

The University of Akron

IdeaExchange@UAkron

Williams Honors College, Honors Research
Projects

The Dr. Gary B. and Pamela S. Williams Honors
College

Spring 2021

Economic Success in the United States

Jason Render Jr.

jmr276@zips.uakron.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/honors_research_projects



Part of the [Law and Economics Commons](#), and the [Law and Society Commons](#)

Please take a moment to share how this work helps you [through this survey](#). Your feedback will be important as we plan further development of our repository.

Recommended Citation

Render Jr., Jason, "Economic Success in the United States" (2021). *Williams Honors College, Honors Research Projects*. 1319.

https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/honors_research_projects/1319

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by The Dr. Gary B. and Pamela S. Williams Honors College at IdeaExchange@UAkron, the institutional repository of The University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, USA. It has been accepted for inclusion in Williams Honors College, Honors Research Projects by an authorized administrator of IdeaExchange@UAkron. For more information, please contact mjon@uakron.edu, uapress@uakron.edu.

Examining Poverty in the United States

Jason Render Jr.

Williams Honors College

Abstract

In this research project, I examine the factors that impact the poverty level of an individual within the United States. In particular, I investigate the impact of inherent privilege and the impact which socioeconomic upbringing has on poverty within American society. This investigation into economic success and the impact of inherent privilege will examine both poor and affluent U.S. citizen populations to find common factors present within both groups. The research will then examine how these factors impact an individual's overall poverty level as a result of the barriers which are inherent based on an individual's socioeconomic status. Through this research, I hope to determine if there are systemic racial barriers to economic success within American society and support these findings through historical and empirical data.

Table of Contents

Abstract	pg. 2
Table of Contents	pg. 3
Introduction	pgs. 4-8
Literature Review	pgs. 9-27
Hypothesis/Model	pgs. 28-35
Research Design	pgs. 36-52
Conclusion	pgs. 53-54
Bibliography	pgs. 55-61

Honors Research Project: Introduction

The United States is a capitalist country based upon the common idea that if an individual works hard, they will have the opportunity to financially support themselves and their dependents. This idea is traditionally believed to be defined as “The American Dream”. The American Dream is the belief that anyone, regardless of where they were born or what class they were born into, can attain their own version of success in a society where upward mobility is possible for everyone (Barone, 2020). This commonly held belief of hard work equating to financial success permeates every aspect of American life. This can be seen in the invention of the forty-hour workweek, along with monetary and social incentives to overtime work. The American capitalistic system embodies core principles of private property and freedom of choice, aided by limited government intervention. We continuously see the American system of capitalism in direct tension with welfare systems aimed at solving poverty issues. This system has continued to evolve to produce wealthy individuals who have amassed wealth through working “harder” but it has also introduced a new class of wealth within America produced by working “smarter” as the middle class was created and has since dwindled within society.

Those who work “smarter” have manipulated this system to create great amounts of wealth for themselves through a means of work outside of just working longer hours. American examples of this can be seen in the monetary success of billionaires such as Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Mark Zuckerberg. While the extreme levels of wealth of the top one percent of American society are extremely rare and heavily influenced by systemic factors, their wealth is presented as an example of the working class rising to the top. When referring to the top one percent of income earned, Pew Research Center records that it takes an annual income of \$538,926 to be among the top one percent (Pew, 2020). When considering this amount of wealth

within the American system, we must realize that amassing \$500,000 is not just a matter of hard work and intellect but rather through generational and systemic opportunity. Today the American Dream of upward economic mobility being afforded to every citizen can be recognized as a lie. Those who are provided as examples of working their way to the top of the American economy are often regarded without attention to the social factors and benefits which afforded them the opportunities to make the wealth in the first place.

While the top one percent of the American population have found means to amass wealth, there were over thirty-four million people in poverty in 2019 according to the United States Census Bureau (Bureau, 2019). The wealth gap has continued to grow as more individuals have become disenfranchised and impoverished. The problem presented is very important to the viability of the United States moving forward, as initiatives continually attempt to enact new ways to combat poverty. This problem is much more complicated than just increased wages and more jobs, as the core problems of American poverty are systemic in nature. Underlying factors such as socioeconomic upbringing, inherent privilege, and historical barriers to wealth within the United States, all impact the economic success of an individual within the United States.

While issues of poverty are not unique to only the United States, the U.S. currently has the second highest poverty rate amongst OECD countries. According to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United States is currently ranked second highest in the poverty rate, amongst large economies, OECD countries (OECD, 2021). While the United States has made strides within social reform issues and gender and racial inequality, the poor within the country has continued to suffer due to income volatility, stagnant wages, welfare reform, housing costs, and mass incarceration (Western B, Bloome D, Sosnaud B, Tach L., 2016). The illustration of the American Dream has continued to be shown

as disillusionment as other Western countries continue to progress in decreasing poverty and increasing social services. European countries and Canada continually provide a wide range of social insurance programs that largely prevent families from falling into poverty as they provide social safety nets (Poverty, 2020). Initiatives in these countries target low-income families by providing nutrition assistance, healthcare services, and supplemental wages. Adversely, the United States continually fails as a Western power as minimal resources, programs, and politics are aimed at the socially vulnerable.

The definition of poverty is living without the basic necessities of life, which are food, clothing, or housing (Bureau, 2020). In the United States, the definition of poverty is an individual with income less than \$35 per day or a family of four with income less than \$70 per day and this is calculated from the poverty threshold as set by the U.S. Census Bureau (Bureau, 2020). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, two factors are used to determine a family's or individual's poverty status: (1) their family or individual income and (2) their poverty threshold (Bureau, 2020). If a family's total income for the year is below its assigned poverty threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered to be in poverty (Bureau, 2020).

Poverty within the United States has not always been prioritized as a detrimental thing, as it was even considered to be self-inflicted and desirable for economic growth in the late eighteenth century (Desmond, Matthew, and Bruce Western, 2018). This economic theory continued through mercantilism, which deemed hunger and poverty as an incentivizing fact for work and was successful in keeping wages low. At the end of the eighteenth century, thoughts around poverty began to shift as Rousseau had distinguished natural inequality such as differences in strength and intelligence from artificial inequality resulting from unfair institutions, while Adam Smith changed the Mercantilists' singular focus on trade, arguing that

poverty reduction was a result of development (Desmond, Matthew, and Bruce Western, 2018). This thinking led to the Elizabethan Poor Laws in England, which prohibited begging and established poor relief in local parishes and really ushered in a new Western understanding of poverty as a social ill, rather than a natural occurrence that could not be impacted by social reform (Desmond, Matthew, and Bruce Western, 2018).

The poverty gap has continued to increase in the United States, as unions have decreased, policy reforms aim to favor the wealthy, technological advancements have increased, and systemic factors continue to disenfranchise individuals. Research has continued as individuals seek to help solve the crisis. Throughout the nineteenth century research on economic and racial inequality grew as change-makers such as Jane Addams, Charles Booth, and W.E.B. Du Bois challenged the idea that poverty resulted from laziness or immorality (O'Connor, 2001). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, poverty studies began to examine poverty from a systemic point within Western society. Poverty was examined in relation to social and political structures that were deemed to facilitate systemic poverty, especially within African-American and minority communities. The multidimensionality of poverty was a main point of research during this time. This focus was illustrated very well in the writings of sociologists, Sidney and Beatrice Webb who described poverty as including, "Recurrent periods of underemployment and unemployment, and consequent hunger and starvation; food adulterated, air poisoned, water contaminated" as well as "a spiritual demoralization, a destruction of human personality itself" (Webb & Webb, 1909). Poverty is extremely complex and cannot be eradicated through means only targeting one aspect of poverty itself, but rather a multifaceted approach that is also systemic in nature. Poverty research has continued into the twentieth century, as policymakers and leaders search for solutions. While these studies have furthered understanding within

poverty, many are not aimed at the factors surrounding systemic advantages within an individual's life. Current research broadens understanding within poverty but does not go into the next process of incorporating historic and systemic factors to examine the current poverty crisis.

The United States continues to experience an ongoing poverty crisis. The capitalistic framework of the United States provides individuals with the opportunity to gain wealth through both active and passive means of income. This freedom of a capitalist economic system is supposed to allow individuals to essentially choose their own economic realities through working within this system. As private actors within this economic system, citizens choose their own means of production, and those choices all combine to make up an individual's life but I assert that this economic system is flawed as some individuals do not have an equal opportunity to achieve wealth. In my study, I will be examining factors that impact poverty within the United States, with a focus on the impact of systemic inherent privileges. This promise of the choice to achieve wealth and avoid poverty is a dream rather than a reality within the American system. The research will examine how these factors impact an individual's poverty level as a result of the barriers that minority and impoverished groups currently face, which are inherent based on an individual's socioeconomic status.

Literature Review

Socioeconomic upbringing and the idea of “inherent privilege” are integral to understanding poverty within American society. Economic success is dependent upon many variables within society, and it must be addressed from that understanding if actual progress is to be achieved. Variables that inherently benefit or disadvantage individuals from the point of birth have been examined within academic studies for many years. Initially, early research failed to consider systemic barriers and variables as they were not widely recognized within the research. Instead, these studies focused on only the immediate variables present in wealth and poverty. This research was essentially incomplete as it sought to address poverty and wealth from the vantage point of immediate variables such as family size, living location, employment status, and debt habits. Research has since shifted to recognize that these immediate dependent variables are results of systemic barriers to wealth that impact individuals’ socioeconomic status.

Although one of the richest countries in the world, the United States has one of the highest poverty rates. According to a 2019 report done by the United States Census Bureau, 34.0 million individuals are identified as living in poverty (Bureau). Poverty is a problem that has been widespread and rampant from the inception of the United States but has just recently been researched from a multidimensional approach at the onset of the 19th century. Poverty is a social dilemma that crosses across the material, social, bodily, and psychological dimensions to impact individuals (Desmond, 2018). This multidimensional concept goes on to include institutions as well such as schools, neighborhoods, and prisons to really shift from just marginalizing the poor within the United States to include lived experiences (Desmond 2018). These variables of poverty are championed within the birth of development economics which researched these issues from a systemic approach, trying to identify the “roots” of socioeconomic status. This

understanding of poverty changed research entirely as exemplified by the studies of professors Sudhir Anand and Amartya Sen who proposed a nuanced approach to poverty as, “involve[d] not only the lack of necessities of material well-being but also the denial of opportunities of living a tolerable life” (Anand & Sen 1997).

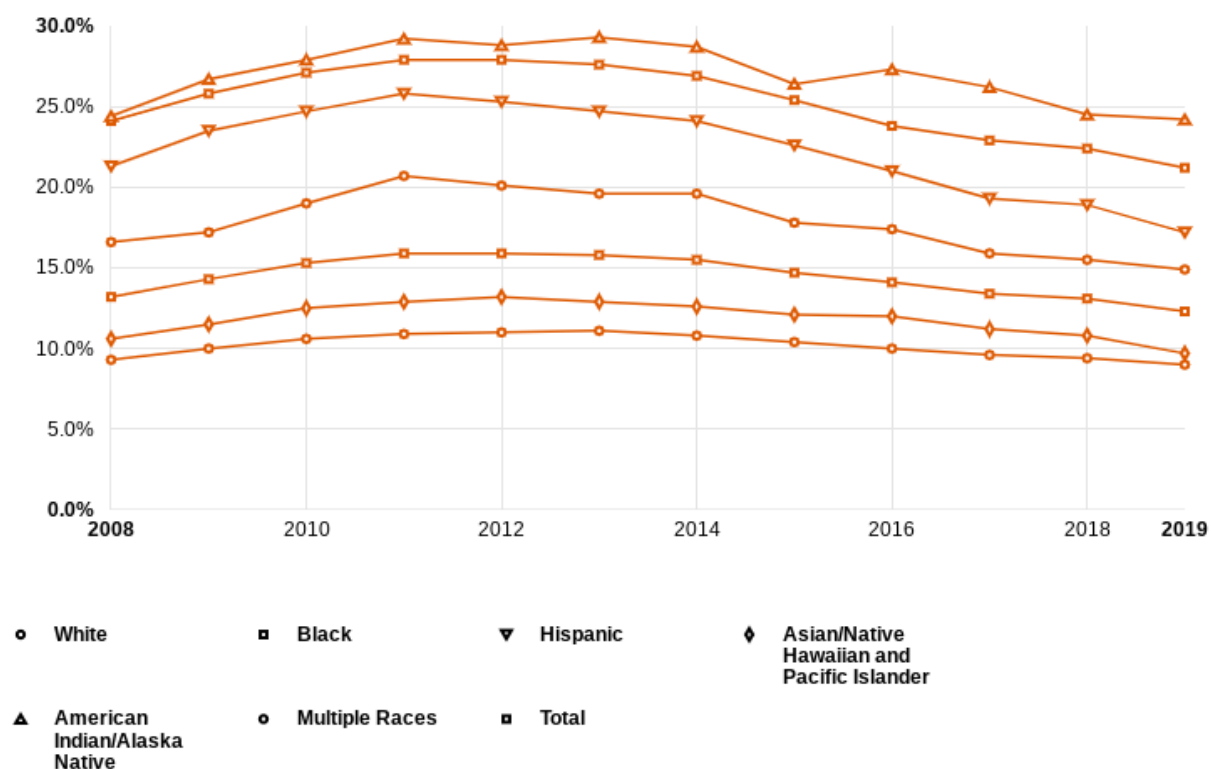
Poverty and wealth cannot be understood from simply a stance of having financial means and not having financial means, but rather from an understanding of the denial of opportunity and the presence of social barriers. As a prosperous Western country, poverty signals less about the material hardships which a member of society endures, but more about alienation from mainstream opportunities afforded to some (Anand & Sen 1997). These opportunities are directly related to poverty, as they encompass jobs, education, and upbringing. This research into opportunity impact was studied by sociologist William Julius Wilson in 1987. Wilson examined the social isolation of poor urban African-Americans who were cut off from mainstream opportunities and institutions and subjected to concentration effects (Wilson, 1987). This study emphasized that disadvantage was systemic in nature as it is particularly severe when endured amongst accumulated hardships within an individual's life (Wilson, 1987).

