

## **Socioeconomic Differentials among White Ethnics in the American Community Survey, 2017-2021**

### **ABSTRACT**

We investigate socioeconomic variation among Whites in the United States. Using data from the American Community Survey, we explore educational attainment, wages, poverty, affluence, and household income by ancestry groups among non-Hispanic, single-race Whites. The results indicate that persons who identify as White report a wide variety of ethnic ancestries. Some ethnic groups have relatively high socioeconomic attainments while others have low outcomes, including a few ethnic groups with poverty and high-school dropout rates that are similar to Blacks. Some of the socioeconomic variation between White ethnic groups is explained by demographic control variables such as age, nativity, region, and disability, but notable socioeconomic differentials frequently persist. Indeed, some of the between-ethnic differentials are as large as the differentials between Whites overall and Blacks. A great deal of socioeconomic variation within specific ethnic groups is furthermore often evident. This substantial heterogeneity in socioeconomic characteristics is inconsistent with the critical demography paradigm which tends to portray Whites as a homogenous and uniformly advantaged group. Our findings suggest that the demographic heterogeneity of Whites—which includes substantial variation in both ethnic identity and socioeconomic characteristics—is a more realistic assessment in the contemporary era of rising class inequality.

## **Introduction: White Privilege and the Critical Demography Paradigm**

In recent years, Whites have been commonly portrayed as a uniformly advantaged group. This advantage is attributed to systemic racism that upholds White privilege (Feagin 2013; Banaji, Fiske and Massey 2021; Hummer 2023), as posited by critical race theory, a widely used framework in American sociology (e.g., Golash-Boza 2016; Reece 2019; Bonilla-Silva 2021). For example, Feagin and Vera argue that (1995:7), “White racism can be viewed as the socially organized set of attitudes, ideas, and practices that deny African Americans and other people of color the dignity, opportunities, freedoms, and rewards that this nation offers White Americans.”

This critical race perspective is gaining popularity within American population studies, where it is also known as the *critical demography* paradigm (e.g., Horton 1999; Massey 1999; Bratter 2015; Hargrove 2018; Stewart et al. 2020; Baker et al. 2022; DeAngelis et al. 2022; Hummer 2023; Ortega 2023). This approach similarly asserts that “White persons gain privileges because of structural arrangements benefitting them” (Saenz and Morales 2019:169), and that White privilege “is used to maintain the social, political and economic power of White supremacy” (Bhopal 2023:114). As stated by Saenz, Embrick and Rodriguez in the *International Handbook of the Demography of Race and Ethnicity* (2015:8), “the last few decades have seen the development of race perspectives that provide us a more profound understanding of how race stratification—White supremacy—is sustained due to its deep roots in the social, political, economic, and legal foundations and structures of societies....White supremacy is reproduced because it becomes part of what is considered natural and Whites derive privilege and rewards from their Whiteness.”

The assumption that “Whites derive privilege and rewards from their Whiteness” is emphasized in recent studies that are popular in population studies and related sociological

research. For example, McDermott and Ferguson (2022:257) conclude that one should “consider Whiteness as a complex identity and basis of structural privilege and neocolonial dominance.” Frankenberg (1988:1) theorizes about how “Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege.” Similarly, Withers (2017) argues that American culture is based on Whiteness which is defined as “a state of normalized White racial domination” which is consistent with Feagin’s (2013) assessment. Historical studies contend that immigrant groups including the Irish (Ignatiev 1994), Jews (Brodkin 1998), and Italians (Guglielmo 2003) came to be viewed and accepted as Whites only after exploiting, discriminating against, or otherwise distancing themselves from African Americans, thereby obtaining the benefits of White privilege.

More recently, Torkelson and Hartmann (2021) acknowledge that there is some variation in socioeconomic status among Whites, as evolving “notions of internal variation—even stratification—among Whites” (Torkelson and Hartmann (2021:9) are associated with a “blurred” White color line that creates “anxieties or resentments located between the heart and certain emerging margins of contemporary Whiteness. This is where demographics, or more precisely, the social construction and surrounding politics of demographics, come centrally into play” (Torkelson and Hartmann 2021:6). Despite this acknowledgement, Torkelson and Hartmann (2021:14) nonetheless conclude that “Whiteness studies has been about power and privilege since its inception” and that the advantages of Whiteness are still dominant due to “the fact that the problem of American race and racism remains, in a word, the problem of Whites and Whiteness.”

Twine and Gallagher (2008:4) relatedly describe the “third wave of Whiteness studies” as being concerned with understanding the evolution of “White supremacy in neo-apartheid, post-imperial, and post-Civil Rights contexts.” Consistent with the general perspective of Torkelson

and Hartmann (2021), Twine and Gallagher (2008:5) assert that Whiteness studies now must address how “institutional arrangements, ideological beliefs and state practices maintain White privilege even as those prerogatives are being challenged by anti-racist social movements, identity politics, multiculturalism and immigration.” That is, White privilege has not diminished in its significance but has only become more complex and perhaps less immediately obvious (see also Bonilla-Silva 2021).

Regarding the “internal variation—even stratification—among Whites” (Torkelson and Hartmann 2021:9), research addresses this issue by framing it as an anomaly in a system that overall protects White privilege. In other words, the “margins of contemporary Whiteness” (Torkelson and Hartmann 2021:6) are portrayed as varied sorts of nonrepresentative groups who do not fundamentally challenge the underlying characterization of White supremacy for the majority of Whites. Torkelson and Hartmann (2021:10) thus describe these margins as including “neo-confederates, proto-fascists, the Proud Boys, Patriot Prayer, Christian identity groups, neo-Nazis, varied right wing militias, the Booglaoo movement, and monikers like the Alt Right...”

Hochschild (2018) refers the lower-income Southern Whites whom she studied as representing a “Great Paradox” (Hochschild 2018:8) because, despite their economic struggles, they tend to vote for the Republican Party, which she argues does not align with their economic interests (Hochschild 2018:261). Hochschild (2018) explains this lack of economic rationality among lower-income Southern Whites as being due to the weight they place on cultural issues associated with their nationalistic identity. For example, referring to Durkheim’s idea of collective effervescence, Hochschild (2018:224-228) describes how these lower-income Southern Whites derive pleasure from chanting “U.S.A! U.S.A! U.S.A!” which temperamentally propels them towards the political rhetoric of the Republican Party. Lower-income Southern

Whites are thereby portrayed as a particular case on the margins of Whiteness as those who lack the economic rationality or knowledge to sufficiently understand their own material self-interests.

Lower-income Southern Whites are also the subject of Wray's (2006) *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness*. Wray (2006:21) discusses historical references to this group as being "lubbers, crackers and poor White trash." They have often been seen as diseased with "hookworm" and related disorders including eating dirt and showing "symptoms that were taken as signs of hereditary indolence and feeble-mindedness" (Wray 2006:115). Eugenicists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century often advocated for public policy measures to limit the spread of the "defective germ plasm" of these problematic Whites including sterilization (Wray 2006:72). Wray's (2006) historical discussion is meant to illustrate how White privilege may be seen as the typical case while many poor Whites are "not quite White" (i.e., they have squandered much of their White privilege [Sakamoto and Wang 2015]) thereby constituting a specialized group on the margins of Whiteness.

In sum, recent research on Whites assumes that they are socioeconomically advantaged. This higher level of socioeconomic status is known as White privilege (or White supremacy) which is due to systemic and structural racism (Feagin 2013; Saenz and Morales 2019; Dennis, Chung, Lodge, Marinez and Wilbur 2021; Hummer 2023). This racism is seen as rooted in the disdain that Whites have for people of color and others with darker skin tones (e.g., Monk 2014; Bonilla-Silva 2004, 2019; Lee 2021; Hummer 2023). Whites then materially benefit from racial discrimination because oppression confers major socioeconomic advantages for Whites (e.g., "to receive greater economic remuneration and access to better occupations and prospects in the labor market" [Bonilla-Silva 2001:37]).

Those few groups of Whites who might seem to be not very socioeconomically advantaged are either largely ignored or viewed as atypical cases. They might be nationalistic xenophobes and avowed racists who often vote against their own economic interests. The peculiarities of those White communities help explain why they do not have higher levels of socioeconomic status (Torkelson and Hartmann 2021). According to this literature, future studies should seek to clarify the continuing racial domination that undergirds White privilege while clarifying how it persists amidst rising tensions about the margins of Whiteness and the color line (Twine and Gallagher 2008).

### **Rising Class Inequality**

Besides emphasizing White privilege, another feature of the foregoing literature is its relative neglect of class inequalities and the broader system of economic production, which both shape the context of racial inequalities and substantially change over time (Shibutani and Kwan 1965; Wilson 2015). Economic inequality has persistently risen (Shrider 2024) even as labor market discrimination has arguably declined in the decades after the post-Civil Rights era (Fryer 2014; Wilson 2015; Sakamoto and Koo 2024). In comparison with prior decades, African Americans and other racial minorities increasingly include middle-class and affluent households (Iceland 2019). In short, all racial categories are affected by changes in the system of economic production with its rising level of income inequality (Wilson 2015).

