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### Introduction

This report summarizes the findings of the 2007 Empire State Poll (ESP), conducted by the Survey Research Institute at Cornell University. The 2007 ESP queried New York State residents' opinions regarding the most important issues facing their community and New York State as a whole, community satisfaction, economic perceptions, social distance, and resident mobility.

### Methodology

- In total, 800 telephone interviews were conducted between January 25, 2007 and March 28, 2007, equally divided by upstate/downstate, and then weighted to reflect actual population distribution within the state.
- The ESP utilizes a random digit dial (RDD) sample of NYS households. Eligible respondents must be residents of NYS and at least 18 years old.
- The cooperation rate was 55.2% using American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) standards.
- The margin of error (MOE) for reported statewide results is 3.5% and is 4.9% for upstate/downstate comparisons. The MOE may be smaller for some questions depending on number the of response options. For regional comparisons, "Downstate" is defined as New York, Rockland, Kings, Richmond, Westchester, Suffolk, Queens, Nassau, and Bronx counties, with the remaining counties of the state defined as "upstate."

See Report 1: Introduction & Methodology for full description at [www.sri.cornell.edu](http://www.sri.cornell.edu).

### Issues of Concern to New Yorkers

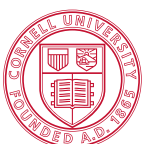
Overall, the most frequently cited issue facing local communities was taxation (local, state, or federal) with nearly one in five (18%) residents identifying this issue as most important.

**Table 1** Most Important Issue in Local Community

Top Issues	% of respondents citing... as most important issue		
	NYS	Upstate	Downstate
Taxes (local, state, or federal)	18	29	9
Crime	12	6	20
Employment	9	12	6
Education	8	5	12
Land Development	7	7	7
Economic Growth	5	9	1
Housing	5	2	9
Other Issues	36	30	36

*Other responses mentioned by fewer than one 10% of respondents included: drug use, traffic and parking, facilities and services for children, public utilities, fostering a more friendly community*

- Crime (12%), employment (9%), and education (8%) are the next most frequently cited issues overall.
- However, there is a great deal of regional variation in what issues New Yorkers feel are most important to their local communities. For example, upstate residents are more than three times as likely (29% vs. 9%) to cite taxes as an issue as downstate residents.
- Downstate residents are substantially more likely to cite crime (20% vs. 6%), education (12% vs. 5%), and he affordability and availability of housing (9% vs. 2%) than upstate residents.
- Conversely, upstate residents are more likely to identify (employment 12% vs. 6%) and economic growth (9% vs. 2%) as important issues facing their community than downstate residents.
- For Democrats, the top three community issues are crime (15%), education (11%), and taxes (11%). The three most important community issues for Independents were taxes (17%), crime (15%), and employment (10%). For Republicans, taxes (32%), education (11%), and land development (9%) were the three top community issues.



As in previous years, employment (16%) and taxes (16%) continue to be cited as the most important issues facing New York State. However, the overall number of residents citing employment has declined by 12 percentage points since 2004.

**Table 2** Most Important Issue in New York State

Year	% of respondents citing... as most important issue				
	Employment	Taxes	Economy	Education	Healthcare
2007 overall	16	16	9	4	9
- 2007 (upstate)	19	25	11	3	8
- 2007 (downstate)	13	7	8	5	10
2006	21	15	10	8	10
2005	25	17	8	8	7
2004	28	10	13	11	10
2003	25	27	12	12	17

Other responses mentioned by fewer than one 10% of respondents included: foreign immigration, terrorism, state budget, state government, crime, environment, housing, and people leaving NYS.

- The number of New York residents citing education as the most important issue has declined by about two-thirds since 2003 (4% in 2007 vs. 12% in 2003).
- Upstate residents are nearly four times as likely (25% vs. 7%) to cite taxes as the most important issue facing NYS than downstate residents. This regional split was the same in 2006.
- The three top statewide issues cited by Democrats were employment (15%), healthcare (13%), and economic growth (11%). For Independents, employment (16%), taxes (14%), and crime (8%) are the top three most cited statewide issues. The three statewide issues most frequently cited by Republicans were taxes (31%), employment (14%), and security/terrorism (8%).

## Community Satisfaction

Across the three dimensions upon which residents' opinions were queried, public education had the highest level of satisfaction (56%), followed by city or town government (49%), and employment conditions (33%).

- Satisfaction with city/town government and employment in 2007 was comparable to levels of satisfaction previously expressed in 2004 and 2005.
- However, satisfaction with local public education declined in 2007 compared to 2005 (56% vs. 65%).