This research into inner-city communities showed the effects of poverty, segregation, and crime combined to create a total disadvantage for community members for several generations. Following Wilson's work, poverty research was reinforced through the recognition of connections amongst many social issues and poverty. One example of this can be seen in the mutually reinforcing relationship between incarceration and poverty which continues on in a cyclical method throughout impoverished communities (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2014). This research revolutionized poverty studies as it indicated the “ubiquity of violence, health problems, and chaos in the childhoods, homes, schools, and neighborhoods of the poor” (Western, 2016).

Sociological theories of poverty and research explore two general segments of poverty identified as individualistic and structural. Within the individual theory, poverty can be explained as being attributed to personal attributes such as education and social background (Blau & Duncan 1967). The structural theory differs as it approaches poverty from a large-scale economic level and policy reforms (Blau & Duncan 1967). These two theories encompass the relational nature of poverty, as it must be understood from both levels to impact change. While these two researched theories are extremely effective in outlining the variables involved in poverty, a third theory has emerged in research which examines the interactions between members of different socioeconomic levels within society. This third theory asserts that poverty is not simply a byproduct of one's attributes or historical outcomes, as discussed in the major two research focuses, but also through unequal relationships between the financially secure and insecure (Desmond, 2018).

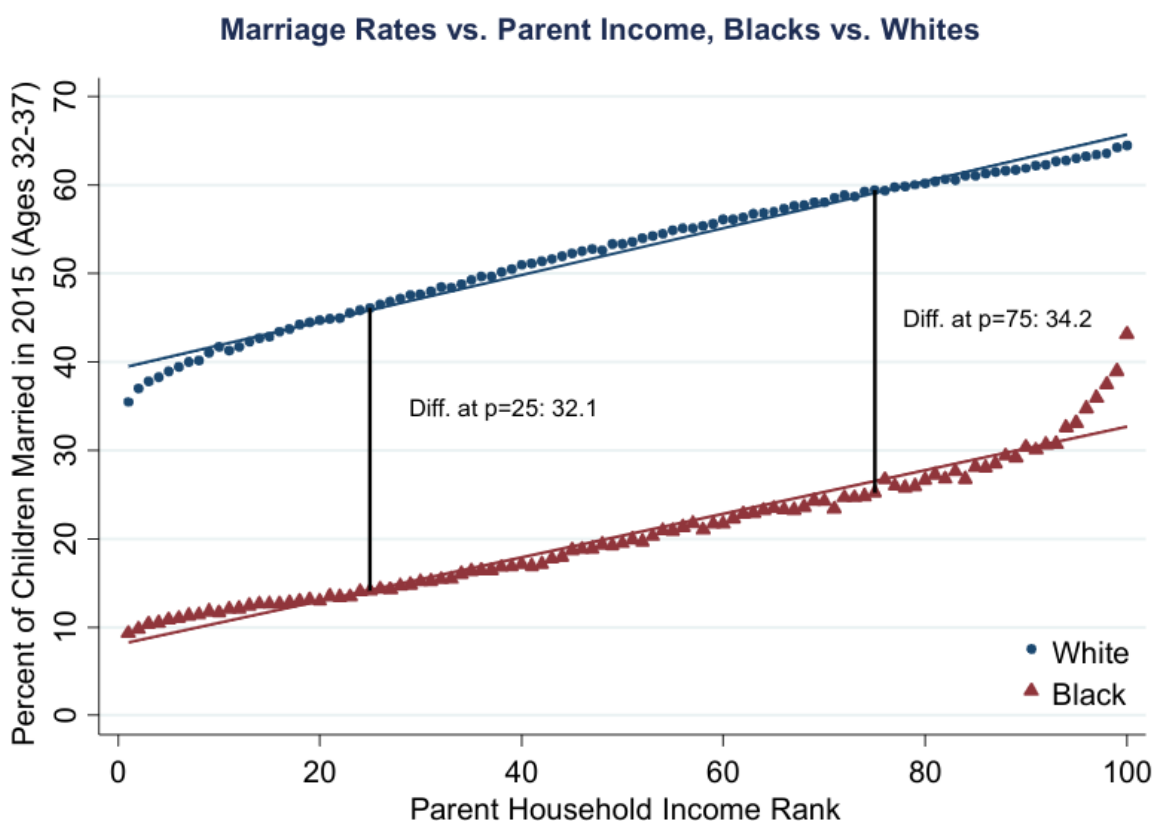
These unequal relationships are exemplified in social settings such as with an employee and their boss, landlords and their tenants, and the homeless and those with homes. This relational research study examines the inequality in the bonds or transactions between different individuals or organizations occupying different positions within the socioeconomic hierarchy (Desmond 2018). The capitalistic system of the United States requires that this relationship between the poor and wealthy be in place, in order to uphold the economic structure. This relationship requires that research examine the processes and transactions between socioeconomic groups that are unequal in power and capital to understand all aspects of poverty (Tilly, 1998). Unfortunately, minority groups are most negatively affected by this causal relationship in the United States.

Within the United States, poverty is both racialized and gendered amongst communities, indicating the intersectionality between these disparities and economic outcomes. Amongst differentiated race populations in the United States American Indian/Alaska Natives have the highest poverty rate at 24.2%, followed by African Americans at 21.2%, Hispanics at 17.2%, Asian/Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander at 9.7%, and then Whites at 9.0% according to data collected by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2019 (KFF, 2019).



This study showed extremely high levels of poverty in minority populations while highlighting the fact that White populations had a much lower level of poverty at 9.0%. To understand these gaps in income, we must evaluate the factors which drive intergenerational gaps in income amongst minority groups and Whites. Marriage rates amongst minority groups are a very influential variable in poverty studies. A study conducted by Harvard professors, Raj Chetty and Nathaniel Hendren along with two members of the U.S. Census Bureau examine these

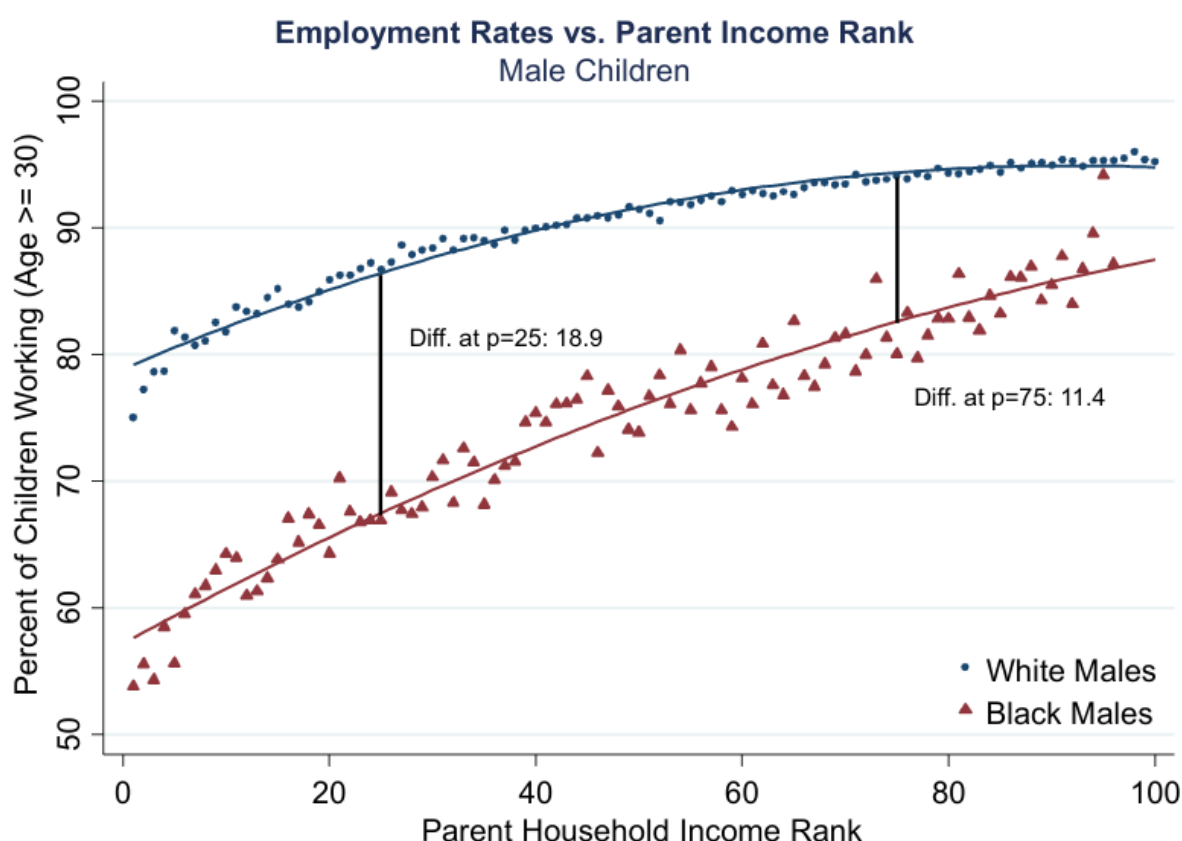
differences. Within this study, it was found that wealth probability begins at birth as black children have substantially lower marriage rates across the parental income distribution, reporting that in 2015 there was a gap of 32 percentage points for Black children with parents at the 25th income percentile and 34 percentage points at the 75th percentile (Chetty et al, 2020).



Comparatively, White children at the bottom of the income distribution are just as likely to be married as black children at the 97th percentile of the parental income distribution (Chetty et al, 2020).

This difference is very important to recognize, as marriage provides households with more resources and oftentimes stability throughout the course of a child's life, which correlates to a higher earning potential. This study evaluates the individual incomes of children to identify the impacts of the differences in marriage rates and the information found asserts that the lower marriage rate in the Black community contributes to a 5% gap in wage potential for the children

across their working lives (Chetty et al, 2020). This gap within the labor market and employment rates are starkly seen for children growing up in low-income families. This study found that black men with parents at the 25th percentile are 18.9% less likely to work during a year than white men, while black men with parents at the 75th percentile are 11.4% less likely to work than white men (Chetty et al, 2020). In comparison, White men with parents at the 9th income percentile have an employment rate comparable to the rates of black men with parents at the 75th percentile (Chetty et al, 2020).



This correlation between race, childhood economic upbringing, and poverty all must be examined as I assert that childhood is the basis for poverty studies.

Childhood poverty is a variable that affects many different aspects of an individual's life and many of these effects are contributing factors to continued poverty throughout adulthood. A study done by economist Martin Ravallion exposed that children growing up in poverty are more

likely to be admitted to a hospital, have poor nutrition, and become disabled, thus leading to increased health costs throughout childhood and also as adults (Ravallion, 2016). While many health problems can be attributed to hereditary factors, many studies suggest that the physical environment that poor children have raised in plays a major role in health. Examples of this can be seen in studies that have found poor children to be significantly more likely to be exposed to high levels of lead and other toxic pollutants that cause a range of health problems (Evans, 2004). A 2008 study done by Georgetown professor Harry Holzer identified that direct health costs and increased spending on special education attributable to child poverty have been estimated to be \$26 billion (Holzer et. al, 2008). This study also found that there is an additional \$248,000 in health capital costs for each child in poverty which results in an aggregate health care cost of \$192.1 billion in 2015 (Holzer et. al, 2008).

Poverty within the United States is continuously seen to be directly correlated with incarceration rates. In 2020, the United States had a prison population of 2.2 million people, nearly half of whom are non-violent drug offenders, accused people held pre-trial because they cannot afford their bail and others who have been arrested for failure to pay debts or fines for minor infractions (Hayes, 2020). Studies have shown that poverty initially plays a role in the imprisonment of individuals both before they are arrested and after the point of arrest. Individuals who experience childhood and adult poverty are more likely to be arrested than their wealthy counterparts, and also more likely to serve longer sentences. According to the American Action Forum, poverty and excessive legal punishments contribute significantly to the United States' high rate of imprisonment, which has disproportionately affected low-income and minority populations (Hayes, 2020). The incarceration rate is now more than 4.3 times what it was nearly 50 years ago, which has led to the United States having the highest incarceration rate

of any country in the world (Hayes, 2020). The higher incarceration rate which is seen is not attributable to higher crime rates though crime has statistically declined since the 1990s. Instead, the arrest rate particularly for drug crimes has increased dramatically, while sentences have gotten longer. These policy changes have disproportionately affected low-income and minority populations, who now make up roughly three-fifths and two-thirds of the prison population (Hayes, 2020).

The root causes of mass incarceration are poverty and overcriminalization within the United States. Data shows that poverty does make a person more susceptible to being arrested and more likely to be charged with a harsher crime and to receive a longer sentence. Research into incarceration rates have discovered that adults in poverty are three times more likely to be arrested than those who aren't, and people earning less than 150 percent of the federal poverty level are 15 times more likely to be charged with a felony which, by definition, carries a longer sentence than people earning above that threshold (Hayes, 2020). Between 1999 and 2016, people convicted of a crime with at least some college education were given sentences that were between 4.6 and 7.8 percent shorter than individuals without a college education, and given that education level is highly correlated with a person's income, this statistic, too, suggests that longer sentences are imposed on lower-income individuals (Hayes, 2020).