In contrast to the emphasis placed by many on the racial basis of inequality (e.g., Bonilla-Silva 2001; Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew and Freeman 2010; Lee and Kye 2016), Sakamoto and Wang (2015) discuss the high level of within-group variance in the income distributions of the racial categories, which is consistent with other related research (Autor, Katz and Kearney 2008; Leicht 2016; VanHeuvalen 2018). In terms of a one-way ANOVA of log-

household income, for example, only about 5 percent is between 6 racial categories using recent data (Sakamoto and Wang 2015:1267). Similarly, the coefficient of determination for most socioeconomic outcomes (e.g., long-term household income) is quite small if the regression equation only includes dichotomous variables indicating the major racial categories in the U.S. (e.g., Kim, Tamborini and Sakamoto 2018). Furthermore, net racial effects on wages are actually even smaller after controlling for productivity-related variables such as education, years of work experience, and other skill indicators (Farkas and Vicknair 1996; Sakamoto, Wu and Tzeng 2000; Caneiro, Heckman and Masterov 2005; Heckman 2011; O'Neill and O'Neill 2012; Wang et al. 2017).

Although the critical demography paradigm emphasizes White privilege as the most important source of inequalities, income and other related socioeconomic outcomes are now more heavily impacted by class variables (Sakamoto and Tzeng 1999; Leicht 2016), which explains rising inequality within racial categories. We refer to class in its generic Weberian definition as market position which has become more salient than race in 21<sup>st</sup> century America (Sakamoto and Wang 2015) due to dramatic changes in the economy (Leicht and Fitzgerald 2022). In post-industrial economies with advanced technologies and the globalized scale of production and market transactions, firms are constantly seeking to promote their market power because even small market advantages can sometimes facilitate the accumulation of large profits (e.g., by Amazon).

The U.S. was once considered to be one of the most competitive capitalist economies (Philippon 2019) among developed nations, but market segmentation and monopolistic advantages have reemerged in recent decades (Leicht 2016; Appelbaum 2017). Firm entry in many industries is declining along with reduced firm investment (Philippon 2019). Firm

concentration in industries has increased, indicating declining market competition and thus greater market power for larger firms. Market power “measures the ability of a firm to raise its price and increase its profits at the expense of its customers” (Philippon 2019:26), which generally reduces economic welfare and increases monopolistic profits (Eggertsson, Robbins and Wold 2021).

Relatedly, American economic growth has been relatively modest in recent decades, and most of that growth accrued to the upper quintile of the distribution of household income (Iceland 2006; Brady and Jantti 2016). The labor share of total income has declined while wage inequality has been increasing (Tomaskovic-Devey, Lin and Meyers 2015). Due to rising economic segmentation, the prices of many commodities now tend to be higher in the U.S. than in Europe (Philippon 2019:118-123). Meanwhile, incomes among American financiers has been notably increasing (Piketty and Saez 2006; Lin and Neely 2020).

Some of this trend is due to the rent-seeking behavior of corporations which engage in expensive lobbying of politicians in order to obtain favorable regulations and economic policies (Philippon 2019). Larger firms with greater market power spend much more on lobbying (Philippon 2019:167). Lobbying is effective because American political campaigns have become very expensive. According to Philippon (2019:176), “politics has become so expensive that new members of Congress are told in no uncertain terms that their first and highest priority in Washington is to raise the money they need to ensure that re-election.” Lobbying may arguably be seen as a form of legalized corruption that helps powerful firms to enhance their market power through favorable regulations and political clout (Campos and Giovannoni 2007).

Wage differentials across firms have become increasingly important in accounting for rising salary inequalities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century American economy (Grusky 2020). That is, rising

firm effects (i.e., firm rents) are likely very important in the trend in increasing earnings inequalities (Barth, Bryson, Davis and Freeman 2016; Song, Price, Guvenen, Bloom and Von Wachter 2019). Extreme cases might be referred to as “superstar firms” with very high levels of market share and wages (Autor, Dorn, Katz, Patterson and Van Reenen 2020).

However, not all workers at Amazon or other profitable companies gain from market power because “rent sharing” is declining (Cappelli 1998; Dencker 2009; Sakamoto and Kim 2014). Workers who are able to extract economic rents are those employees who are employed at firms with market power *and* are privileged by having some bargaining power in the labor process within their firm (Kim and Sakamoto 2008; Sakamoto and Wang 2017). Since most workers do not enjoy both of these advantages, wage inequality is increasing even within detailed occupational categories (Kim and Sakamoto 2008; Martin-Caughey 2021). As firms are continuously being restructured to minimize labor costs using modern technologies and globalized competition (Cappelli 1998; Dencker 2009), high salaries are increasingly limited to only some higher skilled workers (e.g., upper-level managers and elite professionals) with bargaining power and favorable employment contracts in larger firms with greater market power. These trends about the modern transformation of the system of economic production lead to the “increasing significance of class” (Sakamoto and Kim 2003) and the declining significance of racial inequalities (Sakamoto, Wu and Tzeng 2000).

### **Demographic Heterogeneity**

In contrast to the critical demography paradigm, we refer to our theoretical approach as the demographic heterogeneity view (Takei and Sakamoto 2011) which is generally consistent with the theory of ethnic stratification discussed by Shibutani and Kwan (1965) as well as Alba and Nee’s (2014) related rendition of contemporary assimilation theory. As immigrant groups adopt

the values, norms, skills, language, and productive practices of the mainstream society (both intra-generationally and intergenerationally), then these groups become more integrated in terms of secondary and eventually primary relationships and associations. The socioeconomic characteristics of these groups thereby come to resemble the mainstream, which itself may consist of the descendants of a broad mixture of people whose ancestors were among prior waves of immigrants (Alba 2020). Of course, the speed and degree of assimilation into mainstream society will be moderated by the extent to which it is open towards integrating the immigrant groups (Shibutani and Kwan 1965; Constant and Zimmerman 2013). Discriminatory practices may certainly impede and limit assimilation depending on historical, social, political, and economic circumstances (Shibutani and Kwan 1965; Portes and Zhou 1993; Sowell 1996; Sakamoto and Tzeng 1999; Iceland 2017).

We prefer the demographic heterogeneity approach over classic assimilation theory because the former emphasizes the increasing significance of class and social demographic factors. Given the context of rising inequality as discussed above, class factors will clearly be highly relevant for 21<sup>st</sup> century America (Sakamoto, Wu and Tzeng 2000; Borjas 2001). They will decisively impact their settlement process and socioeconomic prospects in the host society, often overriding issues relating to ethnic discrimination. The cultural factors associated with immigrants may also play some role operating through family characteristics, educational attainment, and ambition or motivation for achievement (Sowell 1996). Immigrants may sometimes be “selective” in regard to these variables among others such as health (Feliciano 2020). In our view, “straight line assimilation” is not necessarily always clearly evident (Alba and Nee 2014; Sakamoto, Takei and Woo 2011) especially because contemporary America

society is more accepting of ethnic diversity and “multiculturalism” (Nee and Holbrow 2013; Frey 2018; Alba 2020) and because social class factors are becoming more relevant (Zhou 1997).

### **White Ethnicity**

The ethnic identities of foreign-born immigrants are often prominent especially among those who recently arrived in the U.S. To some extent, their second-generation offspring may share their parental ethnic identities particularly if the second-generation offspring marry within their own ethnic group (Min and Kim 2009; Duncan and Trejo 2018). This ethnic identity may sometimes be further supported to the extent that the second-generation resides within an ethnic enclave (Rumbaut 1994).

With intergenerational assimilation combined with intermarriage that may be quite extensive especially for later generations (i.e., the “melting pot” [McLemore and Romo 1994]), ethnic identities become more selective and symbolic to the extent that they are only very weakly associated with any distinctive cultural characteristics (Gans 1979; Alba 1990; Waters 1990). In the case of third-and-higher generation Whites, however, the White racial category may often be too broad to be meaningful for one’s ancestral identity because “for many White Americans, Whiteness has been an empty signifier. In terms of identity, ethnicity was much more salient, along with regional identities.... Those identities had content. ‘White’ was often a residual category....” (Kasinitz and Waters 2023:9). For this reason, self-reports of ancestry among third-and-higher generation Whites may be more indicative of their ethnic identities which are often maintained (Alba 1990; Marger 2015) even if to some extent they may sometimes be loosely described as “symbolic” (Gans 1979; Waters 1990).

In sum, ethnic identity among Whites is likely a source of demographic heterogeneity. It varies widely among Whites both in terms of type and intensity. Ethnic identity is related to

assimilation among immigrants, but on the other hand, it does not necessarily disappear because White as an ancestral marker is likely often too broad to be adequate. Ethnic identity may be associated with socioeconomic attainments although for some persons that process may be more complex than a simple recursive causal chain.