**Table 3** Resident Satisfaction with...

Dimension	% of respondents satisfied with...				
	Upstate	Downstate	2007	2005	2004
Public Education	70	45	56	65	57
City/Town Govt.	53	48	49	50	46
Employment	27	41	33	35	31

Note: question was not asked in 2006.

- Upstate residents are substantially more likely to be satisfied with local public education (70% vs. 45%) than downstate residents.
- Conversely, downstate residents are more likely to be satisfied with employment conditions in their local community (41% vs. 27%).

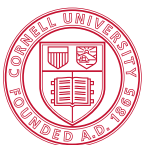
## Evaluations of Personal Finance

A majority of New York State residents reported that their personal economic situation remained unchanged from 2007.

- Since 2005, respondents' reported personal financial situation over the last year remained remarkably consistent, with a little more than half (55%) reporting their financial situation remained the same, a little less than a quarter (22%) reporting that it had worsened, and about another quarter (23%) reporting that it had improved.

**Table 4** Reported Personal Economic Conditions in NYS

Year	% of all respondents		
	Worse	Same	Better
<b>Perceptions of Past Year</b>			
2007 overall	22	55	23
- 2007 (upstate)	25	50	24
- 2007 (downstate)	21	57	21
2006	22	56	23
2005	22	53	25
2004	22	55	24
2003	32	50	18
<b>Perceptions of Forthcoming Year</b>			
2007 overall	11	46	40
- 2007 (upstate)	15	52	33
- 2007 (downstate)	11	43	44
2006	15	51	34
2005	13	51	35
2004	9	48	43
2003	15	53	32



Personal economic optimism rose somewhat in 2007 compared to 2006, though still lower than its high in 2004.

- Two in five respondents (40%) believe that their personal economic situation will improve in the forthcoming year, a six-point increase from 2006 and the second-highest percentage since 2004 (43%).
- Almost half of the poll respondents (46%) believed their economic situation will remain the same and eleven-percent believed it would worsen (a four-point decrease from 2006).

Some variation in personal economic situations by region.

- Downstate residents report less change in their personal economic conditions compared to upstate residents (57% vs. 50%) in the past year.
- Looking to the next year, downstate residents (44%) are substantially more optimistic that their personal financial conditions will improve compared to upstate residents (44% vs. 33%, respectively).

## Evaluations of State Economic Performance

The ESP found the number of New Yorkers who described the state economy as worsening over the past year increased significantly in 2007.

- The number of residents who characterized the state economy as being “worse” over the past year increased to 43% in 2007 from 36% in 2006. The number of respondents who said that the economy remained the same decreased by 10 points (37% in 2007 vs. 47% in 2006).

NYS residents’ economic expectations for the state economy substantially improved in 2007, with a substantial increase in the numbers of New Yorkers who believe the economy will improve.

- The number of residents who expect the state economy to improve in the forthcoming year increased by eleven percentage points (from 23% in 2006 to 34% in 2007). Consequently, the number of residents who believe the state economy will remain the same dropped to 38% in 2007.

**Table 5** Evaluations of Economic Conditions in NYS - Residents

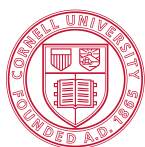
Year	% of all respondents		
	Worse	Same	Better
<b>Perceptions of Past Year</b>			
2007 overall	43	37	20
- 2007 (upstate)	50	41	9
- 2007 (downstate)	39	35	27
2006	36	47	16
2005	50	34	16
2004	54	29	17
2003	79	17	3
<b>Perceptions of Forthcoming Year</b>			
2007 overall	28	38	34
- 2007 (upstate)	31	43	26
- 2007 (downstate)	27	35	39
2006	25	52	23
2005	31	45	25
2004	27	39	34
2003	34	25	24

Perceptions of the state economy continue to vary substantially by region.

- Half of upstate residents believe the state economy worsened over the past year compared to about forty percent (39%) of downstate residents.
- Conversely, downstate residents were three times more likely than upstate residents (27% vs. 9% respectively) to respond that the state economy has improved over the past year
- Upstate residents were substantially more likely to believe that the state economy will remain the same (43% vs. 35%) in the forthcoming year while downstate residents were more likely to believe that it would improve (39% vs. 26%, respectively) compared to upstate residents.

On a parallel survey of 1000 New York State businesses conducted during the same timeframe as the 2007 ESP, the Survey Research Institute also queried business perceptions of the state’s economic performance.

