-15.

Background

Metro Boston's racial context through the 1970s

Historically, Metro Boston has been a White region. Immigration from Europe before the middle of the 20th century brought to the area many White ethnics — predominantly of English, Irish, and Italian descent. As late as the 1970s, minority groups constituted only 7 percent of the regional population, and they were concentrated in the city of Boston.⁶ Ethnic and religious tensions within the White population (especially between Irish Catholic immigrants and the more established Protestant Anglos) dominated inter-group relations in Metro Boston through the middle of the 20th century. Inter-group tensions were a persistent feature of the social landscape as new settlers continued to arrive, and as preexisting groups greeted newcomers with hostility and discriminatory treatment.⁷

Although Blacks have been present in the Boston area since the 1600s, their numbers began to increase significantly after WWII as industrial labor market needs in the North and declining social conditions in the South spurred a vast migration of southern rural Blacks to northern cities (see Appendix 1).⁸ By the 1970s, Blacks formed two-thirds of the region's minority population and 16 percent of the total population in Boston.⁹ Their growing share in the center city was augmented by the steady migration of Whites from Boston to outlying suburbs — a movement that started soon after WWII and grew particularly strong in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁰

These demographic shifts led to highly segregated living patterns between Blacks and Whites in Metro Boston. In 1970, Blacks were so spatially concentrated that over 80 percent of the Black population would have had to move to another neighborhood in order to achieve a proportionate distribution of Blacks across the area.¹¹ Such high levels of residential segregation, White flight into the city's parochial school system, and intentional practices on the part of the Boston Public School Committee¹² led to extreme levels of segregation among schoolchildren in Boston's public schools. Segregation placed Black students in school environments of concentrated poverty — marked by overcrowded classrooms, deteriorated facilities, inadequate learning materials, and

⁶ Ibid., 8, 10.

⁷ Ibid., 19, 23.

⁸ Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 28-29.

⁹ Bluestone, 10, 26. Note that the U.S. Census figures cited in Appendix 1 for 1970 do not include separate estimates for the Hispanic population in Metro Boston or the city of Boston.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Massey, 64.

¹² Examples of such practices included deliberate overcrowding of some schools and underutilization of others; unstructured attendance zones and transfer policies; and busing to maintain segregation. See Robert A. Dentler and Marvin B. Scott, *Schools on Trial: An Inside Account of the Boston Desegregation Case* (Cambridge: Abt Books, 1981), 3-13; and J. Anthony Lukas, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 236.

diminished teaching and learning.¹³ The unequal resources and opportunities of segregated schooling led Blacks and sympathetic Whites to demand change. Their demands culminated in the 1974 federal court ruling that found the city of Boston guilty of unconstitutional school segregation, which in turn led to a busing plan to desegregate Boston's public schools. This remedy progressed relatively smoothly for most of the schools affected by the plan, but also gave rise to violent confrontations in South Boston and a few other Boston neighborhoods.¹⁴ These confrontations attracted national attention and exposed deep antagonisms between the city's working class White and Black citizens.

Metro Boston's racial context from the 1970s to the present

Since the 1970s, the region's population has continued to diversify. Changes in national immigration law in 1965 have led to new waves of immigration into the US and Metro Boston. Over the past several decades, thousands of new immigrants (primarily non-White) have come to the area from places such as Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa. The region's minority share doubled from 7 percent in 1970 to over 14 percent in 1990, and in the city of Boston the minority share went from 18 percent to over 40 percent over the same time period.¹⁵ Now in 2005, racial and ethnic minorities comprise a majority of the population in the city of Boston. Whereas Blacks were the largest minority group in the area only a few decades ago, Hispanics now outnumber Blacks, and Hispanic and Asian population growth rates are the highest in the region.¹⁶ These changes have turned Metro Boston from a White community with a small minority population comprised mostly of Blacks into a much more multiethnic metropolis.

As the metro area has become more racially and ethnically diverse, the region has also become more decentralized. In the 1970s, the city of Boston contained 13 percent of the region's population; today it contains 11 percent. This shift has occurred as Whites have continued to move out from the center to ever further reaches of the suburban fringe, and as increasing numbers of new immigrants have settled in satellite cities and inner suburbs outside of Boston. Cities such as Lawrence and Lynn are now large urban centers with significant shares of Hispanic immigrants; Asians have moved in large numbers into Lowell and suburbs such as Quincy and Malden; Blacks have migrated south of Boston into Milton, Randolph, and Brockton.¹⁷ Due to these recent settlement patterns, the geography of Metro Boston has evolved from a more centralized area to a place that is more multi-centric.

¹³ Lukas, 100-103, 124; Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1991), 1-6.

¹⁴ Lukas, 241.

¹⁵ Bluestone, 10, 26.

¹⁶ Nancy McArdle, *Race, Place, and Opportunity: Racial Change and Segregation in the Boston Metropolitan Area 1990-2000* (Cambridge, The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, 2003), 39.

¹⁷ Guy Stuart, *Segregation in the Boston Metropolitan Area at the End of the 20th Century* (Cambridge: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, 2000), 7-10; McArdle, *Race, Place, and Opportunity*, 4.

Minority growth and spatial deconcentration have not led, however, to greater racial mixing between Whites and other racial or ethnic groups. Instead, the Metro Boston population remains deeply segregated. Although residential segregation between Whites and Blacks has dropped modestly from its extreme levels in the 1970s, about two-thirds of Blacks in the metro area today would have to move to another neighborhood in order to achieve full integration with Whites.¹⁸ Segregation levels in the metro area between Whites and Hispanics as well as Whites and Asians are lower than for Blacks, but these levels have grown slightly over the past decade. Over 60 percent of Hispanics in the region today would have to move to another neighborhood to achieve integration with Whites, and the share for Asians is almost half (46 percent).¹⁹

Residential segregation has led to severe inequality in the living conditions among the region's multiple racial and ethnic groups. Many minorities — especially Blacks and Hispanics — are now isolated in neighborhoods of severe distress and concentrated poverty. Within Metro Boston, Blacks are five and Hispanics are six times more likely than Whites to live in neighborhoods of poverty.²⁰ Because of racial segregation, higher income Blacks and Hispanics are even more likely than *lower* income Whites to live in poverty neighborhoods.²¹ Other indicators of social distress, such as high shares of female-headed households, large high school drop-out rates, and high levels of men detached from the workforce often accompany areas with high poverty levels. Half of all poor Blacks and Hispanics in Metro Boston live in severely distressed neighborhoods, compared to only 16 percent of poor Whites.²² Racial segregation underlies highly unequal neighborhood environments among minorities and Whites in the region today.

In addition, residential segregation has contributed to extreme levels of racial and ethnic isolation in the metro's public schools. In fact, racial segregation within the region's public school population is more severe than within the Metro Boston population as a whole.²³ Segregated minority schools with majority Black and Hispanic populations are disproportionately high poverty schools: 97 percent of schools that are over 90 percent Black or Hispanic in Metro Boston have high levels of poverty, compared to only 1 percent of schools that are 90 percent or more White.²⁴ Metro Boston schools with extreme levels of minority segregation offer their students fewer educational opportunities, since such schools are highly correlated not only with high poverty levels, but also lower teacher quality, lower standardized test scores, and higher drop-out rates.²⁵

¹⁸ Massey, 222; McArdle, *Race, Place, and Opportunity*, 23.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Nancy McArdle, *Beyond Poverty: Race and Concentrated-Poverty Neighborhoods in Metro Boston* (Cambridge: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, 2003), Exhibit 5.

²¹ Ibid., 7.

²² Ibid. Severely distressed neighborhoods are defined as those that contain at least three out of the four listed conditions: high levels of poverty; high shares of female-headed households with children and no spouse present; high shares of high school drop-outs; and high shares of men detached from the labor force.

²³ John Logan, Deirdre Oakley, and Jacob Stowell, *Segregation in Neighborhoods and Schools: Impacts on Minority Children in the Boston Region* (Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research, University at Albany, 2003), Table 2.

²⁴ Chungmei Lee, *Racial Segregation and Educational Outcomes in Metropolitan Boston* (Cambridge: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, 2004), 21.

²⁵ Ibid., 21-28.

Significant disparities between Whites and other Boston area racial groups exists in other domains as well. As Whites have moved further away from the region's central core, so too have jobs — splintering the labor market into different racial segments, and raising significant barriers to minorities who cannot access employment growth located far from areas of greatest minority concentration.²⁶ Over the past decade, a substantial majority (71 percent) of the region's net job growth occurred in Metro Boston's outer suburbs — areas that are over 90 percent White. Only 4 percent of the region's net job growth occurred in satellite cities such as Lawrence and Brockton; these and other satellite cities are home to large and growing shares of Blacks and Hispanics.²⁷ Within the now majority-minority city of Boston, corporate boardrooms remain over 95 percent White, and Blacks comprise only 8 percent of professional workers and 6 percent of managers and executives.²⁸ In fact, Boston ranked last within a group of nine major US cities in growth of professionals of color from 1999 to 2002.²⁹

The racial climate that condones and perpetuates segregation in housing, schools, and the workforce may also support the absence of diversity in some of the metro area's most visible public settings. Researchers have noted that “it has been well recognized in Boston that racial segregation extends beyond the community and neighborhood. The region may have a fascination with sports, music, and fine art, but one is apt to encounter a sea of white faces at a Red Sox or Celtics game, a Boston Symphony event, or an opening at the Museum of Fine Arts.”³⁰ Media reports describe visible racial segregation within Boston area nightclubs, entertainment venues, and dining establishments; many people of color feel they must make large efforts or travel great distances to find social settings that are welcoming and that cater to their interests.³¹ These patterns have led to observations that “blacks and whites in Boston still live, work, and socialize in their own separate worlds.”³² With high and growing levels of residential segregation between Whites and Hispanics as well as Whites and Asians, social divides within the region are no longer simply a matter between Blacks and Whites.

Patterns of discrimination in Metro Boston

The factors which cause segregation and other divisions among racial groups within the region are complex, and they originate from earlier policies promoting discrimination, institutional arrangements and practices that perpetuate preexisting racial inequalities, as well as ongoing bias in the attitudes and actions of individuals.³³ High

²⁶ Nancy McArdle, *Racial Equity and Opportunity in Metro Boston Job Markets* (Cambridge: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, 2004), 3.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The Partnership, *Race and Leadership: Benchmarking Boston's Progress in the Workplace* (Boston: The Partnership, Inc., 2004), 5; Doug Most, “Divided We Stand,” *Boston Magazine*, November 2002 (on www.bostonmagazine.com website).

²⁹ The Partnership, 5.

³⁰ Bluestone, 7.

³¹ Most, “Divided We Stand”; Alex P. Kellogg, “Beyond the city's limits for an ethnically diverse night out, Bostonians are leaving town,” *The Boston Globe*, 14 August 2004, C1.

³² Most, “Divided We Stand.”

³³ Examples of earlier policies promoting discrimination and segregation include restrictive real estate covenants enacted within White communities in the early decades of the 20th century that prohibited home

housing prices and greater affordability constraints among racial and ethnic minorities certainly contribute to separate residential locations among minorities and Whites. Affordability alone, however, cannot fully explain residential segregation in the region, for many minorities can afford housing in areas where they are currently underrepresented or absent.³⁴ Research on residential preferences among different groups also cannot fully explain current settlement patterns. While it is true that Whites and racial and ethnic minority groups express different preferences and levels of tolerance for the share of minorities in their own neighborhood, all groups express willingness to live in neighborhoods with people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds.³⁵ Existing literature also does not make clear whether minorities' preferences for areas with higher minority concentrations are expressions of a true desire to be with others of similar background, or whether such preferences instead reflect fears that they would not be welcome or would suffer as targets of discrimination in communities with larger numbers of Whites.

Fears of these sorts would not be unfounded, for recent research attests to the fact that racial discrimination continues to operate in Metro Boston. Within the metro area's mortgage lending market, Blacks and Hispanics are twice as likely as Whites to be denied a home-purchase loan, and the denial-rate disparity increases as incomes rise.³⁶ In the winter of 2003-2004, the Greater Boston Fair Housing Center conducted an audit study that sent 17 matched pairs of White/Black and White/Hispanic homeseekers into local realtor offices to look for housing in the region. The Center found evidence of differential treatment between the White and minority testers in all 17 cases. Black and Hispanic testers were often steered away from particular communities; they were more often required to be pre-approved for mortgages (even though they had stronger financial qualifications than the White testers); and they were less likely to receive informal advice or appointments for home visits with realtors. Most minority testers were not even aware of the differential treatment they received: discrimination only became apparent when Whites and minorities reported their different experiences to the study's primary

sales to Blacks, as well as guidelines adopted by the Federal Housing Administration in the 1930s and 1940s that discouraged mortgage lending to racially mixed neighborhoods (Massey, 42-55). Institutional arrangements and practices that perpetuate racial inequality include school district boundaries and student assignment policies that do not cross cities and towns that have become racially segregated. Individual biases that can lead to racially unequal outcomes include White managers and employers who will more frequently hire a White candidate over an equally qualified minority candidate not because they carry explicitly racist outlooks, but because they feel they have more in common with the White candidate. These latter examples illustrate how racial inequality and minority disadvantage can persist even in the absence of racial hostility and deliberate racial discrimination.

³⁴ David J. Harris and Nancy McArdle, *More than Money: The Spatial Mismatch between Where Homeowners of Color in Metro Boston Can Afford to Live and Where They Actually Reside* (Cambridge: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, 2003), 3.

³⁵ Bluestone, 195-198; Tara D. Jackson, *The Imprint of Preferences and Racial Attitudes in the 1990s: A Window into Contemporary Residential Segregation Patterns in the Greater Boston Area* (Cambridge: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, 2004).

³⁶ Jim Campen, *The Color of Money in Greater Boston: Patterns of Mortgage Lending and Residential Segregation at the Beginning of the New Century* (Cambridge: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, 2004).

investigators.³⁷ These housing audit findings highlight how subtle racial and ethnic discrimination can be within the region, and how difficult it may be to detect its occurrence.

Within the labor market, numerous studies have also documented significant levels of employment discrimination in the Boston area. Surveys of employers conducted by the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality in the early 1990s found that substantial numbers of employers in Metro Boston and other US metropolitan areas express negative views of Black (and to some extent, Hispanic) workers; these views frequently take the form of stereotypes and affect employers' hiring decisions.³⁸ A nation-wide study of employment data in 1999 found Blacks in Massachusetts face a 40 percent chance of intentional job discrimination when seeking any kind of job opportunity (including obtaining a job, a promotion, or pay or training benefits); Hispanics face a 38 percent chance, and Asians face a 36 percent chance.³⁹ A more recent study conducted in Boston and Chicago finds that simply having a more African-American sounding name leads to fewer offers for job interviews, controlling for job skills and other background attributes.⁴⁰

Recent events reported in the media further highlight persistent prejudice and discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities within the region. Stories of racial profiling and discriminatory treatment by police have been common both across the country as well as in the Boston area.⁴¹ Other recent reports expose particularly negative and entrenched biases toward Blacks — even those who are among the middle class. In 2000, a White landlord in the suburb of Belmont refused to rent a housing unit to a visiting professor at MIT and his family because the professor is Black.⁴² In the fall of 2003, a Black elementary school child who lives in Wellesley was put on a bus to Boston after school because a White teacher assumed that the child did not live in the primarily White town.⁴³ The incident was followed by a local White radio announcer who

³⁷ Findings presented at “Toward Real Residential Choice in Metro Boston,” a housing conference sponsored by The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, the Greater Boston Civil Rights Coalition, and The Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), January 2004.