### **The Current Study**

A feature of the Whiteness literature is the relative lack of quantitative evidence about the socioeconomic characteristics of Whites.<sup>1</sup> Much of it relies on historical studies, qualitative interviews based on small convenience samples, and theoretical discussions rather than representative or demographic analyses on the socioeconomic characteristics of Whites in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For example, a historical discussion of labor market conflicts and other social interactions between various Irish immigrants and African Americans in the antebellum Northeast (Ignatiev 1994), while insightful, does not provide (or aim to provide) information on the broad patterns of racial and ethnic inequalities two centuries later in contemporary America, which differs dramatically from the pre-Civil War era.

In the following, we contribute to this area of study by more thoroughly analyzing the socioeconomic attainments of Whites. Specifically, we are guided by the question of whether White privilege and the advantages associated with structural racism have led to consistently high socioeconomic attainment among Whites, or if factors such as assimilation patterns, regional economic disparities, and rising income inequality have contributed to distinct differences in outcomes among White ethnic groups.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in an influential article, Bonilla-Silva (2004:936) relies on just one descriptive statistical indicator which is “mean per capita income” which ignores variation in the distribution as well as multivariate analysis.

We note that this analysis is largely exploratory. We hypothesize that White ethnic identity remains salient due to economic patterns and differences in assimilation trajectories (H1), though we do not offer hypotheses for individual White ethnic groups. Our goal is to provide a foundation for future research that further examines the factors that help shape White ethnic heterogeneity. We also hypothesize that sociodemographic controls (e.g., age, nativity, education in some models) will explain more of the variation in outcomes (e.g., wages, poverty) than race/ethnicity itself (H2).

Our hypotheses contrast with the implicit predictions of the critical demography paradigm, which portrays Whites as being primarily high on socioeconomic attainments since White privilege is thought to be a homogenizing process across White ethnic groups, and which holds race to be the major driver of socioeconomic inequality (Ignatiev 1994; Brodtkin 1998; Guglielmo 2003; Bonilla-Silva 2004). While our focus is on Whites, other racial categories are also included as reference groups because White privilege is inherently comparative and because our findings are better placed within the broader context of diverse racial inequality in contemporary America.

## **Data and Methods**

We use the five-year, 2017-2021 sample of the American Community Survey (ACS). These data provide a large sample size to analyze relatively small ancestry groups. The ACS contains information on socioeconomic characteristics as well as many other relevant social demographic variables. We restrict our target population to persons who are at least 25 years of age and have additional selection criteria for specific outcomes, as described below.

### *Dependent Variables*

Socioeconomic well-being is multidimensional. We investigate five dependent variables that are available in the ACS and that are widely recognized as being intrinsically important socioeconomic outcomes. The first is the highest level of educational attainment completed, defined with five categories: less than high school; high school; some college (including associate's degree); bachelor's degree; and a master's, professional, or doctoral degree. This study is restricted to respondents who are at least 25 years old, by which age people typically have completed most of their education.

The second dependent variable is hourly wage, calculated as the individual's earnings (in terms of 2021 dollars in order to adjust for inflation) divided by her hours worked. Following convention, we log this variable to reduce its skew when used in regression models. This part of the analysis is restricted to individuals aged 25 to 64, with over 500 hours worked during the 12 months prior to the survey. The latter restriction is imposed in order to remove the effects of persons who are not clearly engaged with the labor market.

The third dependent variable is poverty status. People are considered poor if their family income falls below the official poverty line as established by the U.S. Census Bureau. The poverty line is characterized by different income thresholds that vary by family size and composition, which differentiate the basic economic needs of a household. This analysis is restricted to people in the poverty universe which refers to persons residing in households and excludes people living in institutionalized group quarters such as jails and military barracks.

The fourth dependent variable is affluence. Individuals are defined as affluent if their household income is five times or above the poverty line for their household (Farley 1996; Iceland 2019). While poverty status is a well-known indicator of the level of household income, affluence is not as widely studied. Affluence is increasingly becoming an important indicator to

investigate, however, as the proportion of high-income households has been rising (Iceland 2019) reflecting rising class inequality as discussed above. This analysis is restricted to people in the poverty universe, given that its calculation is based on a multiple of the poverty line variable.

The last dependent variable is household income. Unlike the poverty and affluence measures, it is not adjusted for family size or composition. The unit for this analysis, unlike other measures, is the household rather than the individual. Household income is measured in terms of the actual dollar amounts which are adjusted to 2021 dollars to control for inflation. When used as a dependent variable in the regression, household income is logged to reduce the skew. Following common practice, household incomes of zero or less are reassigned a value of 1 in order to permit logging (Sakamoto, Iceland and Siskar 2022).

### *Independent Variables*

As discussed above, we use ethnic identity to structure our analysis of the socioeconomic attainments of Whites. We measure ethnic identity in terms of the four-digit codes provided by the ANCESTR1 variable in the ACS. This variable records the first response to the ACS question “What is your ancestry or ethnic origin?” Respondents were asked to self-report any and as many responses as they wished to. ANCESTR1 is the first response that the respondent provided. As stated in the ACS manual, “Some compound responses such as ‘Pennsylvania Dutch’ or ‘French Canadian’ were treated as a single response. Respondents could give virtually any response, though they were instructed not to give a religion (the Census is not allowed to collect information on religion). A few responses were not categorized in the samples and were instead coded ‘Uncodable,’ ‘Deferred Cases,’ or ‘Other.’ These uncategorized responses were usually religions.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [https://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variables/ANCESTR1#description\\_section](https://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variables/ANCESTR1#description_section)

Because of the very large number of responses, we made our analysis tractable by explicitly identifying only those ANCESTR1 ethnic groups with a sample size of at least 100. Ethnic groups with less than 100 were grouped together as All Other Whites, which is a residual category. The ACS has another variable to recode the respondent's second response (i.e., ANCESTR2), but for the purposes of our exploratory study, we only consider ANCESTR1 and leave ANCESTR2 for future research.

For simplicity and to avoid confusion, we allocate all Hispanic Whites to an overall Hispanic category which has been extensively studied in prior research (e.g., Mitchell and Tienda 2006). That is, in our investigation, Whites only include non-Hispanic Whites. We use the terms “Whites” and “non-Hispanic Whites” interchangeably.

Because our study is focused on Whites (i.e., non-Hispanic Whites), our categorization of Hispanics is only a reference group that includes persons of any race who identify as Hispanic (i.e., Hispanic Whites, Hispanic African Americans, Hispanic Asians, Hispanic Native Americans, Hispanic Pacific Islanders, and Hispanic Other Race). For the purposes of our study, we refer to this grouping simply as Hispanics. Our analysis includes additional reference groups: non-Hispanic African Americans (hereafter, Blacks); non-Hispanic Asian Americans (hereafter, Asians); and non-Hispanic persons of all other races (i.e., Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, Other Race persons) which also includes multi-racial individuals (hereafter, Other Races).

We include several control variables in our regression models. Nativity is determined by whether or not an individual was born in the United States; among the foreign-born, we also differentiate people by citizenship status. We include a dichotomous variable for whether someone speaks English only, very well, or well. Age and age-squared are continuous variables.

Family type is measured in terms of three categories: married couple (as the reference), female headed households (family households with and without children), and other households. Gender is controlled for in the models specified with a male dichotomous variable although in some analyses we estimate separate models for men and women. We include dichotomous variables for whether the individual resides in a metropolitan area, has a disability, and or is a military veteran. The control for Census region is inclusive of four Census-designated regions (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West).

### *Analytic Strategy*

We begin with a descriptive examination of socioeconomic status by White ancestry group and other racial reference groups. We then use a variety of multivariate models to address our research questions. Specifically, we use ordinal logistic regression when education is the dependent variable because it consists of five ordered categories. The hourly wage dependent variable is continuous and is therefore analyzed with standard OLS regression, as is the household income variable. We use logistic regression models for our dichotomous poverty and affluence variables.

As is commonly done, we estimate separate models for men and women for the education and hourly wage dependent variables due to notable gender interactions in educational and labor force outcomes. We do not include the region and metropolitan status variables in the models with education as the outcome because education might have been completed quite some time before the data were collected and not in the current place of residence. In other words, current region and current metropolitan status are not exogenous independent variables with respect to highest level of educational attainment.

For each dependent variable, we estimate three model specifications. Two of these specifications are baseline models. We refer to the most basic, baseline specification as the White Privilege model which includes only the following independent variables: Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Other Race, with Whites as the reference group. This specification is inspired by the critical demography paradigm which emphasizes the overall socioeconomic advantages of Whites as a racial category due to White supremacy (e.g., Bonilla-Silva 2004:934; Saenz, Embrick and Rodriguez 2015:8).

The independent variables for the second baseline model include Black, Hispanic, Asian, Other Race, and a series of dichotomous variables indicating the various White ethnic groups, with English being the reference category. We refer to this specification as the White Ethnic model. The results for this model provide evidence about how much the White Privilege advantage varies by White ethnic group.

