The Residences of the Super-Affluent: A Test of the Residential Attainment Model among America's Elite

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Between 1970 and 2005, the gap between American households with the highest levels of income, or the top 10th, and the lowest levels of income (the bottom 10th) grew from a ratio of 9 dollars earned at the top for every 1 at the bottom to a ratio of 11 dollars earned at the top for every one at the bottom (Fischer and Mattson, 2009). The gap between the top income earners and the middle grew as well, from 2.7 to 3.6 dollars at the top for every 1 earned in the middle. This trend was not isolated to one particular group, either, being consistent among blacks and Hispanics as well as whites. This increasing divergence in incomes highlights the necessity for researchers to focus not only on those at the bottom of the income distribution, but to analyze the individuals who comprise the upper tier as well.

While much attention has been paid in sociological literature to the living conditions, housing characteristics, and residential attainment of the poor and even the middle class (Massey, Condran and Denton, 1987; Wilson, 1987; Alba and Logan 1991), those whose incomes place them out of these groups are frequently overlooked. There is a growing interest in the national media for America's economic elite, especially in light of the 2011 Occupy Wall Street protests and the focus on the role of Super PACs (Political Action Committees) in allowing the wealthy to indirectly contribute nearly unlimited funds to political candidates. Americans are increasingly aware of not only the growing disparity between the economic elite and the rest of the nation but also the effects that this disparity can have. In 2011, the number of Americans whose wealth exceeded $1 million stood at 8.6 million, which is an increase of 2% from the previous year (Frank, 2012). Despite their group size and increasing interest in their activities, this segment of the population remains understudied.

One explanation for the lack of literature on this population might be the fact that while the number of affluent and super-affluent individuals is sizeable, it is still much lower than the number of poor and middle class, making them sparsely represented in surveys. To complicate this even further, when they are captured in surveys their incomes are often top-coded due to privacy concerns, making the identification of those who might fall into these categories quite difficult. Another possible reason for the difficulty in capturing these individuals is that they are able to leverage their increased economic power to protect their privacy (Lee and Marlay, 2007). Their houses are not usually located near heavily traveled streets, contact information can be difficult to find, and the difficulty of tracking them could be seen as not worth the effort or researchers might simply wish to respect their right to privacy. Aside from the difficulties in access to data on the economic elite, there is also a measurement issue in determining where exactly the cutoff point is to divide them from the rest of the income distribution. Unlike poverty, which can be measured in relation to either the poverty guidelines published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or the poverty thresholds published by the U.S. Census Bureau, there are no government-supplied definitions for who is wealthy.

To address this issue, I propose the construction of two new definitions of economic success: the affluent and the super-affluent. Traditionally, affluence has been defined as four times the poverty threshold (Massey, 1996), which for 2011 would equate to a household of three earning more than $71,664. This would mean that a dual-income household where both individuals worked as cashiers (median salary = $36,380 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics) would qualify as affluent. Other definitions have been used to try and better match this with what people think of when they consider affluence,

such as Danzinger and Gottschalk's (1995) definition of "rich" as those earning more than seven times the poverty threshold. The problem with this definition is that it still relies on the definition of poverty, and because those at the top of the income distribution continue to move further and further away from those at the bottom, using a definition relative to the poverty threshold becomes increasingly inaccurate when attempting to capture the truly affluent. Therefore, I propose a definition that relies on relative income, defining those at the top quartile of the household income distribution as affluent and those at the top 2% as super-affluent. For a family of three, this translates into the affluent being defined as those with a median income of $110,155 and the super-affluent being defined as those with a median income of $485,968.