- Business evaluations about performance of the state economy over the previous year closely mirrored those of the general population.
- Likewise, business expectations for the state economy over the next year also matched those of the general population, except upstate businesses were somewhat more likely to believe the economy will be worse (35% vs. 29%) and less likely to believe it will be better (29% vs. 37%) than the upstate general population.



**Table 6** Evaluations of Economic Conditions in NYS - Businesses

Year	% of all respondents		
	Worse	Same	Better
Perceptions of Past Year			
2007 overall	44	37	19
- 2007 (upstate)	51	38	11
- 2007 (downstate)	39	36	24
Perceptions of Forthcoming Year			
2007 overall	31	35	35
- 2007 (upstate)	35	36	29
- 2007 (downstate)	29	34	37

## Social Distance in NYS by Race/Ethnicity

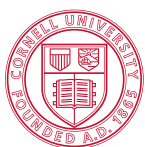
The ESP 2007 measured NYS residents' perceived social distance to different social groups such as whites, blacks, Asians, Hispanics, and homosexuals. Social distance is measured by asking respondents whether they would be very much opposed, somewhat opposed, somewhat in favor, or very much in favor of having a close relative marry a person from each listed group. The overall percentage of respondents who oppose the marriage of a close relative to different racial/ethnic groups is provided in Table 7 as an indicator of distance.

**Table 7** Social Distance to Ethnic/Racial Groups

Respondent Socio-Demographic	Percentage Oppose Marriage of Close Relative To Someone Who is...			
	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Statewide	4	16	11	11
Upstate	5	26	16	17
Downstate	3	11	10	8
White	3	23	15	15
Black	4	0	8	5
Other Race <sup>1</sup>	7	12	8	2
Hispanic/Latino	7	11	15	3
Non-Hispanic/Latino	3	17	11	11
Men	5	21	13	11
Women	3	13	11	10
High School or less	5	19	19	11
Some Coll./Associates	4	16	10	11
4-year degree or more	3	15	9	10
Under 35 yrs old	3	7	7	6
35 to 54 yrs old	4	14	12	10
55 yrs old+	5	27	17	15

Notes: 1. For analysis "Other Race" includes persons who are Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian/Aleut/Eskimo, or mixed race. Results are aggregated due to limited sample size.

- Statewide, by a large margin, there is least opposition to marrying someone who is white (4%) and most opposed to marrying someone who is black (16%).
- Respondents from upstate NY were more than twice as likely to oppose having a close relative marry someone who is black than residents from downstate NY (26% vs. 11%, respectively). Upstate New Yorkers were also more opposed to having a relative marry someone who is Asian (16% vs. 10%) or Hispanic (17% vs. 8%).
- These statewide and regional differences are primarily a function of statewide and regional racial/ethnic compositions. According to 2005 data from the U.S. Census, 67% of NYS residents are white, 15% are black, and the remainder from other racial or mixed backgrounds. Furthermore, a disproportionate number of non-white and Hispanic residents live in downstate NY.
- There was significant variation in attitudes between whites and blacks when asked about a close relative marrying someone from each other's race. Nearly one in four white respondents (23%) are opposed to having a close relative marry someone who is black. In comparison, one in twenty-five (4%) blacks oppose a relative marrying someone who is white.
- In addition, the difference between white and black respondents varies across regions with whites in upstate NY substantially more likely than whites in downstate NY (26% vs. 18%) to oppose a close relative marrying a black person.
- Whites are two to three times more likely to oppose having a close relative marry someone who is Asian or Hispanic than either black respondents or respondents from other races (15% for white respondents, 5% for black respondents and 2% for other races).
- Hispanics/Latinos are less likely to oppose the marriage of a relative to someone who is black (11% vs. 17%) than non-Hispanics.
- Women in general are less likely to oppose (13% vs. 21%) a close relative marrying someone who is black than men.
- There was a strong association between the age of the respondent and opposition to having a relative marry someone who is black, Asian, and or Hispanic, with older respondents in general substantially more likely to oppose marriage to these groups compared to younger respondents, especially in the case of blacks (7% of respondents under 35 oppose marriage to blacks compared to 27% of respondents who are 55 or older).



## Support and Opposition To Same-Sex Marriage by Socio-Demographic Breakdowns

Governor Spitzer has recently proposed the legalization of same-sex marriage within New York State. Though the question posed on the ESP 2007 does not ask about the legalization of same-sex marriage, it does provide an indicator about how New Yorker's feel about same-sex marriage in general.