³⁸ Phillip Moss and Chris Tilly, “What do Boston area employers seek in their workers?” in Bluestone, chap. 10.

³⁹ Alfred W. Blumrosen and Ruth G. Blumrosen, *Massachusetts 1999: Intentional Job Discrimination in Metropolitan Areas* (New Jersey: Rutgers University, 1999), Part III, *The Reality of Intentional Job Discrimination in Metropolitan America - 1999*.

⁴⁰ Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan, *Are Emily and Greg more Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination* (National Bureau of Economic Research, July 2003), Working Paper w9873.

⁴¹ See, for example, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 2; Suzanne Smalley, “Trust in Boston Police Declined, Survey Says,” *The Boston Globe*, 19 January 2005; Keiko Morris, “Federal Class Action Case: \$200M lawsuit filed against Suffolk cops,” *Newsday*, 15 December 2004, A48.

⁴² Scott S. Greenberger, “Landlord agrees to pay for rejecting Black family; Belmont owner agrees to \$50,000 settlement,” *The Boston Globe*, 23 August 2003, B1.

⁴³ Anand Vaishnav, “Wellesley boy put on METCO bus by mistake,” *The Boston Globe*, 5 September 2003, A1.

compared an escaped gorilla from Boston's Franklin Park Zoo to a Black schoolchild who participates in the region's inter-district busing program (METCO).⁴⁴

Certainly, acts of racism and discrimination now take place in a region that appears to have come a great distance from the overt racial strife that grabbed national headlines in the 1970s. Racial and ethnic hate crimes in Boston and the state have dropped every year since 2001,⁴⁵ and a recent survey shows that Boston ranks high among cities across the nation in tolerance of immigrant rights and diversity of friendships.⁴⁶ Poll data from within Boston and around the country suggest that people may view the city of Boston as less divided than in the past.⁴⁷

Signs of progress, however, cannot obscure the racial discrimination that persists and the inter-group problems that remain. Compared to 40 other major cities across the country, Boston ranks 39th — second to last — in levels of social trust.⁴⁸ Measures of social trust are particularly low for Blacks and Hispanics, and for those with lower incomes and levels of education.⁴⁹ Boston's racist reputation also persists among middle-class minorities: over 90 percent of professionals of color in Boston believe that professionals of color outside the region view the area negatively and are hesitant to relocate and work in the region.⁵⁰ Furthermore, a large gap has been found between Whites and people of color in their perceptions of racial discrimination within the region. While at least half of Hispanics and Blacks in Metro Boston have claimed there is "a lot" of job discrimination against their own group, less than a third of Whites have said such discrimination exists at a significant level.⁵¹ Sharply different perceptions of the prevalence of discrimination between Whites and non-White groups — a phenomenon that has been documented nationwide and across time⁵² — exacerbate inter-group tensions and deepen divisions.⁵³ Clearly, serious challenges remain in combating racial discrimination and in improving the inter-racial climate of Metro Boston.

⁴⁴ Sasha Talcott, "WEEI host off air for remark called racist, results in suspension," *The Boston Globe*, 3 October 2003, B1.

⁴⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Hate Crime Statistics, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003*.

⁴⁶ The Boston Foundation, *Social Capital in Boston: Findings from the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey*, Summary Report, 2001.

⁴⁷ Most, "Divided We Stand."

⁴⁸ The Boston Foundation, 14. The report notes that Boston was tied with four other cities in the 39th position because low shares of Boston respondents said they trusted others "a lot."

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ The Partnership, 6.

⁵¹ James R. Kluegel and Lawrence D. Bobo, "Perceived group discrimination and policy attitudes: the sources and consequences of the race and gender gaps," in *Urban Inequality: Evidence from Four Cities*, ed. Alice O'Connor, Chris Tilly, and Lawrence D. Bobo (New York: Russell Sage, 2001), 167.

⁵² Howard Schuman et al., *Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997); Lee Sigelman and Susan Welch, *Black Americans' Views of Racial Inequality* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 57; Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health national poll on race, May 2001.

⁵³ Bluestone, 154.

Racial discrimination and its significance

How much and what types of racial or ethnic discrimination do minorities currently experience in Metro Boston? To tackle this question, we must begin with a clear understanding of what discrimination is and how it can be measured. Racial or ethnic discrimination occurs when an individual or group experiences different treatment from others because of the individual's or group's racial or ethnic background. Notwithstanding claims of "reverse discrimination" among Whites in society, most researchers discuss racial and ethnic discrimination as a phenomenon that is perpetrated by actors from more powerful groups in society upon individuals from less powerful groups. Specifically, racial discrimination has been defined as "actions or practices carried out by members of dominant racial or ethnic groups that have a differential and negative impact on members of subordinate racial and ethnic groups."⁵⁴ Discrimination can range in character, frequency, setting, and social domain; it therefore comprises multiple dimensions and modes of manifestation.

First, racial discrimination in the US has been declared illegal in a variety of arenas. Back in 1871, state laws or actions from public officials that deliberately exclude or treat people differently because of their racial or ethnic background were ruled unconstitutional.⁵⁵ In 1954, the US Supreme Court barred state-sanctioned segregation in schooling.⁵⁶ Ten years later, legal remedies were established against discrimination in public accommodations (such as hotels and restaurants), among recipients of federal funds, and among private employers.⁵⁷ The Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed voting tests and granted the federal government greater power to monitor discrimination in local voting practices around the country; the 1968 Fair Housing Act prohibited discrimination in the sale or rental of almost all housing in the US.⁵⁸

Although landmark federal court decisions, laws, and regulations have established rules prohibiting discriminatory treatment in a variety of domains, procedures for enforcement and the types of legal remedies available have varied widely. In addition, acts of racial discrimination have become less blatant over time, and thus more difficult to prosecute. These factors have allowed racial discrimination to continue in many arenas without strong legal recourse. For example, the 1968 Fair Housing Act has been plagued with such weak enforcement that many forms of housing discrimination have faced little deterrent over the past several decades.⁵⁹ An increasingly conservative US Supreme Court and federal court system have made it difficult for public school districts to maintain effective desegregation remedies, by declaring many districts unitary and

⁵⁴ Joe R. Feagin, "The Continuing Significance of Race: Antiblack Discrimination in Public Places," *American Sociological Review*, 56 (Feb. 1991): 101-102.

⁵⁵ 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (1871).

⁵⁶ *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 374 U.S. 483 (1954).

⁵⁷ Titles II, VI, and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

⁵⁸ Information on these acts is cited from http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/intro/intro_b.htm, <http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/FHLaws/index.cfm>, and Massey, 195.

⁵⁹ Massey, 195-200.

thereby allowing resegregation to occur in many districts.⁶⁰ In a major decision in 2001, the Supreme Court also eliminated the ability of private plaintiffs to sue in court over policies or practices that have discriminatory effects.⁶¹ Weak enforcement of existing laws, recent court decisions, and the difficulty of meeting the standards of proof required to win many types of discrimination cases have led to an environment where racial discrimination can occur today in many arenas, despite legally enshrined declarations against its practice.⁶²

Second, some forms of discrimination (such as denial of a job promotion or rejection of a home mortgage application) may be considered “major” insofar as they occur on a relatively infrequent or occasional basis and have significant consequences for a person’s socioeconomic outcomes.⁶³ In contrast, other forms of “chronic” discrimination may occur with more regular or day-to-day frequency, and may revolve around attacks on a person’s character that do not have immediate effects on a person’s social or economic advancement.⁶⁴ Examples of the latter type of discrimination may include receiving poor service at a restaurant, receiving verbal insults, or racially motivated encounters with police. While day-to-day forms of discrimination may not have immediate impacts on a person’s life chances within society, they may more fully capture the experience of discrimination that racial minorities face, and they can have significant negative impacts on the mental health and longer-term well-being of its victims.⁶⁵

Third, discriminatory actions can range in degree, nature, and severity of interpersonal contact. At one end of the scale are behaviors that demonstrate avoidance of racial or ethnic minorities (such as Whites who clutch their belongings and move away from a Black or Hispanic youth on a public bus). In the middle are racial or ethnic rejection (such as a White taxi driver that refuses to stop for an African American man on the street). Further along the scale are verbal assaults against minorities; and at the far end of the scale may be acts of physical harassment by police officers or outright physical attacks by hostile Whites.⁶⁶ While more overt and physically aggressive forms of discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities are now less tolerated in society, more subtle forms persist and may help perpetuate inter-group misunderstanding and distrust.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Gary Orfield and Susan E. Eaton, *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 1-22.

⁶¹ *Alexander v. Sandoval*, 532 U.S. 275 (2001).

⁶² It should be noted that some states have laws against discrimination that are stronger than federal prohibitions.

⁶³ Ronald C. Kessler, Kristin D. Mickelson, David R. Williams, “The Prevalence, Distribution, and Mental Health Correlates of Perceived Discrimination in the United States,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 40 (Sep. 1999): 212.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 211-212.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*; Tyrone A. Forman, David R. Williams, James S. Jackson, “Race, Place, and Discrimination,” *Perspectives on Social Problems* 9 (1997): 231-261.

⁶⁶ Feagin, 102.

⁶⁷ John F. Dovidio et al., “Why Can't We Just Get Along? Interpersonal Biases and Interracial Distrust,” *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 8 (2002): 88-102; John F. Dovidio and Samuel L. Gaertner, “Aversive Racism and Selection Decisions: 1989 and 1999,” *Psychological Science* 11 (July 2000): 315-319; Lawrence D. Bobo, James R. Kluegel, Ryan A. Smith, “Laissez-Faire Racism: The

Fourth, discrimination can occur in a range of different settings, and the likelihood that discriminatory behavior will take place may depend on the public or private nature of the location. The probability that a racial or ethnic minority individual will experience discrimination may rise as exposure to strangers and as impersonal interactions with others increase. Private spaces occupied by friends or known acquaintances may offer greater shelter to minorities from acts of discrimination, while public streets may provide minorities the least protection.⁶⁸

Last, discrimination can only be measured and recorded when it is reported by victims or observers. The level and prevalence of discrimination often varies, however, by who is doing the reporting. As noted earlier, a large gap exists between Whites and minorities in their perceptions of racial discrimination within society. From 1985 to 1996, between 65 and 85 percent of all Blacks across the country agreed that discrimination is a primary cause of Black economic disadvantage in the US. Through the mid-1990s, the share of Whites who agreed with this claim never rose higher than 41 percent.⁶⁹ A nation-wide poll conducted in 2001 found that 86 percent of Blacks believe there is at least some discrimination in society against Blacks, while the share of Whites who agree is only 71 percent. Similarly, 78 percent of Hispanics believe there is at least some discrimination against Hispanics, while only 64 percent of Whites share this perception.⁷⁰ Although low shares of Whites deny outright the existence of discrimination against minorities, the largest shares believe that discrimination exists at only a moderate or minor level, and they do not share the perception held by many minorities that discrimination is a serious problem.⁷¹ Some scholars argue that beliefs about racial discrimination among Whites stem less from contact with racial minorities and understandings of their actual experiences, and more from abstract ideologies or White group interests. In contrast, minorities tend to develop their perceptions of discrimination levels through their own experiences.⁷²

Perceptions of racial discrimination have also been found to vary by gender, age, marital status, education, and income.⁷³ Trends by demographic subgroup, however, are complex: the relationship between perceived discrimination and people's background characteristics varies with different types of discrimination and depends on whether the victim of discrimination is the individual or the larger group.⁷⁴ Studies that distinguish between major and day-to-day forms of discrimination have found that reported exposure

Crystallization of a Kinder, Gentler, Antiblack Ideology," in *Racial Attitudes in the 1990s: Continuity and Change*, ed. Steven A. Tuch and Jack K. Martin (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997); Bonilla-Silva, 3.

⁶⁸ Feagin, 102.

⁶⁹ Schuman, 156-157, 258-259.

⁷⁰ Washington Post/Kaiser/Harvard School of Public Health Race Poll, April 2001.

⁷¹ Kluegel, 165-168.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 183-185. Some psychologists also argue that people harbor both explicit and implicit racial biases, and both types can lead to discriminatory treatment of racial minorities. Experimental evidence suggests that Whites who hold implicit or unconscious negative racial biases but more egalitarian explicit views may not perceive their actions as discriminatory, while Blacks may be more attentive to both forms of bias and may therefore more readily perceive behavior as discriminatory. See Dovidio, "Why can't we just get along," and Dovidio, "Aversive racism."

⁷³ Kluegel, 174-178; Schuman, 229-237; Sigelman, 71-79; Forman, 246-252; and Kessler, 218.

⁷⁴ Sigelman, 71-79; Forman, 246-252; Kessler, 218.

to major discrimination is often higher for men versus women, younger versus older people, never-married versus married people, and more educated versus less educated individuals. Similar differences across demographic subgroups have also been found for perceived levels of day-to-day discrimination, with the additional finding that reported day-to-day discrimination may decline as income rises.⁷⁵ Findings from other studies that have used more general measures of discrimination or have distinguished between group-targeted and personally-experienced forms of discrimination sometimes conflict with the ones noted above.⁷⁶

Perceived racial discrimination has economic, social, and political implications for society as a whole. For its victims, perceived racial discrimination can decrease economic opportunities and pose threats to individual physical and mental health.⁷⁷ For an area like Metro Boston, ongoing perceptions of racial and ethnic discrimination (as well as inter-group gaps in these perceptions) can heighten interracial tensions, diminishing people's abilities to live and work together to full potential in an increasingly multiethnic society. Reports of high levels of discrimination can also deter racial and ethnic minorities from moving into the region. At a time when the state has suffered a net loss in population,⁷⁸ Metro Boston may ill afford the negative signals that perceived discrimination sends to potential newcomers. Finally, perceptions of discrimination are linked to people's understandings of the sources of racial inequality.⁷⁹ Greater or lesser levels of perceived discrimination may indicate stronger or weaker support for governmental policies (such as busing or affirmative action) that try to address unequal outcomes among the region's racial and ethnic groups.

Attitudes toward integration

In theory, perceptions of ongoing discrimination in Metro Boston could affect people's desires for racial and ethnic integration. For example, frustration with unequal treatment in the 1980s led some local Black leaders to campaign for a separate Black political jurisdiction within the city of Boston.⁸⁰ Some Black political leaders and Black business owners in cities around the country have believed it to be in their own best interest to concentrate Black votes and to develop both Black entrepreneurship and

⁷⁵ Forman, 253.

⁷⁶ Kluegel, 174-178; Sigelman, 71-75.