The Brookings Institution found that only 49 percent of incarcerated men were employed in the three years prior to incarceration and their median annual earnings were \$6,250; just 13 percent earned more than \$15,000. (Looney, 2018). Further findings in the study revealed a pattern, showing that these individuals are not just more likely to be poor and unemployed, but they were also more likely to grow up in poverty and in neighborhoods with high unemployment (Looney, 2018). The study showed the likelihood that a boy from a family in the bottom 10

percent of the income distribution will end up in prison in his thirties is 20 times greater than that of a boy from a family in the top 10 percent (Looney, 2018). These studies also examined the household impact further showing that individuals are also nearly twice as likely to be imprisoned if they grow up in single-parent homes, even after accounting for differences in income (Looney, 2018). All of these factors associated with poverty contribute to incarceration rates within the United States.

Health disparities within the United States are directly linked to poverty. Access to health care is based on the economic status of individuals as health insurance options are often expensive and unrealistic to impoverished individuals. In the United States, per capita healthcare costs are the highest in the world and continue to escalate, leading health insurance to become nearly essential (Hoffman, 2008). Access to healthcare rests on many factors like the availability of health services in a community and personal care-seeking behavior, however, these and other factors are often superseded by whether a person can afford the costs of needed care (Hoffman, 2008). Health insurance enables access to care by protecting individuals and families against the high and often unexpected costs of medical care, as well as by connecting them to networks and systems of health care providers. The American health insurance system is pluralistic, with both private and public sectors, but its foundation is employer-based coverage for working families and Medicare for the elderly and disabled (Hoffman, 2008). Within this system, most working-age adults obtain health coverage for themselves and their dependents as a benefit of employment (Hoffman, 2008).

However, this benefit has been gradually decreasing as health premiums, in addition to higher health care costs, grow at a faster rate, outpacing rates of general inflation and wages. Low-wage workers are far less likely than higher-wage workers to have access to job-based

coverage as they are not covered within employer health insurance guidelines. When it is available, health insurance is often unaffordable for low-income people, whose household budgets are strained to meet food, housing, and other basic needs (Hoffman, 2008). Health insurance, poverty, and health are all interconnected. The economic downturn caused by the coronavirus pandemic has renewed attention on health insurance coverage as millions have lost their jobs and potentially their health coverage.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) sought to address the gaps in our healthcare system that leave millions of people without health insurance by extending Medicaid coverage to many low-income individuals and providing subsidies for Marketplace coverage for individuals below 400% of poverty (Tolbert, 2020). As a result of the ACA, the number of uninsured nonelderly Americans declined by 20 million, dropping to a historic low in 2016. However, beginning in 2017, the number of uninsured nonelderly Americans increased for three straight years, growing by 2.2 million from 26.7 million in 2016 to 28.9 million in 2019, and the general uninsured rate in the United States increased from 10.0% in 2016 to 10.9% in 2019 (Tolbert, 2020).

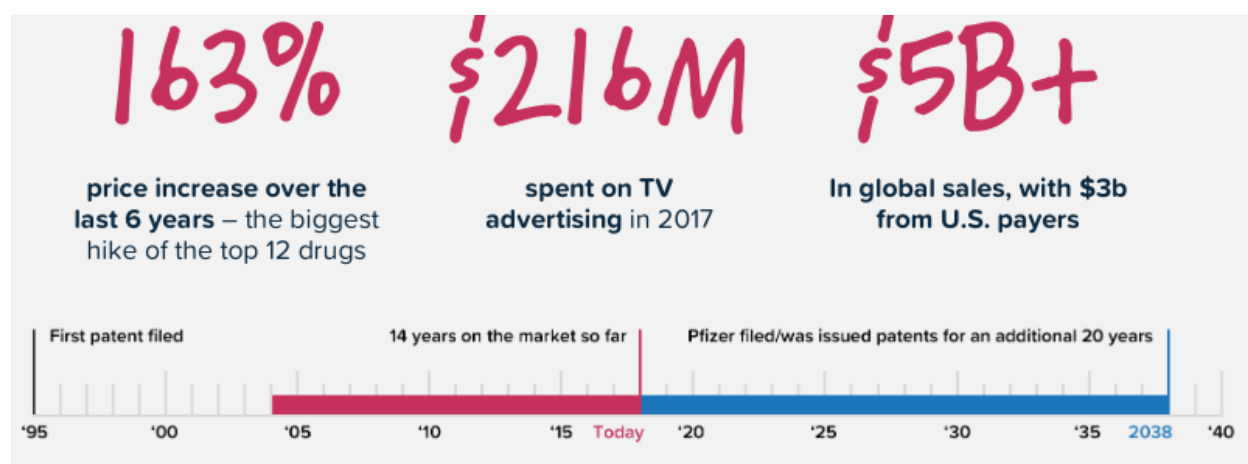
Within the United States, patents are disproportionately held by the wealthy. Patent-holding has been a key variable contributing to the poverty gap within the United States. The patent disparity was exacerbated with the America Invents Act of 2011 which transitioned America's patenting system away from a first-to-invent system to a first-to-file system (Tzeng, 2016). A large consequence of this alteration to the patent system was that economically disadvantaged investors were now being priced out of the costly patenting process and were subsequently unable to protect their intellectual property (Tzeng, 2016). This essentially blocked many inventors from patenting their works, solely based on their economic means, which impacted women and minority group members at a statistically high rate. In order to work

against these adverse effects, Congress incorporated a number of provisions including section 32 into the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act to aid individual inventors by encouraging patent pro bono prosecution by attorneys (Tzeng, 2016). As patents have become concentrated amongst the richest members of society, social mobility has become stunted as the poverty gap has grown as the rich hold large amounts of capital and the means of production. Inequality within patents impacts the overall viability of the entire economy. As the rich majority owners of patents continue to dominate the market on their revenue streams, their economic spending habits do not grow at the same pace as their wealth which leads to less rotating economic wealth (Tzeng, 2016).

The adverse effects of the patent system are extremely apparent within healthcare. A 2018 study done by Tahir Amin of the Initiative for Medicines, Access & Knowledge (I-MAK) analyzed the twelve best-selling drugs in the United States and revealed the vast abuse of patents by these drug-makers (Amin, 2018). Drug companies are able to exploit minority and impoverished populations by filing for hundreds of patent applications annually, which allows them to extend their monopolies far beyond the twenty years of protection intended under U.S. patent law (Amin, 2018). This patent manipulation process results in almost a doubling in the length of protection for drug companies which keeps cheaper versions of medicines out of the market (Amin, 2018). Patents allow these top drug manufacturers to wreak havoc on the impoverished as they control high costs on medications and treatment plans. The study went on to find that between 2012-2018 branded drug prices increased by sixty-eight percent amongst the top twelve drugs, while only one of those drugs decreased in price (Amin, 2018). The process of drug companies manipulating the patent system is known by lawmakers within government, as

expressed by past President Donald Trump in 2018, “Our patent system will reward innovation, but it will not be used as a shield to protect unfair monopolies”.

The danger of drug company monopolies has been exemplified throughout the course of 2020-2021 as companies have competed to produce a COVID-19 vaccine. Moderna, Pfizer, and most recently, Johnson & Johnson have been able to produce vaccines as they are some of the largest drug manufacturing companies and hold many patents on different technologies and practices needed to manufacture the vaccine. Within a more equitable patent system, more companies would have access to the patents and technologies required to successfully make a vaccine, leading to a higher volume of vaccine options. This system of patent-holding is not new to Pfizer, as the I-MAK study points to their manufacturing of a neuropathic pain medicine called Lyrica. Pfizer has utilized over-patenting based on trivial inventions to artificially extend their commercial exclusivity of Lyrica while raising prices (Amin, 2018). Pfizer’s patent strategy with Lyrica allowed them to increase the drug price by 163% between 2012-2018 as they gained more than \$5,000,000,000 in global sales with \$3,000,000,000 from U.S. buyers (Amin, 2018).



Drug companies such as Pfizer are able to maintain patent monopolies and negatively affect the American healthcare system by driving drug prices. Studies show that generic supplier competition consistently reduces the price of medicine by more than half (Amin, 2018).

The cyclical nature of poverty can also be observed in childhood poverty and education. The opportunity to obtain a quality education is very dependent upon what neighborhood children are raised in and unfortunately, minority and White children often are raised in two extremely different environments. Statistics show that black children do especially well in neighborhoods with a large fraction of fathers at home in black families and low levels of racial bias among whites (Chetty et al, 2020). Unfortunately, very few black children grow up in these areas as currently, only 4.2% of Black children in the United States grow up in areas with a poverty rate below 10% and more than half of black fathers present (Chetty et al, 2020). Alternatively, 62.5% of White children grow up in low-poverty areas with more than half of white fathers present (Chetty et al, 2020). Because of these factors of poverty, minority children enter kindergarten with very different levels of preparedness. This can particularly be seen in Asian and Hispanic populations as achievement levels are lowered due to a high proportion of parents who lack English skills (Lin & Harris, 2008). These initial differences are increased by class differences, ability grouping, and teacher attention. This disparity is seen by fourth grade as, Black children score more than 25 points lower, Hispanic children about 15 points lower, and Asian children between 5-10 points lower than White children on reading and math tests (Lin & Harris, 2008).

Education attainment is crucial to potential economic earnings, as school grades directly influence career and educational advancement. The factor of poverty within education is further exposed through the studies of Rank, Hirschl, and Foster in “Chasing the American Dream”, as they demonstrated that children growing up in poverty are often exposed to an inferior education (Rank et. al, 2014). This lack of educational success results in fewer skills and abilities developed which leads to employment in lower-paying and less stable jobs often spanning across

the span of adulthood (Rank et. al, 2014). The lack of opportunity and economic potential presented by low educational attainment directly correlates to potential crime and incarceration. This increase in crime amongst children and adults in poverty directly correlates to the economic theory of cost and benefit analysis when examining an individual's propensity towards crime. A study done by PEW Research Center found that at the end of 2018 Black Americans represented 33% of the sentenced prison population which was about triple their 12% share of the United States adult population, while Whites accounted for 30% of prisoners which is about half their 63% share of the adult population (Gramlich, 2020). Included in this study, Hispanics were found to make up 23% of the American prison population, compared to 16% of the American population (Gramlich, 2020).

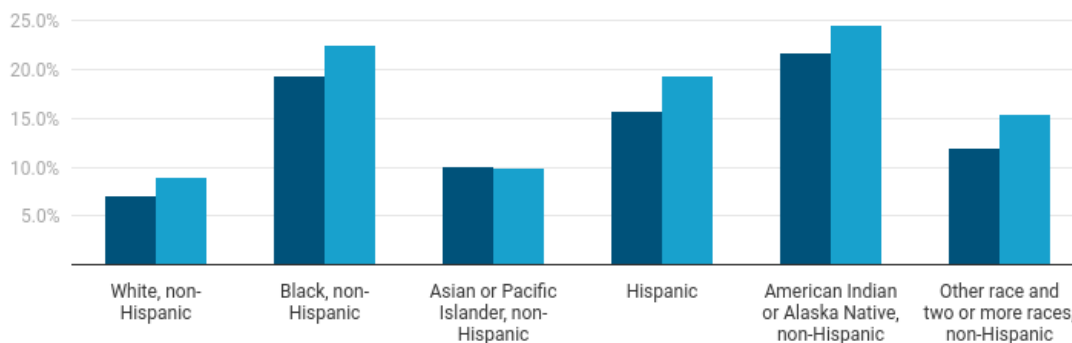
Outside of external factors which impact poverty, whether an individual is born male or female is directly correlated to poverty rates within the United States. Before starting this study I must note that we will be examining the sex of individuals which is defined as being based on the biological attributes of men and women including chromosomes, anatomy, and hormones (Bureau, 2016). Many studies utilize the term gender in place of sex within their poverty research, but gender differs from sex as it is a social construction whereby a society or culture assigns certain tendencies or behaviors the labels of masculine and feminine. Consequently many of the studies which I examine use the term gender to denote males and females, so I will stay consistent with their terminology. The wage gap between men and women is extremely apparent in the United States, more women live in poverty than men. A 2018 study done by the Center for American Progress found that of the 38.1 million people living in poverty in 2018, 56 percent or 21.4 million were women (Bleiweis, 2020). This study also showed that women of nearly all races and ethnicities face higher rates of poverty than their male counterparts, with the highest

rates of poverty being experienced by American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN) women, Black women, and Latinas (Bleiweis, 2020).

Women have higher rates of poverty than men across almost all races and ethnicities

Poverty rates by gender and race and ethnicity

Men Women

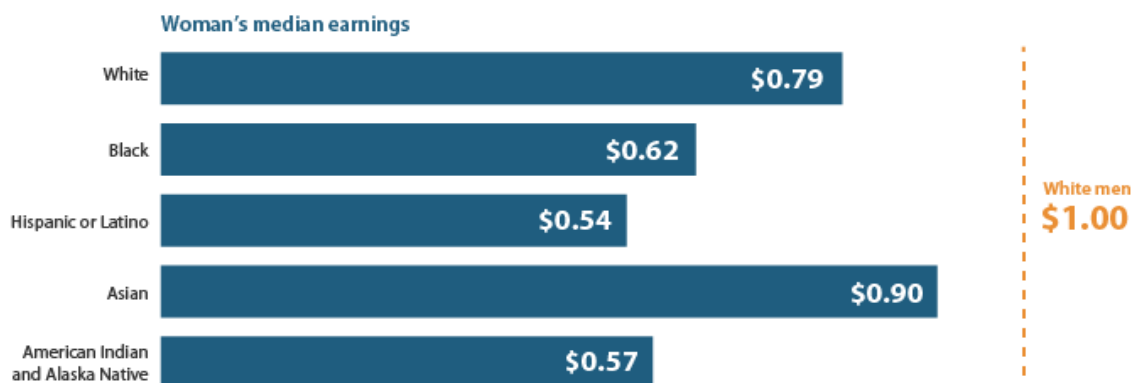


Within the United States, issues of inequality between men and women are exacerbated by the “gender wage gap”. The gender wage gap refers to the difference in earnings between women and men, with women consistently earning less than men, and the gap is wider for most women of color (Bleiweis, 2020). Analyzing the most recent Census Bureau data from 2018, women of all races earned, on average, just 82 cents for every \$1 earned by men of all races (Bleiweis, 2020). This calculation is determined by the ratio of median annual earnings for women working full-time, year-round to those of their male counterparts, and it translates to a gender wage gap of 18 cents (Bleiweis, 2020). When examining the wage gap for women, it is important to highlight that there are significant differences by race and ethnicity as the wage gap is larger for most women of color.