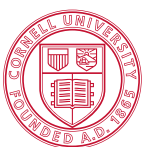
- Overall, a slight majority of NYS residents (52%) are opposed to having a close relative marry someone of the same-sex. However, though the number of NYS residents who favor marriage of a close relative to someone of the same-sex is nearly the same as the number of New Yorkers who oppose it, the intensity of opinion is not equal. Almost twice as many New Yorkers (35%) "very much oppose" having a relative marry someone of the same-sex as those who "very much favor" it (22%).

**Table 8** Favor/Oppose Marriage of Close Relative to Someone of the Same-Sex by Socio-Demographic Group

Respondent Socio-Demographic	% Favor	% Oppose
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>52</b>
Upstate	43	53
Downstate	44	51
Liberal Ideology	66	31
Moderate Ideology	40	55
Conservative Ideology	21	74
Democrat	46	50
Independent	50	46
Republican	27	69
High School or less	35	61
Some College/Associates/Technical	44	53
4-year degree or more	62	34
Men	42	52
Women	46	52
Married	40	55
Divorced/Widowed/Separated	40	55
Single	51	45
White	49	46
Black/African-American	31	68
Other Race <sup>1</sup>	40	58
Hispanic/Latino	41	58
Non-Hispanic/Latino	44	51
Under 35 yrs old	44	54
35 to 54 yrs old	47	49
55 yrs old+	40	56

Notes: 1. For analysis "Other Race" includes persons who are, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian/Aleut/Eskimo, or mixed race. Results are aggregated due to limited sample size.

- Two-thirds (66%) of liberals favor a relative marrying someone of the same-sex compared to nearly three-fourths (74%) of conservatives who oppose it. Moderates are more evenly split, though a majority (55%) oppose a close relative engaging in a same-sex marriage.
- Across political parties, a plurality of Democrats (50%) and a majority of Republicans (69%) oppose a close relative marrying someone of the same-sex. Conversely, a plurality of independents (50%) favors a relative marrying someone of the same-sex.
- Views vary considerably across levels of education, with NYS residents who have at least a four-year college degree almost twice as likely to favor (62% vs. 35%) a relative marrying someone of the same-sex than someone who has a high school education or less.
- Women are more likely to favor a relative marrying the same sex than men (46% vs. 42%).
- A majority of respondents who are married, or who were married in the past (55% in case), are opposed to having a close relative marry someone of the same sex. Conversely, a majority (51%) of single respondents favor having a relative marrying someone of the same sex.
- Non-whites, blacks in particular, are substantially more likely to oppose a close relative engaging in a same-sex marriage than white residents (68% of blacks vs. 46% of whites for example).
- Hispanics and Latinos are also more likely to oppose a same-sex marriage of a close relative than non-Hispanics/Latinos (58% vs. 51%, respectively).
- Respondents under 35 (54%) and those 55 years or older (56%) are more likely to oppose a relative marrying someone of the same-sex than respondents who are between 35 and 54 years old (49%).
- There is little variation in views of same-sex between regions even though the political demographics of each region vary greatly (55% of downstate respondents are self-identified Democrats, 9% are Republicans vs. 26% of upstate respondents are self-identified Democrats, 25% are Republicans). A possible reason is that though downstate New York is heavily Democrat in comparison to upstate New York, it has a disproportionate number of Black and Hispanic residents who are less favorable toward same-sex marriage than white respondents.



## Resident Mobility

The ESP annually examines community/residence mobility. In 2007, respondents were asked the likelihood that they would be living within in their residence in five years, and if not, the likelihood of remaining in New York State.

- In 2007, almost two-thirds (63%) of New York State residents said they would likely be living in their current residence in five years.
- One in ten (10%) of New Yorkers expect to leave state within five years.
- The downstate New York region experiences higher resident mobility than upstate New York (31% likely to leave residence vs. 20%).

**Table 9** Resident Mobility Within New York State

Year	% of respondents saying that 5 years from now they will...			
	Likely stay in current community/ residence*	Leave community/ residence but likely stay in NYS	Likely leave NYS altogether	Leave community/ residence unknown destination
2007 overall	63	26	10	1
- 2007 (upstate)	69	20	11	1
- 2007 (downstate)	59	31	10	1
2006	77	3	11	4
2005	81	5	10	4
2004	74	5	13	7
2003	77	**	**	**

\* In 2007, the wording was residence, not community.

\*\* Question was not asked on ESP 2003

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