⁷⁷ See, for example, David R. Williams and Ruth Williams-Morris, "Racism and Mental Health: the African American experience," *Ethnicity & Health*, 5 (2000): 243-246; Kessler, 225-226; Clare Cassidy et al., "Perceived Discrimination and Psychological Distress: The Role of Personal and Ethnic Self-Esteem," *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 51 (2004): 329-339; Rashaun K. Roberts, Naomi G. Swanson, Lawrence R. Murphy, "Discrimination and occupational mental health," *Journal of Mental Health*, 13 (April 2004): 129-142; and Gary G. Bennett et al., "Perceived Racism and Affective Responses to Ambiguous Interpersonal Interactions Among African American Men," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47 (March 2004): 963-976. Negative health incomes include higher levels of depression, anxiety, aggression, job burnout, and days absent from work.

⁷⁸ For US Census Bureau statistics on population change in Massachusetts 2003 – 2004, see <http://www.census.gov/popest/states/tables/NST-EST2004-05.pdf>. Also, Stephanie Ebbert, "Census shows Mass. at a loss; was only state to take population hit in '04," *The Boston Globe*, 26 December 2004, B1.

⁷⁹ Schuman, 275; Sigelman, 88-107.

⁸⁰ Bluestone, 46.

markets for Black businesses through Black segregation.⁸¹ Support for integration in schools nationwide, however, has consistently been close to unanimous among Blacks. Since the early 1970s, between 96 and 99 percent of Blacks around the country have agreed that Black and White students should attend the same schools.⁸² Support for the principle of school integration has also become almost unanimous among Whites. In 1942, only 32 percent of Whites agreed that Black and White children should attend the same schools; the share rose to 90 percent in the early 1980s and to 96 percent in 1995.⁸³

While support for school integration has been nearly universal for the past several decades, there has been much more division over the steps that should be taken to address persistent school segregation and other racial inequalities.⁸⁴ In the 1970s, mandatory student assignment (which often required student busing) was the primary strategy used to combat school segregation outside the South. Whites have almost always been overwhelmingly against busing, although their resistance has lessened over time. Only 13 percent of Whites in 1972 said they were in favor of busing; by 1996 the share had risen to 33 percent.⁸⁵ Support for busing among Blacks has always been much higher than among Whites, but Blacks too have displayed discomfort with this strategy. In the mid-1970s, 48 percent of Blacks nationwide were in favor of busing; the share rose to 63 percent in 1991 and then leveled off to 59 percent in 1996.⁸⁶ Families and students who have actually experienced desegregation policies have expressed more favorable attitudes toward busing and integrated schooling than within the broader population.⁸⁷

Since the 1980s, strategies other than mandatory student assignment with busing have been used to desegregate school systems. Desegregation plans using various forms of school choice (such as magnet schools) have become more popular ways to create racially diverse schools.⁸⁸ Although national polls have not probed the public for their attitudes toward more current desegregation approaches, polls have shown that large shares of the public have been in favor of allowing families to choose which public school in their community their children can attend.⁸⁹ Under the city of Boston's Controlled Choice plan in the 1990s, families more frequently based their school

⁸¹ Massey, 213.

⁸² Schuman, 240-241. In 1998, the Public Agenda Foundation issued a national study suggesting that Blacks were no longer interested in desegregation efforts and were more focused on educational improvement policies. This finding is misleading, however, because of the way the survey questions were posed. See Gary Orfield, *Schools More Separate: Consequences of a Decade of Resegregation* (Cambridge: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, 2001), 7, for discussion.

⁸³ Schuman, 104-105.

⁸⁴ Schuman, chap. 3; Gary Orfield, "Public Opinion and School Desegregation," *Teachers College Record* 96 (Summer 1995), 654-670.

⁸⁵ Schuman, 123-124.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 248-249. Questions on busing were no longer asked by the NORC or the Gallup organization after 1996.

⁸⁷ Orfield, 656-657.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 667.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

preferences on school quality rather than proximity, often leading to choices that required busing.⁹⁰

Because residential segregation in neighborhoods and regions around the country has been so entrenched, courts and voluntary desegregation plans throughout the nation have long recognized that strategies other than exclusive reliance on neighborhood schools are necessary to achieve school integration.⁹¹ Strongest opposition to busing among Whites and Blacks around the country occurred in the mid- and late-1970s, after busing had been mandated in a number of cities (which forced many students and parents to leave schools to which they had become attached), and before other desegregation methods had become more prevalent. The collision between the goal of school integration and its method of implementation in Boston led to an explosion of violence and racial animosity in the mid-1970s. The city and region have been battling the fallout from this collision ever since.

⁹⁰ Charles V. Willie, Ralph Edwards, and Michael J. Alves, *Student Diversity, Choice, and School Improvement* (Westport, CT: Bervin & Galvey, 2002), 12-13.

⁹¹ Gary Orfield, *Must We Bus? Segregated Schools and National Policy* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1978), 101-118; Willie, 14.

Study Questions

The early summer of 2004 marked the 30th anniversary of *Morgan v. Hennigan*, in which Judge W. Arthur Garrity ruled that the Boston Public School Committee had engaged in illegal segregation of the city's public schools. The foregoing discussions indicate how Boston and the surrounding region have become much more multi-racial and multi-ethnic over the past three decades; how racial segregation continues between Blacks and Whites and is growing for Hispanics and Asians; how discrimination may persist in multiple and often subtle forms throughout the region; and how support for the principle of school integration has frequently run up against opposition to its implementation. Blacks (especially those of African American heritage)⁹² suffer the greatest social and economic disadvantages in the region, followed by Hispanics. Considering the reputation that Boston carries for racism, and considering the ongoing battles against school desegregation efforts across the region,⁹³ how do the most disadvantaged racial minorities view the region's current racial climate? Specifically, this study asks:

- 1) How much discrimination do resident African Americans and Hispanics perceive against their own groups in the Metro Boston region?
- 2) What are these groups' attitudes toward greater racial integration within public schools?

Methods

To explore these questions, The Civil Rights Project (CRP) at Harvard University designed a short survey to investigate perceptions of discrimination and attitudes toward school integration among African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston. Under the direction of Lou DiNatale, the Center for State and Local Policy at the University of Massachusetts-Boston conducted the survey by telephone in October 2004. The Center generated the sample from a list of known African American and Hispanic households and their telephone numbers from zip code areas within Metro Boston.⁹⁴ The list was used to seed a random digit dialing program,⁹⁵ and telephone interviewers screened respondents with an initial question probing their racial and ethnic background.⁹⁶ To

⁹² Native-born Blacks of African American descent are more likely than immigrant Blacks to live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty in Metro Boston (see McArdle, *Beyond Poverty*, Appendix 3). Researchers have also found that employers frequently express preferences for immigrant over native Black workers in hiring decisions (see, for example, Waters, 1999).

⁹³ The city of Boston abandoned its race-conscious student assignment policy in 1999 due to a lawsuit and a federal appeals court decision ruling the policy as unconstitutional. The city of Lynn's voluntary desegregation program is currently being challenged in a federal appeals court case.

⁹⁴ As noted earlier, the definition of Metro Boston used in this study consists of Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk, and Worcester counties. See note 1.

⁹⁵ The random digit dialing program was based on Waksberg clustering methodology.

⁹⁶ The first question on the survey instrument asked: "Which of the following best describes most of your ancestors?" Respondents could answer one of the following: 1) African American; 2) Hispanic; 3) Asian American; 4) European; 5) Mixed Race; 6) Something else. Only those who answered "African American" or "Hispanic" were asked to continue with the poll.

maximize response rates, calls took place during weekday evenings and during the day on Saturdays.⁹⁷

The telephone survey comprised a total of 30 questions: 21 items focused on perceptions of discrimination in Metro Boston; 3 questions probed respondents on their attitudes toward school integration; and 6 questions collected information on respondents' background characteristics. To explore different dimensions of minorities' experiences with discrimination, we posed questions about personal encounters with major forms of discrimination in employment and housing, as well as questions about access to housing within their racial or ethnic group as a whole. In addition, we asked about personal experiences with day-to-day forms of discrimination, and probed levels of comfort within specific cultural or public settings within the region. Most of the questions we posed in the poll were adapted or taken directly from prior surveys.⁹⁸

The final survey sample included 202 African American and 201 Hispanic adults age 18 and over.⁹⁹ In comparison to the Black population in Metro Boston as a whole, African Americans in our sample were more likely to live in the region's central core, slightly older, more highly educated, and from higher income categories (Appendix 2). The Hispanics in our sample were more often never married and with at least some college education compared to Hispanic adults across the region. The differences in background characteristics of our sample groups compared to the broader African American and Hispanic populations in the region did not have a significant impact on our survey results.

Results

As noted above, we posed to respondents questions about personal or group experiences with discrimination in employment, housing, day-to-day life, and in specific cultural or public settings within Metro Boston. We also asked about respondents' views of school integration. Findings for each of these topics are presented in turn.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Calls were conducted between 5 pm and 9 pm Sunday through Friday and 10 am to 4 pm on Saturdays. Each number was called a minimum of five times without a live answer before being eliminated from the sample. In the case of a live answer, a household had to refuse to do the survey twice before the number was eliminated from the sample. All calls were made live by trained interviewers from one supervised telephone center. The final response rate was 76 percent.

⁹⁸ Specifically, our poll items were adapted from survey questions used by the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality in 1993; a 1998 poll by the McCormack Institute of the University of Massachusetts; a 2001 poll conducted by The Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health; and the work of David Williams and his colleagues (see, for example, Forman, "Race, Place, and Discrimination"). Questions about school integration were taken directly from the Gallup poll.

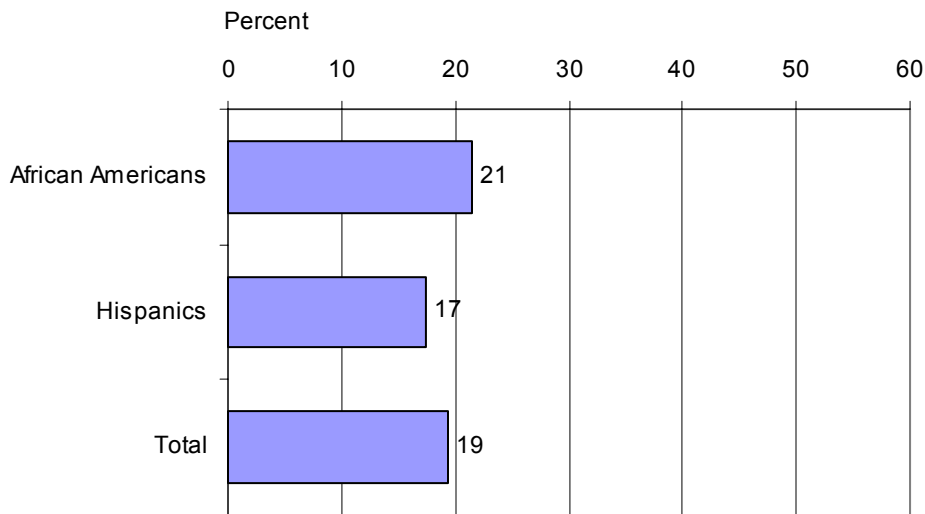
⁹⁹ Because of the wording used in the poll's initial racial and ethnic screening question, this report will use the terms African American and Hispanic (rather than other labels such as Black or Latino) when referring to poll respondents. When citing data from the US Bureau of the Census, this report uses the label Black to refer to people of African American descent and other origins grouped together by the Census as Black, and it uses the Census label Hispanic for people of Hispanic or Latin American origin.

¹⁰⁰ The poll's overall margin of error across the total sample (N = 403) is plus or minus 5 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. Because the size of an error margin depends on the percentage levels reported and the number of actual respondents for each survey question, error margins for different

Perceptions of discrimination in employment

We asked respondents two questions probing their own personal experiences with racial or ethnic discrimination in the workplace. The first question examined recent, general experiences with discrimination: *During the past year or the last year you worked, do you think you were discriminated against at your work because of your race or ethnicity?* About one in five, or 19 percent of African Americans and Hispanics in our poll responded affirmatively. When the data are disaggregated by racial group, a slightly higher share of African Americans (21 percent) report having experienced discrimination at work compared to Hispanics (17 percent), but the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant (Appendix 3).

Figure 1. Share who say they have experienced racial or ethnic discrimination at work during the last year or year they worked



Ten years ago, the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality found that 15 percent of both Blacks and Hispanics reported experiences with workplace discrimination in Metro Boston within the past year.¹⁰¹ The margins of error associated with the percentages in our poll (+/-6 points for African Americans and +/-5 points for Hispanics, see Appendix 3) suggest that the shares of Blacks and Hispanics who believe that they have experienced some form of racial or ethnic discrimination at work has not declined over the past ten years, and may have even increased for African Americans.

We looked to see if reports of discrimination at work varied by residential location, gender, age, marital status, income, and education. Across our entire sample, college graduates are significantly more likely (28 percent) than non-college graduates (17 percent) to report having experienced racial or ethnic discrimination at work within

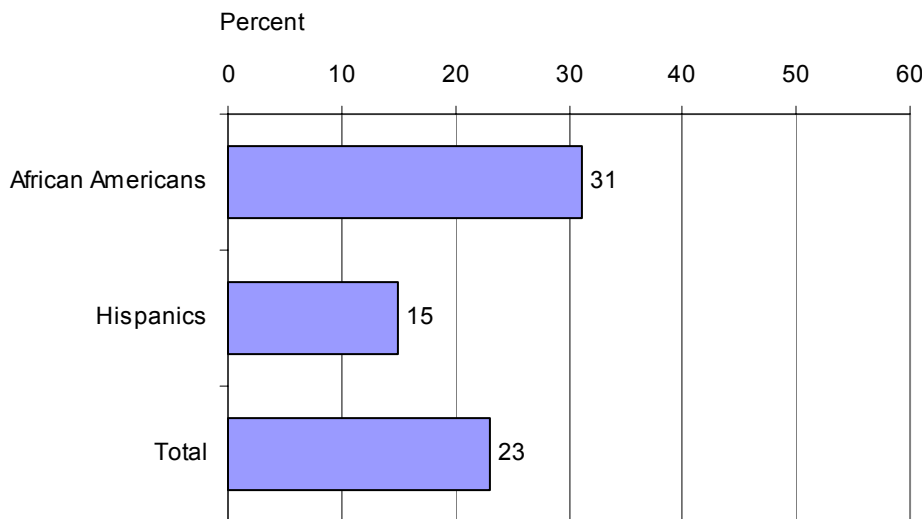
questions throughout the survey and for responses by disaggregated groups typically deviate from 5 percentage points. Actual error margins are noted for all reported figures in the Appendix tables.

¹⁰¹ Bluestone, 153. To note: Bluestone and Stevenson's definition of Metro Boston was slightly smaller than our definition. See note 2.

the past year (Appendix 3). Among our Hispanic subsample, women are significantly more likely than men (22 percent vs. 13 percent) to report an experience with work discrimination. There are no statistically significant differences in response rates between other demographic comparison groups, either across the entire poll sample or within racial and ethnic subsamples.