FIGURE 1

The gender wage gap is more significant for most women of color

Comparing 2018 median earnings of full-time, year-round workers by race/ethnicity and sex



The wage gap between men and women has decreased over the past decades due to many hardworking reformers, but this progress has been halted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to new data released today by UN Women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the COVID-19 crisis will dramatically increase the poverty rate for women and widen the gap between men and women who live in poverty. While the poverty rate for women was expected to decrease by 2.7 percent between 2019 and 2021, projections now point to an increase of 9.1 percent due to the pandemic and its fallout (Sanchez, 2020). According to UNDP research, women are employed in some of the most affected sectors, like accommodation, food services, and domestic which have been particularly vulnerable to layoffs and loss of livelihood (Sanchez, 2020). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), by June 2020, it is estimated that 72 percent of domestic workers globally had lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19 (Sanchez, 2020). As a result of the pandemic, women and men are both taking on more household chores and care for children and family members during lockdowns, but the majority of work still falls on the shoulders of women and girls as they have been forced to stay home and care for any children or siblings during this time. Poverty inequality continues to grow between men and women as it has become a gendered issue.

When considering variables within poverty in the United States, the existence of work unions has served to positively affect poverty. Unions allow workers to join together to negotiate for higher wages and benefits while also ensuring that fair workplace practices are in place and are being implemented. Unfortunately, today the number of workers in unions has steadily dwindled to about eleven percent in the public sector and less than seven percent in the private sector (Madland, 2021). Unions work to ensure that workers share in the gains of a more productive economy and this sharing of wealth is what drives the growth of the middle class and lessens the poverty gap. The United States economy has grown greatly, but as the economy has grown over the decades, poverty rates also continue to grow.

Unions serve to provide the greatest amount of help to those within the lowest-wage of workers as union contracts raise wages by twenty-one percent (Madland, 2021). While unions serve to benefit the lowest-wage workers, they are consistently under attack by the federal government and interest groups. This strife can be seen in the example of the United States Postal Service Union which continuously found itself facing governmental attack during Donald Trump's presidency in 2020, fighting for federal funding during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research into advanced democratic countries around the world shows that this positive impact is not only seen by union workers, as studies have shown that all working people in higher unionized areas are less likely to live in poverty (Madland, 2021). This data is no surprise as unions work to give their workers the highest levels of negotiation within their wages and benefits, and highly unionized areas serve as natural regulators of wages amongst non-unionized workers.

The positive impact of unions can especially be seen within the African-American community in the United States. In 1983, at the height of unionization within the Black

community, 31.7 percent of Black workers were represented by a union (Bucknor, 2020). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, this number has since decreased to about 10.8 percent in 2020 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). When observing data between 2010-2015 the gap between unionized and nonunionized Black workers is extremely apparent as union workers earned about thirty-six percent more than non-unionized workers (Bucknor, 2020). This difference is even more apparent amongst Black workers in low-wage occupations where unionized workers earned about thirty-nine percent more than non-unionized workers (Bucknor, 2020).

Government jobs with unions have historically been important for Black workers within the United States. Government jobs within the federal government were early adopters of anti-discrimination provisions, leading to an astounding percentage of black workers in the federal workforce at twenty percent in 2020 (Baker, 2021). These federal positions provided Black workers with pensions and stable well-paying jobs, providing a path to the middle class for the Black community (Baker, 2021). A study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research found a higher unionization rate for Black workers in the public sector to quadruple the unionization rate for Black workers in the private sector (Baker, 2021). This data serves to show the importance of unions within the Black community as federal jobs provide an opportunity for these workers to gain well-paying employment and benefits. Since data became available in 1989, Black workers have continuously been overrepresented at all levels of government, but the number of Black workers within unions has gone down since 2016 (Baker, 2021).

The function of unions has been especially important within the Black community as they helped to form a new middle-class of Black workers, in consistent battle against workplace inequities and wage discrimination. Along with wage benefits, unions promised the benefit of

health insurance coverage within the Black community, which helped to address a prominent barrier of health inequity. Between 2009-2015 71.4 percent of Black union workers had employer-provided health insurance, compared to just 47.7 percent of non-union Black workers (Bucknor, 2020). The rise of de-unionization within the United States over the past two decades has contributed to a rise in overall wage inequality as well as a growth in the Black-White wage gap as workers are no longer protected from the adverse effects of capitalistic economic growth. These effects were especially seen during the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020 when Black union members weathered the pandemic better than their non-union counterparts (Baker, 2021). All of these factors are important to this study of poverty within the United States, and they will be the basis from which I continue to examine this economic study through my research.

Hypothesis and Model

Briefly summarized, the central argument asserted within this research paper is that the systemic barriers experienced by minority group members have significantly contributed to high poverty rates and economic inequality amongst members of these groups in the United States. In addition, I argue that the inherent privileges and socioeconomic upbringing of an American citizen have contributed to an increased poverty gap within the United States. Incarceration rates, educational attainment, race, sex, marital status, childhood poverty, health insurance coverage, patent-holding, and union-membership, serve as the independent variables in this study, while the poverty rates amongst racial groups in the United States serves as the dependent variable.

Incarceration rates

The first independent variable, incarceration rates, is expected to have a positive relationship with the dependent variable of poverty rates. As incarceration rates increase I argue that poverty rate levels increase as well. According to Marc Mauer, Executive Director of the Sentencing Project, incarceration rates can be defined as the number of people incarcerated as a proportion of its total population (Mauer, 2017). This definition can be expanded as the incarceration rate is often interpreted as a measurement of the degree of punitiveness in a society, although it is an imperfect measure (Mauer, 2017). Incarceration rates are directly correlated to the prison population within a society, which includes jails as well. Within societies, several factors that influence incarceration rates include rates of serious crime, law enforcement and prosecutorial decision making, the scale of prison admissions, length of time served in prison, and other means of social control in a society (Mauer, 2017). A society's incarceration rate is calculated by standard means as the number of imprisoned individuals is calculated and then divided into the total population. The rate of incarceration provides one measure of the degree of

punitiveness in a society, but it does not necessarily explain whether those levels reflect overall societal conditions and crime rates or the functioning of the criminal justice system (Mauer, 2017).

Educational attainment

For the second independent variable, educational attainment, I argue that as educational attainment increases, poverty rates decrease. According to the United States Census Bureau, educational attainment refers to the highest level of education that an individual has completed and this is distinct from the level of schooling that an individual is attending (Bureau, 2016). Data on the educational attainment for United States citizens is derived from a single question on the Census that asks, “What is the highest grade of school... has completed, or the highest degree ... has received?” (Bureau, 2016). This question was first implemented in the 1992 Census and continues to be included within the Census today, allowing for this data to be available in research. Educational attainment is categorized on the American Census in the following categories: No schooling completed, Nursery school, Grades 1 through 11, 12th grade- no diploma, Regular high school diploma, GED or alternative credential, Some college credit, but less than 1 year of college, 1 or more years of college credit, no degree, Associates degree, Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree, Professional degree beyond bachelor’s degree, and Doctorate degree (Census, 2016). Educational attainment is used within Census data to address how educated a population is, and find relationships between educational attainment and socioeconomic status.

Race

Within the third independent variable of race, I assert race has both a positive and negative relationship with poverty rates. For minority group members I hypothesize being a

minority group member increases poverty rates amongst these communities. Within my research, I argue that being a White person leads to a lower poverty rate and thus has a negative relationship with the dependent variable of poverty rates. According to the United States Census Bureau, the race is defined as being a grouping of humans based on shared physical or social qualities into categories generally viewed as distinct by society (Bureau, 2016). Within the U.S. Census race is categorized into the following groups: **White** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa, **Black or African American** – A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa, **American Indian or Alaska Native** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment, **Asian** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam, and **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands (Bureau, 2016). Data on race is completely based on an individual's self-identification, and individuals are able to self-identify as more than one race. Within race, racial categories included in the census questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically (Census, 2016).

Sex

For my fourth independent variable of sex, I argue that being a male leads to lower poverty rates while being female leads to higher poverty rates. Sex is defined as being based on the biological attributes of men and women including chromosomes, anatomy, and hormones

(Bureau, 2016). Sex should not be used interchangeably with gender. Gender differs from sex as it is a social construction whereby a society or culture assigns certain tendencies or behaviors the labels of masculine and feminine (Bureau, 2016). The biological designation of sex is appointed at the point of birth and is asked as a question on the American Census. Data statistics regarding the male and female sex are utilized by local, state, tribal, and federal agencies to plan and fund government programs and direct policies for ensuring equity amongst both groups (Bureau, 2016). Within studies of wealth inequality between males and females, the term gender is often used interchangeably with sex.

Marital status

_____ Within my fifth independent variable of marital status, I predict that a higher proportion of married households tends to contribute to lower poverty rates. Marital status is defined as the legally defined marital state of an individual, encompassing four major categories: Never married, Married, Widowed, and Divorced (Bureau, 2016). Within data collection on the U.S. Census, the category “married” is further divided into “married, spouse present,” “separated,” and “other married, spouse absent” (Bureau, 2016). A person was classified as “married, spouse present” if the husband or wife was reported as a member of the household, even though he or she may have been temporarily absent on business or on vacation, visiting, in a hospital, etc., at the time the data was collected (Bureau, 2016). Citizens who are reported as separated include those with legal separations, those living apart with intentions of obtaining a divorce, and other people permanently or temporarily separated because of marital discord (Bureau, 2016). The group “other married, spouse absent” includes married people living apart because either the husband or wife was employed and living at a considerable distance from home (Bureau, 2016).

These differentiations are extremely important within data collection for household income levels.

Childhood poverty

As my sixth independent variable, I predict that higher levels of childhood poverty directly correlate to higher poverty rates in adulthood. Childhood poverty refers to the state of children living in poverty and applies to children from poor families or orphans being raised with or without state resources (Haider, 2021). The definition of children within the United States and most countries is “people under the age of eighteen”. If a child’s standard of living fails to meet the minimum acceptable standard of the nation where that child lives, they are considered to be poor (Haider, 2021). According to the United Nations Children's Fund, "children living in poverty are those who experience deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to stay alive, develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential, and participate as full and equal members of society" (UNICEF, 2005). America’s child poverty problem is both persistent and structural in nature as official statistics still undercount the severity of need amongst children. The official poverty measure calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau has long been criticized for being narrow and outdated in large part because it determines the resources a family needs based on a bare-bones food budget from the 1960s (Haider, 2021). It does not take into account major expenses such as housing or child care, nor does it account for geographical differences in costs of living (Haider, 2021). The current system for measuring childhood poverty is setting an absolute or relative monetary level and if a family does not earn above that level, the children of that family will be considered to live below the poverty line.

Health insurance coverage

As my seventh independent variable, I predict that as health insurance coverage lowers, poverty rates increase. Health insurance coverage is defined as an individual being included in a health insurance policy. Health insurance is defined as a product that covers your medical expenses actively if you get sick or injured or passively through preventative care practices (Lalley, 2020). Health insurance coverage means that there is a legal entitlement to payment or reimbursement for your health care costs under a contract with a health insurance company, a group health plan offered in connection with employment, or a government program like Medicare or Medicaid (Lalley, 2020). In private health insurance coverage, individuals pay into a monthly plan which completes the contract of health coverage, while federal health programs such as Medicare and Medicaid are provided to some enrolled citizens who meet qualifying poverty and employment statuses. Through enrollment in a health insurance plan, individuals are able to receive medical services either completely covered by the insurance company, or provided by the insurance company at a lower copay for the individual to pay back to the insurance company.

Patent-holding

Within my eighth independent variable, patent-holding, I argue that as patent-holding increases poverty rates decrease. The definition of a patent is the granting of a property right by a sovereign authority to an inventor (Kenton, 2020). Patent-holding provides the inventor exclusive rights to the patented process, design, or invention for a designated period of time in exchange for a comprehensive disclosure of the invention (Kenton, 2020). In the United States, most patents are valid for twenty years from the date the application was filed. The three types of patents are as follows: **Utility patents** -cover anyone who invents a new and useful process,

article of manufacture, the machine, or a composition of matter, **Design patents** -include an original, new, and ornamental design for a manufactured product, and **Plant patents** -go to anyone who produces, discovers, and invents a new kind of plant capable of reproduction (Kenton, 2020). Patents provide incentives for companies or individuals to continue developing products and services without fear of infringement as they are often sources of monetary income.

Union-membership

Finally, for the ninth independent variable, union membership, I argue that as union membership increases, the poverty levels decrease. The definition of a labor or trade union is an organized group of workers who unite to make decisions about conditions affecting their work while striving to bring economic justice to the workplace (UnionPlus, 2020). Unions allow workers to join together to negotiate for higher wages and benefits while also ensuring that fair workplace practices are in place and are being implemented. Unions function like democracy in practice as they hold elections for officers who make decisions on behalf of members, giving them more power on the job through negotiating with businesses and other entities on their members' behalf (UnionPlus, 2020). The power of labor unions rests in their two main tools of influence: restricting labor supply and increasing labor demand. When unions want to increase union member wages or request other concessions from employers, they can do so through collective bargaining and if unions are unable to negotiate or are not satisfied with the outcomes of collective bargaining, they may initiate a work stoppage or strike (UnionPlus, 2020).

Poverty rates

Within my research, poverty rates stand alone as the dependent variable. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the poverty rate is defined as the number of people (in a given age group) whose income falls below the poverty line; taken

as half the median household income of the total population (OECD, 2021). It is also available by a broad age group: child poverty (0-17 years old), working-age poverty, and elderly poverty (66 year-olds or more) (OECD, 2021). Within poverty rates income is defined as household disposable income in a particular year and it consists of earnings, self-employment, and capital income, and public cash transfers; income taxes and social security contributions paid by households are deducted (OECD, 2021). The income of the household is attributed to each of its members, with an adjustment to reflect differences in needs for households of different sizes (i.e. the needs of a household composed of four people are assumed to be twice as large as those of a person living alone) (OECD, 2021).

Research Design

This study explores the relationship between the independent variables of incarceration rates, educational attainment, race, sex, marital status, childhood poverty, health insurance coverage, patent-holding, and union-membership with the dependent variable of poverty rates within the United States. In order to examine the effects of these variables on the poverty rates which are seen within the United States, this study utilizes varied strategies. A qualitative research design is utilized in this study, incorporating qualitative measures within this case-study approach. This approach will be qualitatively based as previous research data is examined. Within this study, I will be examining each of the nine independent variables and utilizing research studies to establish connections with the dependent variable of poverty rates within the United States.

Incarceration rates

When examining the linkages between incarceration rates and poverty rates, we are able to see numerous sub-factors which influence both within this study. A 2020 research project done by the Brennan Center For Justice, examined the current factors involved in incarceration rates in the United States. This study examined the United State's criminal justice system in relation to poverty by identifying how many of the more than 70 million people with criminal records have become involved with the criminal justice system in each of three discrete ways: through imprisonment, a conviction of a felony without subsequent imprisonment, and conviction of a misdemeanor (Craigie, 2020). Then it assesses how each interaction depressed individuals' earnings in both short and long-term analysis.

Using data through 2017, about 7.7 million living Americans have at some point been imprisoned, about 12.1 million have been convicted of a felony without being imprisoned for it,

and about 45 million have been convicted of at least one misdemeanor (Brennan 1). When examining the economic effects of incarceration, it can be seen that people who have spent time in prison suffer the greatest losses, with their subsequent annual earnings reduced by an average of 52 percent (Craigie, 2020). While people convicted of a felony but not imprisoned for it see their annual earnings reduced by an average of 22 percent (Craigie, 2020). Finally, people convicted of a misdemeanor see their annual earnings reduced by an average of 16 percent (Craigie, 2020).

TABLE 1

Lost Earning Potential Due to Involvement in the Criminal Justice System (2017)

	NUMBER OF PEOPLE	ANNUAL AVERAGE EARNINGS LOSS	AVERAGE LIFETIME EARNINGS LOSS	AGGREGATE ANNUAL EARNINGS LOSS
Formerly imprisoned people	7.7 million	52%	\$484,400	\$55.2 billion
White	2.7 million	—	\$267,000	—
Black	2.7 million	—	\$358,900	—
Latino	2.3 million	—	\$511,500	—
People convicted but not imprisoned			\$98,800*	
Felonies	12.1 million	22%	—	\$77.1 billion
Misdemeanors	46.8 million	16%	—	\$240.0 billion
Total				\$372.3 billion†

Note: *In this table, \$98,800 represents lifetime earnings lost due to a conviction in general, whether for a felony, a misdemeanor, or another offense. Because of data limitations, this report is not able to offer a more precise estimate.

† Because of potential overlap between categories, the actual annual aggregate loss may be smaller than \$372.3 billion.

Source: Brennan Center analysis.

Each of the estimates above describes annual earnings lost by an average member of each group. These effects are continually felt by formerly imprisoned or convicted people, their families, and their communities as they experience levels of poverty. The effects of imprisonment are continued through multiple phases of life. Even in a single year, these lost earnings, in the aggregate, constitute an enormous sum of money. To quantify that loss, table 3 presents each annual earnings loss estimate from the preceding section, in dollars, and multiplies it by the size of the group, as identified in Table I (Craigie, 2020).

TABLE 3

Aggregate Annual Earnings Lost Due to Criminal Justice System Involvement (2017)

	FORMERLY IMPRISONED PEOPLE	PEOPLE WITH FELONY CONVICTIONS	PEOPLE WITH MISDEMEANOR CONVICTIONS
Average earnings	\$6,700	\$23,000	\$26,900
Average earnings of peers	\$13,800	\$29,400	\$32,000
Earnings effect	-51.7%	-21.7%	-16.0%
Size of group	7.7 million	12.1 million	46.8 million
Annual earnings lost	\$55.2 billion	\$77.1 billion	\$240.0 billion

Note: All data points were computed from unrounded estimates.

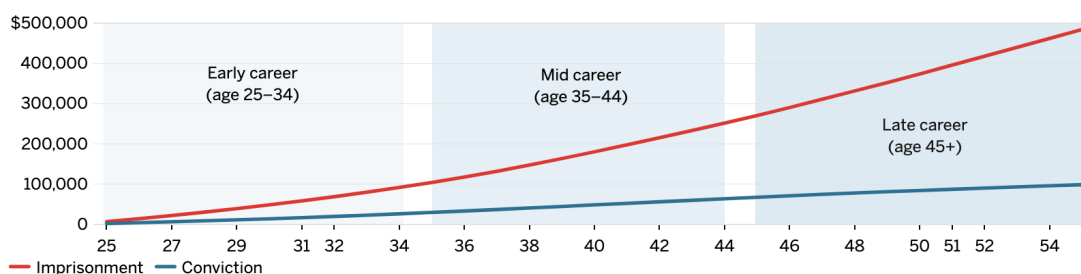
Source: Brennan Center analysis.

Annual lost earnings are a helpful metric for analyzing the macroeconomic impact of mass incarceration. As shown in figure 2, the value of these lost earnings for formerly imprisoned people approaches half a million dollars per person (Craigie, 2020). Below is an analysis of the cumulative lost earnings of incarcerated individuals.

FIGURE 2

People Who Have Been Convicted or Imprisoned Lose Up to Half a Million Dollars in Earnings Over the Course of a Career

Lost earnings (cumulative)



Source: Brennan Center analysis.

This analysis defines the cohort's prime working years as running from their twenties to fifties because earnings growth is typically most stable over this period (Craigie, 2020). For

simplicity, when describing results, this 30-year period is divided into three stages, based on the average age of NLSY participants in the sample in each stage: early career (ages 25–34), mid-career (35–44), and late-career (45+) (Craigie, 2020).

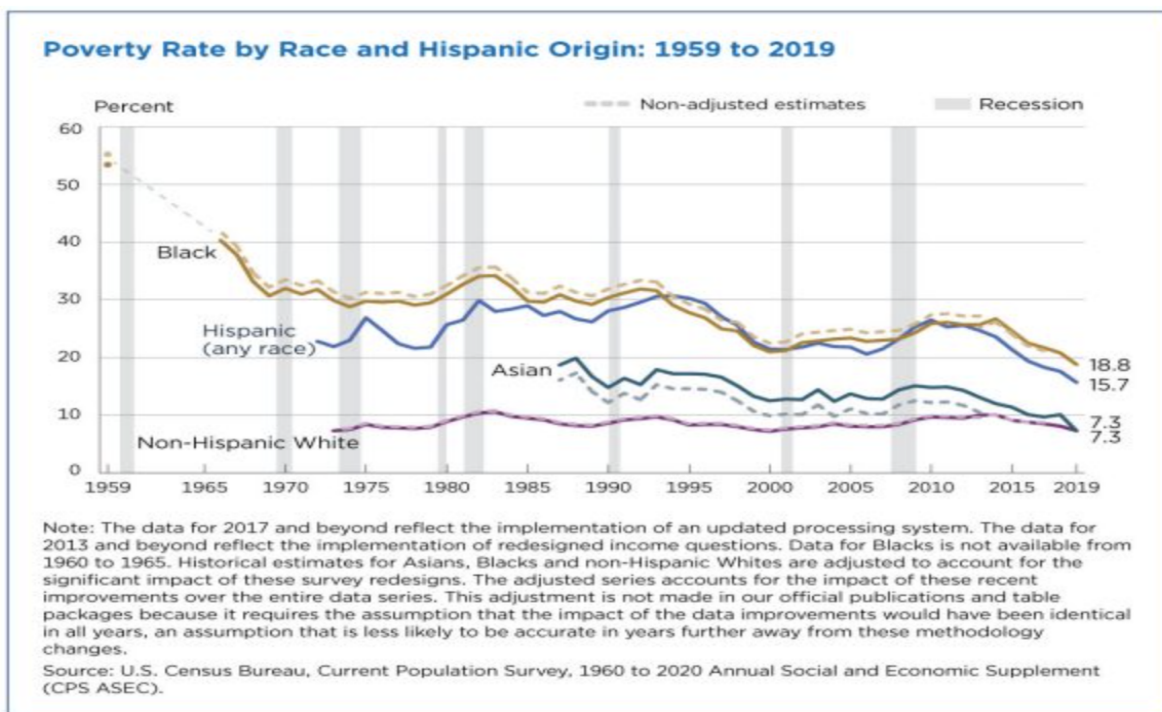
Educational attainment

Further educational attainment is directly linked to expectations of economic success within the United States. A 2019 study done by the U.S. Census Bureau found that within educational attainment the following groups existed: 1. 22.0 million adults without a high school diploma, 2. 62.3 million adults with a high school diploma but no college, 3. 57.4 million adults with some college, and 4. 79.8 million adults with a bachelor's degree or higher (Stebbins, 2019). Amongst adults without a high school diploma, studies found that 5.7 million group members lived below the poverty line equating to a group poverty rate of 25.9% (Stebbins, 2019). This research showed that American adults who have not completed high school are at an especially high risk of living in poverty with more than one in every four of the 22 million adults age 25 and over who dropped out of high school living below the poverty line (Stebbins, 2019).

Amongst adults with a high school diploma but no college, studies found that 7.9 million of the group lived under the poverty line with a group poverty rate of 12.7%. Adults in this category are at a slightly greater than average risk of poverty. Of the 62.3 million Americans who fit into this demographic, 12.7% live in poverty, compared to 11.8% of all Americans (Stebbins, 2019). Adults with some college education showed to have 4.8 million people living below the poverty line according to this study, equating to a group poverty rate of 8.4% (Stebbins, 2019). Within the last group of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher, studies showed that of the 79.8 million people within the group, only 3.5 million group members lived below the poverty line (Stebbins, 2019). This equated to a group poverty rate of 4.4%.

Race

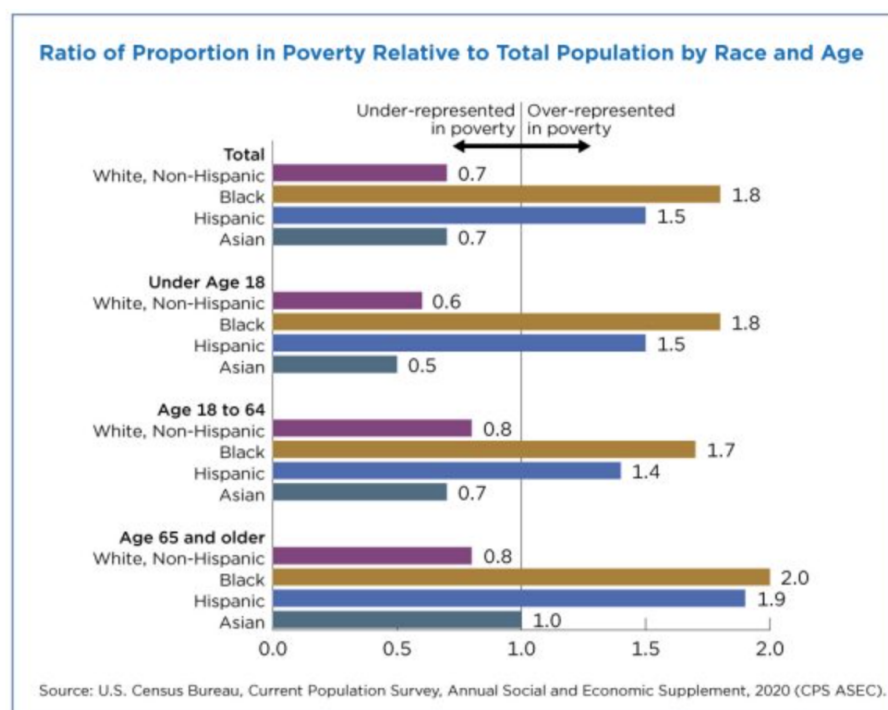
Racial economic disparities are examined in 2019 research done by the U.S. Census Bureau, which found poverty rates declined between 2018 and 2019 for all major race and Hispanic origin groups, with Blacks and Hispanics, reaching historic lows in their poverty rates in 2019. The figure below charts historical poverty rates for each of the major race and Hispanic origin groups and Hispanics from the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC) (Bureau, 2020).



The figure shows that for Blacks, the poverty rate of 18.8% in 2019 was the lowest rate observed since poverty estimates were first produced for this group in 1959, and the previous low for this group was 20.8% in 2018 (Bureau, 2020). Poverty rates in 2019 were also the lowest ever observed for Hispanics at 15.7%, compared to the prior low of 17.6% in 2018 (Bureau, 2020). Poverty statistics for Hispanics date back to 1972. The Asian poverty rate of 7.3% was also the lowest on record (Bureau, 2020). The 2019 poverty rate of 7.3% for non-Hispanic Whites was

not statistically different from the previous low (historically adjusted) of 7.2% in 2000 and 7.3% in 1973 (Bureau, 2020).