With these definitions of affluence and super-affluence, I examine an important indicator of stratification: neighborhood and housing quality. In order to make comparisons between individuals of different incomes, I divide the population into four income groups: the super-affluent, or the top 2%, the affluent, or the next 23%, the middle 50%, and the bottom 25%. Drawing on the residential attainment framework, I first look at the differences in neighborhood and housing quality by income group to determine whether there are significant cleavages between, for example, the affluent and super-affluent. I also include variables for housing and neighborhood satisfaction in order to gauge whether satisfaction varies by income. Next, I test whether there are differences within each income group by race, controlling for gender, education, and other socio-demographic variables. Finally, I analyze the findings with reference to the spatial assimilation perspective, which would predict that any differences found by race/ethnicity would disappear once individual-level characteristics are controlled for, and the stratification perspective which would predict that racial/ethnic difference will persist even when individual-level characteristics are controlled for. By testing the differences within the super-affluent population, this will provide a conservative test of the residential attainment model due to the fact that all individuals are already a part of the economic elite and therefore differences in income should no longer be significant. If I find that net of individual-level characteristics, race and ethnicity are not significant predictors of housing and neighborhood measures, this will lend support to the spatial assimilation perspective. On the other hand, if race and ethnicity remain significant within the super-affluent population even after controlling for individual-level characteristics, this will suggest that the stratification perspective is a better fit.

Housing and Neighborhood Consequences of Poverty and Affluence

In Massey's Population Association of America presidential address on Concentrated Affluence and Poverty in the Twenty-First Century, he linked an understanding of the spatial concentration of affluence and research on inequality of earnings and income to immigration, racial and ethnic segregation, and also to the causes and consequences of concentrated poverty, and chastised scholars for placing too much focus on the poor and poor neighborhoods at the expense of the other end of the continuum. Addressing the issue of housing quality, Rosenbaum and Friedman (2007) argue that there is evidence of a positive correlation between housing quality and physical and mental health (Dunn, 2000; Evans, Wells and Moch, 2003) based on the fact that poor housing can be linked to decreased cognitive development and increases in behavioral

problems (Green and White, 1997; Rohe, McCarthy and VanZandt, 2000), nutrition, and increased instances of asthma (Rosenbaum, 2004). Crowder and Teachman (2004) find that the residential conditions of children have a strong relationship with the likelihood of a child dropping out of school and their risk of premarital pregnancy.

There is an implicit notion, according to Friedman (2007), that neighborhood and physical residence have an effect on an individual's access to quality schools, housing stock, job opportunities, and exposure to crime (see Logan and Molotch, 1987). Additionally, we commonly use residence to indicate relative social-class position. There is a housing hierarchy in America that exists largely parallel to our social-class hierarchy, meaning that the appearance, size, and location of our residential units convey information to others about our relative class standing (Rosenbaum and Friedman 2007). For example, an individual living in a spacious, well-maintained two-story house on a private lot would be perceived as being socially distant from an individual residing in an apartment complex in need of major repairs. These studies show that there is a definite advantage to living in an affluent neighborhood or residence, yet still there is very little known about what these affluent households actually look like.

Residential Attainment Framework

Lee and Marlay (2007) took the first step toward examining the residential environments that the affluent occupy. They analyzed the neighborhoods that make up the top 2% of the income distribution in the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the United States, and found that the affluent live in neighborhoods that are half the average density of all tracts, half the average vacancy of all tracts, that the percent of units that are owner-occupied is much higher, and that the residences themselves are much more spacious, are more frequently detached single-family units, and were built more recently than those which are not a part of the economic elite. Solari (2012) finds that affluent neighborhoods are also able to maintain this advantage over time through steady or increasing investment in both the neighborhood and the residence in the form of renovation and maintenance. They are also able to maintain their economic status through the exertion of political power and exclude non-affluent households in order to maintain the neighborhood status.

I move this research forward by looking at the individual housing units and households within these residential environments and testing how different the residences of the super-affluent are not only from the poor and middle-class, but from the generally affluent as well. In other words, I ask: is there a difference in housing and neighborhood conditions between those who are super-affluent and those in the other income groups? And, if so, are these differences structured around race, gender, education, and other socio-demographic characteristics, or is there a different process by which the super-affluent generate their advantage?

