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THE INCOME COLOR LINE: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RACE
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ABSTRACT

Using data from the first wave of the New Immigrant Survey, I examine differences in personal income—combined wage/salary, tips, professional practice, and self-employment—among new immigrants in the United States based on skin color classification, as determined by survey interviewers (N = 1,589). Additionally, I examine whether income differences support one, more than one, or none of the three most prominent theoretical perspectives on the racial color line: white/non-white, black/non-black, and the tri-racial divide. First, I test the hypothesis that income decreases as skin color "darkens" on a continuous scale from 0 to 10. Results from an OLS regression analysis do not support this assertion. Next, I test whether gender has a moderating effect on skin color (as a continuous variable) and income. Results show that it does not. However, regression results partially support the hypothesis that non-blacks earn more than blacks when gender is included as a moderating variable. Specifically, results suggest that non-black females earn the least, non-black males the most, and black males and females in between. Next, I test the hypothesis that whites earn more than non-whites, on average, followed by the hypothesis that an intermediate racial group of non-black immigrants ("honorary whites") earn more than black immigrants but less than white immigrants. Results do not support either of these hypotheses.

***Keywords**: New Immigrant Survey; income; racial classification; gender*

BACKGROUND

Most race and ethnicity scholars have demonstrated differences in assimilation among various immigrant groups in the U.S. by examining racial disparities in two areas: residential patterns and income. For instance, past research shows that lighter-skinned immigrants (i.e. Asians) are not only less residentially segregated from whites than darker-skinned immigrants (Charles 2003; Wen 2009) but are also more likely to have a higher socioeconomic status (Gomez 2000; Bideshi and Kposowa 2012). These data support Bonilla-Silva's (2010) tri-racial color-line theory, where light-skinned immigrants create a racial buffer between whites and blacks. Others suggest the existence of a white/non-white color line, a variation of the traditional white/black line in which immigrants who are not white will take longer to assimilate, if at all (Lee and Bean 2010). More recently, there is support for a black/non-black color line, where immigrants are better off so long as they are not perceived as black, or more specifically, African American (Model 1991; Kalmijn 1996; Lee & Bean 2010).

Much past research on income differences among immigrants is based on racial self-identification (e.g., Census data). However, I propose to study income differences based on the racial *classification* of immigrants, or in other words, the identification of race by others. Furthermore, an abundance of research focuses on income differences within particular groups of immigrants. For example, Latin American immigrant groups are often used because of their extensive variation in skin color (Gomez 2000). However, with the use of the NIS, I will be comparing income differences across a variety of immigrant groups based on race. More importantly, I propose to test whether these differences in income, if they exist, represent a white/non-white, black/non-black, or tri-

racial divide. Until now, race and immigration research has not used data on the income of new immigrants to test these three theoretical perspectives of the contemporary racial color line elaborated by Lee & Bean (2010). These researchers focused primarily on interracial marriage and multiracial identification to test these theories**.** Lastly, there is no research to date that considers the moderating effect of gender on skin color classification and income. Thus, in the current study, I will examine an interaction between gender and skin color on income.

Skin Color Classification

How one racially or ethnically self-identifies may or may not reflect how others racially or ethnically classify that person. For instance, past studies on immigration have documented the presence of "colorism" (Walker 1983)—the notion that skin color from an employer or coworker's perspective will often determine one's social status in the labor force (i.e., including whether an immigrant is hired or how much he or she is paid relative to others) (Bass 2014:71). Thus, because skin color may carry social meaning, a more appropriate estimation of racial inequality should rely on racial classification by others as opposed to (or in addition to) racial self-identification. In their study of employed males in Brazil, Telles and Lim (1998) found that income inequality between whites and non-whites was greater when the independent variable was racial classification by the interviewer rather than racial self-identification by the respondent. Keith and Herring (1991) establish a statistically significant relationship between skin tone (the independent variable) and stratification outcomes such as educational attainment, occupation, personal income, and family income (dependent variables)

among African Americans. They measure respondents' skin tone using a five-point scale, where one indicates the darkest brown and five indicates the lightest brown. Specifically, their results suggest that (at least in the 1980s) lighter-skinned African Americans had more years of education and higher personal and family incomes than darker-skinned African Americans; they were also more likely to hold professional or technical jobs than those with darker-skin. Gomez (2000) further supports skin color stratification with her study of male Puerto Rican and Dominican immigrants in Boston. Using a 3-level skin color measure—light, medium, dark—Gomez found that light-skinned Puerto Rican and Dominican men had more education, owned their homes at higher rates, were more likely to be married, and had higher hourly wages than their counterparts with darker skin.

Compared to many past studies employing a measure of skin color, I utilize a more elaborate skin color measure in my study, the New Immigrant Survey Skin Color Scale developed by Massey and Martin (2003), which ranges from 0 to 10 discussed in detail in the Methods section.