Blacks and Hispanics continue to be over-represented in the population in poverty relative to their representation in the overall population. The figure below shows the ratio of people in poverty by race or Hispanic origin group to each group's share of the total population.



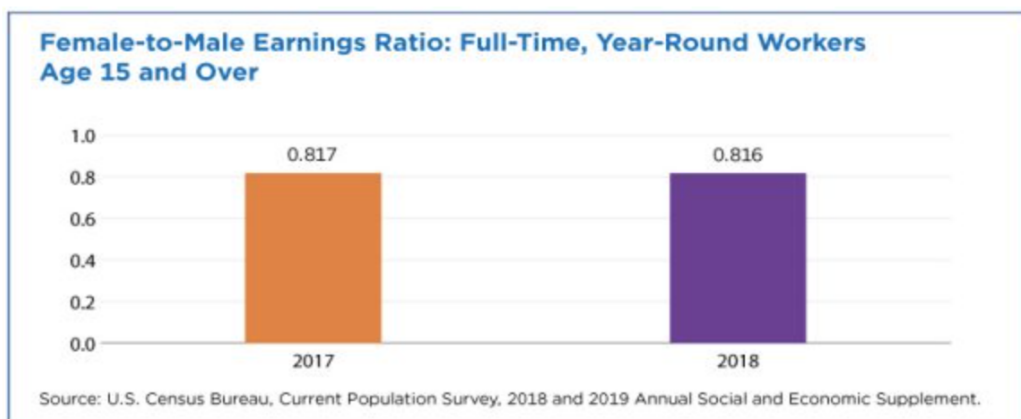
If the poverty population is perfectly proportional to the total population, we would expect the ratio to be 1.0 but if a group is overrepresented in poverty, the ratio will be greater than 1.0 (Bureau, 2020). If the ratio is less than 1.0, the group is under-represented in poverty (Bureau, 2020). In 2019, the share of Blacks in poverty was 1.8 times greater than their share among the general population with Blacks represented 13.2% of the total population in the United States, but 23.8% of the poverty population (Bureau, 2020). The share of Hispanics in poverty was 1.5 times more than their share in the general population with Hispanics comprising 18.7% of the total population, but 28.1% of the population in poverty (Bureau, 2020). In contrast, non-

Hispanic Whites and Asians were under-represented in the poverty population with Non-Hispanic Whites making up 59.9% of the total population but only 41.6% of the population in poverty (Bureau, 2020). Asians made up 6.1% of the population and 4.3% of the population in poverty.

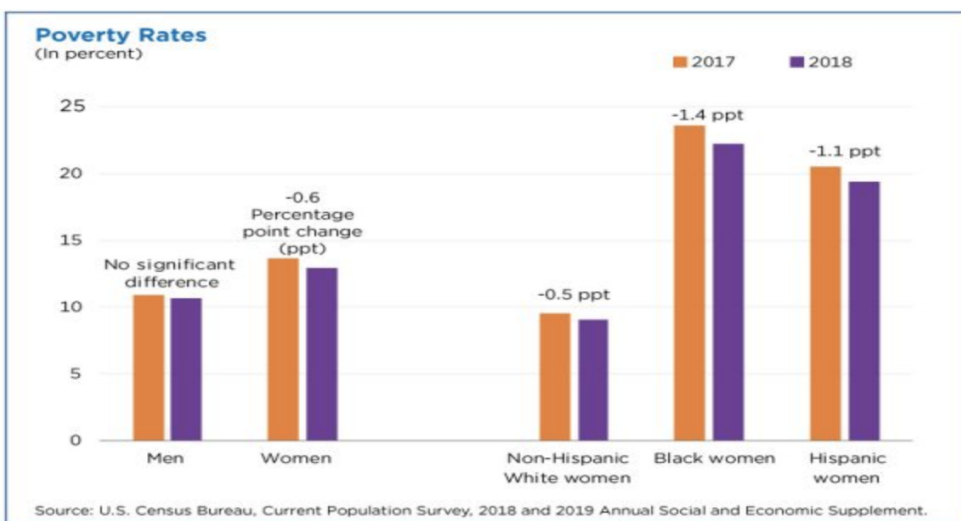
Sex

Women are making significant gains in median earnings and their poverty rates are decreasing, but the wage gap between men and women remains as women earned 82 cents for every dollar earned by men among full-time, year-round workers (Semega, 2019). In 2018, 12.9 percent of women lived in poverty compared with 10.6 percent of men with nearly 10 million women living in deep poverty, as they lived below 50 percent of the federal poverty line (Bleiweis, 2020). The U.S. Census

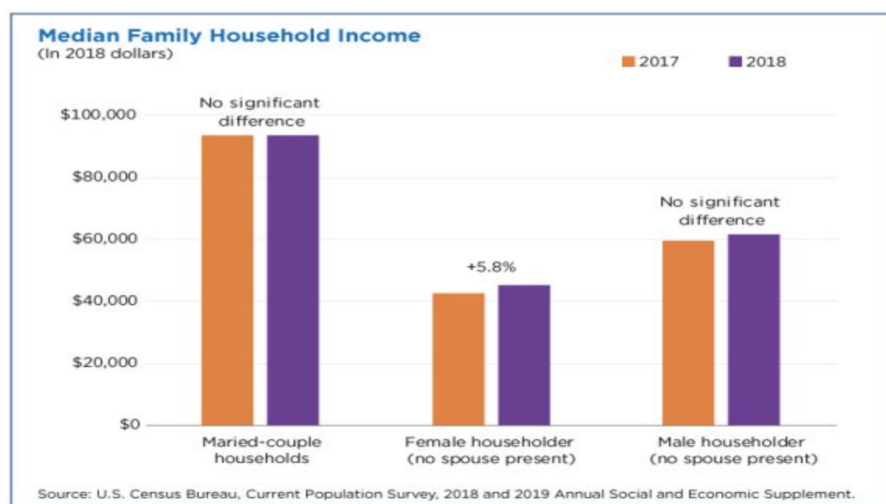
Bureau research examines the role of sex in income earned, and expresses findings in the graph below:



In 2018, the median earnings for women were \$45,097, while median earnings for men were \$55,291 with an increase in real earnings of 3.3% for women and 3.4% for men (Semega, 2019).



Data from the Census Bureau found that women continue to have higher rates of poverty than men. The 2018 poverty rate for women was 12.9%, down from 13.6% in 2017 while the poverty rate for men was 10.6% in 2018, not statistically different from 2017 (Semega, 2019). During this time median income for households maintained by women (\$45,128) was lower than that for married-couple family households (\$93,654) and those maintained by men (\$61,518) in 2018 (Semega, 2019).

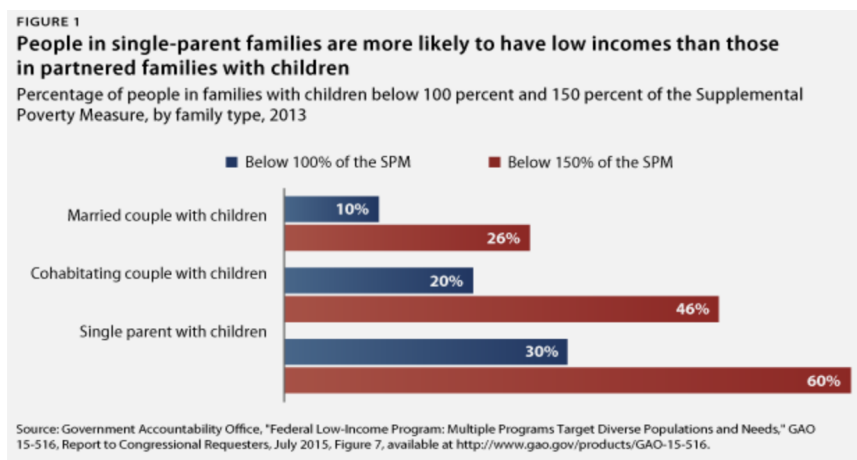


The Census Bureau classifies family households (defined as two or more people living together who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption, and one of them is the householder) into three groups: married-couple, a female householder with no spouse present, and male householder with no spouse present (Semega, 2019).

Marital status

A 2016 study done by the Center for American Progress examines the statistics of marital status within the United States in relation to economic status. These studies found that slightly more than one in four people in married-couple households with children at 26 percent are low income, having incomes under 150 percent of the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) compared with about half 46 percent of people in cohabiting-couple households, and 60 percent of those in single-parent households (Fremstad, 2016). About 33.1 million Americans in low-income families with children are in low-income families headed by partnered couples, which breaks down to roughly 27.75 million people in married-couple households and another 5.35 million people in domestic-partner households (Fremstad, 2016). About 17.3 million people in low-income families with children are in families headed by single parents, mostly mothers (Fremstad, 2016). Among people in higher-income families, 77.5 million are in married-couple families at 81 percent; 6.3 million are in cohabiting-couple families at 7 percent, and 11.4 million are in single-parent families at 12 percent (Fremstad, 2016).

The figure below shows the prevalence of poverty in married, cohabitating, and single-parent households:



This data

single-

families are

than people

reasons that

parent

more likely

in married

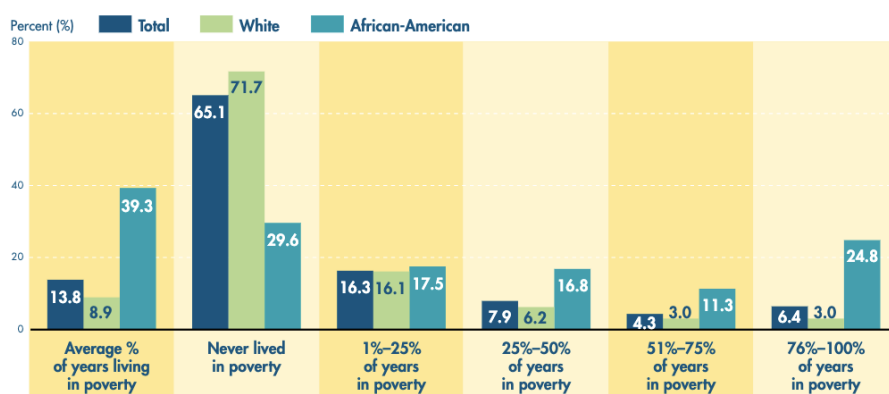
and coupled families to have low incomes as families with more than one adult have more potential adult workers who are able to pool earnings and share housing and other costs and benefit from economies of scale in household consumption (Fremstad, 2016). Additionally, the heads of single-parent families are more likely to belong to economically disadvantaged groups than parents in married-couple families (Fremstad, 2016). Data shows that married couples are doing better than single-parent households with just 7 percent of married couples with two incomes making less than \$40,000, according to data from the Census Bureau (Bureau, 2018).

Childhood poverty

Data studies done by the National Center for Children in Poverty at Columbia University in 2009 examine the effects of childhood poverty. Within this study data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) is utilized to study intergenerational poverty. In the PSID, individuals from original sample households are re-interviewed every year, whether or not they are living in the same dwelling or with the same people and adults are followed as they grow older, and children are observed as they advance through childhood and into adulthood, forming family

units of their own (Wagmiller, 2009). This procedure produces an unbiased sample of families each year as well as a continuously representative sample of children born into families each year (Wagmiller, 2009). Exposure to poverty during childhood varies widely in the United States with 65% of children never experiencing poverty between the ages of birth and 15 years old (Wagmiller, 2009). Of those who are poor at some point during their childhood and early adolescence, 69% are poor for less than half of that time (Wagmiller, 2009). However, one in 10 children spend at least half of childhood living in poverty and 6.4 percent are poor for three-quarters or more of childhood (Wagmiller, 2009).

Figure 1. Time spent living in poverty during childhood (ages 0–15), by race: Children born between 1970 and 1990



Data shows that few adults who did not experience poverty during childhood are poor in early and middle adulthood. At ages 20, 25, and 30, only four to five percent of those adults who were never poor during their childhood live in poverty and at age 35, less than one percent are poor (Wagmiller, 2009). Poverty rates for adults who were poor during childhood are much higher, especially for those individuals with high levels of exposure to poverty during childhood. For adults who experienced low-to-moderate levels of poverty during childhood (one to 50 percent of childhood years), 12 to 13 percent are poor at ages 20 and 25 and seven to eight percent are poor at ages 30 and 35 (Wagmiller, 2009). For adults who experienced moderate-to-

high levels of poverty during childhood (51 to 100 percent of childhood years), between 35 percent and 46 percent are poor throughout early and middle adulthood (Wagmiller, 2009).