To answer this question, I use the Residential Attainment model, which describes how social and economic attributes are translated into residence in neighborhoods of equivalent status (Rosenbaum and Friedman, 2007). Residential attainment is seen as a process by which individuals, throughout their lifetimes, gain higher levels of education, income, and other social and economic attributes such as social capital and wealth, and translate these gains into residences that reflect their achievements relative to other members of society (Massey 1985). Spatial assimilation stems from this and predicts that

members of minority groups, net of individual-level characteristics, should be able to gain access to residences and neighborhoods equivalent to their socioeconomic status. It has been successfully utilized to study both physical and social neighborhood features (Massey, Condran and Denton, 1987; Massey and Fong 1990). On the other hand, Logan and Molotch (1987) developed the place stratification perspective, which hypothesizes that not all groups are equally able to translate gains in socioeconomic status into residences of equal quality and that this is an important contributor to racial and ethnic inequality (Alba and Logan, 1992).

Data and Methods

The data I use are taken from the 2011 National Sample of the American Housing Survey, which is collected by the US Census Bureau for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The AHS is a longitudinal housing survey that asks householders questions about housing quality and neighborhood characteristics, and includes both subjective and objective measures. It also includes demographic characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, and nativity status as well as economic questions such as income and housing costs. The AHS is conducted every two years and is intended to be nationally representative. I divided the respondents (n=73,222) into four income categories according to my definition of affluence and super-affluence: the bottom 25% of the income distribution, the middle 50%, the next 23% and the top 2%. I then used one-way ANOVA in Stata 12.1 to test the differences in means for the four different income categories. In order to test the differences between each group relative to the other, I used the Bonferonni comparison (Kirk, 1998). This adjustment reduces the likelihood of false positives, or type 1 errors, and is considered to be very conservative. To address concerns about violating the homogeneity of variance assumption of ANOVA, I used the F* test to ensure that the comparisons were all significant at the level reported by the standard F test.

The first tests I undertake are for differences in regional distribution of the four income strata, followed by tests of differences in neighborhood amenities, neighborhood disorder, and residential and non-residential land use. I then examine differences by income stratum in unit exterior condition and interior contents, using measures such as square footage and number of rooms. Next, I analyze the four strata by education, ethnicity, and individual characteristics such as age, gender, and martial status in order to determine how similar or dissimilar the householders in all four groups are. While I test differences between all groups, I only report the significance levels for each group compared to the super-affluent in my tables in order to make the comparison more straightforward. Finally, I use OLS regression, logistic regression, and ordered logistic regression with residential and neighborhood characteristics as the dependent variable to test for the significance of race and ethnicity within the affluent and super-affluent populations. This will allow me to determine whether the residential outcomes of the affluent and super-affluent are better modeled by spatial assimilation or place stratification. In order to adjust for heteroskedasticity, I use the robust estimator of variance in Stata 12.1.

One limitation of my data, as addressed previously, is the difficulty in capturing members of the affluent and super-affluent in surveys. While the AHS has the benefit of a very high top coding that allows for a great economic distinction between individuals, there are still a only a small number found in the survey. In order to increase the statistical

power of my models, I merged affluent and super-affluent respondents from the 2009 and 2011 AHS surveys, allowing me to capture households that were present in only one of the survey years. This resulted in a population size of 2,794 for the super-affluent and 32,106 for the affluent out of a total combined population of 139,598. In order to account for potential differences in the housing market by year, I included a control in my models for the year of the survey that the respondent appeared in.

Another limitation of the data is that the AHS does top code some variables with extreme values in order to protect privacy. For the variables used in my analysis, the current value of the unit as well as the square footage of the unit are both top coded. Square footage is top coded at 20,159 square feet for 102 respondents and the current value of the unit is top coded at just over $5.2 million for 24 individuals. Household income, the variable that I use to construct my income groups, is an aggregate of individual income that is also top coded and can vary based on the individual. The aggregate measure of household income itself is not top coded, though, with the maximum value of nearly $3 million being reported by only one household. None of the variables that I use are bottom coded, and because the values for the top codes are so high, they are likely to only make my measures for the super-affluent more conservative, having little effect therefore on my analysis.

Where do the Super-Affluent Live?

