

August 2, 2011, 5:01 PM ET

## **Affluent African-Americans Live in Poorer Neighborhoods Than Middle-Class Whites**

A new study finds that African-American and Hispanic Americans are more likely to live in poor neighborhoods — even if they're affluent.

The study of 2010 census data by John Logan, a sociology professor at Brown University, found that the average white household that earns less than \$40,000 is in a more affluent, resource-rich neighborhood than a black or Hispanic household that earns more than \$75,000.

Asians are the least likely to live in poor neighborhoods, regardless of their income. On average, affluent Asians live in neighborhoods that are 8.7% poor, while affluent whites live in neighborhoods that are 8.9% poor. Affluent Hispanics live in neighborhoods that are 13% poor, and affluent blacks live in neighborhoods that are 13.9% poor. (Affluent is defined in the study as household income of more than \$75,000 while “poor” is defined as income of less than \$40,000).

What explains the disparities?

Some say it's simple discrimination.

“White middle-class families have the option to live in a community that matches their own credentials,” Mr. Logan told USA Today. “If you're African-American and want to live with people like you in social class, you have to live in a community where you are in the minority.”

Some say social and cultural affinity may trump incomes when it comes to neighborhood choices.

“Customs, language, notions of prior national identity are what influence the decisions of people to live where they do,” said Roger Pilon, vice president for legal affairs at the conservative Cato Institute.

Either way, the Pew Research Center recently released a survey showing that the wealth gap whites and minorities is at a historic high due to the fall in housing prices.

Why do you think affluent African-Americans live in poorer neighborhoods than middle-class whites?

Copyright 2008 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved