The Color of Class between the Lines: Multiracial Families and Socioeconomic Standing

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Abstract

Race/ethnic inequality in incomes is a persistent fixture of racial stratification, marking the enduring separation between races in terms of opportunity.   The racial composition of families is rarely, if ever, taken into account, missing an opportunity to detect differences between monoracial and multiracial families. This paper addresses this gap, using American Community Survey data 2006-2008 (3 year estimates), by examining the differences in income relative to the poverty line across various monoracial and multiracial types of families. Findings reveal that the income of many multiracial families' are closer to those of White families than similar monoracial families of color, with White-Asian and White-Latino families earning significantly higher incomes. Independent of controls, differences between multiracial and monoracial families narrow considerably, marking both the dramatically distinctive compositions of multiracial families relative to many monoracial families as well as the ways race continues to "matter" in the midst of racial mixture.

Word Count: 148

Multiracial families represent a rapidly growing share of American families. According to the Pew research center, 15 percent of all new marriages cross and race/ethnic boundary, representing more than a doubling of intermarriages since 1980 (Wang 2011; see also Qian and Lichter 2011). While they are often situated as one of many "minority" families whose experiences can be contextualized with other families of color (e.g., Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew, & Freeman, 2011), a growing body of work demonstrates these families do not face the same degree of economic disadvantages encountered by many race/ethnic minority families. For example, White-Asian couples have the highest median earnings among all other couples including White-White couples (Wang 2011), interracial marriages involving Blacks and Latinos tends to include spouses who have higher education than their minority counterparts (Gullickson 2006), and rates of child poverty are lower for partially White children compared to their monoracia minority counterparts (Bratter and Kimbro forthcoming). Finally, interracial couples often face less segregation and live in higher quality neighborhoods than their monoracial minority counterparts (Ellis et al 2007; White and Sassler 2000). As economic disadvantage is generally reflective of the ways minorities are disenfranchised, these patterns suggest those who cross race/ethnic lines experience fewer of the dire consequences of minority status.

These patterns raise new questions about the ways demographers and sociologists cast multiracial families vis a vis their monoracial counterparts in the area of socioeconomic standing. On one hand, this may symbolize the emergence of a distinctive layer of racial stratification, where multiracial families occupy a distinctive space between White and Nonwhite tiers (Bonilla Silva 2004). On the other hand, multiracial families may only appear more advantaged in some respects but this may be a function of the demographic composition relative to the minority peers as opposed to unique experience of racial inclusion. Adjusting for compositional issues,

therefore would or should produce parity between monoracial and multiracial families in terms of gaps in socioeconomic standing.

The current paper examines patterns of race/ethnic differences in household income, assessed relative to the federal poverty line. While household income differences across race remain a salient marker of racial inequality in general, this is traditionally assessed with no regard for how families are racially composed, specifically whether there are differences between members in terms of their race/ethnic identities. This work aims to provide a detailed analysis of the role of race/ethnic composition of families housing minor children. Using the 3 year estimates of the 2006-2008 American Community Survey disseminated through the IPUMS (Ruggles et al 2010), we examine the variation in the income-to-poverty ratio across various multiracial and monoraical family types and potential explanations for the variation in poverty across race. On the basis of these findings, we propose future analyses aimed at disentangling the association between these factors and income and whether multiracial families experience the same returns to income as experienced by White or minority families.

BACKGROUND

New Diversity, New Distinctions

Sociologists and demographers are increasingly aware that appraising the distinctions of well-being across the race/ethnic spectrum has become more complex (Lee and Bean 2010; Bonilla Silva 2004; Qian and Licther 2007; 2011). Population projections predict that the White population (defined as non-Hispanic and selecting only one race) will cease to be a demographic majority at some point between 2040 and 2045. This shift is already evident in the newest cohort of births (Tavernise 2011) as well as the demography of four states and several major cities, which are now classified as "majority-minority" (Humes et al 2011). Further destabilizing the

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distinction between majority and minorities has been the growing number of families that combine race/ethnic groups and individuals who self-identify with more than one race/ethnic community. Since 1970, marriages that cross race/ethnic lines have increased four-fold, from less than one percent to eight percent of all marriages and fifteen percent of new marriages (Qian and Lichter 2011; Wang 2011). Additionally, since the introduction of the Census "mark one or more" race question in 2000 (Perlmann and Waters 2002), the number of self-identified multiracial individuals has grown by 33 percent, from 6.7 million in 2000 to over 9 million in 2010. This group has also been hailed as one of the fastest growing race/ethnic groups, projected to expand to more than 16 million individuals by 2050 (U.S. Census 2009). This complexity remains mute in assessments of race/ethnic differences in well-being that reduce family-level racial definition to the "race of householder" or by limiting differentials to those selecting only one race.

Understanding the meaning of this new demographic complexity for a discussion of race/ethnic inequality is still being appraised. Many sociologists for example, have asked whether such shifts in composition have corresponded with a changeover in how race/ethnicity stratifies outcomes, testing whether the crucial divides continue to occur between Whites and Nonwhites. The improved position of several race/ethnic minority groups, specifically Asians and some Latino ethnic sub-groups, raises real questions as to whether classification as "non-white" necessarily equated with race/ethnic disadvantage. In the area of poverty, wealth, and income inequality in general, the enduring divide has been between Black and White families (Linh and Harris 2008) with relatively less emphasis placed on the racialized distinctions between Latino immigrant and Whites (Telles and Ortiz 2008). These patterns and other have prompted some to ask whether the line of race actually separates Black and all other groups

(Gans 1999; Yancey 2003). Additionally, Bonilla-Silva (2004) argues that the shift in stratification is not about shifting the lines of race but rather about appraising the continuum of color. He argues that a three-tier system has emerged, composed of an advantaged "White" group, a disadvantaged "Collective Black" group, and a middle-group that is termed "honorary White". These groups are distinctive on the basis of skin color rather than discrete race, such that multiracial persons, "light skinned Latinos" and some Asian groups are placed in either White or honorary White categories, but not in a typified minority category (Bonilla-Silva 2004).

A growing body of work has sought to test these competing frameworks by examining the dynamics of the multiracial population, inclusive of individuals of mixed-race origins and the families that house them (e.g., Lee and Bean 2010; Campbell 2009; Bratter and Gorman 2011; Cheng and Powell 2007). As a group, multiracial families and individuals symbolize the on-going blurring of the distinction between majority and minority. Therefore, knowing where they fall in terms of race/ethnic outcomes portends the rigidity with which race stratifies life chances. Alternatively, the growth of these families represents a need, on methodological terms, to account for the increased complexity in the ways race is organized.

In general, most assessments show that multiracial families and those in interracially unions' individuals have distinctively better socioeconomic circumstances than monoracial minority families and in some cases, are better off than White families. Research on interracial marriage finds consistently provides evidence that Blacks and Latinos who cross race/ethnic lines tend to be better educated (Gullickson 2006). Analyses based on American Community Survey data similarly finds that Asian-White couples are the highest earners across all couple combinations (Wang 2011) and multiracial families with children involving Latino, and Asian parties have lower poverty rates than respective minority families (Bratter and Kimbro

forthcoming)). Finally, analyses on 1990 Census data drawn from the 12 largest metropolitan areas, shows that the level of racial segregation multiracial families face, particularly those including Black spouses, is markedly lower than what monoraical Black families face (Ellis et al 2007).

The current paper adds household income to the array of indicators that have been studied to see what, if any differences are apparent across different types of race/ethnic composition. Income continues to be a core way to appraise socioeconomic standing and remains the direct indicator of presence in or close to the poverty line. While income inequality, or the distance between the upper and the lower segments of the income spectrum, continues to grow (Reardon and Bischoff 2011), this is exacerbated by the sustained and in some cases widening differences in income by race. According to recent reports by the U.S. census, the median income for Black families was $32,000 compared to the median income by $53,000 of White families as of 2010, representing a continuation of an at least 20k difference in incomes that has persisted since at least the 1970's (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith 2011). While the recession inspired a decline in real median income since 2007 for all households, the decline for Blacks households was considerably steeper, amounting 10 percent, compared to the 5 percent for white households. The decline for Asians, who earn more than whites, was substantial, but their incomes begin at a level surpassing all other groups, exceeding $60,000. Additionally, the growth of the Black middle class meant an expansion of income inequality among Blacks as it was widening between Blacks and Whites (Farley and Frey 1994).

What remains unclear in these aggregate statistics is how well they characterize families who may be labeled as "White", "Black" or "Asian" on the basis of householder information but who include members of other races. Therefore, *as a first step, this research characterizes the*

socioeconomic position of families with a variety of race/ethnic compositions using a composite measure of socioeconomic standing, the income-to-poverty ratio. This information sheds light on where families rate relative to the national poverty line. We wish to note specifically (as has been done in other work) how the positions of certain racial groups may differ depending on the presence of other race/ethnic members.