Our second employment-related question asked respondents to reflect upon their job search experiences over the past decade, and to report specifically on discrimination in attaining employment: *During the last 10 years, do you think a job that you have applied for in Metro Boston was ever denied to you because of your race or ethnicity?* Almost one in three African Americans (31 percent) said “yes” (Figure 2). This rate is double the one reported by Hispanics (15 percent). Researchers in the early 1990s asked a similar question to Blacks and Hispanics in the Boston region (“Do you think a job was ever denied to you because of race or ethnicity?”). The response rate for Blacks from their survey (36 percent) was similar to the rate from our recent poll, while their response rate for Hispanics (26 percent) was larger than ours.¹⁰² Both the earlier and our most recent polls show that African Americans in Metro Boston are more likely than Hispanics to believe they have been denied a job because of their racial or ethnic background. Research from a decade ago suggests a similar pattern: Blacks in Boston were more likely than Hispanics to say that members of their own group suffer from a large amount of discrimination in finding good paying jobs.¹⁰³

Figure 2. Share who say they were denied a job in Metro Boston because of their race or ethnicity in the past 10 years



Paralleling the different response rates of African Americans and Hispanics, residents of the city of Boston (82 percent of whom are African American in our sample) are significantly more likely than residents outside Boston (78 percent of whom are

¹⁰² Bluestone, 153.

¹⁰³ Kluegel, 166-167.

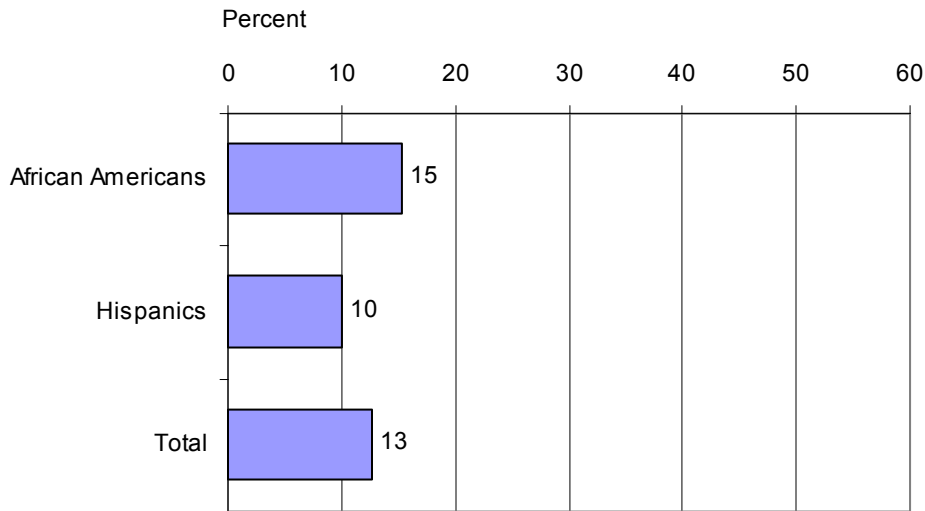
Hispanic in our sample) to say they were denied a job in the region because of their race or ethnicity in the past 10 years. Within the African American sample, residents in the city of Boston are more likely than those outside the city to say they have faced job discrimination, and within the Hispanic sample, those outside the city are slightly more likely than those in Boston to make the same claim. In both cases, however, the differences are not statistically significant. Similarly, differences in response rates by gender, age, income, education, and marital status categories among the African American respondents alone and the Hispanic respondents alone are not statistically significant.

In sum, perceptions of workplace discrimination in Metro Boston among African Americans and Hispanics are fairly common and have been persistent over time. Roughly one in five in our sample report that they have experienced some form of racial or ethnic job discrimination in their last year of work. The size of this response is similar to what was found in a regional survey almost a decade ago. Almost a third of African Americans say they were denied a job because of their race — a response rate double that of Hispanics, and again similar to what was found in the early 1990s. Our poll indicates that college graduates and Hispanic women perceive themselves victims of general workplace discrimination more often than non-college graduates and Hispanic men (respectively), and larger shares of Boston residents (composed mainly of African American descent) report that they have been denied a job due to their race compared to those outside the central city.

Perceptions of discrimination in housing

The housing market is another major arena in which racial discrimination has been a pervasive problem. We first asked African Americans and Hispanics about their personal experiences with racial or ethnic discrimination during their most recent housing search: *Now think about the last time you looked for housing here in Metro Boston. Did you or a member of your household have an experience of racial or ethnic discrimination as a part of your search for housing?* Over one out of ten of our total sample (13 percent) said “yes” (Figure 3). The response rate is slightly higher for African Americans than Hispanics (15 percent vs. 10 percent), but the difference is not statistically significant.

Figure 3. Share who say they experienced racial or ethnic discrimination the last time they looked for housing in Metro Boston



Across our entire sample, Boston residents are more likely than those outside the central city (17 percent vs. 9 percent) to report an experience with discrimination during their last housing search (Appendix 4, panel 1). Similarly, people without a college degree are more likely than college graduates (15 percent vs. 8 percent) to make the same claim. These patterns are also statistically significant within the Hispanic subsample.

We subsequently asked respondents to assess the prevalence of different housing market factors that may contribute to their own group’s housing choices and the region’s segregated residential patterns. Specifically, we drew upon a series of questions adapted from the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality:

How often do [African Americans/Hispanics] miss out on good housing because of the following reasons?

- *White owners will not rent or sell*
- *Real estate agents will not show, sell, or rent*
- *Can’t afford good housing*
- *Lack information on where to find good housing*
- *Fear that they will not be welcome in a particular community*

Possible responses to these items were “very often,” “sometimes,” “rarely/almost never,” and “never.” The first two propositions tap into respondents’ beliefs about active racial discrimination by specific, powerful individuals within the housing market (white owners and real estate agents). The third and fourth propositions explore the extent to which respondents attribute housing market outcomes to their own groups’ economic and social resources. The last proposition gauges respondents’ beliefs about how open different communities are to minorities like themselves, and how comfortable they would be in these communities, given the region’s deeply segregated residential patterns and reputation for racial intolerance.

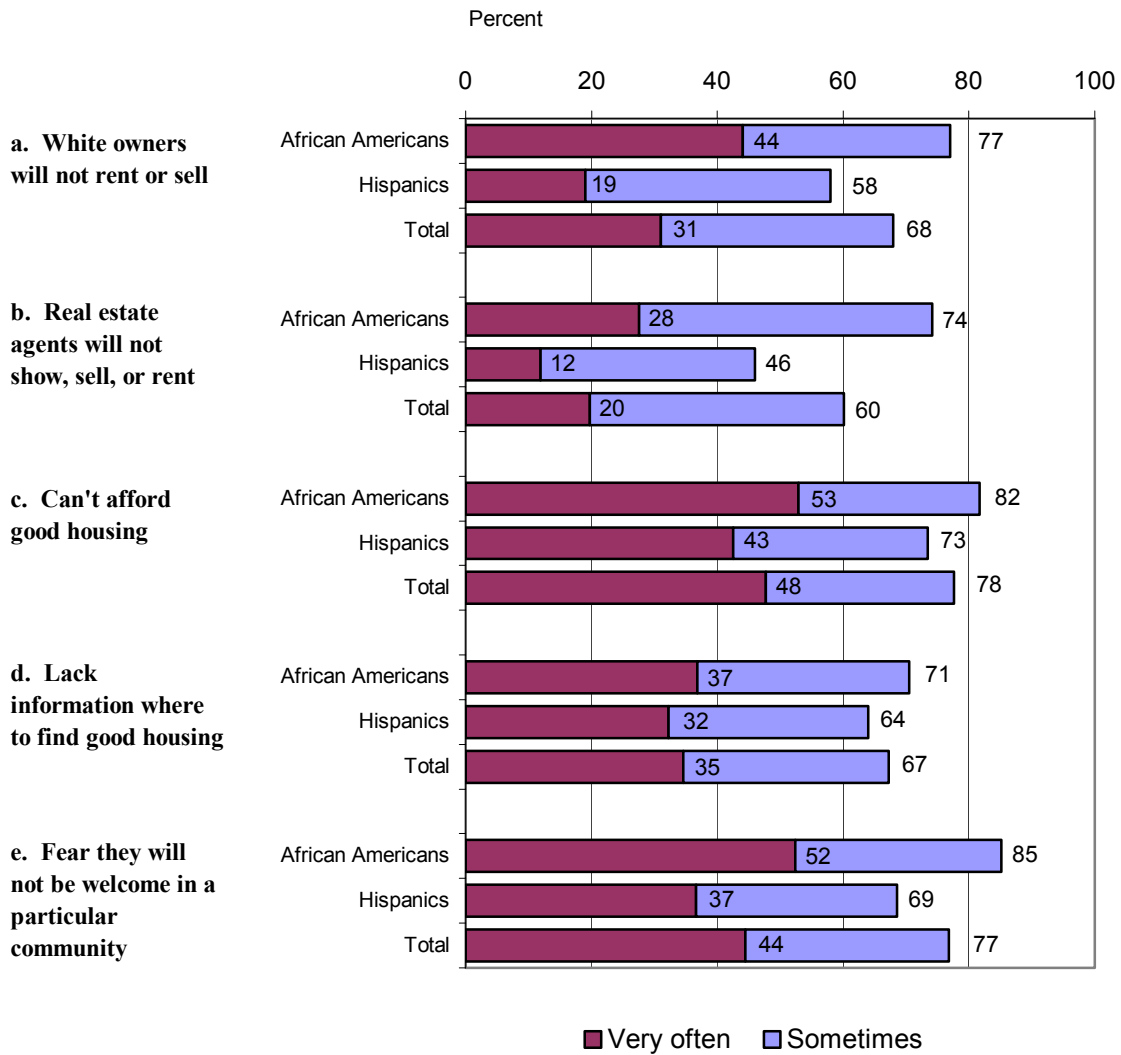
Regarding deliberate discrimination in the housing market, almost half (44 percent) of African American respondents believe that White owners do not rent or sell housing to African Americans “very often,” and a substantial three out of four (77 percent) believe that White owners will refuse such access at least “sometimes” (Figure 4, panel a). Hispanic respondents perceive White resistance at significantly lower but still sizable rates: about 19 percent of Hispanics believe that Whites refuse to rent or sell to Hispanics “very often,” and 58 percent believe that Whites present such barriers at least “sometimes.”

These differential response patterns mirror those from almost a decade ago, when Blacks in the Boston region (59 percent) were much more likely than the region’s Hispanics (36 percent) to say that Whites “very often” refuse to rent or sell housing to members of their own racial or ethnic group.¹⁰⁴ Our poll also suggests a change from past findings, however: the share of Metro Boston African Americans who perceive significant white resistance to Blacks in the housing market may have fallen by roughly a quarter over the past ten years, and the share of Hispanics who perceive significant White resistance to their own group may have fallen by almost half.

Among our African American respondents, residents of the city of Boston are significantly more likely than those outside the city to believe that African Americans miss out on good housing because White owners frequently refuse to rent or sell to them. A striking 84 percent of African Americans in Boston say that such White behavior occurs at least some of the time, and about half (49 percent) say that such White behavior occurs very often (Appendix 4, panel 2a). In contrast, there is a slight (albeit statistically insignificant) tendency among Hispanics for the reverse pattern: residents living outside Boston believe more often than city residents that White owners refuse to rent or sell to other Hispanics. Hispanic women are more likely than Hispanic men to perceive frequent resistance by White owners in the housing market; and across the whole sample, those who are or have formerly been married (often individuals with children) are more likely than those who have never been married to believe such White resistance exists at least some of the time. Socioeconomic status does not appear related to response outcomes: respondents of different income and education levels do not display consistent or statistically significant differences in their perceptions of barriers to good housing posed by White owners.

¹⁰⁴ Bluestone, 186.

Figure 4. Shares who say that members of their group miss out on good housing very often or sometimes because of the following reasons



Another persistent and often imperceptible form of institutional discrimination takes place when realtors treat minorities less favorably than Whites in the housing market. Do Blacks and Hispanics in Metro Boston believe that real estate agents discriminate against members of their own group, and how often do they think such discrimination occurs? About 28 percent of African Americans in our sample think that they miss out on good housing “very often” because real estate agents will not show, sell, or rent housing to them, and three quarters of the sample believes such behavior occurs at least some of the time (Figure 4, panel b). Significantly lower but still sizable shares of Hispanics think that such actions occur very often (12 percent) or at least some of the time (46 percent). Ten years ago, 16 percent of Hispanics in the region said they thought that realtors discriminate “very often,” and almost half (47 percent) of Blacks made the

same claim.¹⁰⁵ Our poll results suggest that opinions among Hispanics on this issue have remained steady over the past decade, while perceptions among African Americans of realtor discrimination may have fallen.

African American residents of the City of Boston are significantly more likely than those outside Boston to perceive realtor discrimination at least some of the time (79 percent vs. 58 percent), and older respondents across the entire sample are more likely than younger members (68 percent vs. 52 percent) to believe such discrimination occurs at least occasionally (Appendix 4, panel 2b). Similar to response patterns about White resistance in the housing market, African Americans and Hispanics who are or have been married are slightly more likely than their never-married counterparts to believe that realtor discrimination occurs at least some of the time (although the trend in this case is not statistically significant). Once again, class does not seem to affect perceptions of discrimination within the housing market: respondents of varying income and education levels do not display consistent or statistically significant differences in their views of realtor discrimination.

Housing prices across Metro Boston are among the highest in the nation,¹⁰⁶ and Blacks and Hispanics have some of the lowest average household incomes in the region.¹⁰⁷ Many often cite housing affordability as the reason why Blacks and Hispanics live in segregated areas from Whites. Indeed, over half of metro area African Americans (53 percent) believe that members of their group very often miss out on good housing because such housing is unaffordable, and a substantial 82 percent believe that housing affordability is a barrier at least some of the time (Figure 4, panel c). The share of African Americans who believe that housing costs very often pose a barrier to good housing has risen over the past decade, for in the early 1990s, only a third of Blacks in the region (32 percent) gave this response.¹⁰⁸ Hispanics cite housing costs as a barrier at lower rates than African Americans, but three quarters of our Hispanic respondents still believe that Hispanics miss out on good housing at least some of the time because they cannot afford it. The share of metro area Hispanics who believe that costs “very often” hinder access to good housing (43 percent) is larger than the shares for other surveyed explanations, and is similar to the share reported in a survey a decade ago (40 percent).¹⁰⁹

Among African Americans, those living in the city of Boston (57 percent) are significantly more likely than those outside the city (40 percent) to see housing affordability as a frequent barrier to good housing opportunities (Appendix 4, panel 2c). Across the total sample, those with higher incomes and college degrees are more likely

¹⁰⁵ Bluestone, 186.

¹⁰⁶ See, for instance, Glen Johnson, “Mass wages render affordable housing unaffordable,” *The Boston Globe* 21 December 2004, A2; and Robert David Sullivan and Rachel Dyette Werkema, “Just how unaffordable is the Bay state?” *The Boston Globe* 9 May 2004, D4.

¹⁰⁷ Average household income in 1999 in Metro Boston for non-Hispanic Whites was \$72,618; for non-Hispanic Blacks was \$46,662; for non-Hispanic Asians was \$66,290; and for Hispanics of any race was \$41,019 (author’s tabulations of Summary File 4, U.S. Bureau of the Census).

¹⁰⁸ Bluestone, 186.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

than their lower income, non-college graduate counterparts to perceive housing affordability as an issue at least some of the time.