Table 1. Exposure to poverty during childhood and the probability of being poor at ages 20, 25, 30, and 35*

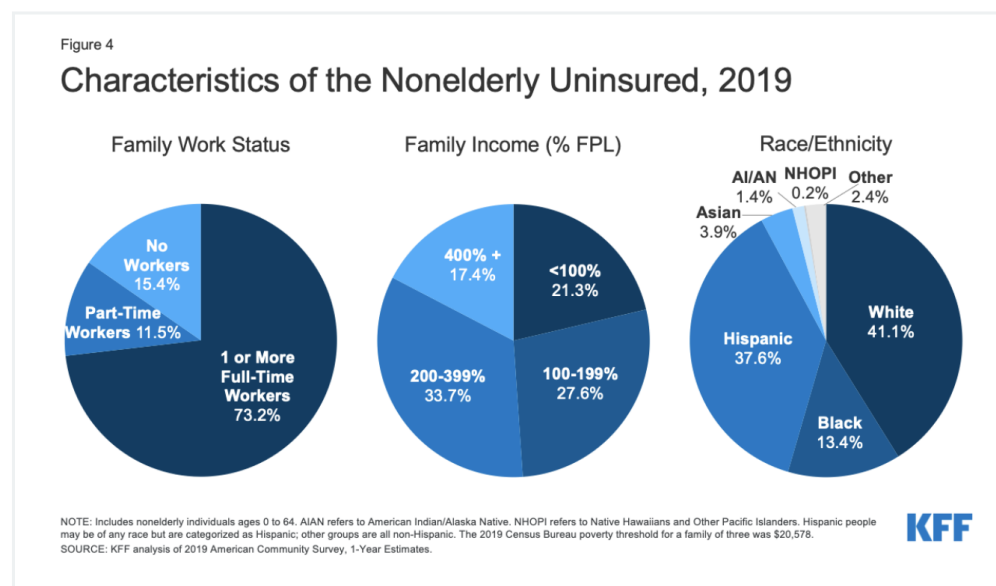
Race	% of years living in poverty during childhood (birth to age 15)		Proportion poor at age 20	Proportion poor at age 25	Proportion poor at age 30	Proportion poor at age 35
Total	0%	(0 years)	4.1	5.3	4.3	0.6
	1%–100%	(at least 1 year)	20.8	20.1	13.6	13.3
	1%–50%	(1–7 years)	12.4	13.6	7.3	8.1
	51%–100%	(8–14 years)	46.0	40.0	33.6	45.3
White	0%	(0 years)	4.0	5.1	4.2	0.4
	1%–100%	(at least 1 year)	15.2	13.9	7.9	7.3
	1%–50%	(1–7 years)	10.7	10.4	4.7	4.2
	51%–100%	(8–14 years)	40.0	31.7	25.0	**
African-American	0%	(0 years)	4.7	8.1	6.9	5.2
	1%–100%	(at least 1 year)	34.6	38.9	29.6	27.1
	1%–50%	(1–7 years)	19.4	29.8	19.0	20.0
	51%–100%	(8–14 years)	51.3	48.4	41.8	43.4

* Poverty status at more advanced ages is only observed for the increasingly restricted sample of individuals who reached the age specified.

**Health
insurance
coverage**

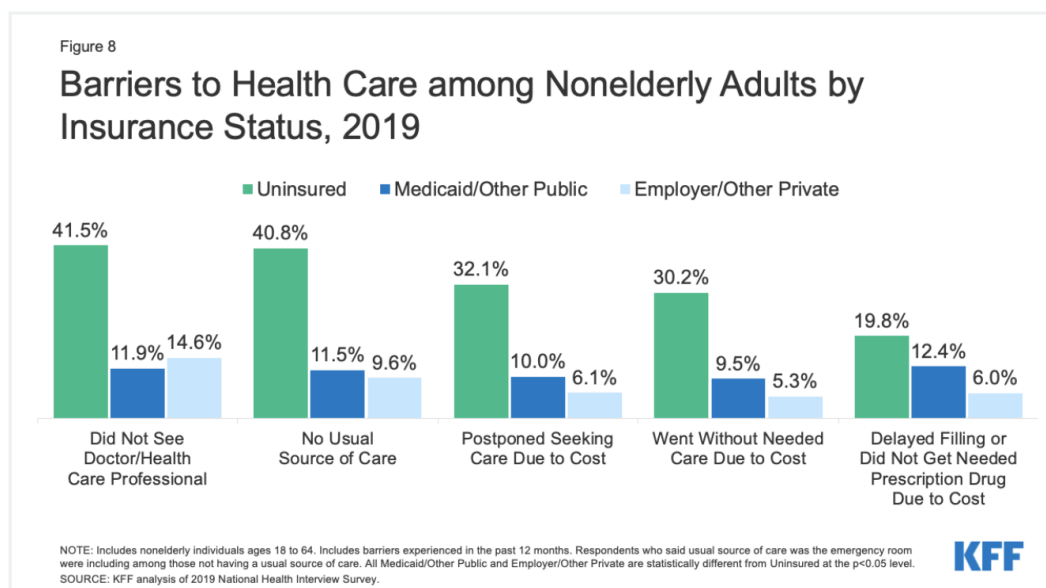
Studies were done by the U.S. Health Affairs in 2018 examine the effects of health insurance coverage within the United States. These studies showed that compared to higher-income Americans, low-income people face greater barriers to accessing medical care as they are less likely to have health insurance, receive new drugs and technologies, and have ready access to primary and specialty care (Khullar, 2018). Low-income workers are more likely to be employed by organizations that do not offer health benefits as less than one-third of low-income workers obtain health insurance through their employer, compared to nearly 60 percent of higher-income workers (Khullar, 2018). Even after the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), more than twenty-seven million Americans remain uninsured, the majority of whom are low-income people (Khullar, 2018). Those without health insurance are less likely to have a regular source of medical care and more likely to forgo care because of cost concerns. People without insurance coverage have worse access to care than people who are insured and data

shows that three in ten uninsured adults in 2019 went without needed medical care due to cost (Tolbert, 2020).



Data shows that individuals with income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)¹ are at the highest risk of being uninsured (Tolbert, 2019). In total, more than eight in ten 82.6% of uninsured people were in families with incomes below 400% of poverty in 2019 (Tolbert, 2019). This study shows that 85.4% of the uninsured are nonelderly adults with an uninsured rate among children of 5.6% in 2019, less than half the rate among nonelderly adults (12.9%), largely due to broader availability of Medicaid and CHIP coverage for children than for adults (Tolbert, 2019). Most of the nonelderly in the U.S. obtain health insurance through an employer, but not all workers are offered employer-sponsored coverage or, if offered, can afford their share of the premiums (Tolbert, 2019). Medicaid covers many low-income individuals; however, Medicaid eligibility for adults remains limited in some states. Additionally, renewal and other policies that make it harder for people to maintain Medicaid likely contributed to

Medicaid enrollment declines (Tolbert, 2019). Nonelderly adults expressed various barriers to healthcare coverage as shown in the data below:



Patent-holding

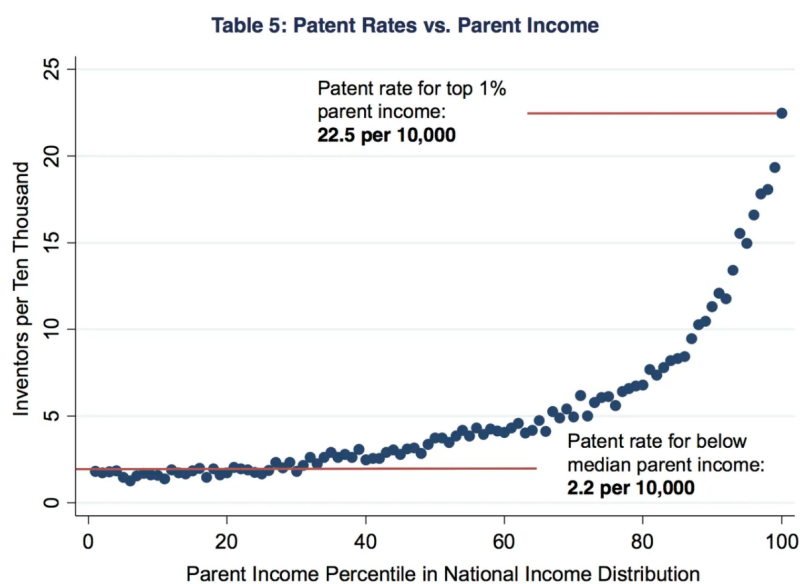
The economics of the patent system are explored in the studies of macroeconomist Dean Baker as he examines the redistribution of wealth which has gone from ordinary workers to those who hold patents and copyrights. Patent policy at the federal level over the last four decades, including the America Invents Act of 2011, has served to preserve the protections in place for monopoly patent holders (Baker, 2016). These protections surrounding stronger rules on patents and copyrights have been associated with slower upward redistribution as the “common person” is no longer the beneficiary of patent-holding (Baker, 2016). This concentration of patents within monopolies has led to extremely high prices for breakthrough drugs for cancer, hepatitis C, and other diseases, which would essentially be sold for much less if there were affordable generic company options. The justification for granting monopoly protections is the increased innovation

and creative work produced as a result of these incentives exceeding the economic costs from patent and copyright monopolies (Baker, 2016). Unfortunately, there is little evidence to support this claim as the higher costs which are a result of such patent and copyright protections for monopolies, do not show a more rapid pace of innovation or more creative work (Baker, 2016).

This inequity within patents starts at the beginning of one's life. In a study done by the Equality of Opportunity Project, Stanford economist Raj Chetty and his team identified that children from families in the top one percent of the income distribution are ten times more likely to file for a patent than those from below-median-income families (Semuels, 2017). Amongst these groups, black children were three times less likely to file a patent than white children, denoting a noticed trend of large gaps in innovation by income, race, and gender (Semuels, 2017). As children continue to grow in impoverished households, they are not given the same opportunities to be introduced to inventing and do not have the means to delve into the study. This lack of opportunity early for impoverished children directly correlates to the lack of equity within the United States patent system. The gap presented at childhood for impoverished individuals is fully connected to education. As children are impoverished they are presented with the same opportunities as their wealthy counterparts, and this correlates to more limited education options. Without proper education within technology and math, many individuals may not have the same opportunities and connections to eventually get to a point of submitting information for a patent. Better education is not the solution for impoverished individuals though, as the current patent process demands inventors have substantial money to even begin the patent process.

The patent system is explored by a group of economists at the Harvard Treasury Department and the London School of Economics. This research allowed them to match up data

on patents in the United States with tax returns of the people getting the patents, and the returns of their parents (Matthews, 2015). Enabling data on how much inventors earn as adults and also how much their families made when they were children, to compare how often children born into poor or middle-class families get patents relative to children of privilege (Matthews, 2015). This is displayed in the graph below:



also

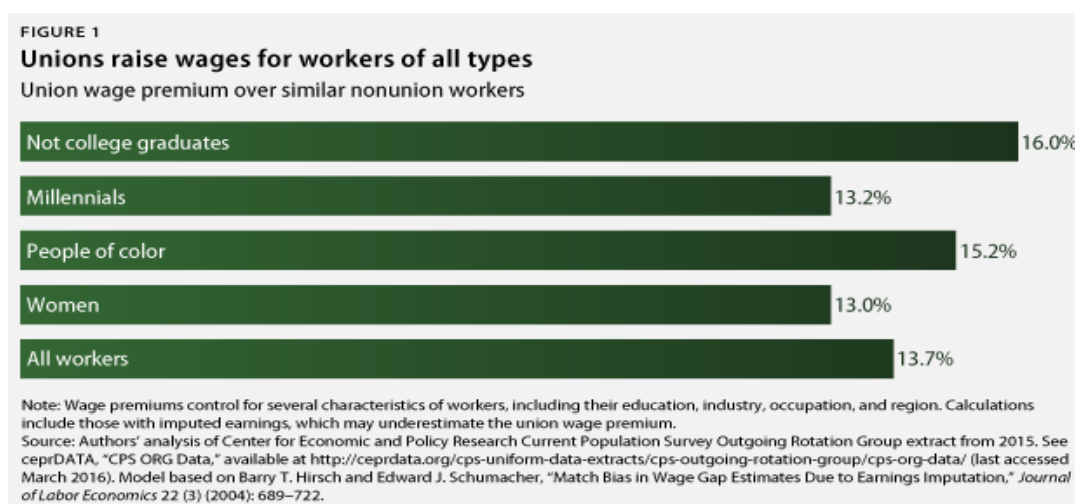
Through data, we

observe disparity not

just between the poor and rich in patent-holding but also between the 90th economic percentile of citizens and the 99th percentile. Studies show that patent rates of the 90th percentile are roughly half of that of the 99th percentile (Matthews, 2015). The researchers suggest that about 90 percent of the relationship between childhood income and patent rates is explainable by children of privilege being more likely to attend high-quality colleges; they note that 23 percent of patents (weighted by the number of times they're cited, so higher-quality patents count more) come from students from just 10 colleges, which account for only 2.7 percent of US college enrollment (Matthews, 2015).

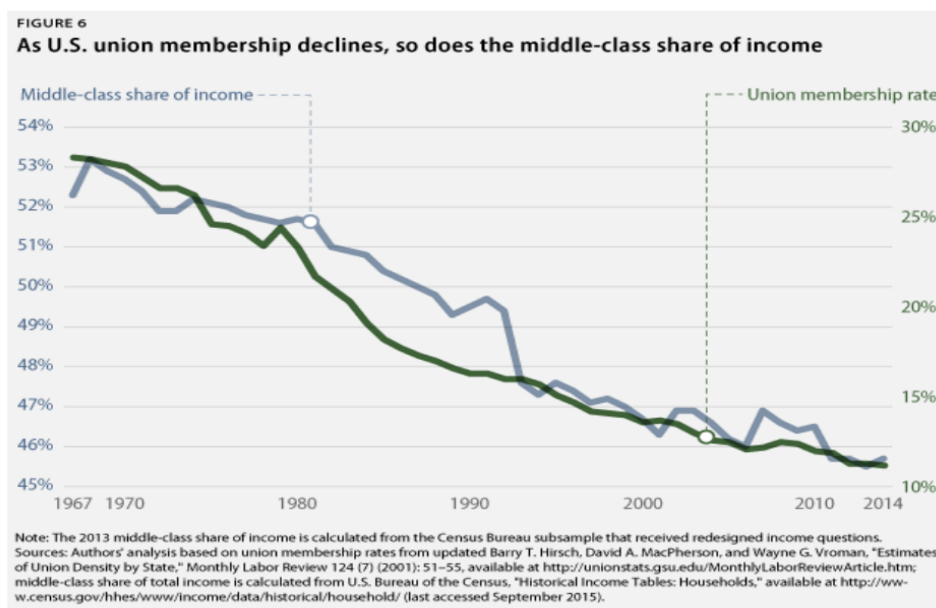
Union-membership

A study from the Center for American Progress shows that the amount of output per worker has grown about eight times as fast as the typical worker's pay (Madland, 2021). This increase in worker output has been supplemented by workers being more educated as well. The impact of unions on worker wages is something that has heavily been studied through previous studies. When comparing unionized and nonunionized worker wages it is typically seen that union wages are about ten percent to twenty percent higher (Madland, 2021). The increase in wages experienced by union membership is especially high within people of color populations and amongst individuals who did not graduate college. This impact of unions is expressed in the graph below:



Studies observe the impact of union density as it reduces wage inequality and runaway incomes at the top of society, leading to redistribution within the middle-class. Alternatively,

with a decline in union membership since 1968, we observe that the middle 60 percent of Americans now receive well less than half of the nation's income (Madland, 2021).