Multiracial Families and Income: Explanations

While the preponderance of evidence suggests that some groups of multiracial families will either occupy an in-between status or have close to parity with Whites families, the literature on the topic is less clear on what explains this pattern. The classic assimilation framework (i.e. Gordon 1964) suggests that what we are gauging results from the processes that are proximate to intermarriage, such as greater increasing structural parity with Whites and acculturation into the American mainstream norms and traditions (Alba and Nee 2003; Qian and Lichter 2007). Those who are well educated and native born are both more likely to intermarry and less likely to be in poverty or have low incomes (Van Hook, Brown, and Kwenda 2004; Lichter, Qian, and Crowley 2005). Other work, testing the social exchange hypothesis, suggests that intermarriage, particularly by minority men, selects on the most educated minorities who are exchanging their human capital for the caste capital of their white partners (see Rosenfeld 2010. Other work has suggested that this selectivity might contribute to the dearth of the number of marriageable black men within local areas (Crowder and Tolnay 2000).

This framework, or at least how it's been operationalized in intermarriage research, does not capture the full range of influences that translate into a family's ability to capitalize on those resources. The presence or absence of additional strains on resources (e.g. number of children, co-resident adults who may or may not be working), presence in vulnerable or marginalized

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statuses (e.g., head a single parent family, heading a same-sex family) are meaningful sites for the discussion of socioeconomic stability. While assimilation and caste-exchange hypotheses explain how educational background impacts the likelihood that someone will marry out of their race, the frameworks do not address role of other issues that impact how much attainment someone (or their family) will achieve or retain.

As a second goal, we seek to identify the roles of an array of characteristics associated with remaining out of poverty in race/ethnic differentials in income. A family's proximity to the poverty line reflects an array of structural and compositional issue that indicates degree of risk. The level of income across ethnic groups also reflects acculturation, captured in terms of nativity, citizenship, and length of time within the U.S (Lichter, Qian, and Crowley, 2005). We know quite well that non-marital family structures, particularly where women are parenting alone are at exception risk of poverty and these just happen to family structural types which are highly prevalent among African Americans (Eggeben and Lichter 1991; McLanahan and Percheski 2008).   Mothers with young children are at special risk as they are often younger themselves and are likely to initiate motherhood in the teen or young adult years, thus reducing educational attainment and cumulative earnings (Hoffman and Maynard 2008; Miller 2011). Labor force participation and education as well as they type of family one has, marital, cohabiting, or otherwise, all factor into how well families can avoid entry into poverty.

Taken together, adjusting for these influences should narrow race/ethnic differences in income across all families. *Our second research aim is to test to what degree race/ethnic differences between race/ethnic specific families close between all "non-White" and White monoracial families and between our multiracial families and similar monoracial minority counterparts.*

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Data and Methods

Data

The data for this project come from the 2006-2008 American Community Survey (ACS) 3 year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). These files were made available through the Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample series (Ruggles et al., 2010). The ACS is a nationally representative monthly cross-sectional survey that, once aggregated, collects data from over 3 million households a year. The ACS questionnaires are comparable to the long form of the 2000 5-percent PUMS (National Research Council, 2007). Although other datasets provide information on the race of both biological parents, a census-based sample provides the case base necessary to focus on minor children, across all races, in female-headed families.

This research employs the 2006-2008 American Community Survey (ACS) the 3 year estimates) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), available from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample series (Ruggles et al 2010). The ACS is a nationally representative survey conducted monthly surveying over 3 million households a year. The ACS questionnaires are comparable to the long form of the 2000 5-percent PUMS (National Research Council 2007). The original dataset was reorganized into a family level datafile. The ACS (like the Census) only provides unique identifiers for households, not families. Though other members (such as extended family members, borders, unmarried partners) may be present as well, all families in these data include at least one child and one related adult (who is aged 18 or over). Other "non-family" members were reassigned as members of families, such as cohabiting partners to provide a more accurate assessment of the amount of resources available within the household as so not to bias the level of poverty (Iceland 2000; Garfinkel, Glei, and McLanahan, 2002). All unmarried partners and any of their own children were included in the family of their partner. This included

172,796 of the 3,929,268 families (4.4 percent) in the total sample.[1] Both primary and

subfamilies are included in these data. Several cases where dropped if the family relationships

could not be determined where the metropolitan area status was "unknown" were dropped, and

where families with no children present. The final sample includes 1,037,169 families.

There are three categories of members of each family: parents, children, and extra adults.

Parents, who must be age 18 or older, are defined in terms of the relationship to householder,

including those who are householders and spouses in households where there are children. The

ACS also has designated codes identifying individuals as responsible for children. All persons

who are identified as being responsible for a child are considered parents. All forms of family

ties are considered, including biological, step, and adopted. Children are any person who is

under the age of 18 living in the family. All other adults are classified as "extra adults" this

includes persons listed as family members (grandparents, siblings, other extended families) and

"non-family" members (unmarried partners, boarders). In all, 27.2 percent of the family

included at least one extra adult. To gauge their contribution, extra adults are classified as either

working (i.e. employed either full-time or part-time) or non-working.   Six percent of the

families in the sample have non-working extra adults and 23.26% percent have working extra

adults.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable for this analysis is the income-to-poverty ratio, a continuous

indicator which captures families' income as a percent of the national poverty line. Unlike

analyzing whether families are in or out of poverty, or even in or out of near poverty, this

indicator informs how far above the poverty line different families are, indicating how likely

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[1] Unless otherwise stated, all proportion presented throughout the paper are survey weighted proportions calculated
with all 80 replicate weights.

they are to remain out of poverty or low income status. This approach allows us to capture a wider range of economic circumstances. The ratio is calculated by dividing the total family income by the estimated poverty line for the number of individuals in that family. Therefore, a 100 percent score represents a family living on the poverty and thus considered in poverty. The measure is a continuous measure and it is censored as all families over 500 percent of the poverty line are giving the score 501.

Race/Ethnic Designation of Families

Although race/ethnicity is typically operationalized as an individual-level characteristic, this analysis employs race as a family-level variable indicating a range of race/ethnic compositional types reflecting different combinations of parents' race/ethnic backgrounds. We do not include children in how we characterize composition to capture specifically how resources and characteristics of *parents* differentiate socioeconomic resources. We first measure racial/ethnic background of parents employing standard Census administrative categories set forth by the Office of Management and Budget [OMB] that combine the data on the questions on Race and Hispanic ethnicity and the number of races selected. Those indicating Hispanic ethnicity, regardless of the race(s) selected, are classified as Hispanic. For those selecting one race and whose ethnicity is not Hispanic, they may be designated White, Black/African American, American Indian / Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander, or Some Other Race. Parents, who are non-Hispanic and selected multiple races, are placed in a "two or more races" category.

Parents' race was then classified into 17 categories. The first seven categories consist of monoracial categories, meaning that all parents identify as the same monoracial category (i.e., only one race was selected): White, Black, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Native Alaskan,

Native Hawaii/Pacific Islander, and "Some Other Race". The remaining families are classified in one of ten multiracial categories where parents may be of differing races or one or both parents identify with more than one racial group.   The categories are as follows: multiracial White-Black, multiracial White-Asian, multiracial White-Latino, multiracial White-American multiracial White-Some Other Race, multiracial Black-Latino, multiracial Black-Non-White/non-Latino, Multiracial Latino-Non-White/non-Black, Multiracial All other two race combinations, and lastly families including more than 2 races. Each multiracial household can include a variety of race/ethnic combinations. For example, multiracial White-Black encompasses families with two parents where one is White and one is Black, but also includes single parent families where the parent is multiracial their classification is White-Black (non-Hispanic), as well as families with two parents where one is White-Black and the other is either White, Black, or combines White or Black with another race[2].   In brief, these categories represent the presence of race/ethnic backgrounds evident in the classification of parents, as opposed to specific combinations of classifications.

We now turn to the characteristics of parents we control for in the multivariate analyses which we organize in categories of demographic, acculturative, socioeconomic, and geographic characteristics.

Demographic Characteristics

We adjust for several characteristics that mark the demographic composition of the families. Covariates include continuous measure of the number of children, presence of young children under six years old, whether the household consists of single or multiple families, and

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[2] For the multiracial non-Hispanic White Latino, multiracial non-Hispanic Black Latino and multiracial non-Hispanic non-White non Black Latino categories at least one parent is Latino and the other is non-Hispanic and has one of these respective racial identities. This is due to the fact that if a person reports being Latino they are considered monoracial Latino because there is no way to distinguish their races and still include Latino as a mutually exclusive racial category.

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the marital status of parents. Marital status categories include *a) married both present, b) married but only one present, c) separated, d) divorced, e) widowed f) cohabiting*, and *g) never married.* Finally, we include a residual category for families where marital status is unclear due to presence of multiple families and unclear relationships (i.e. two related individuals who both have children and cohabit in the same household). We also control for gender of parent when marital status denotes a single persons (i.e. not married) or where only one married person is present, and the gender combination of the married or cohabiting couples (same-sex vs. different sex). Finally, we include covariates for the number of extra adults (i.e. not parents or children) that may be none, one, two or three with separate variables for number of working adults and number of non-working adults.

Acculturation

We introduce several proxy measures of parents' acculturation status including nativity, English proficient, linguistic isolation, length of time in the United states if foreign born, and parent's citizenship status.   Parent's may be *a) born in the United States or to United States citizen parents, b) born in United State territories, or c) born outside the United States.* Parent(s)' nativity is reflected with the category signifying the most acculturated, therefore a union between a native born parent and one not born in the US is captured as born in the United States. Therefore, families in the born outside of the US category include families where *both* parents foreign born. We take a similar approach for English proficiency, whose categories represent the standard groups in the ACS (Does not speak English, Speaks English not well, speaks well, very well, and speaks only English) where the parent with the greatest English proficiency represents the status of the family. We also adopt this approach for citizenship, where the parents are defined as having citizenship if at least one does. Additionally the

dichotomous variable of language isolation is added to the model to further control for families where no one over the age of 14 speaks English. (no need to defend measure in this way, just list the categories). Length of time living in the US, if foreign born, is coded as a continuous variable.

Socioeconomic Status

We introduce several covariates that adjust for the role of parent's education, labor market participation.   Parents' education attainment represents the education of the most highly educated parent, to show the upper limit of the resource base. We divide educational attainment into five categories: less than high school, some high school but no degree, high school diploma, some college, Bachelor's degree or more. Similarly, parent's labor force is measured by status of the working parent in the family. If both parents are working, we code the information of the parent working the longest hours, according to the usual hours worked variable. The categories are a) not in the labor force, b) unemployed, c) working part time (<35 hours a week), and d) working full time (=>35 hours a week). Finally we control for the occupation of the parents. We use five standard occupational categories: professional/managerial, service, sales, production and military.[3] Unlike our other variables, we provide more detail on the extent of occupational status within the household. We code each family as having no parents in this occupation, one parent in this occupation, or two parents in the occupation.[4]

Geographic Factors

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[3] For individuals that work more than one job, the job that is their primary job is coded as their occupation.
[4] The two parent category also includes families with more than two parents working in one particular occupation. This is applicable only for the multiple family families who have more than two parents working. There are very few families who have more than two parents working in one occupation so we chose to group them with the two parent families since they are similar to these families and including them as their own category would introduce unnecessarily error into the model.

I include two measures of geography, division and presence in or outside a metropolitan area. The United States' Census Bureau categorizes the country into four regions and nine divisions. These divisions included: New England Division, Middle Atlantic Division, East North Central Division, West North Central Division, South Atlantic Division, East South Central Division, West South Central Division, Mountain Division, and Pacific Division. Additionally we also control for if the individual resides inside of metropolitan area or outside of a metropolitan area. As mentioned above we exclude all families whose metropolitan status is unknown.

Methods

To analyze variation in the income to poverty ratio, we employ tobit regression. Tobit regression is best suited to adjust for a continuous variable where the top values are censored, as is the case with the income to poverty ratio, where values at 501 and above are censored. An ordinary least squares linear regression model would overestimate the constant and underestimate the coefficients (Long 1997) to accommodate what looks like a restricted range of the data. A tobit model is able to take the censoring of data into consideration and estimate more accurate coefficients and constants. Taking the regression assumption that the relationship between two variables at every point is normally distributed, the model estimates the probability that each point is censored and then adjusts the estimations accordingly. Therefore the tobit regression model is able to keep the benefit of the interpretation of the continuous poverty measure while adjusting for the fact that the measure is censored over 500 percent of the poverty line. The interpretation and use of a tobit model is very similar to a multiple regression meaning that a one unit increase in an independent variable still translates to its slopes change in the dependent variable.

To adjust for the complex survey design of the IPUMS data, we incorporate the replicate weights provided with the IPUMS data. The 80 replicate weights take into consideration the demographic and geographic information of each household and appreciate weight the household to represent the proportion of the United States' population. To accommodate for a family level analysis using weights that are constructed for the household, we divided each household weighed by the number of families in that household. This ensures that all weights were used the appropriate amount of times and not over used for households with multiple families.

Results

In Table 1, we present the descriptive statistics for all the variables. We begin with our dependent variable – income to poverty ratio.   The average families' income is slightly over 3 times the federal poverty line (M=303.79).   Families in this sample are racially diverse, and more diverse than the population as a whole. According to 2010 Census data, Whites are over 60 percent of the population even as only 57 percent of the families are headed by either one or more White parents. Although diverse, ninety two percent of the families are monoracial meaning both parents are of the same (single) race. Slightly more than half are composed of two White parents (57%), with Latinos as the second largest race/ethnic composition (16%) and thirteen percent of families composed of one or two (single race) Black parents. Slightly less than five percent of families were composed of one or two Asian (single race) parents, and less than one percent of families involve members from American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Some Other race groups.   Multiracial families represent slightly less than eight percent of all families in these data. The most prominent types are White-Asian (2.8%), White-Latino (1.2%), White-Black (0.8%), and White-American Indian families (0.84%). Remaining families

encompass less than a half a percent of all families, with the exception of those including members of more than two race/ethnic backgrounds (0.92%).

-----Insert Table 1 about Here-----

Families in these data are most often headed by two married parents (64%) , previously married (i.e. widowed divorced, or separated) parents, who encompass nearly 15 percent (sum of 9.9% , 3.7%, and 1.4%) of families, or never married single parents (13 percent). Three percent of families in this data are headed by an unmarried person with a partner. Only a small segment of either married or cohabiting partners are same-sex as the householder (0.33%). These families, on average have between one and two children (M=1.86), however, over half of our sample have a child under six years old. In terms of composition of these families, most families only include parents and children.   Over ninety percent of families have no "extra" adults (related or unrelated adults) who are not working and seventy-six percent have no working "extra adults".

In terms of socioeconomic status, American families are well educated and involved in the labor market. Over sixty percent include at least one parent that is college educated and only ten percent of families is the highest education "less than high school". Over eighty percent of families have at least one full-time employed member and only seven percent of families have one or both parents that are not in the labor force. To accommodate for the family-level structure of the data, we show the number of parents in each occupational category. Between twenty and thirty percent of families have worker each type, with the exception of the military. We also find that dual-worker households where both parents have the same occupation are most likely professional / managerial. Geographically, a small percent of families (16.9%) live outside of a metropolitan area. The modal region is the South Atlantic part of the country.

We now turn to the pattern of differences in average income to poverty ratio across the different race/ethnic compositional types. In Table 2, we present this information for each group, ordered by income to poverty ratio level from highest to lowest. We also present the results of significance tests contrasting all families to White families (monoracial), who are listed fourth on the Table. White family incomes are 350 percent of the federal poverty line (Mean = 3523.3) and several families incomes significantly lower and higher in comparison. White-Asian families (who are listed at the top) have incomes that are 4.5 times the federal poverty line, compared to White families that are only 3.5 times that standard. White-Latino families have incomes that are more than 380 percent the federal poverty lines and Asian (monoracial) family incomes are 360 percent the poverty line. The remaining multiracial families have incomes lower than Whites but still higher than other monoracial types. For example, we identify three family compositions that include members of some Black ancestry (White-Black, Black-Latino, and Black and all other group) and all have incomes that are at least 300 percent of the federal poverty line. Meanwhile monoracial Black families have incomes that are barely more than 200 percent of the federal income, hovering just above the cut off for low-income. Native Hawaiian monoracial families are similarly disadvantaged, at only 232 percent of the poverty line. Similarly, partial Latino families fare far better than monoracial Latino families whose incomes are only 200 percent of the federal poverty line (Mean=203.15). White-American Indian families have incomes that are also 3 times the federal poverty line, while American Indian monoracial family incomes are less than 200 percent of that line.

----Insert Table 2 about here ----

Though these differences are unadjusted, the overall patterns raise two issues that the analysis will explore. First, including multiracial family compositions to a discussion of race and

income provides greater complexity in the patterns of minority/majority distinctions. Not only are some partially White families faring better than their White counterparts, all families are faring better than their counterparts of color. This raises the question whether this is a product of composition differences between multiracial and monoracial families or does it signify a greater degree of economic incorporation experienced by multiracial families that is not extended to monoracial families?

Multivariate Analysis

Table 3 presents the results of the multivariate tobit regression models. We first show the baseline findings where only race is adjusted and then the fully adjusted models where all controls listed in table 2 are applied. We adjust for marital status and family structure, the number of and age of children, presence of working and non-working adults, parents' education, labor force participation of parents, and geographic location of family. These tobit models produce coefficients that are similar in interpretation to linear regression coefficients, where the coefficient represent the average increase in the dependent variable per change in the independent variable.

According to Table 3, the addition of controls narrows many of the relative advantages and disadvantages in income/poverty ratios across race-ethnic compositions. The baseline results (see Model I) are echoed in the previous discussion of mean differences between race-specific family types. The major motivating question is whether adjusting for differences in these areas close gaps substantially. Looking first among monoracial families, we find that many of the White-Nonwhite differences narrow considerably. While Black and White families differed in income by more than 130 percent, adjusting for covariates narrows this differential to only 26 percentage points. Native Hawaiian family incomes are also more than 100 percent lower than

White families, but net of controls, this differential shrinks to six percent (b=6.94). The difference in incomes relative to Whites for Latinos and American Indians and Whites ranges from 150 to 170 percentage points, but this shrinks substantially to 15 percent for Latinos and 33 percent for American Indians. The differences between Asians and White families are not substantial and while they do not close entirely in the adjusted model, the net differences in income to poverty reveal that this group essentially has the same income as Whites regardless of controls (b=3.91).

------ Insert Table 3 about here ----

For many multiracial families, adjusting for background controls similarly shrunk the difference between their incomes and White monoracial families both for those whose incomes were substantially higher (White-Asian, White-Latino), as well as for the remaining groups whose incomes where lower. White-Asian incomes were nearly 100 percent higher than White families at baseline, however independent of background controls, the gap is only 25 percentage points. In the baseline model, White-Latino families had a higher income to poverty ratio relative to Whites by 31 percentage points, but this shrinks to only six percentage points in the adjusted model (b=6.49). Notably, some of the adjusted differences are strongly similar to those experienced by minority monoracial families. The difference between White and White-Black families (b=-22.79) in Model II is highly similar to the net differential between White and Black families (b=-26.23). The difference between White and White-American Indian families follows a similar path. In the adjusted case the income to poverty ratio differs by 32 percentage points, meanwhile the difference between White and American Indians families is 33 percentage points. Finally, Black-Latino families experience adjusted income differentials from Whites (b=-19.58) that are very close to Latinos in the adjusted case (b=-15.8).

The controls are suppressed in this table but are available upon request from author and will be included in the completed paper. In summary, their patterns echo many previous studies on the role of family/household composition and income or poverty (see Licther, Qian, and Crowley 2005). Families headed by married couples have the highest incomes, ahead of all other structures including cohabiters and never marrieds. Additionally, female-headed households have significantly lower income/poverty ratios than their male counterparts. Presence of non-working adults, children, and younger children are all correlated with lower incomes. Results on acculturation variables operate in expected directions. Incomes are lower for those born outside the U.S., recent arrivals to the U.S., those lacking English speaking skills, and those who are linguistically isolated (i.e. living without any English speakers). Clearly, higher incomes are strongly correlated with education and full time employment and employment in professional and managerial occupations. Finally the geographic location controls in general are also what we would expect. Those living in rural areas are having lower income to poverty ratios, meanwhile those in New England and Pacific part of the country have the highest incomes and those in the South, particularly Southeast have some of the lowest.

Discussion and Proposed Analysis

Race/ethnic differences in income portend the vulnerability of families to entry into poverty and the ways that vulnerability is racialized, or a result of historical and current forces of marginalization. The current paper asks how the presence of multiracial families complicates this picture in terms of baseline and adjusted differences in income relative to the federal poverty line. We find that identifying multiracial families in our data does lend itself to more complexity in the patterns of race/ethnicity and income. Monoracial white families, who are often the

standard as the racial majority and the most advantaged, have incomes that are lower than two of

the multiracial family types (White-Asians, White-Latino). Further, all other multiracial family

compositions either had similar incomes (White-Other Race) to Whites or lower incomes while

higher than their minority counterparts, even those families that are dual minority (i.e. Black-

Latino).

Second, we find that adjusting for many of the standard characteristics that are related

income and poverty narrows divides substantially for all families relative to Whites. However,

race/ethnic gaps did not close completely for barely any group, monoracial or multiracial. In

addition, the net differences between Whites and many multiracial families mirrored the

differences between minority monoracila families and Whites. This suggests that characteristics

above and beyond those identified here are related to the income inequality by race for both

monoracial and multiracial families. Indeed this suggests that race continues to matter in the

lives of multiracial families, even as the crossing of racial lines suggests that it would not.

Proposed Analyses

 To unpack the issues of the relevance of race, we ask if the adjusted characteristics influence or

impact socioeconomic standing differently depending on how the family is racially organized?

Put another way, does education coincide with the same returns to income for monoracial and

multiracial families? As a third goal, *we will explore to what degree our array of characteristics*

operate to mediate the differences in socioeconomic position between families. Is the improved

position of some multiracial families relative to their monoracial counterparts due to greater

human capital attainment or, other issues being equal, might multiracial families have fewer

strains on available resources (e.g. fewer co-resident workers, fewer children)?, In addition,

families experience the same returns from resources across race? Some work shows that

employment is less able to keep minority families out of poverty than Whites (Lichter, Qian and Crowley 2005). To the degree that this reflects the multiple ways race fundamentally stratifies life chances, *we will also test whether these limited returns experienced by minority families extend to multiracial families as well, particularly those that combine White and non-white members.* In this portion of the analysis, we will estimate several models interacting racial compositional types and several explanatory variables to show whether some issues in that might differentially benefit some families while either operating as a cost or a benign influence on others.