Minorities may end up in lower quality and segregated housing not only for affordability reasons, but also if they have less access to information about better housing opportunities. Over a third of Metro Boston African Americans (37 percent) say that members of their group “very often” lack information on where to find good housing; almost three-fourths (71 percent) say that African Americans lack such information at least some of the time. Hispanics in our sample responded at statistically similar rates (Figure 4, panel d). The share of African Americans who cite poor housing information as a frequent problem is comparable to the share who responded to the same question ten years ago (34 percent).¹¹⁰ In contrast, Hispanics in our poll are *more* likely to say they very often lack information on good housing compared to Hispanics from a decade back: 21 percent of Hispanics at that time said that poor information was “very often” a problem.¹¹¹

Looking within subgroups, Hispanic women are significantly more likely than Hispanic men to say that Hispanics lack good housing information at least some of the time (70 vs. 58 percent). Similar to response patterns concerning housing affordability, both African Americans and Hispanics with higher incomes are more likely than those with lower incomes to believe that members of their group do not have information on where to find good housing. Response rates did not vary significantly by residential location, gender, age, education, or marital status (Appendix 4, panel 2d).

Last, many minorities may be reluctant to search for housing in specific areas because they anticipate hostility or a cold reception from existing residents. Our poll suggests that this dynamic may operate at a high level within Metro Boston. Over half (52 percent) of African Americans and over a third (37 percent) of Hispanics in our poll said that members of their group “very often” miss out on good housing because they fear that they will not be welcome in a particular community (Figure 4, panel e). A vast majority of African Americans (85 percent) and over two-thirds of Hispanics (69 percent) believe that such fears influence housing search behaviors at least some of the time. Residents of Boston, women, older adults, those who are or have been married, and those with higher incomes and college degrees are all more likely than their counterparts to believe that fears of community hostility keep many from seeking better housing (Appendix 4, panel 2e).

To summarize the preceding discussion, our main findings concerning perceived access to housing across our total sample of African Americans and Hispanics are:

- A relatively small share (13 percent) of total respondents report that they or their family had a personal experience with racial or ethnic discrimination during their last housing search in Metro Boston.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

- About two-thirds of total respondents, however, believe that discrimination by White owners and real estate agents occurs at least some of the time against members of their group.
- The most common beliefs (cited by over three-fourths of our total sample) are that fear of community hostility and lack of affordable housing pose barriers to good housing opportunities among minorities. African Americans were especially likely to hold these beliefs: over 8 out of 10 say that fear and affordability affect their group's housing choices some of the time or more.

Perceptions of housing discrimination and other barriers to good housing also appear to be related to a variety of demographic characteristics among respondents. These findings are:

- Residents of the city of Boston (especially Hispanics) are more likely than other metro area respondents to say they have had a personal experience of racial discrimination during their last housing search.
- Boston residents, older respondents, people who are or have been married, and Hispanic women all perceive more frequently than their counterparts the presence of owner and realtor discrimination, minority affordability issues, poor information, and fear of community hostility within the Metro Boston housing market.
- While African American and Hispanic college graduates are less likely than non-college graduates to say they have had a personal experience of racial discrimination during their last housing search in the area, both college graduates and higher income respondents are more likely to say that affordability, poor information, and fear of different communities pose barriers to minorities when seeking housing in the region.
- We did not find a relationship between class and perceptions of housing discrimination by White owners or real estate agents in our poll.

Comparing our findings to available data from previous research, we make the following observations:

- Among African Americans and Hispanics, perceptions of discrimination perpetrated by white owners may have fallen over the past ten years. Among African Americans alone, perceptions of discrimination perpetrated by realtors may have fallen over the same time period.
- The share of African Americans who say that housing affordability is a significant barrier to housing opportunities, however, appears to have risen over the past decade, as has the share of Hispanics who believe that a lack of information very often hinders members of their own group from good housing.
- We do not have comparable data to assess whether fears of community hostility toward minorities have risen or fallen over time, but it is clear that

current perceptions of fear levels among the minorities in our poll are strikingly high.

Perceptions of day-to-day forms of discrimination

To fully explore the range of differential treatment that African Americans and Hispanics may experience within Metro Boston, we posed questions not only about potentially major incidents of discrimination within employment and the housing market, but also about chronic, day-to-day encounters with racial or ethnic discrimination. Drawing upon questions used in prior national surveys, we asked:

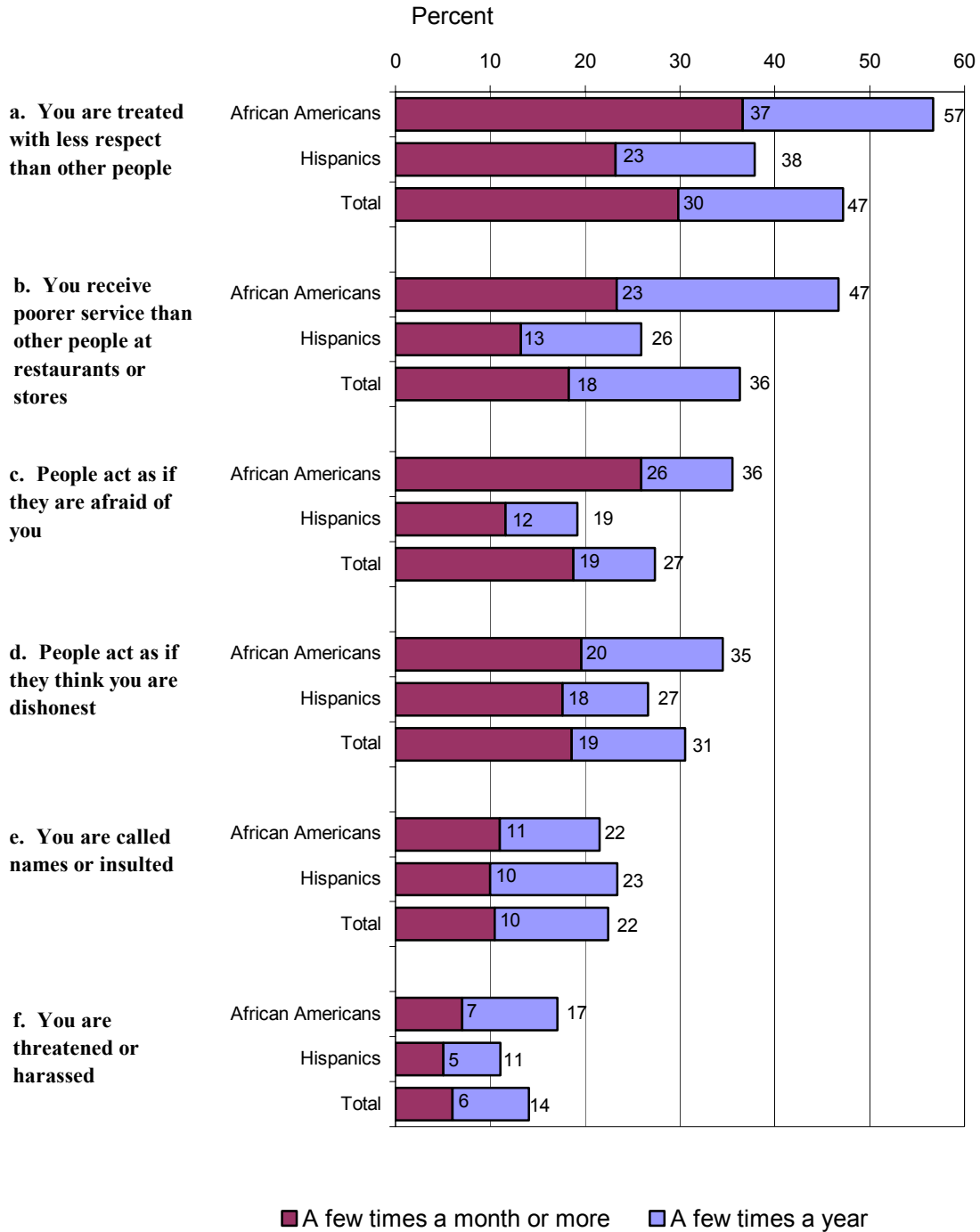
In your day-to-day life, how often do any of the following things happen to you because of your racial or ethnic background?

- *You are treated with less respect than other people*
- *You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores*
- *People act as if they are afraid of you*
- *People act as if they think you are dishonest*
- *You are called names or insulted*
- *You are threatened or harassed*

These questions probe a variety of discriminatory experiences that range in severity from avoidance (e.g., people act as if they are afraid of you), to rejection (e.g., receiving poorer service at restaurants), to verbal or other attacks (e.g., being insulted or harassed). Possible responses to these questions were “almost every day,” “at least once a week,” “a few times a month,” “a few times a year,” and “never.” We also asked respondents additional questions about outright physical victimization (*While living in the Metro Boston area, at anytime in the past 2 years have you or your family ever been physically attacked because of your racial and ethnic background?*), and racial encounters with law enforcement officers (*In the past 3 months, about how often have you had a personal experience of racial or ethnic discrimination dealing with police?*). Respondents could answer “yes” or “no” to the former question, and they could give a range of responses from “never” to “five times or more” for the latter question.

Well over half of African Americans in our poll (57 percent) say that because of their racial or ethnic background, they are treated with less respect than other people in the metro region a few times a year or more (Figure 5, panel a). Well over a third (37 percent) say that they receive disrespectful treatment a few times a month or more. Hispanics report such treatment at significantly lower but still substantive levels: 38 percent say they are treated with less respect at least a few times a year, and 23 percent say they experience disrespect a few times a month or more. Residents of Boston (particularly Hispanics) are significantly more likely than residents outside the city to report disrespectful treatment due to race (see Appendix 5, panel 1a). Other differences by gender, age, marital status, income, and education are not statistically significant.

Figure 5. In your day-to-day life, how often do any of the following things happen to you because of your racial or ethnic background?



Similar findings emerge for other experiences involving racial avoidance or rejection. Almost half of African American respondents (47 percent) say they receive worse service than others at restaurants or stores at least a few times per year, and almost one out of four (23 percent) say they encounter such inferior service at least a few times per month. Over a third of African Americans say that people in the region act afraid of them or as if they are dishonest at least a few times a year. Following a persistent pattern, reported encounters with these behaviors are sizable for Hispanics but particularly severe for African Americans.

Examining other subgroup patterns, residents of Boston and younger African Americans are more likely than non-Boston residents and older African Americans to say they receive worse service in restaurants or stores at least a few times per year. Residents of Boston, men, younger people, and never-married singles are more likely than their counterparts to say that people act afraid of them with some frequency. Similarly, respondents from these groups and those with lower incomes are more likely than their counterparts to say that people often treat them as if they are dishonest.

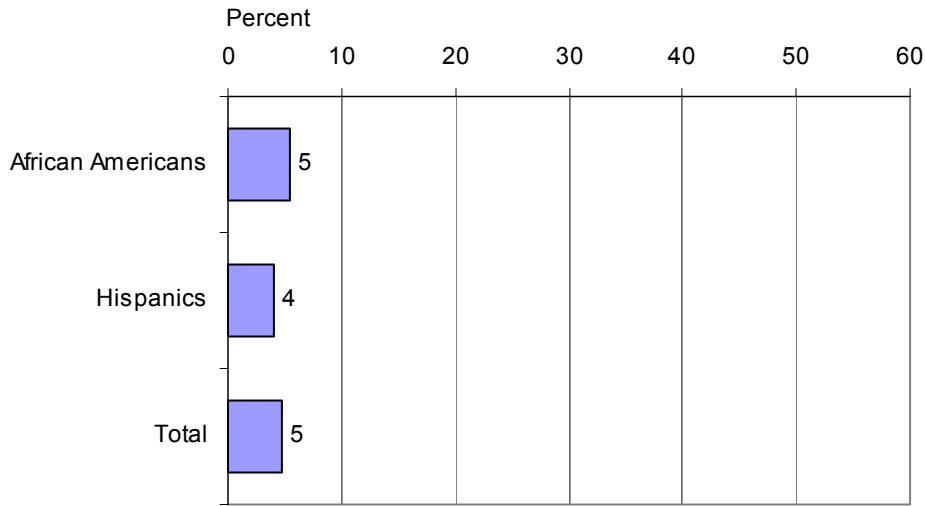
Lower shares of respondents from our poll say that they are the victims of verbal or other attacks: less than a quarter are occasionally called names, insulted, threatened, or harassed. Younger people, never married individuals, and people who have not graduated from college are more likely than others to say they are called names or insulted. African Americans are more likely than Hispanics to report that they have been victims of threats or harassment at least a few times a year; among African Americans, those with lower levels of education report such incidents in higher shares than those with college degrees. Only 5 percent of total respondents say they or their family have been physically attacked in the past 2 years because of their racial or ethnic background (Figure 6).

Even though the share of respondents who say they frequently experience any one form of day-to-day discrimination typically does not rise above one in three, the likelihood that they will experience at least one form frequently is substantial. Over half (52 percent) of African Americans in our poll say they experience at least one of the six types of chronic discrimination a few times a month or more; three out of four (74 percent) say they experience at least one form a few times a year or more. For Hispanics, the shares are 37 percent and 60 percent, respectively (Table 1).

Table 1. Share that reports at least one form of day-to-day discrimination

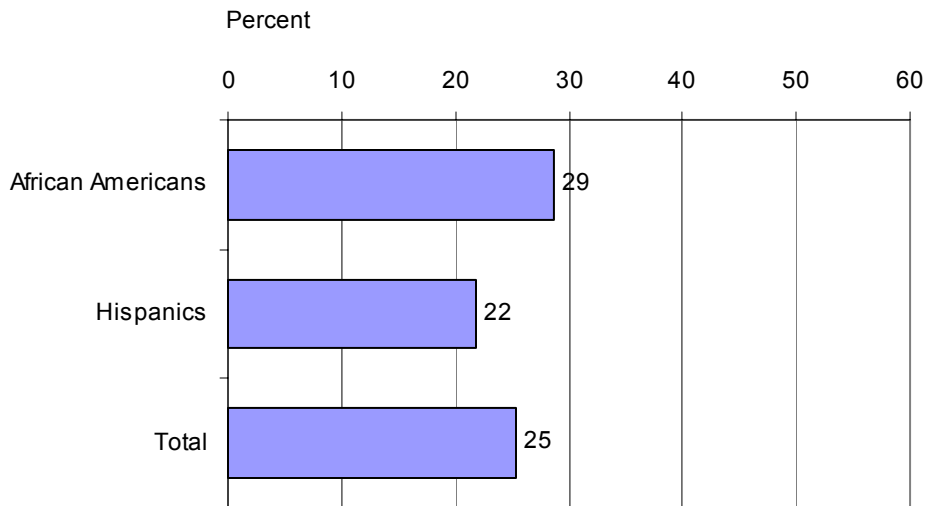
	(Percent)		
	African Americans	Hispanics	Total
A few times a month or more	52	37	44
A few times a year or more	74	60	67

Figure 6. Share who say they have been physically attacked because of their racial or ethnic background in the past 2 years



As noted earlier, racial profiling and discriminatory treatment by police are frequent phenomena as reported in recent studies and press accounts. How frequently do racial minorities in the Boston region say that they have had a personal experience of racial or ethnic discrimination dealing with police? About one out of four total respondents from our poll say they have had such an experience at least once in the past three months (Figure 7). Different response rates among African Americans and Hispanics are not statistically significant, but Boston residents, younger individuals, and those who have never been married are significantly more likely than their counterparts to report they have had racially discriminatory encounters with police.