Our third specification is the Demographic Heterogeneity model. Its independent variables include all of the aforementioned racial and ethnic variables, but also the demographic control variables (i.e., age, gender, education, disability, metropolitan status, region, nativity, English ability, family type, and veteran status). According to the demographic heterogeneity view, many of these latter demographic variables will be far more important—both in terms of direct effects and explained variance—than the White privilege effect emphasized by the critical demography paradigm.

(Table 1 about here)

## **Empirical Results**

### *Ethnic Diversity*

Basic descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1, which lists 42 groups of Whites. As noted earlier, an ethnic group was explicitly identified as a separate category if its sample size is at least 100. A great deal of ethnic variability is evident in Table 1. These results are consistent with the demographic heterogeneity view that the White racial category is diverse.

The largest group in Table 1 is All Other Whites, which is the residual category that constitutes 33.8 percent of all Whites. This residual category includes over a hundred possible ethnic identities, including non-codable responses. The next largest specific group is German (14.9 percent) followed by English (10.4 percent) and then Irish (9.6 percent). The next largest group is United States (7.2 percent) which is not usually considered to be a specific ethnic identity by sociologists. Many of these Whites may not be aware of their ancestral origins.

The smallest ethnic groups shown in Table 1 (i.e., .01 percent or less) include Maltese, Turkestan, Rom (not to be confused with Romanian), German Russian, Uzbek, Kurd, Appalachian, and North American. Other small groups (i.e., less than 1.0 percent but greater than .01 percent) include Pennsylvania German (hereafter, Amish), Prussian, Greek, Sicilian, Portuguese, Croatian, Bohemian, Bosnian, Serbian, Hungarian, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Bosnian, Slav, Iranian, Israeli, Armenian, Palestinian, French Canadian, Cajun, and Texas. Groups greater than 1.0 percent but less than 7.0 percent include Dutch, French, Italian, Norwegian, Scotch Irish, Scottish, Swedish, and “White”.

These findings reveal a great deal of ethnic diversity among Whites. Immigrant streams have been ongoing for centuries generating a variation in identities. Ethnic diversity is wide-ranging, including not only some traditional, regional, or somewhat generic North American groups (e.g., Amish, Appalachian, Cajun, French Canadian, North American, Texan, United States, White) but also various European-origin groups (e.g., Croatian, Dutch, Greek, Hungarian,

Italian, Portuguese, Rom, Russian, Scottish, Swedish) as well as Middle Eastern and western Asian groups (Armenian, Iranian, Israeli, Kurd, Palestinian, Russian, Turkestani, Uzbek) among others.

### *Socioeconomic Diversity*

According to our demographic heterogeneity view, a variety of class and social demographic variables affect socioeconomic attainments. Being the largest racial category comprising a wide variety of persons who fall into the White category, socioeconomic variability (in addition to ethnic diversity) among Whites is likely to be pronounced. White privilege may not be applicable to all White ethnic groups.

The combined total for all Whites overall is referred to as “Non-Hispanic Whites, total” in Table 1. For this total of Whites overall, Table 1 shows that the percentage without a high school degree is 5.2 percent. That table indicates, however, substantial variation in the high school dropout rate by ethnicity. Some groups have very low percentages without a high school degree such as German Russian (1.0 percent), Prussian (1.2 percent), Russian (1.9 percent), Slav (2.0 percent), Swedish (2.1 percent), Norwegian (2.2 percent), Scottish (2.4 percent), Scotch Irish (2.5 percent), and Hungarian (2.8 percent). Other groups have percentages in the range from 3.0 percent through 5.1 percent (i.e., still below the overall average for Whites) including Dutch, English, French, German, Irish, Italian, Sicilian, Maltese, Croatian, Bohemian, Romanian, Serbian, Iranian, Israeli, and Texan.

Conversely, several groups are above the White overall figure of 5.2 percentage for high school dropouts. That is, the high school dropout figure is 26.6 percent for Amish, 15.9 percent for Rom, 13.9 for Kurd, 13.2 percent for Portuguese, 11.6 for Appalachian, 11.4 for Cajun, 10.2 for Uzbeks, 9.0 for United States, 8.4 for Bosnians, 8.4 for North African-Southwest Asian

country, 7.9 for Palestinians, 7.6 percent for White, 6.5 for Armenians, 6.5 for All Other Whites, 5.7 for Greeks, 5.6 for North American, and 5.3 for Turkestan. For reference, Table 1 shows that Blacks have a high school dropout rate of 10.3 percent which is a point estimate that is lower than the point estimates for Amish, Rom, Kurd, Portuguese, Appalachian, and Cajun. Indeed, despite all the rhetoric about Asian Americans being highly selective immigrants in regard to educational attainment (e.g., Lee and Zhou 2015), the proportion of Asians without a high school degree (9.8 percent) is only half of a percent point lower than Blacks.

Other educational statistics in Table 1 similarly indicate substantial ethnic variation among Whites. The percent with a graduate degree among Whites overall is 14.4 percent, but 25 groups have a higher percent (e.g., 15.1 percent among Dutch, 18.0 percent among English and Prussians, 15.6 percent among Irish, etc.). Despite having a slightly higher rate of high school dropouts than Whites overall, Greeks, Turkestan, Armenians, Uzbeks, Kurds, and Palestinians also nonetheless have a higher rate than Whites overall in possessing a graduate degree thus indicating some substantial within-group educational variability. On the other hand, Amish, Rom, Portuguese, Appalachian, Bosnian, White, and Cajun all have lower levels of possessing a graduate degree as well as a higher rate of high school dropouts than Whites overall.

Other socioeconomic variation evident in Table 1 include, for example, relatively high poverty rates above 11.0 percent among Amish, Turkestan, Rom, Kurd, Uzbek, Armenian, Palestinian, Appalachian, Whites, and North African-Southwest Asian country, but relative low poverty rates below 6.0 percent among English, Maltese, Norwegian, Scottish, Swedish, and Croatians. Almost half or more of Maltese, Croatian, Iranian, Israeli, and Russian are affluent in contrast to approximately a quarter or less of Amish, Rom, Uzbek, and Kurd. By comparison, the

percent affluent is 44.8 for Asians, 39.3 for Whites overall, 21.4 for Blacks, and 19.6 for Hispanics.

In sum, basic descriptive statistics reveal considerable diversity among Whites, supporting our first hypothesis (H1). Although often portrayed as uniformly homogeneous and socioeconomically successful (e.g., Feagin 2013; McDermott and Ferguson 2022; Saenz, Embrick and Rodriguez 2015; Bhopal 2023; Hummer 2023), diversity among Whites is evident in various manifestations. Ethnic diversity has already been noted above, but significant socioeconomic variation is also obvious. While statistical averages are typically referenced in regard to the socioeconomic standing of Whites, many ethnic groups have above-average levels of persons who do not have a high school degree including a few groups exceeding the rate of Blacks. Many White ethnic groups have educational or poverty levels that differ substantially from the overall average for Whites (either higher or lower) underscoring the fact that a measure of central tendency does not necessarily describe a majority of the group.

(Table 2 about here)

Ordered regression models of educational attainment are shown in Table 2.<sup>3</sup> To conserve space, Table 2 only shows the antilog of the coefficients (the “odds ratios”). The results for the basic White Privilege model (in which Whites overall are the omitted category and no control variables are included) show that White men overall are advantaged in educational attainment relative to Black men whose odds ratio is .52. However, with an odds ratio of only .29, Hispanic men appear to be even more disadvantaged than Black men. Conversely, Table 2 shows that the

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<sup>3</sup> The proportionality assumption of the ordered regression model (i.e., equal ethnic differences across every educational level) is, given patterns in Table 1, not always strictly correct and is likely violated. However, for our descriptive purposes involving many dozens of groups, we nonetheless use ordered regression models of educational attainment as a useful summary approach to outline broad patterns of ethnic differences.

Asian male odds ratio is 2.03, indicating that educational attainment among Asian men is much higher than among White men. The results for the White Privilege model in Table 2 for women shows a similar overall pattern although the racial differentials are somewhat less pronounced. For example, the odds ratio for Asian women is 1.49 which is lower than for Asian men.

In the White Ethnics model shown in Table 2, no control variables are included in the regression but the various ethnic groups are identified with English being the reference group. The earlier discussion of Table 1 identified various groups with high levels of high drop-outs, and those disadvantages are also evident in the White Ethnics model in Table 2 (e.g., Amish, Portuguese, Rom, Bosnian, Appalachian, Cajun, Kurd, United States). The new information provided by the White Ethnics model in Table 2 is that gender differentials are considered. The results in Table 2 reveal, however, that gender differentials in the ethnic effects are usually relatively small with the possible exceptions of significantly greater educational disadvantages being evident among Rom men (relative to Rom women) and Kurdish women (relative to Kurdish men).

The Demographic Heterogeneity model in Table 2 does not yield very different results or conclusions from the White Ethnics model. Although the Demographic Heterogeneity model in Table 2 controls for age, nativity, English speaking, disability, and veteran status, the results indicate that those independent variables do not substantially affect the ethnic differentials in regard to educational attainment for either men or women.

However, the goodness-of-fit improves considerably for the Demographic Heterogeneity model in Table 2. Among men, the pseudo-R-squared is .025 for the White Privilege model, .031 for White Ethnics model, and .065 for the Demographic Heterogeneity model in Table 2. The relative differences in the pseudo-R-squared's are even larger for women in Table 2. These

findings regarding the pseudo-R-squared's indicate that the control variables used in the Demographic Heterogeneity model, though limited, nevertheless explain more variance than do racial category and ethnicity. This provides support for our second hypothesis (H2).

(Table 3 about here)

Table 3 shows the regressions of log hourly wage. Among men, the R-squared is .048 for the White Privilege model, .055 for White Ethnic model, and .252 for the Demographic Heterogeneity model in Table 3. Among women, the R-squared is .030 for the White Privilege model, .036 for White Ethnic model, and .233 for the Demographic Heterogeneity model in Table 3. The White Privilege model thus explains less than 5 percent of the variance of log hourly wages, which is consistent with prior discussions (Sakamoto and Wang 2015:1267). For both men and women, focusing exclusively on racial category ignores the vast majority of wage inequality. The latter is far more affected by the control variables for the Demographic Heterogeneity model which in Table 3 include, age, nativity, English speaking, disability, and veteran status, education, family size and type, number of children, region, and metro status.

The results for the White Ethnic model in Table 3 for men reveal important variability across ethnic groups. Some groups have significantly higher wages than those of English ancestry (e.g., coefficients of .17 for Russian, .12 for Iranian, .12 for Israeli, .10 for Croatians) whereas many other groups have significantly lower wages (e.g., coefficients of -.45 for Rom, -.40 for Uzbek, -.33 for Amish, -.30 for Appalachian, -.25 for Bosnian, -.25 for United States, -.22 for White, -.20 for Kurd, -.19 for Palestinian, -.19 for Cajun, -.19 for Bohemian).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For simplicity, we just report the coefficients, but one may take their exponent (and then subtract 1) to find their exact proportionate effects.

Contrasting the White Ethnics model with the Demographic Heterogeneity model in Table 3, a portion of ethnic variation in wages is statistically explained by group differences in the control variables. Usually (but not always), the ethnic coefficients are somewhat closer to zero after controls. For example, the highly negative coefficients for Amish, Rom, and Cajun men are no longer statistically significant after controls (i.e., in the Demographic Heterogeneity model) and the statistically significant, positive effect for Israeli men is no longer statistically significant. The coefficient for Iranian is actually statistically significant and negative (i.e., it switches sign) in the model with controls.

However, even in the Demographic Heterogeneity model, variation in the net effects of ethnicity are still remain for men in Table 3. Some statistically significant, negative effects remain such as -.35 for Uzbek, -.20 for German Russian, -.20 for Appalachian, -.19 for Palestinian, -.16 for Kurds, -.14 for North African-Southwest Asian country, -.12 for Rom, and -.11 for Sicilian. For several of these groups (i.e., Uzbek, German Russian, Appalachian, Kurd, and Rom) the disadvantage is not statistically different from that for African American men in the Demographic Heterogeneity model as indicated in Table 3.<sup>5</sup>

The results for women in Table 3 similarly indicate ethnic variation, although perhaps a little less so than for men especially in the Demographic Heterogeneity model. After controls, the statistically significant, negative effects include -.16 for Prussians, -.14 for Uzbeks, -.10 for Amish, -.06 for Scotch Irish, and -.06 for Cajun as well as a few others with effects closer to zero. Statistically significant, positive effects in the Demographic Heterogeneity model for

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<sup>5</sup> In Tables 2, 3, and 4, the superscript *a* denotes that the coefficient is not statistically different from that for African Americans at the .05 level of significance. The superscript *b* indicates that the coefficient is statistically different from and lower than that for African Americans at the .05 level of significance.

women include .08 for Israeli, .03 for Norwegian, Portuguese, and Greek, .02 for Italian, and .01 for Irish.

(Table 4 about here)

The indicators of economic well-being shown in Table 4 include poverty, affluence, and household income. In regard to measures of goodness-of-fit, pseudo-R-squared's are shown in Table 4 for the poverty and affluence models because they are logistic regressions. R-squared is reported for the household income model which is estimated by OLS. Results from Table 4 consistently show that the goodness-of-fit of the Demographic Heterogeneity model far exceeds the goodness-of-fit of the White Privilege model and of the White Ethnic model. For example, in predicting poverty, the pseudo-R-squared is .020 for the White Privilege model, .024 for White Ethnic model, and .158 for the Demographic Heterogeneity model. In predicting affluence, the pseudo-R-squared is .028 for the White Privilege model, .033 for White Ethnic model, and .184 for the Demographic Heterogeneity model. In predicting household income, the R-squared is .020 for the White Privilege model, .023 for White Ethnic model, and .188 for the Demographic Heterogeneity model. The control variables for the Demographic Heterogeneity model in Table 4 are the same as for Table 3, and they clearly have much greater explanatory power than focusing exclusively on racial category (i.e., the White Privilege model) or ethnicity (i.e., the White Ethnic model).

Nonetheless, according to the results for the Demographic Heterogeneity model in regard to poverty, ethnic variation remains apparent even after the controls. Several groups in the Demographic Heterogeneity model have higher odds ratios than Blacks including Turkestan, Rom, Uzbek, Iranian, Kurd, Palestinian, and North African-Southwest Asian country while the odds ratios for Blacks and Appalachian, Armenian, Israeli, and German Russian are not

statistically different at the .05 level. Regarding affluence, the Demographic Heterogeneity model indicates that several groups have point estimates that are higher than Asians, including Greek, Italian, Maltese, Norwegian, Portuguese, Croatian, Serbian, and Israeli. Regarding household income, many statistically significant and negative coefficients are evident in the Demographic Heterogeneity model including, for example, -.98 for Turkestan, -.65 for Rom, -.63 for Kurd, -.59 for Palestinian, -.50 for Uzbek, -.48 for North African-Southwest Asian country, -.33 for Iranian, and -.33 for Appalachian. For comparative purposes, the household income coefficients in the Demographic Heterogeneity model are -.40 for Blacks and -.13 for Hispanics. The household income coefficients in the Demographic Heterogeneity model for Turkestan, Rom, Kurd, Palestinian, Uzbek, and Appalachian are not statistically different from Blacks at the .05 level.

## **Discussion**

In the case of Asian Americans, ethnic heterogeneity in socioeconomic status has been a time-hallowed critique of the “model minority” image (e.g., Kim 1973; Wong 1985; Sakamoto et al. 2009; Tran 2024). For example, as Kao and Thompson (2003:432) argue, “the model minority image is misleading and damaging to ethnic groups that are extremely disadvantaged but happen to be classified under the rubric of Asian Americans....” According to Lee and Zhou (2015:186-187), “underscoring the enormous heterogeneity within the Asian American population, Cambodians, Hmong, and Laotians are Asian ethnic groups that exhibit lower educational attainment than the U.S. average, and these groups also have higher high school dropout rates than Blacks and Latinos in the United States.” Some have even suggested that “Asian American” as a term should be eliminated (Khemka 2023) because of the heterogeneity within that racial category.

Our results indicate a substantial degree of ethnic diversity—largely unacknowledged in the 21<sup>st</sup> century—within the White racial category. As with other racial categories, the variability in ethnic identity is likely related to national origins, generation, region, language, and religion (Gordon 1964; Neidert and Farley 1985).<sup>6</sup> For comparison, Tran (2024:584) emphasizes the “demographic diversification” of Asian Americans reporting that 80.5 percent of them identify as Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean or Japanese. That is, these six ethnic groups represent about 8 out of 10 Asian Americans. By contrast, even setting aside the extremely heterogeneous All Other Whites category that constitutes 33.8 percent of all Whites, Table 1 lists 41 ethnic groups that constitute only about two-thirds (i.e., 66.2 percent) of Whites. Taken at face value, these findings suggest that “demographic diversification” among Whites is considerable despite stereotypical portrayals of Whites as a homogenous group (e.g., Twine and Gallagher 2008) whose identity is said to be simply based on “structural privilege and neocolonial dominance” (McDermott and Ferguson 2022:257).

If anything, ethnic heterogeneity among Whites is may be understated in our data because the U.S. Census Bureau is prohibited from asking questions about religion (U.S. Census Bureau 2025).<sup>7</sup> Using other data, however, the high educational and income attainments of American Jews have been well documented (e.g., Chiswick 1993; Burstein 2007). Anecdotal evidence suggests high socioeconomic attainments among Mormons (Chua and Rubinfeld 2014), and Salt Lake City has been identified as having the highest rate of upward intergenerational mobility of

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<sup>6</sup> Related views about African Americans are evident in recent research (Hamilton 2019) including in regard to Nigerian Americans (Sakamoto, Amaral, Wang and Nelson 2021).

<sup>7</sup> See the “Frequently Asked Questions” web page of the U.S. Census Bureau. <http://www.census.gov/data/what-is-data-census-gov/guidance-for-data-users/frequently-asked-questions.html>

any place in America (Chetty et al. 2014). On the other hand, many traditional groups such as Mennonites and Hutterites are unidentified in our data but may have below-average educational attainment (Ediger 1977).

For simplicity, our analysis has not separately considered Whites who identify as Hispanic, but they are arguably another source of heterogeneity within the White racial category. We caution against prematurely concluding that all Hispanic Whites are “really” non-White minorities. As is well known, many millions of Europeans immigrated to Latin America during various time periods (e.g., Sowell 1996; Loveman 2014; Telles 2014). Some of their descendants may have complex identities that may include being White (e.g., Villarreal 2010; Soto-Marquez 2019).

Mixed-race persons who partly identify as White (e.g., Alba et al. 2018) are another source of heterogeneity. We have not discussed this category due to space constraints, but immigration and intermarriage have increased during recent decades (Frey 2018). The boundaries of the White category may be expanding to include persons with varying degrees of mixed parentage that may involve some groups which are not non-Hispanic White as commonly understood by current conventions (Alba 2020).

That said, our results show substantial heterogeneity in outcomes across white ethnic groups we analyzed, including considerable differences in educational attainment, wages, poverty, affluence, and household income across dozens of different ethnicities. While some of this variation is statistically explained by demographic control variables such as age, nativity, region, and disability, notable socioeconomic differentials persist across ethnic groups even after taking those factors into account. Indeed, some of the between-ethnic differentials are as large as the differentials between Whites overall and Blacks.

Another major finding from our analysis is that race and ethnic origin play a smaller role in explaining socioeconomic outcomes than other variables. Specifically, in all of our regressions, the White Privilege model explains only less than 5% of the variation in the dependent variable. That is, focusing only on the mean differentials between White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Other Race persons ignores over 95% of the variation in education, wages, poverty, affluence, and household income. By contrast, the goodness-of-fit statistics for the Demographic Heterogeneity are several times larger than for the White Privilege. For wages among men, for example, the R-squared for the Demographic Heterogeneity model (i.e., .252) is over 5 times greater than the R-squared for the White Privilege model (i.e., .048). By incorporating the ethnic, demographic, and class characteristics (associated with our control variables), the Demographic Heterogeneity model goes beyond bare-bones contours of the White Privilege model to provide a more realistic portrayal of racial and ethnic inequalities in contemporary America.

Our study has a few limitations. We only analyzed one of the two ancestry variables in the American Community Survey and people often provide responses that do not fit neatly into widely-understood categories. In addition, the race categories we use are those defined by the Census at the time of the data collection, but these categories may change in future Census surveys. Despite these limitations, we have documented considerable variation in outcomes across White ethnic groups with a goal of providing a foundation for future research on White ethnic heterogeneity.

## **Conclusion**

This exploratory study has revealed considerable variation in ethnic identity and socioeconomic circumstances across dozens of different non-Hispanic White ethnic groups. Akin to the critiques by Kao and Thompson (2003:432) and Lee and Zhou (2015:186-187) of Asians as a “model minority,” broad generalizations about White privilege based on observed differentials using the White racial category mask substantial ethnic variability among Whites as well as class inequality among all racial and ethnic groups. For decades, Whites have been the largest group among the poor, but their poverty rate has been relatively static despite many years of economic growth (Iceland 2019; Brady 2023). Meanwhile, mortality among Whites may be increasing due to despair associated with economic disadvantage (Elo et al. 2019). To better understand these social problems, more precise theories and evidence may be required to advance beyond overly general narratives about Whites as an undifferentiated whole.

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**Table 1** Socioeconomic Outcomes by Ancestry Groups and Race, 2017-2021

	Less than high school	High school	Some college	BA	Grad	Median household income	% poor	% affluent	Wages	Sample size	% of white pop
Non-Hispanic whites (total)	5.2	34.6	22.9	22.8	14.4	75,527	7.9	39.3	34.5	7,765,942	100
Dutch	4.3	32.7	24.1	23.8	15.1	77,147	6.4	40.4	35.8	82,286	1.04
English	3.3	29.0	23.3	26.4	18.0	80,300	5.8	44.3	37.9	845,522	10.42
French	5.1	35.3	24.9	21.2	13.6	72,222	7.8	39.2	34.1	150,384	1.99
German	3.6	33.3	24.5	24.2	14.4	78,502	6.2	41.2	34.3	1,178,508	14.89
Pennsylvania German	26.6	41.7	15.4	10.0	6.4	60,000	11.2	25.6	27.3	8,414	0.10
Prussian	1.2	24.7	29.7	26.5	18.0	79,579	7.5	40.6	34.2	1,304	0.02
Greek	5.7	25.4	20.0	27.7	21.2	88,163	6.9	47.9	42.0	33,547	0.47
Irish	3.8	31.7	24.2	24.7	15.6	80,167	7.0	43.2	36.0	722,525	9.61
Italian	3.7	32.4	21.9	25.4	16.6	86,876	6.5	46.4	38.3	445,300	6.01
Sicilian	4.5	29.9	26.8	24.7	14.0	75,932	9.4	39.0	32.7	5,049	0.07
Maltese	4.0	34.1	24.0	23.0	15.0	93,947	4.8	50.8	41.3	1,071	0.01
Norwegian	2.2	29.5	26.6	26.5	15.3	81,458	5.6	43.9	35.5	119,659	1.42
Portuguese	13.2	37.0	21.8	18.2	9.9	79,758	7.4	40.7	34.8	30,660	0.44
Scotch Irish	2.5	26.3	26.5	26.2	18.5	74,400	6.0	41.1	34.3	90,074	1.10
Scottish	2.4	26.7	25.3	27.3	18.3	82,541	5.9	44.6	37.3	135,337	1.73
Swedish	2.1	26.8	24.7	28.3	18.2	80,542	5.8	44.8	37.3	87,571	1.08
Turkestanti	5.3	23.5	15.7	34.6	20.9	70,295	19.2	29.9	39.6	107	0.00
Croatian	3.3	28.7	20.2	28.8	19.0	86,317	5.6	48.7	40.6	10,537	0.14
Bohemian	3.9	40.8	24.8	20.0	10.5	67,093	6.6	37.8	30.3	6,307	0.07
German Russian	1.0	18.9	25.6	34.3	20.2	89,031	8.7	42.5	33.4	500	0.01
Rom	15.9	32.8	22.3	16.3	12.7	50,000	26.7	24.2	24.7	275	0.00
Hungarian	2.8	31.4	22.9	24.4	18.6	78,000	7.4	43.1	38.1	31,849	0.42
Romanian	4.8	24.6	19.3	27.1	24.3	82,895	8.4	43.7	39.8	11,800	0.18
Russian	1.9	16.8	17.8	31.3	32.2	90,016	7.8	51.0	46.2	61,753	0.86
Serbian	3.9	28.5	19.4	27.1	21.2	89,500	6.4	46.0	40.0	5,151	0.08
Bosnian	8.4	50.2	19.0	15.1	7.4	75,527	9.8	29.7	28.1	3,021	0.06
Uzbek	10.2	22.3	15.7	27.3	24.5	58,000	15.5	25.1	26.7	409	0.01
Slav	2.0	26.9	23.6	27.6	19.9	75,000	6.3	44.2	36.5	3,166	0.04
Iranian	3.2	15.8	13.6	30.7	36.7	90,080	10.6	48.8	47.9	12,986	0.21
Israeli	3.6	26.2	16.1	27.5	26.6	94,203	10.4	49.9	49.0	3,036	0.05
Armenian	6.5	26.3	21.3	26.0	20.0	78,000	11.8	41.7	39.0	13,184	0.20
Kurd	13.9	25.1	16.9	27.7	16.4	55,475	19.7	23.3	36.0	492	0.01
Palestinian	7.9	25.7	19.5	27.8	19.2	71,842	14.5	30.2	38.3	2,558	0.05
Appalachian	11.6	41.3	21.5	12.9	12.7	53,381	15.3	29.9	28.0	794	0.01
French Canadian	5.2	37.3	23.7	20.9	12.9	77,368	6.7	40.5	34.4	57,066	0.72
Cajun	11.4	41.2	18.9	18.6	9.9	64,738	10.9	31.5	30.6	2,979	0.04
"United States"	9.0	45.2	21.8	15.8	8.3	60,853	10.1	30.5	29.2	572,776	7.22
"Texas"	4.8	32.2	24.2	25.5	13.4	77,979	7.3	40.5	36.3	1,519	0.02
"North American"	5.6	31.8	25.7	24.6	12.2	76,714	6.6	39.8	32.8	807	0.01
"White"	7.6	40.8	21.6	19.0	11.1	66,235	11.4	31.2	30.7	364,417	4.60
North African/Southwest											
Asian country	8.4	23.1	17.2	29.8	21.6	71,842	15.5	33.6	38.6	46,618	0.79
All other whites	6.5	37.2	22.3	21.1	13.1	72,947	9.2	36.5	33.1	2,614,624	33.83
Non-white race groups											
Black	10.3	40.2	26.3	14.2	8.9	46,629	17.6	21.4	24.4	1,001,293	--
Asian	9.8	20.4	14.9	30.3	24.7	99,520	8.6	44.8	40.6	631,220	--
Hispanic	25.5	36.7	19.6	12.3	5.9	59,000	14.4	19.6	23.8	1,355,369	--
Other race	7.9	33.3	26.3	20.4	12.3	64,738	13.8	30.7	30.2	362,242	--

Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey. Calculations for blacks, whites, and Asian groups are for people who report that group alone.