Historically unions have played a large role in reducing poverty and redistributing wealth amongst the poor and middle-classes through their political influence and the increased negotiating power they bring to workers. Among the lowest-wage workers, a union contract raises wages by approximately 21 percent (Madland, 2021). The effect of unions is not just limited to union workers, however. In studies of advanced democratic countries around the world, researchers have found that working people in highly unionized areas are less likely to live in poverty (Madland, 2021). Similarly, a study that compared U.S. states found that state-level unionization measures actually had a larger impact on working poverty rates than gross domestic product, or GDP, per capita, and economic growth rates (Madland, 2021).

Conclusion

Through the use of qualitative analysis, this research paper examined the relationship between the independent variables of incarceration rates, educational attainment, race, sex, marital status, childhood poverty, health insurance coverage, patent-holding, and union membership with the dependent variable of poverty rates within the United States. In this research, I utilized several different scholarly research studies to find correlations amongst the data and provide a comprehensive understanding of each variable. Within correlations between the independent variables and poverty rates, were obtained through careful qualitative research of studies in connection with the United States citizen economic data.

Through the data analysis and qualitative theory utilized in this study, I was able to support my central hypothesis proposed. It appears that the systemic barriers experienced by minority group members have significantly contributed to high poverty rates and economic inequality amongst members of these groups in the United States. My hypotheses regarding the relationships between incarceration rates, educational attainment, race, sex, marital status, childhood poverty, health insurance coverage, patent-holding, and union-membership, in relation to poverty rates amongst racial groups in the United States all proved to be supported through data.

This research showed that as incarceration rates and childhood poverty increased or decreased within society, poverty rates also increased or decreased in a positive relationship, which supported my hypotheses. Through the continued studies I also observed that as educational attainment, marital status, health insurance coverage, patent-holding, and union membership interacted with poverty rates in a negative relationship. As these variables increased, poverty rates decreased, and as these variables decreased poverty, which supported my

hypotheses. Within my variables of race and sex, I hypothesized that they would interact with poverty rates in a mixed relationship. For sex data supported my hypothesis that being a male directly correlated with lower poverty rates while being a woman correlated with higher poverty rates. Within race, research showed a correlation between being White and having a lower poverty rate, while being a minority race member was directly correlated with higher poverty rates within America. This data supported my hypothesis for the race within the United States.

From this research, I conclude that variables of incarceration rates, educational attainment, race, sex, marital status, childhood poverty, health insurance coverage, patent-holding, and union membership directly impact poverty rates within the United States. Colleagues examining my research may raise objections that my analysis negates to investigate affirmative action practices currently being implemented in the United States to lower poverty rates as well as other variables associated with the poverty rate. Although my research was extremely thorough, it is impossible to fully investigate all variables involved in poverty rates within the parameters of this project. My research only sought to examine some of the most influential variables which I identified within poverty rates.

I believe that this research can be furthered and improved by examining the variable of patent-holding in further depth. Through my research, I discovered the importance of patent-holding within poverty and I believe it is under-researched. The next stages of research must be focused on patent-holding as well as the effect of childhood poverty as they are interconnected and present the largest opportunity to positively impact poverty rates through resolution. We must work to address all variables of poverty within the United States if we hope to ever eradicate poverty and this must come through focused efforts and further poverty research.

Bibliography

Anand S, Sen A. 1997. Concepts of human development and poverty: a multidimensional perspective. In *Human Development Papers*, pp. 1–20. New York: UN Dev. Programme

Baker, Dean, and Hayley Brown. “Public Sector Unions Mean Middle-Class Jobs for Black Workers.” Center for Economic and Policy Research, 25 Feb. 2021, cepr.net/public-sector-unions-mean-middle-class-jobs-for-black-workers/.

Baker, Dean. *Rigged: How Globalization and the Rules of the Modern Economy Were Structured to Make the Rich Richer*. Center for Economic and Policy Research, 2016.

Barone, Adam. “What Is the American Dream?” Investopedia, Investopedia, 28 Aug. 2020, www.investopedia.com/terms/a/american-dream.asp.

Blau P, Duncan O. 1967. *The American Occupational Structure*. New York: Wiley

Bleiweis, Robin. “Quick Facts About the Gender Wage Gap.” Center for American Progress, 2020, www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2020/03/24/482141/quick-facts-gender-wage-gap/.

Bucknor, Cherrie. “Black Workers, Unions, and Inequality.” Center for Economic and Policy Research, 6 Feb. 2020, www.cepr.net/report/black-workers-unions-and-inequality/.

Bureau, US Census. “Income and Poverty in the United States: 2019.” The United States Census Bureau, 15 Sept. 2020, www.census.gov/library/publications/2020/demo/p60-270.html.

Bureau, Labor Statistics. “Union Members - 2020” The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 22 Jan. 2021.

Bureau, US Census. "About." The United States Census Bureau, 16 Nov. 2016,
www.census.gov/topics/education/educational-attainment/about.html.

Bureau, U.S. Census. "Poverty Rates for Blacks and Hispanics Reached Historic Lows in 2019."
 The United States Census Bureau, 15 Sept. 2020,
www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/09/poverty-rates-for-blacks-and-hispanics-reached-historic-lows-in-2019.html.

Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, Maggie R. Jones, and Sonya Porter. 2020. "Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States: An Intergenerational Perspective." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 135 (2): 711–783.

Craigie, Terry-Ann, et al. "Conviction, Imprisonment, and Lost Earnings: How Involvement with the Criminal Justice System Deepens Inequality." Brennan Center for Justice, 15 Sept. 2020,
www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/conviction-imprisonment-and-lost-earnings-how-involvement-criminal.

Desmond, Matthew, and Bruce Western. "Poverty in America: New Directions and Debates." *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 44, no. 1, July 2018, pp. 305–318. EBSCOhost,
 doi:10.1146/annurev-soc-060116-053411.

Evans, G. (2004). The environment of childhood poverty. *American Psychologist*, 59, 77–92.

Fremstad, Shawn. "Partnered But Poor." Center for American Progress, 2016,
www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/reports/2016/03/11/131968/partnered-but-poor/.

Gramlich, John. “Black Imprisonment Rate in the U.S. Has Fallen by a Third since 2006.” Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center, 6 Aug. 2020, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/05/06/share-of-black-white-hispanic-americans-in-prison-2018-vs-2006/.

Haider, Areeba. “The Basic Facts About Children in Poverty.” Center for American Progress, 2021, www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/reports/2021/01/12/494506/basic-facts-children-poverty/

Hayes, Tara, et al. “Incarceration and Poverty in the United States.” AAF, 30 June 2020, www.americanactionforum.org/research/incarceration-and-poverty-in-the-united-states/#_edn35.

Hoffman, C., & Paradise, J. (2008). Health Insurance and Access to Health Care in the United States. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1136, 149–160. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uakron.edu/2443/10.1196/annals.1425.007>

Holzer, H., Schanzenbach, D., Duncan, G., & Ludwig, J.(2008). The economic costs of childhood poverty in theUnited States.*Journal of Children and Poverty*, 14,41–61.

Kenton, Will. “How Patents Work and Notable Patents That Changed How We Live.”

Investopedia, Investopedia, 16 Sept. 2020, www.investopedia.com/terms/p/patent.asp.

Khullar, Dhruv A. “Health, Income, & Poverty: Where We Are & What Could Help: Health Affairs Brief.” Health, Income, & Poverty: Where We Are & What Could Help | Health Affairs, 4 Oct. 2018, www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20180817.901935/full/.

Lalley, Colin. “Health Insurance Basics: 101 Guide to Health Insurance for 2021.” Policygenius, 2020, www.policygenius.com/health-insurance/learn/health-insurance-basics-and-guide/.

Lin, A., & Harris, D. (Eds.). (2008). *Colors of Poverty, The: Why Racial and Ethnic Disparities Persist*. Russell Sage Foundation. Retrieved February 9, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/9781610447249>

Looney, Adam, and Nicholas Turner. “Work and Opportunity before and after Incarceration.” Brookings, Brookings, 14 Mar. 2018, www.brookings.edu/research/work-and-opportunity-before-and-after-incarceration/.

Madland, David, and Alex Rowell. “Unions Help the Middle Class, No Matter the Measure.” Center for American Progress Action, 2021, www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/economy/reports/2016/06/09/139074/unions-help-the-middle-class-no-matter-the-measure/#:~:text=Unions%20reduce%20poverty&text=As%20a%20result%2C%20reducing%20poverty,and%20growing%20the%20middle%20class.&text=Among%20the%20lowest%2Dwage%20workers,limited%20to%20union%20workers%2C%20however.

Matthews, Dylan. “The Great Invention Gap between Rich and Poor Kids - and Why It Matters.” Vox, Vox, 16 Mar. 2015, www.vox.com/2015/3/16/8225165/patents-innovation-social-mobility.

McLaughlin, M., & Rank, M. R. (2018). Estimating the Economic Cost of Childhood Poverty in the United States. *Social Work Research*, 42(2), 73–83. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uakron.edu:2443/10.1093/swr/svy007>

Michener, J., & Brower, M. T. (2020). What’s Policy Got to Do with It? Race, Gender & Economic Inequality in the United States. *Daedalus*, 149(1), 100–118. https://doi-org.ezproxy.uakron.edu:2443/10.1162/daed_a_01776

Mauer, Marc, and Nicole D. Porter. "Incarceration Rates in an International Perspective." The Sentencing Project, 28 June 2017, www.sentencingproject.org/publications/incarceration-rates-international-perspective/.

OECD (2021), Poverty rate (indicator). doi: 10.1787/0fe1315d-en (Accessed on 26 March 2021)

Poverty, Confronting. "Why Is Poverty Higher in the U.S. than in Other Countries?" Confronting Poverty, 2020, confrontingpoverty.org/poverty-discussion-guide/why-is-poverty-higher-in-the-u-s-than-in-other-countries/.

"Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity." KFF, 23 Oct. 2020, www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/poverty-rate-by-raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22%3A%22Location%22%2C%22sort%22%3A%22asc%22%7D.

O'Connor A. 2001. Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century US History. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press

OECD (2021), Poverty rate (indicator). doi: 10.1787/0fe1315d-en (Accessed on 22 January 2021)

Rank, M., Hirschl, T., & Foster, K. (2014). Chasing the American dream: Understanding what shapes our fortunes. New York: Oxford University Press

Ravallion, M. (2016). The economics of poverty. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sanchez, Maria. "Press Release: COVID-19 Will Widen Poverty Gap between Women and Men, New UN Women and UNDP Data Shows." UN Women, 2020,

www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/8/press-release-covid-19-will-widen-poverty-gap-between-women-and-men.

Semega, Jessica. "Payday, Poverty, and Women." The United States Census Bureau, 10 Sept. 2019, www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/09/payday-poverty-and-women.html.

Samuels, Alana. "America's Lost Einsteins." The Atlantic, Atlantic Media Company, 5 Dec. 2017, www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/12/innovation-income-chetty/547202/.

Stebbins, Samuel, and Thomas C. Frohlich. "The Poverty Rates for Every Group in the US: From Age and Sex to Citizenship Status." USA Today, Gannett Satellite Information Network, 28 Feb. 2020, www.usatoday.com/story/money/2019/11/06/united-states-poverty-rate-for-every-group/40546247/.

Tahir, Amin. "Overpatented, Overpriced: How Excessive Pharmaceutical Patenting Is Extending Monopolies and Driving up Drug Prices." I, 2018, www.i-mak.org/overpatented-overpriced-excessive-pharmaceutical-patenting-extending-monopolies-driving-drug-prices/.

Tilly C. 1998. *Durable Inequality*. Berkeley: Univ. Calif. Press

Tolbert, Jennifer, and Kendal Orgera. "Key Facts about the Uninsured Population." KFF, 12 Nov. 2020, www.kff.org/uninsured/issue-brief/key-facts-about-the-uninsured-population/.

Tzeng, W. (2016). Poverty and Patents: Intellectual Property Policy and Economic Inequality. *Ind. JL & Soc. Equal.*, 5, 313.

Wagmiller, Robert Lee, and Robert M. Adelman. "Childhood and Intergenerational Poverty: The Long-Term Consequences of Growing Up Poor." NCCP, 2009, www.nccp.org/publication/childhood-and-intergenerational-poverty/.

Wakefield S, Wildeman C. 2014. *Children of the Prison Boom: Mass Incarceration and the Future of American inequality*. Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ. Press

Webb S, Webb BP. 1909. *The Break-Up of the Poor Law; Being Parts 1–2 of the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission*. London: Read Books

Western B, Bloome D, Sosnaud B, Tach L. 2016a. Trends in income insecurity among US children, 1984–2010. *Demography* 53:419–47

Wilson WJ. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press