Figure 7. Share who say they have had a personal experience of racial or ethnic discrimination dealing with police within the past three months



In sum, perceptions of day-to-day discrimination are pervasive. Over half of African Americans in Metro Boston say they experience at least one form of everyday-type discrimination at a frequency equivalent to almost every week, and three out of four say they experience these forms of discrimination a few times per year or more. Lower but still substantial shares of Hispanics report regular encounters with these same sorts of experiences. Other findings are the following:

- African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston more commonly perceive themselves to be subject to subtle and indirect forms of racial or ethnic discrimination than to overt expressions of discrimination. A quarter to half of all respondents report at least occasional disrespect from others or encounters with people who act afraid of them.
- Lower shares (less than a quarter) of total respondents report at least occasional experiences with more direct forms of racial hostility (such as verbal assaults or physical harassment). Other national studies have also found that individuals typically perceive themselves as victims of avoidance or rejection more frequently than as victims of direct verbal or physical threats.¹¹²
- Our poll shows that African Americans are more likely than Hispanics to report frequent exposure to day-to-day forms of racial or ethnic discrimination; and among our total sample, Boston residents, men, younger people, never-married individuals, and those with lower incomes and less education report more frequent exposure than their counterparts. Many of these demographic patterns have been found in prior, national studies.¹¹³
- Roughly a quarter of our total sample says that they have had a recent encounter with police due to race or ethnicity. This figure suggests that racial encounters with police are less frequent than experiences with poor service or disrespect in general settings, but more frequent than overt, physical forms of racial hostility.

Perceptions of discrimination within Metro Boston: public settings and overall

As noted earlier, some public settings within Metro Boston (such as sports venues and longstanding cultural institutions) may be particularly unwelcoming for racial or ethnic minorities. We asked respondents about their comfort in a range of public settings around the region:

Because of your race or ethnic background, how often have you felt out of place or unwelcome at:

- *Professional sports venues in Metro Boston?*
- *Museums in Metro Boston?*
- *Shopping areas in Metro Boston?*
- *Restaurants in Metro Boston?*

¹¹² Kessler. 214.

¹¹³ Ibid.

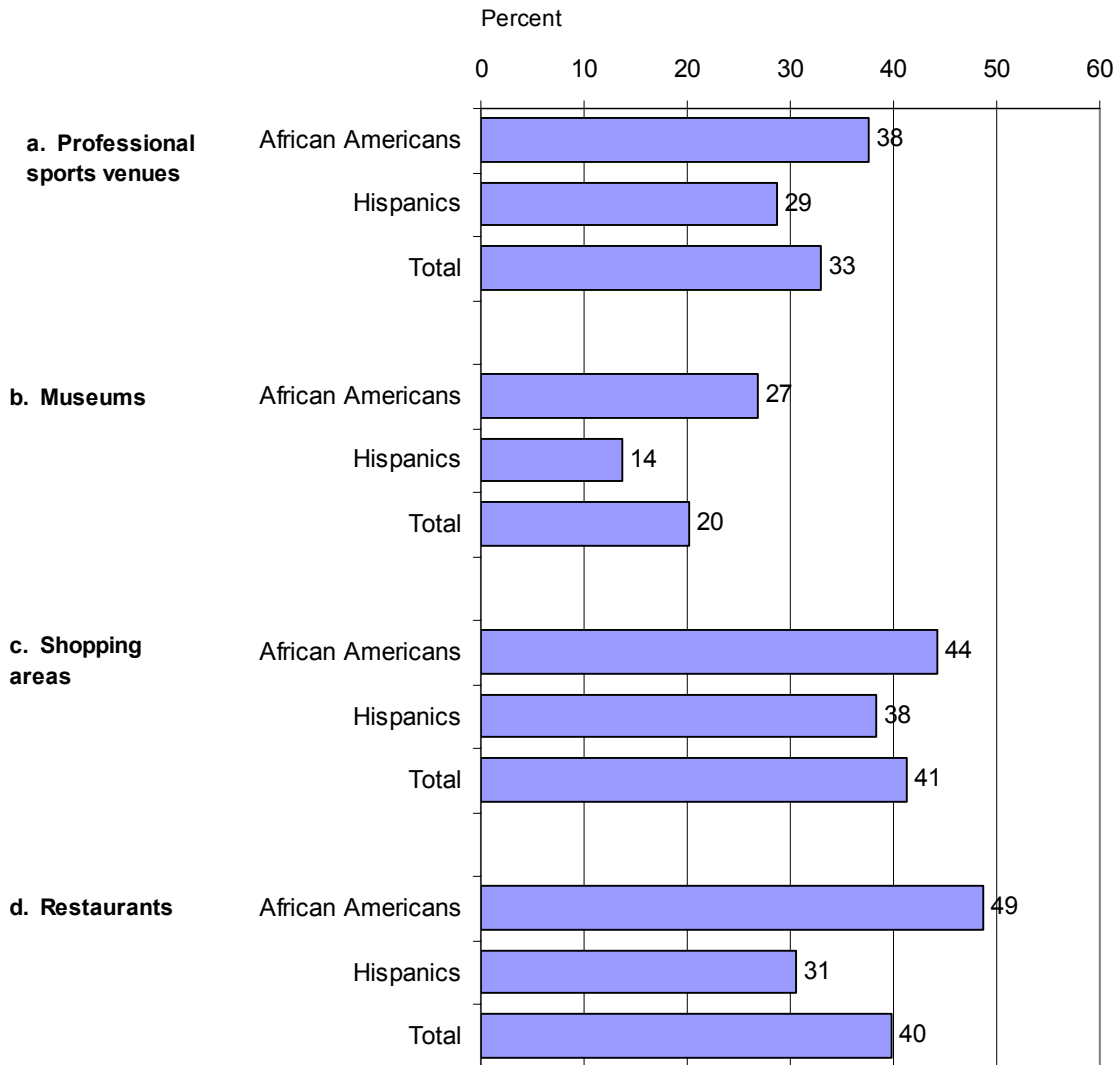
Responses to each item could be “very often,” “fairly often,” “occasionally,” “never,” or “never been [to this setting].”

Among African American respondents who have been to a professional sports venue in the Boston area (84 percent), over a third (38 percent) say that they have felt out of place or unwelcome because of their race at least occasionally (Figure 8, panel a). About 79 percent of Hispanic respondents in our sample have visited a professional sports facility in the region; over a quarter (29 percent) say they have felt unwelcome because of their ethnic background in these settings. Across our total sample, women are more likely than men to say they have felt unwelcome because of their race at least on occasion within Boston sports venues, and among Hispanics, younger and never married individuals are more likely than their counterparts to express the same type of discomfort in these locations (Appendix 6, panel a).

Over 80 percent of the total sample has attended a museum in Metro Boston; among African Americans, 27 percent say they have felt out of place or unwelcome because of their race in a museum at least on occasion (Figure 8, panel b). A significantly lower but still sizable 20 percent of Hispanics express the same sentiments. Education is related to feelings of comfort among African Americans in Metro Boston museums: 31 percent without a college degree say they have felt out of place in these settings because of their race at least on occasion, while the share for those with college degrees is 17 percent (Appendix 6, panel b).

Attending professional sports events and museums are recreational activities that many people engage in infrequently; visiting shopping areas or restaurants, however, are more common and often necessary activities. Based on responses to our poll, about four out of ten of total respondents say that they have felt out of place or unwelcome at shopping areas within Metro Boston due to their race or ethnicity (Figure 8, panel c). The share is significantly larger for residents of Boston compared to those living outside the city (Appendix 6, panel c). Among African Americans, a significantly larger share of people who are or have been married (50 percent) express such discomfort compared to never married individuals (36 percent). About half of African Americans (49 percent) say they have felt out of place or unwelcome at least occasionally in restaurants around the region; the share for Hispanics (31 percent, Figure 8, panel d) is substantial but less acute. People who are or have been married are more likely than their counterparts to say they have felt uncomfortable at Boston area restaurants because of their race or ethnicity (Appendix 6, panel d).

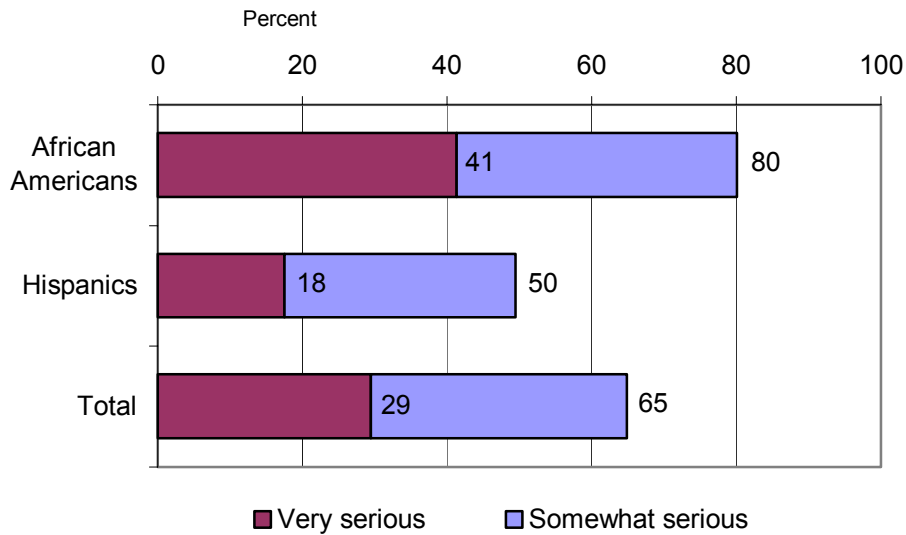
Figure 8. Share who say they have at least occasionally felt out of place or unwelcome in specific public settings within Metro Boston because of their racial or ethnic background



Finally, we asked respondents about their overall impression of racial discrimination within the region. Specifically, we asked: *How serious a problem do you think racial discrimination against [African Americans/Hispanics] is in Metro Boston — a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, not too serious, or not at all serious?* A striking 80 percent of African Americans in our poll say that racial discrimination is at least somewhat of a serious problem; 41 percent say it is very serious (Figure 9). The responses by Hispanics are lower in share but still substantial: 50 percent say racial discrimination is at least a somewhat serious problem, and 18 percent say the problem is very serious. Similar to patterns found in responses to other questions, poll respondents living in Boston are more likely than people outside the city to say racial discrimination is a problem, and minority women are more likely than minority men to say the same thing. Breaking from some of the response patterns found earlier,

respondents in our sample older than age 36 are more likely than younger individuals to see racial discrimination as a problem, and African Americans with higher incomes are more likely than those with lower incomes to say that the problem is somewhat or very serious.

Figure 9. Share who say that racial discrimination in Metro Boston against members of their own group is a very serious or somewhat serious problem



While our poll findings for demographic subgroups do not always reveal clear and consistent patterns, a few general trends emerge. African Americans report being victims of discrimination more frequently than Hispanics in all domains that we measured — seeking work, seeking housing, day-to-day life, and specific local settings. Boston residents, men, younger people, those with less income and education, and never-married singles generally report greater experiences with day-to-day discrimination compared to those in counterpart groups. Most of these counterpart groups (women, older people, currently or formerly married individuals, those with more income and education) as well as Boston residents are more likely to attribute their own racial or ethnic group’s poor housing opportunities to fear of hostility from existing communities. African Americans, residents of Boston, women, and older individuals are more likely than their counterparts to say that racial discrimination in Metro Boston is serious. Figure 10 summarizes the subgroup differences we found.

Figure 10. Summary of Statistically Different Response Rates among Sample Subgroups: Perceived Discrimination

Groups who report or perceive racial discrimination at significantly different rates than their counterparts:

	<u>African Americans</u>	<u>In Boston</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Age 36+</u>	<u>Earn \$35k/yr+</u>	<u>With college degree</u>	<u>Never married</u>
<u>In employment</u>							
General						+	
During recent search	+	+	H+				
<u>In housing</u>							
During last search		+				H-	
By White owners	+	+ ^A	+	+			+
By real estate agents	+	+		+			
<u>Other barriers:</u>							
Affordability	+	+			+	+	
Poor information			H+		+		
Fear of community hostility	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
<u>In day-to-day life</u>							
Get less respect	+	+ ^H					
Get worse service	+	+					
People act afraid	+	+ ^H	-	-			+
People think you're dishonest	+	+	-	A-	-		+
Receive insults				-	- ^H	-	+
Threatened / harassed	+					A-	
Physically attacked (last 2 yrs)							
During police interaction (last 3 mos)		+		-			+
<u>In local public settings</u>							
Pro sports venues	+		+	H-			H+
Museums	+					A-	
Shopping areas		+					A-
Restaurants	+	+ ^A					- ^H
Overall in Metro Boston	+	+	+	+ ^A	A+		

Notes: Counterpart subgroups are (in order across the columns): Hispanics, metro area residents outside Boston, age 35 or under, earning under \$35,000/year, without a college degree, and currently or formerly married.

Responses for noted subgroups are significantly higher (or lower) than for their counterparts at p<.10 or less:

+ (or -) = across the total sample

A+ (or A-) = among African Americans only

H+ (or H-) = among Hispanics only

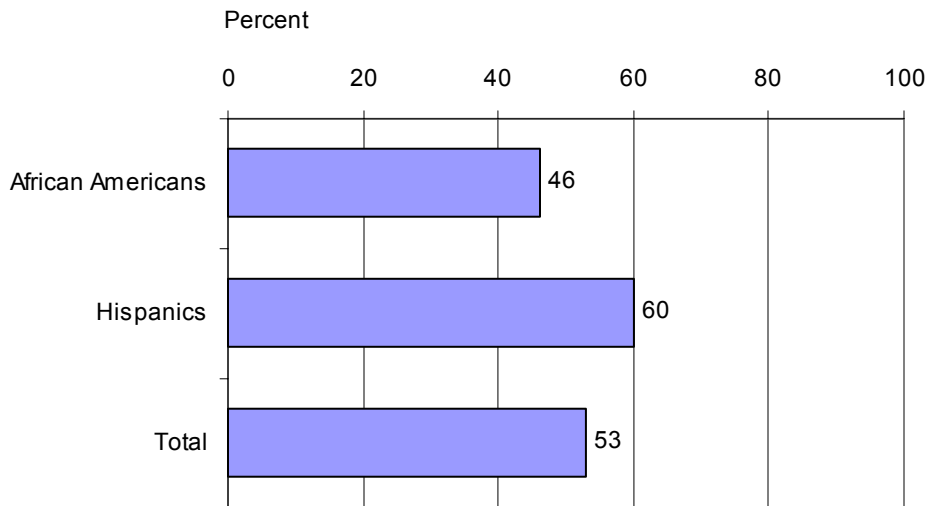
+^A (or -^A) = across the total sample, primarily because of the strong trend among African Americans. The difference among Hispanics is negligible or in the reverse direction.

+^H (or -^H) = across the total sample, primarily because of the strong trend among Hispanics. The difference among African Americans is negligible or in the reverse direction.