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Table 1. Mean and Percent Distribution of characteristics of Families, 2006-08, N=1,037,169

Variable	%/ M(SD)
Income-to-poverty ratio	303.79 (159.33)
Race/Ethnic Combinations of Parents	
Monoracial Families	
White	57.6
Black	13.63
Latino	16.14
Asian	4.3
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.48
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	0.12
Some Other Race	0.19
Multiracial Families	
White-Black	0.87
White-Latino	1.2
White-Asian	2.76
White-American Indian/Alaskan Nat.	0.84
White-Some Other Race	0.16
Black-Latino	0.23
Black-Nonwhite / Non-Latino	0.24
Latino-Non-White/non-Black	0.23
All other Two race combinations	0.08
More than 2 Races	0.92
Marital Status	
Married, both present	64.41
Married, only one present	2.14
Separated	3.74
Divorced	9.85
Widowed	1.39
Cohabiting	3.05
Never Married	13.15
All Other	2.26
Same Sex family	0.33
Number of children	1.86 (0.98)
Has a child under 6 years old	0.58
Presence of Non-Parent Adult (non-Working)	
None	93.95
One	5.41
Two	0.57
Three or More	0.07

Table 1. Mean and Percent Distribution of characteristics of Families, 2006-08, N==1,037,169

Presence of Non-Parent (Working)	
None	76.74
One	17.81
Two	4.2
Three or More	1.25
Education of highest educated parent	
Less than High School	10.26
High School Diploma	22.58
Some College (No Degree)	32.08
Bachelor's Degree or More	35.08
Parents' Labor Force Participation	
Not in Labor Force	7.71
Unemployed	3.08
Part Time	6.44
Full Time	82.76
Parent Hours Worked	40.89 (16.02)
Number of Parents in the following occupations	
Professional/Managerial	
None	56.67
One	31.25
Two	12.08
Service	
None	77.28
One	20.88
Two	1.84
Sales	
None	66.45
One	30.04
Two	3.51
Production	
None	68.65
One	28.65
Two	2.7
Military	
None	99.51
One	0.47
Two	0.02

Table 1. Mean and Percent Distribution of characteristics of Families, 2006-08, N=1,037,169

Lives in Non-Metropolitan Area	16.89
Regional Division	
New England	3.94
Middle Atlantic	13.68
East North Central	15.74
West North Central	6.57
South Atlantic	18.93
East South Central	5.68
West South Central	11.63
Mountain	6.85
Pacific	16.98

Table 2. Average income to poverty ratio by racial composition of parents, ordered by income level
N=1,037,169

Parent's Race/Ethnic Composition	Income to Poverty Ratio (SE)
White-Asian	454.1 (2.04)***
White-Latino	387.2 (5.31)***
Asian	365.7 (1.14)***
White-Other	362.6 (5.31)
White (reference)	356.1(0.35)
All Other Two Race Combinations	352.3 (8.22)
Latino-Other Non-White/Non-Black Race	348.0(4.48)***
Black-Latino	331.4 (4.48)***
White-Black	322.5 (1.87)***
White-American Indian	303.5(4.39)***
Three or more races	302.9 (2.16)***
Black-Other Non-White/Non-Latino Race/ethnic group	300.2 (5.12)***
Some Other Race	261.1(5.19)***
Native Hawaiian	232.0 (5.71)***
Black	219.09(0.72)***
Latino	203.15(0.48)***
American Indian	184.3 (2.24)***

Table 3. Baseline and adjusted race/ethnic differences in families income to poverty ratio, American Community Survey (2006-08)

	Model I (Baseline)	Model II (Fully Adjusted)
Parent's Race/Ethnic Comp. (Ref: White (monoracial)		
Black	-136.97***	-26.23***
Latino	-152.91***	-15.8***
Asian	9.64***	3.91***
American Indian	-171.73***	-33.11***
Native Hawaiian	-124.06***	-6.94
Some Other Race	-94.95***	-7.88*
Multiracial Families		
White-Black	-33.53***	-22.79***
White-Asian	97.99***	25.01***
White-Latino	31.17***	6.49***
White-Amer. Indian/Alaskan Nat.	-52.53***	-32.43***
White-Some Other Race	6.49	3.18
Black-Latino	-24.66***	-19.68***
Black-Nonwhite / Non-Latino	-55.9***	-15.69***
Latino-Non-White/non-Black	-8.08+	-22.41**
All other Two race combinations	-3.81	7.29
More than 2 Races	-53.18***	-9.83***
Intercept	356.1***	316.57

(Controls suppressed)