Notes: the calculations for poverty, income, and education are for people aged 25+; earnings and wages are for people aged 25-64 with over 500 hours worked, and positive earnings. Median household income calculated for households. Sample size is count of group age 25+.

**Table 2** Ordinal Logistic Regression Models of Educational Attainment by Gender, 2017-2021

	Men			Women		
	White privilege	White Ethnics	Hetero- geneity	White privilege	White Ethnics	Hetero- geneity
	<u>OR</u>	OR	OR	<u>OR</u>	OR	OR
Dutch		0.82 ***	0.83 ***		0.80 ***	0.78 ***
English (omitted)						
French		0.67 ***	0.67 ***		0.74 ***	0.69 ***
German		0.76 ***	0.78 ***		0.86 ***	0.81 ***
Pennsylvania German		0.15 <sup>b</sup> ***	0.14 <sup>b</sup> ***		0.22 <sup>b</sup> ***	0.20 <sup>b</sup> ***
Prussian		1.12	1.16 *		1.12	1.03
Greek		1.09 ***	0.99		1.15 ***	0.98
Irish		0.81 ***	0.78 ***		0.91 ***	0.81 ***
Italian		0.86 ***	0.76 ***		0.91 ***	0.73 ***
Sicilian		0.77 ***	0.73 ***		0.91 *	0.74 ***
Maltese		0.81 *	0.71 **		0.76 **	0.65 ***
Norwegian		0.89 ***	0.95 ***		1.00	1.00
Portuguese		0.41 ***	0.37 <sup>a</sup> ***		0.49 <sup>a</sup> ***	0.42 <sup>b</sup> ***
Scotch Irish		1.07 ***	1.13 ***		1.08 ***	1.17 ***
Scottish		1.05 ***	1.04 ***		1.11 ***	1.07 ***
Swedish		1.07 ***	1.09 ***		1.14 ***	1.13 ***
Turkestani		1.55	1.65		1.13	1.97 *
Croatian		1.06	0.97		1.08 *	0.97
Bohemian		0.61 ***	0.72 ***		0.59 ***	0.69 ***
German Russian		1.46 **	1.88 ***		1.44 **	1.77 ***
Rom		0.24 <sup>a</sup> ***	0.26 <sup>a</sup> ***		0.69 <sup>a</sup>	0.63 <sup>a</sup> *
Hungarian		0.96 *	0.89 ***		0.96 *	0.87 ***
Romanian		1.19 ***	1.07		1.34 ***	1.21 ***
Russian		2.15 ***	2.05 ***		2.08 ***	2.09 ***
Serbian		1.00	0.97		1.23 ***	1.12 *
Bosnian		0.35 <sup>a</sup> ***	0.36 <sup>a</sup> ***		0.41 <sup>b</sup> ***	0.38 <sup>b</sup> ***
Uzbek		1.04	1.44		1.31	1.99 **
Slav		1.25 ***	1.23 **		1.05	1.05
Iranian		3.02 ***	2.82 ***		1.94 ***	2.04 ***
Israeli		1.20 **	0.96		1.69 ***	1.26 **
Armenian		1.01	1.04		1.01	1.15 ***
Kurd		1.00	0.89		0.54 <sup>a</sup> **	0.51 <sup>a</sup> **
Palestinian		1.06	0.93		0.90	0.76 ***
Appalachian		0.40 <sup>a</sup> ***	0.48 ***		0.47 <sup>a</sup> ***	0.53 <sup>a</sup> ***
French Canadian		0.61 ***	0.59 ***		0.71 ***	0.64 ***
Cajun		0.40 <sup>a</sup> ***	0.41 <sup>a</sup> ***		0.49 <sup>a</sup> ***	0.47 <sup>a</sup> ***
"United States"		0.39 ***	0.42 ***		0.45 <sup>b</sup> ***	0.47 <sup>b</sup> ***
"Texas"		0.83 *	0.92		0.72 **	0.71 **
"North American"		0.82 *	0.80 *		0.67 **	0.63 ***
"White"		0.49 ***	0.50 ***		0.58 ***	0.52 ***
North African/Southwest Asian country		1.26 ***	1.18 ***		1.00	0.97
All other whites		0.60 ***	0.60 ***		0.68 ***	0.62 ***
Non-white race groups						
Black	0.52 ***	0.36 ***	0.36 ***	0.66 ***	0.51 ***	0.45 ***
Asian	2.03 ***	1.44 ***	1.45 ***	1.49 ***	1.16 ***	1.21 ***
Hispanic (not white)	0.29 ***	0.20 <sup>b</sup> ***	0.24 <sup>b</sup> ***	0.34 ***	0.26 <sup>b</sup> ***	0.29 <sup>b</sup> ***
Other race	0.81 ***	0.57 ***	0.58 ***	0.91 ***	0.70 ***	0.61 ***
With controls			X			X
Pseudo R-Squared	0.025	0.031	0.065	0.016	0.020	0.069
Observations		5,358,853			5,757,213	

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ , "a" not significantly different than Blacks at  $p < .05$ , "b" significantly lower than Blacks at  $p < .05$

Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey. Calculations for blacks, whites, and Asian groups are for people who report that group alone. Controls include age, age squared, nativity, speaks English, disability status, and veteran status.

**Table 3** Ordinary Least Squares Regression Models Predicting Logged Hourly Wage by Gender, 2017-2021

	Men			Women		
	White privilege	White Ethnics	Hetero- geneity	White privilege	White Ethnics	Hetero- geneity
	<u>B</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>B</u>
Dutch		-0.05 ***	-0.01 *		-0.05 ***	-0.01 *
English (omitted)						
French		-0.09 ***	-0.02 ***		-0.06 ***	-0.02 **
German		-0.08 ***	-0.02 ***		-0.05 ***	0.00
Pennsylvania German		-0.33 ***	-0.02		-0.23 <sup>a</sup> ***	-0.10 <sup>a</sup> ***
Prussian		-0.08	-0.08		-0.17 <sup>a</sup> **	-0.16 <sup>a</sup> ***
Greek		0.05 ***	0.00		0.09 ***	0.03 **
Irish		-0.06 ***	-0.01		0.00	0.01 ***
Italian		0.02 ***	0.03 ***		0.05 ***	0.02 ***
Sicilian		-0.19 ***	-0.11 ***		-0.08 **	-0.04
Maltese		0.09 *	0.11 *		0.11	0.09
Norwegian		-0.05 ***	0.00		0.00	0.03 ***
Portuguese		-0.06 ***	0.03 **		0.00	0.03 **
Scotch Irish		-0.11 ***	-0.08 ***		-0.07 ***	-0.06 ***
Scottish		-0.03 ***	-0.03 ***		-0.01	-0.01 *
Swedish		-0.01	-0.01		0.03 ***	0.01
Turkestani		0.02	0.01		0.19	0.21 <sup>a</sup>
Croatian		0.10 ***	0.07 ***		0.07 ***	0.03
Bohemian		-0.19 ***	-0.08 **		-0.13 ***	-0.01
German Russian		-0.18	-0.20 <sup>a</sup> *		-0.03	-0.04 <sup>a</sup>
Rom		-0.45 <sup>a</sup> ***	-0.12 <sup>a</sup>		-0.21 <sup>a</sup> *	-0.12 <sup>a</sup>
Hungarian		0.01	0.00		0.00	-0.01
Romanian		-0.04	-0.06 **		0.06 **	0.01
Russian		0.17 ***	0.05 ***		0.13 ***	0.01
Serbian		0.03	0.03		0.10 **	0.05
Bosnian		-0.25 ***	-0.07 **		-0.19 ***	-0.01
Uzbek		-0.40 <sup>a</sup> ***	-0.35 <sup>a</sup> ***		-0.16 <sup>a</sup> *	-0.14 <sup>a</sup> *
Slav		-0.08	-0.10 **		0.06	0.03
Iranian		0.12 ***	-0.05 **		0.16 ***	0.03
Israeli		0.12 **	0.07		0.19 ***	0.08 *
Armenian		-0.03	-0.09 ***		0.05 **	-0.01
Kurd		-0.20 **	-0.16 <sup>a</sup> *		-0.27 <sup>a</sup> **	-0.13 <sup>a</sup>
Palestinian		-0.19 ***	-0.19 ***		0.08	0.06
Appalachian		-0.30 ***	-0.20 <sup>a</sup> ***		-0.23 <sup>a</sup> *	-0.14 <sup>a</sup>
French Canadian		-0.07 ***	0.00		-0.02 **	0.01
Cajun		-0.19 ***	-0.01		-0.19 ***	-0.06 <sup>a</sup> *
"United States"		-0.25 ***	-0.06 ***		-0.21 ***	-0.05 ***
"Texas"		-0.16 **	-0.05		0.00	0.10
"North American"		-0.06	0.01		-0.16 <sup>a</sup> **	-0.05 <sup>a</sup>
"White"		-0.22 ***	-0.07 ***		-0.17 ***	-0.04 ***
North African/Southwest Asian country		-0.12 ***	-0.14 ***		-0.03 **	-0.05 ***
All other whites		-0.14 ***	-0.03 ***		-0.10 ***	-0.01 ***
Non-white race groups						
Black	-0.37 ***	-0.47 ***	-0.26 ***	-0.20 ***	-0.27 ***	-0.10 ***
Asian	0.11 ***	0.01 ***	-0.04 ***	0.12 ***	0.06 ***	0.06 ***
Hispanic	-0.36 ***	-0.46 ***	-0.15 ***	-0.29 ***	-0.35 <sup>b</sup> ***	-0.09 ***
Other race	-0.17 ***	-0.26 ***	-0.12 ***	-0.09 ***	-0.15 ***	-0.05 ***
With controls			X			X
R-Squared	0.048	0.055	0.252	0.030	0.036	0.233
Observations		3,047,494			2,719,163	