Attitudes toward school integration

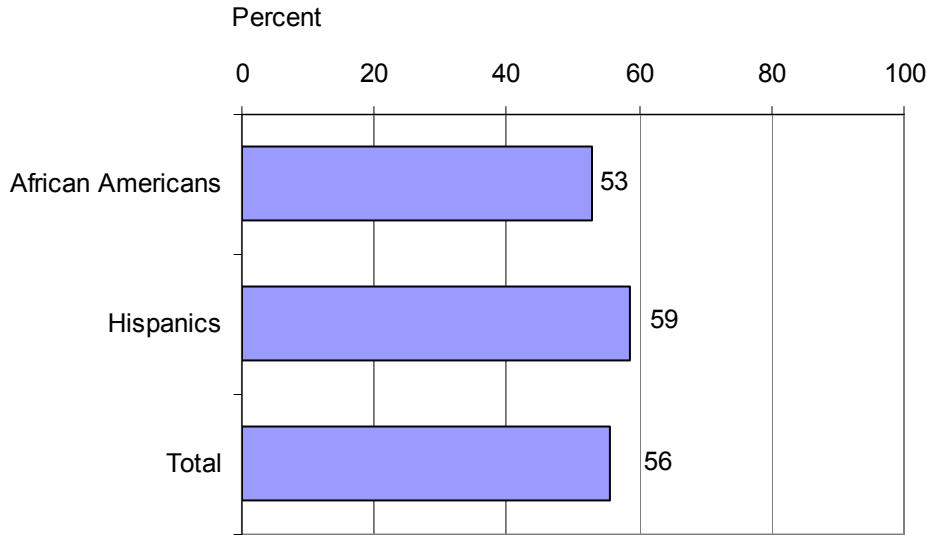
The preceding discussion reveals that very large shares of African Americans and Hispanics believe that racial discrimination exists as a significant problem in Metro Boston. Within this context, how do African Americans and Hispanics view deliberate efforts to bring different groups together, such as through school integration? Considering the city of Boston’s difficult experience with school integration in the 1970s, how do racial and ethnic minorities view school integration today? We asked our sample: *Do you feel school integration has improved the quality of education received by African American and Hispanic students in communities in the Metro Boston area?* Almost two-thirds, or 60 percent of Hispanic respondents say “yes,” while less than half of African American respondents agree (Figure 11). Minorities living outside the city of Boston are more likely than Boston residents to agree; in addition, men and people age 35 or younger are more likely than women and older respondents to say that school integration has improved educational quality for African American and Hispanic students (Appendix 8, panel 1).

Figure 11. Share who say that school integration has improved the quality of education received by African American and Hispanic students in Metro Boston communities



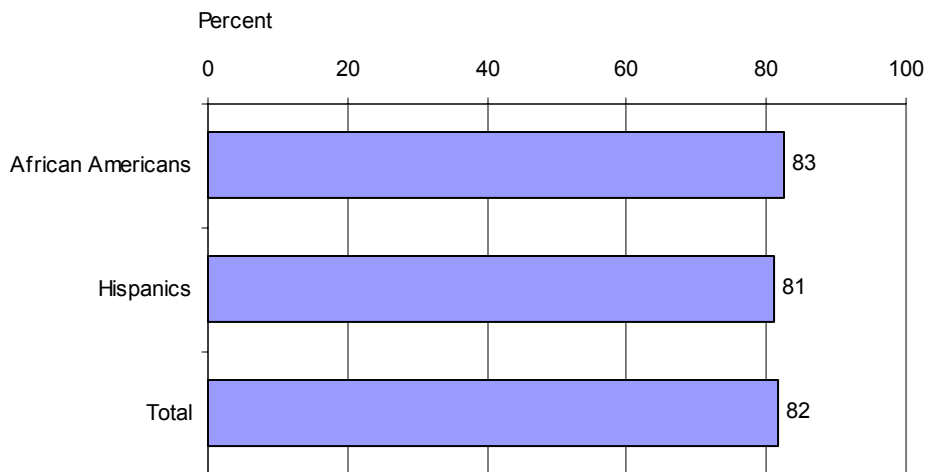
We then asked our sample about the effects of desegregation efforts on Whites: *Do you feel that school integration has improved the quality of education received by White students in Metro Boston?* Over half of African Americans and Hispanics say “yes” (Figure 12). Similar to the response patterns above, residents outside the city of Boston are more likely than Boston residents to agree; in addition, those with lower incomes are more likely than those with higher incomes to say that desegregation has improved education for Whites (Appendix 8, panel 2).

Figure 12. Share who say that school integration has improved the quality of education received by White students in Metro Boston



Finally, we asked respondents their views on their current policy position toward school integration efforts: *Do you believe that more should be done — or that less should be done — to integrate schools throughout Metro Boston?* An overwhelming 82 percent of the total sample say that more should be done (Figure 13). Respondents with lower incomes are more likely than those with higher incomes to support greater school integration efforts, and interestingly, those who have never been married are more likely than those who are or have been married (and who may more frequently have children) to applaud greater efforts toward school integration (Appendix 8, panel 3).

Figure 13. Share who believe that more should be done to integrate schools throughout Metro Boston



Overall, African Americans and Hispanics in our poll express overwhelming support for furthering school integration across Metro Boston, and a majority of both groups believe that integration has improved education for Whites in the region. Almost two out of three Hispanics and just under one half of African Americans believe that integration has improved educational quality for members of their own group. Interestingly, Hispanics and people living outside the city of Boston, men, younger individuals, those with lower incomes, and never-married singles are more likely than their counterparts to express belief in the benefits of school integration. People who fall into these categories are many of the same ones who more frequently report experiences with day-to-day experiences with racial discrimination, but who are less likely than members of their counterpart groups to say that racial discrimination is a serious problem in the metro area.

Figure 14. Summary of Statistically Different Response Rates among Sample Subgroups: Attitudes toward Integration

Groups who report or perceive racial discrimination at significantly different rates than their counterparts:

	<u>African Americans</u>	<u>In Boston</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Age 36+</u>	<u>Earn \$35k/yr+</u>	<u>With college degree</u>	<u>Never married</u>
Integration has improved education for African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston	-	- ^A	- ^A	-			
Integration has improved education for Whites in Metro Boston		-			-		
More should be done to integrate schools throughout Metro Boston					- ^A		+ ^H

Notes: Counterpart subgroups are (in order across the columns): Hispanics, metro area residents outside Boston, men, age 35 or under, earning under \$35,000/year, without a college degree, and currently or formerly married.

Responses for noted subgroups are significantly higher (or lower) than for their counterparts at $p < .10$ or less:

+ (or -) = across the total sample

A+ (or A-) = among African Americans only

H+ (or H-) = among Hispanics only

+^A (or -^A) = across the total sample, primarily because of the strong trend among African Americans. The difference among Hispanics is negligible or in the reverse direction.

+^H (or -^H) = across the total sample, primarily because of the strong trend among Hispanics. The difference among African Americans is negligible or in the reverse direction.

Discussion

Thirty years ago, Boston became known to the country as a Northern city where Whites stormed the streets and threw rocks at buses carrying Black schoolchildren as the city began efforts to end its *de facto* system of segregated schooling. Some media reports and polls of city residents and people around the country suggest that since that time, views of Boston's racial climate may have improved. Whites in particular may see racial discrimination as something that lingers in the area but is not a serious factor in racial minorities' lives. Our poll of metro area African Americans and Hispanics suggests, however, that perceptions of discrimination among these groups are still high. Indeed, our data suggest that while perceived levels of discrimination in employment and housing are significant, more pervasive still are daily forms of interpersonal racism and discrimination. In both major and day-to-day life arenas, discrimination for these groups may be increasingly subtle. Following are observations surrounding our major findings.

Discrimination in employment and housing. Our data reveal that **African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston report personal discrimination in employment more often than in housing.** About one out of four total respondents say they have been denied a job because of their race or ethnicity in the past ten years, and about one in five say they have experienced work discrimination over the last year or the last year they worked. In contrast, about one out of eight say they had a personal experience of discrimination the last time they looked for housing in Metro Boston. This general finding falls in line with prior research; past surveys have found that higher shares of Black Americans report personal experiences with discrimination in getting a job and achieving equal wages to Whites than in education and housing.¹¹⁴ Much research has shown that housing discrimination in particular can be extremely subtle; it is possible that lower reports of housing discrimination stem from the difficulty of detecting discrimination in this arena.

Although relatively small shares of African Americans and Hispanics believe they have experienced housing discrimination themselves, **substantial portions of our sample believe that housing discrimination persists against the broader African American and Hispanic populations in Metro Boston.** Roughly two out of three respondents say that discrimination by White owners and realtors hinder African Americans' and Hispanics' access to good housing at least some of the time. Past research has also found that people tend to perceive greater discrimination against their group than against themselves individually. Because individuals often do not have access to comparative information that can prove discriminatory treatment, and because perceptions of oneself as a victim of discrimination carry high psychological and social costs, individuals often deny or underreport personal experiences of discrimination.¹¹⁵ In contrast, reports of discrimination in the broader community and in the media may boost people's beliefs in the prevalence of discrimination against their group as a whole.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Sigelman, 55.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.; Kluegel, 181.

¹¹⁶ Sigelman, 62; Kluegel, 181-182.

A decade ago, even higher shares of Blacks and Hispanics claimed that housing discrimination was a frequent problem in the metro region. Almost 60 percent of Blacks and 36 percent of Hispanics in the early 1990s said that White owners very often refuse to sell or rent housing to members of their group; our new poll shows that the shares of African Americans and Hispanics who make the same claim have dropped to 44 percent and 19 percent, respectively. The share of Blacks who believe that real estate agents discriminate very often appears to have fallen from 47 percent to 28 percent over the past decade. It is possible that these lowered perceptions may indicate an actual decline in discriminatory practices against African Americans and Hispanics within the metro area housing market. A recent housing audit study suggests, however, that racial discrimination in the Metro Boston housing market is still pervasive but more subtle and harder to detect.¹¹⁷ Minorities' perceptions of housing discrimination may also fall if, over time, they look less frequently for housing outside of segregated areas. African American and Hispanic real estate agents are deeply underrepresented in the metro region, especially in areas outside the city of Boston.¹¹⁸ Such low representation diminishes the likelihood that members of these groups are looking for housing outside areas that are familiar to them. More research is needed to examine where minorities in the region are actually looking for housing, and how the geographic scope of their search may be related to their perceptions of housing discrimination.

While high shares currently believe that discrimination exists in the housing market, **even higher shares of African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston believe that members of their own group miss out on good housing because they can't afford it.** More than three out of four respondents in the total sample believe that low housing affordability in the region hinders their group's access to good housing. Unlike perceptions of discrimination, views of low affordability appear to have risen over the past decade. These views may reflect the enormous growth in housing prices across the region over the past ten years. At the same time, minorities' views of housing affordability across the region may not be fully accurate, for recent research shows that minorities are deeply underrepresented in many communities where they can afford to buy.¹¹⁹ Although a significant share perceive discrimination as a barrier to good housing, a vast majority point to affordability as an important obstacle.

Perhaps the most striking finding from our questions on housing is the fact that **extremely high shares of minorities — especially African Americans — believe that fear prevents their group from moving into communities around the region.** Almost 70 percent of Hispanics and an overwhelming 85 percent of African Americans believe that members of their group miss out on good housing because they fear they will not be welcome in a particular community. Prior research has found that Whites consistently perceive racial discrimination as less of a problem than minorities perceive. It is unclear to what extent Whites in the region realize that fear of White hostility may be a major factor in minority people's residential choices. It is possible that many Whites will believe that minorities' fears (like their views of discrimination) are exaggerated.

¹¹⁷ See note 37.

¹¹⁸ McArdle, *Racial Equity and Opportunity*, 16.

¹¹⁹ Harris, 3.

Ultimately, however, it may not matter whether minorities' fears of White hostility, beliefs in levels of discrimination, or perceptions of housing affordability are entirely accurate. What matters is that such fear, beliefs in discrimination, and views of poor housing affordability all exist at pervasive levels within minority communities. They serve as real and potent forces that affect minority people's decisions on where to look for housing and where to reside. These factors constrain minorities' choices, limit their housing opportunities, and contribute to the segregated housing patterns we see in the metro region today.

High levels of fear suggest that many minorities may choose to live in segregated areas not so much because they prefer to live as separate communities, but more because they seek safe haven from what they perceive to be unwelcoming communities around them. We must ask ourselves as members of Metro Boston whether it is acceptable to allow high levels of fear to persist among the minority members of our broader community — levels that can lead them to make residential decisions that heighten racial isolation and their own social and economic disadvantage. We must ask ourselves what factors within the metropolitan community contribute to minorities' perceptions, and whether we have the will to act in ways that indicate we truly want an inclusive society. Ongoing racial discrimination as well as ongoing White flight from areas of minority concentration not only send strong messages to minorities about how accepted they are within the metro community, but they also play a fundamental role in perpetuating racial polarization within the region.

Day-to-day and other forms of discrimination. Another major finding from our poll is that **racial discrimination in one's ordinary, day-to-day encounters is a pervasive feature in the lives of African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston.** Over half of African Americans and almost four out of ten Hispanics say they are treated with less respect, offered worse service, called names or insulted, or confronted with another form of day-to-day discrimination at least a few times a month. About three out of four African Americans and six out of ten Hispanics say they experience at least one form of discrimination in their day-to-day lives a few times a year or more. For these groups, experiences with rejection and avoidance are more common than outright verbal or physical assaults. At the same time, a quarter of respondents say they have recently experienced racial discrimination dealing with police. While these forms of interpersonal racism may not have major impacts on minority individuals' economic fortunes, they can take a heavy psychological toll by continually reminding minorities that they may not be fully respected or always a welcome presence.

Because experiences with discrimination in minorities' daily dealings are so common, it is not surprising to find that **sizeable shares have felt discomfort in many of the region's most public settings and noted cultural institutions.** Among respondents in our poll who have attended a professional sports venue or museum in Metro Boston, a third and a fifth (respectively) say they have at least occasionally felt out of place or unwelcome in each setting because of their race or ethnicity. Researchers argue that the likelihood of discriminatory treatment rises as settings become more public and impersonal, since in such locations people are more likely to respond to others based on

superficial assessments and prior biases. It is also possible that many minorities may feel discomfort in sports stadiums or museums around the region due to the venues' high entry prices and individuals' economic or educational limitations. In a region that takes great pride in its passion for professional sports and its cultural contributions, however, community bonds are weakened when significant shares of minorities feel alienated in settings that often celebrate regional identity and local accomplishments.

Even more troubling, our poll shows that **very substantial shares of minorities say they have felt unwelcome in shopping areas and restaurants in the region.** Close to half of African Americans and a third of Hispanics say that they have felt unwelcome in these settings occasionally or more. Unfortunately, it is not clear from our poll whether respondents feel discomfort in specific locations, or if their feelings of unease occur across the region's shopping areas and restaurants in general. But while sports stadiums and local museums are places where people go for occasional recreation or entertainment, shopping centers and restaurants are places where people often *must* go to meet daily needs. It should be of concern both to businesses and to the Metro Boston community at large when large shares of minorities feel unwelcome in spaces that many may need to visit to conduct their daily business and to carry out their ordinary lives.