I began my analysis by looking at the broadest context, the region in which the household lives. Historical perceptions gleaned from literature, television, and movies hold that the Northeast is the place where super-affluence would be the most prevalent (Lee and Marlay 2007), with large global cities that are centers of finance, commerce, and trade, such as New York City. Instead, as shown in Table 1, I find that nearly 33% of the super-affluent live in the South while less than 23% live in the Northeast, more closely mirroring the overall national population distribution. The affluent follow a similar pattern, with 34% residing in the South and fewer than 21% in the Northeast.

Table 1. Regional Distribution of Households in Different Income Strata

	All Households	Top 2%	Next 23%	Middle 50%	Bottom 25%
Northeast	0.184	0.226	0.209	0.185 *	0.182 *
Midwest	0.228	0.169	0.212 *	0.250 ***	0.231 ***
South	0.385	0.329	0.340	0.362	0.393 **
West	0.203	0.276	0.238	0.203 ***	0.194 ***
Area Median Income	60564	63785	63344	60455 ***	58982 ***

***$p<.001$ **$p<.01$ *$p<.05$

While the numerical majority resides in the south for all four groups, it is still evident that a disproportionate number of super-affluent households reside in the northeast relative to other income groups. Whereas only slightly over 18% of the total U.S. population resides in the Northeast, 22.6% of super-affluent households are found in this region as well as 20.9% of affluent households, a statistically significant difference from the middle 50 percent and bottom 25 percent of the income distribution. Additionally, the

super-affluent and affluent are found to be clustered differently from one another in that while the Midwest was the least populated region by the super-affluent in absolute numbers, the Northeast was the least populated by the affluent. I also calculate the average area median income, using the metropolitan area or non-metropolitan county as the area, and find that the super-affluent and affluent live in areas that are more well-off than the middle class and poor, but find no difference between the super-affluent and affluent.

What do the Neighborhoods of the Super-Affluent Look Like?

From this analysis, I move to a smaller geographic level, the neighborhood. As seen in Table 2, I begin with the objective presence of neighborhood amenities, such as public schools, shopping options, and police public transportation, based on the idea that socioeconomic status and higher residential attainment leads to better neighborhood services, greater security, and better education. I also test for subjective measures of neighborhood quality, including satisfaction with public services and amenities. I find that while satisfaction varies little between groups with the exception of police protection, the availability of public schooling, shopping and public transportation were significantly different, with the bottom 25% of the income distribution being more commonly located close to public schools and public transportation. One reason for this might be that the affluent and super-affluent may prefer private transportation and could be willing to travel further for public schools or may prefer private schooling for their children, making proximity to these services less of a determining factor in their choice of residence. The fining that satisfaction varies little between groups is not surprising, given that much previous research (Campbell, 1972; Schneider, 1975; Duncan, 1975) has shown that satisfaction measures are frequently upwardly biased and are commonly disconnected from objective circumstances. Campbell et al. (1976) called this the "dilemma" of social indicators research, that subjective measures such as satisfaction are not always correlated with objective situations.

I also analyze indicators of neighborhood disorder and types of residential as well as non-residential land use within a one-half block radius of the respondent's unit. I find that for the super-affluent, the absence of single-family homes is significantly different from the bottom 25% of the income distribution. Roads in need of repair, the presence of factories or industry, the presence of 4-lane highways, railroads, or an airport, and the presence of trash, litter, or junk on the street are all significantly different between the super-affluent and both the middle 50% and bottom 25% of the income distribution, but not between the super-affluent and affluent. Additionally, for the presence of mobile homes, parking lots, apartment buildings, the presence of businesses and institutions, bothersome smoke, gas or bad smells and the presence of serious crime in the past 12 months, the super-affluent are statistically significant from all other groups, including the affluent. These differences show that while the super-affluent are not different from the affluent in all respects, there are differences in their neighborhoods that do set them apart, and that the super-affluent and affluent live in neighborhoods that are different from the remainder of the population in almost all regards.