\*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05, "a" not significantly different than Blacks at p<.05, "b" significantly lower than Blacks at p<.05

Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey. Controls include age, aged squared, disability status, veteran status, education, family size and type, number of children, nativity, speaks English, region, and metro status.

**Table 4** Logistic Regression Models Predicting Poverty, Affluence and Household Income, 2017-2021

	Poverty			Affluence			Household Income		
	White	White	Hetero-	White	White	Hetero-	White	White	Hetero-
	privilege	Ethnicity	geneity	privilege	Ethnicity	geneity	privilege	Ethnicity	geneity
	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	B	B	B
Dutch		1.09 ***	1.01		0.85 ***	0.92 ***		-0.06 ***	-0.02 *
English (omitted)									
French		1.35 ***	1.12 ***		0.81 ***	0.94 ***		-0.13 ***	-0.02 *
German		1.06 ***	0.96 ***		0.88 ***	0.99 **		-0.03 ***	0.02 ***
Pennsylvania German		2.03 ***	1.37 ***		0.43 ***	0.67 ***		-0.31 ***	-0.03
Prussian		1.31	1.32		0.86	0.82 *		-0.07	-0.10
Greek		1.19 ***	1.21 ***		1.16 ***	1.10 ***		0.06 ***	0.00
Irish		1.21 ***	1.06 ***		0.96 ***	1.02 ***		-0.02 ***	0.03 ***
Italian		1.12 ***	1.04 **		1.09 ***	1.07 ***		0.04 ***	0.03 ***
Sicilian		1.67 ***	1.34 ***		0.80 ***	0.88 **		-0.15 **	-0.08
Maltese		0.82	0.81		1.30 **	1.48 ***		-0.05	-0.09
Norwegian		0.96 *	0.91 ***		0.98 *	1.08 ***		0.01	0.03 ***
Portuguese		1.28 ***	1.00		0.86 ***	1.07 ***		-0.07 ***	0.02
Scotch Irish		1.03	0.96		0.88 ***	0.91 ***		-0.06 ***	-0.01
Scottish		1.01	1.03		1.01	0.97 **		0.03 ***	0.00
Swedish		0.98	1.00		1.02	0.99		-0.01	-0.02
Turkestani		3.82 <sup>a</sup> ***	4.89 <sup>b</sup> ***		0.54 <sup>a</sup> *	0.55 <sup>a</sup> *		-0.721 <sup>a</sup>	-0.983 <sup>a</sup> *
Croatian		0.95	1.01		1.19 ***	1.14 ***		0.04	-0.01
Bohemian		1.14	0.98		0.76 ***	1.02		-0.22 ***	-0.04
German Russian		1.53	1.69 <sup>a</sup> *		0.93	0.92		0.02	-0.09
Rom		5.86 <sup>b</sup> ***	3.71 <sup>b</sup> ***		0.40 <sup>a</sup> ***	0.63 <sup>a</sup> **		-0.942 <sup>a</sup> ***	-0.645 <sup>a</sup> **
Hungarian		1.29 ***	1.30 ***		0.95 **	0.92 ***		-0.03 *	-0.03 *
Romanian		1.48 ***	1.61 ***		0.97	0.92 **		0.00	-0.12 ***
Russian		1.35 ***	1.62 ***		1.31 ***	1.03		0.07 ***	-0.06 ***
Serbian		1.10	1.12		1.07	1.11 *		0.07 *	0.02
Bosnian		1.75 ***	1.47 ***		0.53 ***	0.84 **		-0.14 **	-0.13 **
Uzbek		2.94 <sup>a</sup> ***	3.31 <sup>b</sup> ***		0.42 <sup>a</sup> ***	0.42 <sup>a</sup> ***		-0.43 **	-0.501 <sup>a</sup> ***
Slav		1.09	1.15		1.00	0.90		-0.02	-0.04
Iranian		1.91 ***	2.44 <sup>b</sup> ***		1.20 ***	0.96		-0.09 **	-0.33 ***
Israeli		1.87 ***	2.20 <sup>a</sup> ***		1.25 ***	1.14 *		0.05	-0.12 *
Armenian		2.16 ***	2.21 <sup>a</sup> ***		0.90 ***	0.91 ***		-0.21 ***	-0.27 ***
Kurd		3.96 <sup>a</sup> ***	4.55 <sup>b</sup> ***		0.38 <sup>a</sup> ***	0.42 <sup>a</sup> ***		-0.41 *	-0.626 <sup>a</sup> ***
Palestinian		2.74 ***	3.31 <sup>b</sup> ***		0.54 ***	0.52 <sup>a</sup> ***		-0.39 **	-0.592 <sup>a</sup> ***
Appalachian		2.90 <sup>a</sup> ***	2.07 <sup>a</sup> ***		0.54 ***	0.76 *		-0.592 <sup>a</sup> ***	-0.333 <sup>a</sup> **
French Canadian		1.15 ***	0.95		0.85 ***	0.97 *		-0.06 ***	0.02
Cajun		1.97 ***	1.37 ***		0.58 ***	0.81 ***		-0.28 ***	-0.08
"United States"		1.80 ***	1.32 ***		0.55 ***	0.79 ***		-0.35 ***	-0.11 ***
"Texas"		1.26	1.08		0.86 *	1.01		-0.07	-0.01
"North American"		1.14	0.96		0.83 *	0.92		-0.10	-0.03
"White"		2.07 ***	1.54 ***		0.57 ***	0.76 ***		-0.30 ***	-0.15 ***
North African/Southwest Asian country		2.96 ***	3.51 <sup>b</sup> ***		0.64 ***	0.60 ***		-0.30 ***	-0.480 ***
All other whites		1.64 ***	1.32 ***		0.72 ***	0.88 ***		-0.18 ***	-0.07 ***
Non-white race groups									
Black	2.48 ***	3.45 ***	2.07 ***	0.42 ***	0.34 ***	0.54 ***	-0.64 ***	-0.74 ***	-0.39 ***
Asian	1.09 ***	1.51 ***	1.64 ***	1.25 ***	1.02 ***	1.03 ***	0.17 ***	0.07 ***	-0.15 ***
Hispanic	1.95 ***	2.72 ***	1.51 ***	0.38 ***	0.31 <sup>b</sup> ***	0.56 ***	-0.30 ***	-0.40 ***	-0.13 ***
Other race	1.85 ***	2.57 ***	1.79 ***	0.68 ***	0.56 ***	0.75 ***	-0.27 ***	-0.37 ***	-0.21 ***
With controls			X			X			X
(Pseudo) R-Squared	0.020	0.024	0.158	0.028	0.033	0.184	0.020	0.023	0.188
Observations		10,743,857			10,743,857			5,892,795	

\*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.05, "a" not significantly different than Blacks at p<.05, "b" significantly lower (or higher in poverty) than Blacks at p<.05

Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey. Controls include gender, age, aged squared, disability status, veteran status, education, family size and type, number of children, region, and metro status.