Common reports of discomfort, discrimination, and fear in a variety of settings and domains help explain one of our most sobering findings: **strikingly high shares of African Americans and Hispanics believe that racial discrimination is a serious problem in the region.** Eighty percent of African Americans and half of Hispanics in our poll say that racial discrimination in Metro Boston is a somewhat or very serious problem. Some past reports suggest that many inside and outside the region may view Boston as less divided than in the past, and many Whites may believe that racial discrimination plays a minor role in the lives of minorities in Metro Boston. In contrast, our data show that strong perceptions remain among local African Americans and Hispanics that people in the region do not always treat them fairly or welcome them fully within the broader community.

Perceptions of discrimination among other demographic subgroups. While significant shares of Hispanics in our poll report personal experiences of discrimination and sentiments of fear or discomfort in different regional settings, African Americans consistently report these perceptions at even higher levels. Our poll reveals that differences in perceptions occur across other demographic subgroups as well. In terms of gender, **women are more likely than men to perceive that major forms of discrimination are a problem in the region.** Women are more likely than men to believe that discrimination by White owners and minority fears of community hostility keep members of their racial group from good housing opportunities; they are also more likely to believe that discrimination in general is a serious problem in Metro Boston. Hispanic women are more likely than Hispanic men to report experiences with discrimination in a recent job search and to cite poor housing as a barrier to good housing for Hispanics. Other researchers have also found that women tend to perceive more

discrimination than men.¹²⁰ **At the same time, men are more likely to report experiences with some forms of day-to-day discrimination**, such as encounters with people who act afraid of them or think they are dishonest. This finding is not surprising when one considers the prevalence of media images portraying dark-skinned men as criminals and perpetrators of violence.¹²¹

Looking across age and marital status categories, **older minority respondents are more likely than younger respondents to perceive that discrimination exists in the metro area housing market and is a serious problem in general.** People over age 35 and those who are or have been married are also more likely than younger and never married people to believe that fear prevents many in their racial group from moving to new communities. Other research has found positive as well as more complex relationships between age and perceived experiences of discrimination, with people in middle age categories in some cases reporting the highest levels.¹²² The size of our survey sample was too small to allow us to examine the relationship between age and perceived discrimination in greater detail, but our findings agree with those that report higher levels of perceived discrimination after age 35. In the Metro Boston context, older people who are or have been married often have children; families may face colder receptions than younger singles from communities that associate increased numbers of racial minority children with increased community costs and social problems.

Our poll also suggests that **younger minority respondents and those who have never been married are more likely than their counterparts to experience the hassles of day-to-day discrimination.** Those who are age 35 or under and who are single more often report that others act afraid of them, treat them as dishonest, or insult them. Once again, broader social stereotypes may contribute to these outcomes. Common media images of criminals are not only depicted as dark-skinned men (as noted above), but also as young individuals unattached to families. These stereotypes may contribute to greater wariness or outright hostility to younger, unmarried minorities. It is also possible that minorities with these characteristics are more likely than older, married people to spend time outside of the home and in public places where day-to-day types of racial discrimination are more likely to occur.

Prior research has shown complex effects of socioeconomic status on perceived discrimination among racial minorities. While income has been found to have an inconsistent relationship with different measures of perceived discrimination, several studies find that higher levels of education are associated with greater perceptions of racial discrimination.¹²³ Our poll similarly reveals a variety of contrasting relationships between income, education, and views of racial discrimination. On the one hand, **minorities of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to attribute poor housing**

¹²⁰ Schuman, 235. Note: Schuman et al.'s gender findings were for Whites. Other studies have found that men are more likely than women to perceive major and day-to-day forms of discrimination among Blacks (Kessler, 218; Forman, 253).

¹²¹ See, for instance, Robert M. Entman and Andrew Rojecki, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).

¹²² Forman, 246-249; Kluegel, 175.

¹²³ Forman, 253; Schuman, 276-278.

outcomes to affordability constraints, poor information, and fear of community hostility. These barriers can all be interpreted as limitations on the part of minority group members themselves, suggesting that respondents of higher socioeconomic status may have a dimmer view than their lower status counterparts of their fellow racial group members' abilities to do well in the housing market.

Our poll also suggests that higher income and education protects minorities from some forms of discrimination: many with higher incomes are less likely than those with lower incomes to encounter people who insult them or view them as dishonest; African Americans with college degrees are less likely than those with less education to say they have been threatened or harassed. The more striking finding, however, is that **minorities of higher socioeconomic status are equally as likely, and in some cases more likely, than their lower status counterparts to say they have experienced different forms of racial discrimination in Metro Boston.** For instance, higher and lower income minorities perceive discrimination in the housing market at equal rates. Minorities with higher incomes and college degrees are equally likely as their less advantaged counterparts to experience such daily affronts as getting worse service in restaurants, facing people who act afraid of them, and having a racial encounter with the police. Further, minorities with college degrees are *more* likely than their lesser educated counterparts to report a recent experience with discrimination at work. And African Americans with higher incomes are *more* likely than those with lower incomes to believe that discrimination is a serious problem in Metro Boston.

Other researchers have argued that middle-class Blacks often have more negative views of race relations than lower class blacks because their economic standing puts them in greater contact with Whites, and because their relative economic success still cannot shield them from acts of racial discrimination.¹²⁴ Our poll results suggest that indeed, higher levels of income and education do not diminish minorities' experiences of many forms of discrimination in Metro Boston. For a region that boasts a host of world-class educational institutions and a well-educated population, and for a region that needs to attract talented individuals of all backgrounds to maintain its economic competitiveness, it is a disquieting sign when the most successful racial minority members of the community feel the same levels of racial aversion or mistreatment as those with fewer advantages and less social status.

Attitudes toward school integration. Our poll shows that Hispanics in Metro Boston are fairly positive about the region's record with school integration: about 60 percent believe that integration has improved educational quality for both minority and White students. African Americans express greater ambivalence on this issue: about 46 percent say that integration efforts have improved schooling for minorities, and a little over half say that such efforts have improved schooling for Whites. This ambivalence could reflect the lingering legacy of Boston's contentious efforts to desegregate its schools thirty years ago, and the very public indignities African Americans faced in those efforts. Despite these reservations, **vast majorities of African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston believe that more should be done to integrate the**

¹²⁴ Schuman, 277-278.

region's schools. Support for this position is even stronger among respondents who are young, male, and never married (possibly some of the groups who are less likely to have directly experienced Boston's early desegregation efforts), as well as those with lower incomes. Due to the limitations of our study, we were not able to probe further what sorts of policies African Americans and Hispanics would support most to reach this goal. It is clear, however, that despite Boston's difficult past, most respondents in our poll desire greater school integration and wish for greater efforts to achieve this end.

Clearly, this study carries a number of limitations. Due to the limited amount of time that researchers can keep respondents on the telephone, we were restricted in the number of questions we could ask in our telephone poll. Ideally, we would have been able to include more questions about experiences of discrimination in the workplace, since prior research has found that reports of discrimination are often highest in this important domain, and because workplace discrimination can take on a wide variety of forms. We would like to have asked more questions distinguishing among lifetime, recent, and every-day experiences of discrimination, for prior research shows that response patterns can be obscured when these different types of discrimination are not clearly identified and probed thoroughly. Future studies would do well to include in-depth interviews in their research design, so we can learn more about which residential communities, shopping areas, restaurants, and other public settings are most racially forbidding for minority groups in the region. Such interviews could also explore more deeply the fear that minorities express about moving to specific communities, and how much decisions to self-segregate stem from desires for membership in their own racial community versus fear of hostility from other communities.

In addition, limited resources restricted the scope of our study. Because the survey sample size was small, the margins of error for some subgroup responses were large — making differences in some response rates statistically insignificant when in the larger population responses across different subgroups may indeed vary greatly. Importantly, future studies should also survey Whites and Asians and distinguish between immigrants and non-immigrants in the region. A full understanding of perceived discrimination in this increasingly diverse region is not complete until the views of all groups are examined and compared.

Despite these limitations, the picture that emerges from our small-scale survey is stark. Within a region that is deeply segregated by race and ethnicity, large shares of African Americans and Hispanics believe that they are not welcome in many existing communities, and that fear of resident antipathy restricts their group's residential choices. Day-to-day forms of racial discrimination are perceived as regular occurrences for significant shares of African Americans and Hispanics. A vast majority of African Americans say that racial discrimination is a serious problem in Metro Boston, and most say that more should be done to increase school integration. Boston and the surrounding region may have opened its doors to many people of color since the turbulent times of the mid-1970s, and today's racial climate may be less divisive than in the past. For substantial shares of African Americans and Hispanics, however, much still needs to change before they can feel equally respected and fully welcome across the region.

Policy Implications

To make progress in ending the persistent and serious perceptions of discrimination held by African Americans and Hispanics in Metro Boston, the region must make a serious commitment to eradicating the roots of these perceptions. Much documentation exists about the very real forms of racial discrimination that continue to operate in institutions and by individuals in multiple life domains. At minimum, the fight against ongoing racism and discrimination in institutional settings needs to be waged on the following fronts:

- *Employment settings.* Previous research has found that African Americans face a 40 percent chance of intentional racial discrimination in obtaining employment in the area; the chance for Hispanics is 38 percent and for Asians, 36 percent.¹²⁵ This risk occurs not only in getting a job, but also in getting promotions, compensation, training, and other employment-related opportunities. Employers and civil offices in the region must continue to:
 - examine seriously claims of discrimination in the workplace and to enforce rigorously existing anti-discrimination laws;
 - work with experts to train managers and hiring officers to recognize and combat racial prejudices that may enter into hiring and employee management situations, and to eliminate policies as well as individual employee actions that lead to differential treatment of racial minorities;
 - fight entrenched biases and negative assumptions about the contributions that racial minorities can make in the workplace, by actively recruiting and developing racial minorities at all occupational levels within their establishments.
- *Housing.* Studies in Metro Boston and around the country show that housing market discrimination is still prevalent, although very often subtle and difficult to detect. Concerted public and private efforts around the region to end housing discrimination should include the following elements:
 - broadly distribute and advertise information about how to recognize housing discrimination and what legal remedies are available;
 - increase resources and avenues available for enforcing anti-discrimination laws in housing;
 - increase training within real estate agencies and among individual agents to ward against sales or rental advertising practices that result in differential treatment of racial and ethnic minorities in the housing market. Training should help individuals recognize the conscious and unconscious biases they may hold about clients of different backgrounds that lead to racial steering, differential dissemination of information, or other discriminatory acts;

¹²⁵ See note 39.

- request municipalities to work together to increase the share of affordable housing that is available to people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds in every town and segment of the region.
- *Police practices.* Racial profiling by police officers continues to be a problem both in Metro Boston as well as around the country. Our poll data show that higher incomes and education do not protect African Americans and Hispanics from the indignities of frequent police questioning or even harassment, simply because of their racial and ethnic backgrounds. Police departments around the region must continue to:
 - train their staff to apply standards of equal treatment to people of all backgrounds as they work to maintain public safety;
 - actively recruit and develop trained officers who 1) understand the backgrounds, concerns, and protection needs of *all* members of diverse communities, and 2) can work with community members in relationships of trust to jointly build safe and responsive community environments.

Efforts to eliminate fear and feelings of racial rejection among minority populations must also come from communities and individuals. Low levels of social trust within the Boston region reflect not only high levels of fear among African Americans and Hispanics, but also fear and suspicion among Whites and other groups. Organizations and groups that can help break down barriers of mutual distrust and promote inter-group understanding and acceptance include:

- *Schools.* Schools are places that teach young people cognitive skills that will allow them to function and thrive as future members of the labor force. They are also places where young people learn interpersonal relational skills, ethical awareness, and how to live within a broader social community. As social breeding grounds for the region's next generation, schools offer critical opportunities to help people of diverse backgrounds come together to learn about each others' differences; to overcome the fear and prejudices that grow from racial isolation and inter-group ignorance; and to learn how to function effectively in an increasingly multiracial society. As a region, we should:
 - heed the desires of a preponderance in our largest minority communities for greater racial integration in local schools. Efforts to maintain racial diversity within schools inside individual districts should not be abandoned;
 - continue to pursue efforts that promote greater racial diversity in schools across the region. Examples include inter-district programs like METCO, as well as policy measures that promote greater residential integration throughout Metro Boston.
- *Community organizations.* These groups can play an important role in bringing diverse people together through work on shared community development goals. Explicit efforts to build understanding and trust across groups of different racial and ethnic backgrounds should also be pursued. Initiatives such as the City-Wide Dialogues run by the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts should be promoted and expanded across the region.

- *Faith-based organizations.* As centers that focus on building and supporting the spiritual and moral life of the community, faith-based organizations are in a unique position to reach out and build understanding among people of different racial, ethnic, national, and class backgrounds. Actual and perceived discrimination point directly toward issues of social fairness and ethical human behavior, issues that lie at the heart of what faith-based communities seek to understand and promote. Faith-based institutions are powerfully situated to serve as ever-present social prods, urging individuals and larger communities to continually examine and challenge their deepest fears and assumptions about unfamiliar others. They can serve as strong mediators that foster real exchange, mutual learning, and shared understanding across diverse groups. They can also serve as moral spurs that urge individuals and broader social groups to act in ways that live up to their highest community ideals.
- *Researchers and journalists.* Most residents of Metro Boston have a strong interest in their own social and economic opportunities in the region as well as the opportunities and quality of life available to all residents in the area. While many residents may have a sense that racial segregation exists in Metro Boston, and that some groups experience greater poverty levels than others, large shares of the population may not have a clear understanding of the extent of racial segregation that exists and the degree to which ongoing segregation and discrimination adversely affect the life chances of many people within our midst.

Social researchers can play a powerful role in helping to uncover and explain the complex social, economic, political, and individual forces that contribute to racial inequality, and in assessing and sharing the lessons learned from past policies to address inequality. Areas for further research that follow from this study include perceptions of discrimination and attitudes toward integration among Whites, Asians, immigrants, and non-immigrants in Metro Boston; the types of workplace discrimination that racial minorities experience most frequently; which communities, shopping areas, and other public venues in the region feel most unwelcoming; and the types of policies or changes they believe would help them feel more welcome.

Journalists and the media can play a major role in challenging the public to face the social problems within Metro Boston, with reports that discuss the difficult conflicts and social barriers that produce these problems and that hinder effective redress. The media have the potential to help build interracial understanding and insight within the public by sharing stories of individuals and institutions in their struggles for social and economic opportunity, and by avoiding the easy stereotypes and popular myths that hinder deeper public awareness of the challenges that many groups face. As the region continues to grow more diverse, the future health and strength of Metro Boston depend on the ability of all within its borders to put interracial isolation, ignorance, misunderstanding, and distrust truly in the past.

Appendices

Note: The poll's overall margin of error across the total sample (N=403) is plus or minus 5 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. Because the size of an error margin depends on the percentage levels reported as well as the number of actual respondents for each survey question, error margins for different questions throughout the survey and for responses by disaggregated groups typically deviate from 5 percentage points, and are often much larger. For instance, margins of error for responses by Hispanics polled in the City of Boston are frequently quite large because of their small sample size. Actual error margins for each question and subgroup are noted for all reported figures in the following Appendix tables.

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