Table 2. Mean Neighborhood Characteristics of Households in Different Income Strata

	All Households	Top 2%	Next 23%	Middle 50%	Bottom 25%
Neighborhood Amenities					
Is Public Elementary School Satisfactory?	0.918	0.919	0.914	0.916	0.921
Is Neighborhood Shopping Satisfactory?	0.976	0.972	0.982	0.977	0.971
Is Police Protection Satisfactory?	0.927	0.964	0.951	0.927 ***	0.902 ***
Are there Public Schools within 1 Mile?	0.642	0.645	0.583	0.623	0.703
Is there Shopping within 1 Mile?	0.953	0.965	0.970	0.952	0.940 **
Is there Public Transportation Available?	0.551	0.521	0.538	0.536	0.597 ***
Neighborhood Disorder within 1/2 Block					
Roads Need Repairs	0.392	0.300	0.325	0.399 ***	0.452 ***
Presence of Trash, Litter, or Junk on Street	0.090	0.039	0.054	0.086 ***	0.129 ***
Presence of Serious Crime in Past 12 Months	0.157	0.141	0.130 **	0.154	0.188 ***
Presence of Bars on Windows	0.018	0.015	0.016	0.017	0.022
Residential Land Use within 1/2 Block					
Absence of Single Family Homes	0.150	0.098	0.094	0.126	0.175 ***
Presence of Mobile Homes	0.116	0.021	0.054 *	0.117 ***	0.165 ***
Presence of Apartment Buildings	0.316	0.134	0.200 ***	0.300 ***	0.445 ***
Non-Residential Land Use within 1/2 Block					
Presence of Heavy Street Noise/Traffic	0.236	0.134	0.189 **	0.239 ***	0.283 ***
Presence of Parking Lots	0.300	0.140	0.217 ***	0.285 ***	0.399 ***
Presence of Businesses/Institutions	0.314	0.185	0.241 **	0.303 ***	0.425 ***
Presence of Factories/Industry	0.044	0.020	0.025	0.044 **	0.073 ***
Presence of 4-Lane Highway, Railroad, or Airport	0.161	0.098	0.124	0.164 ***	0.212 ***
Presence of Bothersome Smoke, Gas, or Bad Smells	0.054	0.028	0.038 *	0.053 ***	0.075 ***
Neighborhood Satisfaction					
Satisfaction with Neighborhood as a Place to Live	8.077	8.592	8.302 ***	8.084 ***	7.810 ***

***p<.001 **p<.01 *p<.05

Finally, I analyze the differences between each groups' satisfaction with their neighborhood as a place to live and find that all groups are statistically different from each other in the order that would be expected given the differences in neighborhood characteristics. The super-affluent report the highest levels of satisfaction well above the overall mean, and the bottom 25% report the lowest levels of neighborhood satisfaction, with a mean of 7.8 on a 10-point scale. This suggests that residents are both aware of the presence of unsatisfactory neighborhood characteristics and that these characteristics do, indeed, have an effect on their personal satisfaction.

What do the Houses of the Super-Affluent Look Like?

Having established that the super-affluent live in neighborhood contexts quite different from those of other income strata, I looked at what differences exist between the units of residence themselves. I categorized the responses from the AHS regarding unit characteristics into three different categories. The first category describes the unit in more general terms, including measures for current market value, the year the unit was built, and the square footage of the home, as seen in Table 3. The second category is Unit Exterior, which includes indicators of visible disrepair such as holes in the roof, cracks in the walls or foundation, and broken or boarded windows. The Third category is Unit Interior, which summarizes the space in the house in terms of the number of bathrooms, bedrooms, living rooms, and other various types of rooms that the interior of a housing unit can be divided into.

Table 3. Mean Residential Characteristics of Households in Different Income Strata

	All Households	Top 2%	Next 23%	Middle 50%	Bottom 25%
General Housing Attributes					
Current Market Value	279354	766607	378263 ***	229201 ***	165260 ***
Year Unit Was Built	1965	1972	1971	1966 ***	1962 ***
Square Footage	1835	3846	2345 ***	1830 ***	1414 ***
Square Footage per Person	935	1663	1099 ***	893 ***	793 ***
Owned Unit	0.703	0.940	0.869 ***	0.715 ***	0.470 ***
Monthly Housing cost as a Proportion of Income	0.384	0.079	0.170 ***	0.268 ***	0.876 ***
Unit Exterior					
Unit has Cracks Wider than a Dime	0.052	0.019	0.032	0.045 **	0.067 ***
Windows are Covered with Bars or Boarded	0.034	0.015	0.024	0.033	0.062 ***
Windows are Broken	0.040	0.012	0.018	0.030 *	0.069 ***
Holes/Cracks or Crumbling in Foundation	0.029	0.016	0.016	0.026	0.039 **
Roof has Holes	0.019	0.007	0.009	0.013	0.031 ***
Roof is Missing Shingles or Other Material	0.051	0.032	0.036	0.043	0.070 ***
Walls are Missing Siding or Other Material	0.032	0.012	0.013	0.024	0.045 ***
Outside Walls Lean/Slope/Slant/Buckle	0.019	0.004	0.007	0.013	0.025 ***
Unit Interior					
Number of Bathrooms	1.725	2.835	2.155 ***	1.723 ***	1.403 ***
Number of Bedrooms	2.698	3.579	3.110 ***	2.773 ***	2.370 ***
Numbero f Dining Rooms	0.478	0.807	0.650 ***	0.493 ***	0.363 ***
Number of Kitchens	1.000	1.038	1.010 ***	1.005 ***	0.995 ***
Number of Laundry Rooms	0.219	0.373	0.306 ***	0.234 ***	0.155 ***
Number of Living Rooms	1.326	2.031	1.615 ***	1.338 ***	1.130 ***
Number of Rooms in Basement	2.601	2.424	2.494	2.539	2.706 ***
Number of Other Rooms	0.097	0.229	0.163 ***	0.104 ***	0.048 ***
Unit Satisfaction					
Satisfaction with Unit as a Place to Live	8.239	8.820	8.484 ***	8.242 ***	7.955 ***

***p<.001 **p<.01 *p<.05

The first variable of interest is the current market value of the unit, which is a measure that captures much information about the unit in one single number as it varies according to square footage, unit quality, unit age, and even neighborhood context. A unit with a high market value is usually larger, in better repair, and is frequently located in a better neighborhood than a less valuable unit, though there can be variations and exceptions based on market trends. I find that for the super-affluent, the mean value of their unit is $766,000, a significant premium over the $378,000 mean market value of residences inhabited by the affluent. Even more striking is the difference between the super-affluent and the middle 50%, with a mean market value of $229,000 as well as the difference between the super-affluent and the bottom 25% of the income distribution, with a mean market value of $165,000 for their units of residence. The year the unit was built is not significantly different between the super-affluent and the affluent, but it is significant between these two groups and the other two income strata, with the residences of the affluent and super-affluent being of newer construction. This suggests that the more well-off are moving into newer housing while the less well-off remain in older units or take up residence in the older units left behind by the super-affluent and affluent. A much higher proportion of the super-affluent also own their units of residence rather than renting, and this is statistically significant from all other strata, including the affluent.

Between the super-affluent and the affluent there are no statistically significant differences in the unit exterior, which might be interpreted to mean that once a household reaches a certain level of income, they are able to easily take care of any structural issues in their residence and have the financial means to patch any holes in the roof, repair any broken windows and replace missing siding. At this level of income, additional finances do not aid them any more than what they currently have because there is an upper limit to a unit's state of repair. On the other hand, those at the lower end of the income distribution may lack the finances necessary to maintain the exterior of their unit, as cracked foundations and buckled walls can be very costly to repair. To investigate this further, I calculate monthly housing cost as a proportion of income for each household by dividing annual household income by twelve months and dividing monthly housing costs by this segment of household income. I find that while the super-affluent and affluent spend about 8 and 17 percent of their income on housing costs, respectively, these same costs take up much more of the other groups' monthly income. Nearly 27% of monthly income for the middle 50 percent and over 87% of monthly income for the bottom 25 percent of the income distribution is spent on housing costs. This suggests that after taking care of housing costs such as rent or mortgage payments there is little left over for these individuals to put towards exterior upkeep and repair.

Analyzing the interior of the unit shows striking differences between the four income strata as well. With the exception of the number of rooms in the basement, all of the variables are statistically significant between all groups. The super-affluent occupy residences that are, on average, about 1500 square feet larger than those of the affluent, over 2000 square feet larger than those of the middle 50 percent, and 2,432 square feet larger than the residences of the bottom 25 percent. In addition to being much larger, the residences of the super-affluent also have more bathrooms, more bedrooms, more dining rooms, kitchens, laundry rooms, living rooms, and other rooms in general, making for a much more spacious dwelling. To put this in relative terms, occupants in a residence of the super-affluent have over 1660 square feet to themselves on average, while the affluent occupy residences with nearly 1100 square feet per person. The middle 50 percent are found to have about 900 square feet per person, and the bottom 25 percent of the income distribution resides in units that contain nearly 800 square feet per person, half that of the super-affluent. Although these differences are quite striking, the number of rooms varied by no more than 1.5 between the super-affluent and the bottom 25 percent, suggesting that while the homes of the super-affluent are quite spacious, the images of mega-mansions that might be conjured when thinking of this group are not the norm.

Who are the Super-Affluent?

In order to get a better idea of the types of people that live in these larger, more spacious, and better-maintained homes, I analyze the individual characteristics of the residents for each unit, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Mean Household Characteristics for Different Income Strata

	All Households	Top 2%	Next 23%		Middle 50%		Bottom 25%	
Global Characteristics								
Householder Age	50.382	51.702	49.257	***	49.921	*	52.230	
Male	0.550	0.691	0.657	*	0.572	***	0.396	***
Native Born	0.848	0.900	0.876		0.855	**	0.802	***
Married	0.528	0.767	0.692	***	0.547	***	0.320	***
Ethnicity								
White	0.826	0.942	0.881	***	0.837	***	0.746	***
Black	0.116	0.022	0.059	**	0.109	***	0.191	***
Asian	0.038	0.029	0.048		0.035		0.033	
Hispanic	0.117	0.045	0.064		0.114	***	0.178	***
Education								
Less than High School	0.151	0.022	0.027		0.123	***	0.333	***
Graduated High School	0.275	0.087	0.167	***	0.309	***	0.322	***
Some College	0.282	0.161	0.265	***	0.316	***	0.242	***
College Graduate	0.185	0.368	0.314	***	0.173	***	0.075	***
Gradute Degree	0.107	0.362	0.227	***	0.080	***	0.028	***
***p<.001 **p<.01 *p<.05		0.891	0.805		0.568		0.345	

I find that among the super-affluent, a higher proportion of them are male, native-born, and married than among the other strata. They are also the highest proportion white group and the lowest proportion black, and the super-affluent and affluent together are less likely to be Asian or of Hispanic origin. The super-affluent are also more likely to have received a bachelor's or graduate degree, and this result was statistically significant from all other strata, including the affluent.

Testing the Residential Attainment Model

The process of residential attainment is one in which individuals translate higher levels of education, income, and other social and economic attributes into residences of an equal status (Massey 1985). Among the super-affluent I have shown that they are very likely to be well-educated and certainly have very high incomes as well as other characteristics that advantage them over the rest of the population. The generally affluent, as well, have been shown to share many of these characteristics, if to a slightly lesser degree. Because of this, I analyze racial differences in neighborhood, residential, and householder characteristics within both the super-affluent and affluent populations in order to analyze how the process of residential attainment works within these groups. If the spatial assimilation perspective were to hold true, I would expect to find that within the super-affluent and affluent, race and ethnicity are not as important in determining residential and neighborhood context due to the high levels of economic success that has already been achieved by members of these groups. On the other hand, if differences are found by race and ethnicity, it will lend support to the place stratification perspective in finding that racial and ethnic groups are not equally able to translate their socioeconomic status into residence of equal quality. This works as a conservative test of the residential attainment model in that the socioeconomic success of these groups is already proven,