Relevant Research using the New Immigrant Survey

Although research using the NIS to study race and income among new immigrants in the U.S. is extremely limited, there are two seminal articles relevant to my current study that should be discussed. First, Frank et al. (2010) used both racial self-identification and racial classification (NIS Skin Color Scale) to examine the U.S. racial order as it pertained to Latino immigrants. In particular, these researchers were interested in whether or not the white racial boundary is expanding to include Latinos. Because white expansion depends on both Latino individuals and the U.S. society at large, Frank et al. (2010: 384)

expected to find that if white expansion was occurring, Latino immigrants would be self-identifying as white and be "immune from skin-color-based discrimination." Their results show that most Latino immigrants self-identified as white, but they were not immune to workplace discrimination (e.g., lower annual income) based on dark skin. Frank et al. (2010) conclude that a racial boundary exists between the few light- skin Latinos who can successfully identify as white, and dark skin Latinos who cannot.

More relevant to the current study, Hersch (2008) used the NIS to examine whether immigrants' skin color, height, and weight affect wages. She found that immigrants with the lightest skin color earn about 17% more in hourly wages (i.e., from wages/salaries and self-employment) than immigrants with the darkest skin color. Moreover, Hersch (2008) found that tall immigrants earn more than short immigrants, but weight did not have a significant effect.

Theoretical Framework

Some race and ethnicity scholars theorize that a white/non-white color line is evolving from the historical black/white color line. These scholars note that even prior to the Civil Rights Movement and the Immigration Act of 1965, this color line was taking form for immigrants. For instance, in response to Chinese immigration to the United States, the government imposed the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act in which the Chinese were barred from immigration and those Chinese immigrants already in the U.S. could not become American citizens (Alba & Nee 2003; Lee & Bean 2010). This was based on the premise that Asians were not white and hence incapable of assimilating (Lee & Bean 2010). Later, the 1921 and 1924 Immigration Acts formulated a system of national-origin quotas which

preferred white Northern and Western Europeans (Alba & Nee 2003). Even in the wake of the 1965 Immigration Act, some authors in favor of a white/non-white color line argue that complete assimilation may be difficult to achieve for contemporary immigrants who are not traditionally white (of European descent), and some may actually experience "downward assimilation" by getting stuck in dead-end, low-pay service jobs or turning to illegal forms of revenue (e.g., gangs and drug-trade) (Haller et. al. 2011).

Other race scholars theorize that the racial boundary for immigrants in the U.S. looks more like a black/non-black color line. This divide reflects not only the separation of blacks from whites but the separation of blacks from other nonwhite immigrant groups (Lee & Bean 2010). Scholars who have compared the average occupational earnings of Latino immigrants, for instance, show that white Hispanics earn more than black Hispanics. In her study of Latino men in Boston, Gomez (2000: 100) concluded that "once controlling for traditional human capital variables, differences in hourly wages persisted between dark-skinned men and the remainder of the male sample." Bideshi and Kposowa (2012) employed OLS regression analyses to compare average annual earnings of white immigrants, white African immigrants, black African immigrants, and African Americans to native-born whites (i.e., the reference group). They found that while African Americans made about $4,000 less on average than native-born whites, black African immigrants made over $10,000 less on average than native-born whites. On the other hand, white African immigrants and white immigrants from other countries made over $2,000 more on average than native-born whites (Bideshi and Kposowa 2012).

Bonilla-Silva's (2010) "Latin Americanization" theory posits that there are (or will be) three racial groups: whites (e.g., European whites, assimilated Russians),

"honorary" whites (e.g., Korean-Americans, light-skinned Latinos), and collective blacks (e.g., African Americans, Filipinos, dark-skinned Latinos). Bonilla-Silva (2010) reasons that this middle category is forming as a response to the "darkening" of America through immigration. "As a tri-racial system, race conflict will be buffered by the intermediate group, much like class conflict is when the class structure includes a large middle class" (Bonilla-Silva 2010: 226). Bonilla-Silva supports his theory by comparing the mean per capita income (i.e., individual as opposed to family income) from those in the collective black category to those in the "honorary" white category, net of education level and occupational standing. For instance, Puerto Ricans, who generally have dark skin, make considerably less on average than Cubans, who generally have lighter skin: $11,314 and $16,741, respectively. A similar comparison shows that Vietnamese make considerably less on average than Chinese: $14, 306 and $20,728, respectively (Bonilla-Silva 2010:234). In sum, skin color appears to translate into economic stratification.

Gender and Racial Classification

It is now readily accepted in sociology that gender and race (as well as class in most cases) should not be treated as isolated group identities; instead, the "intersectionality" approach posits that within most research contexts (e.g, the labor market), gender meanings vary across racial groups, and that the meaning of race varies by gender (e.g., Choo and Ferree 2010). Greenman and Xie (2008:1218) note that many studies examining income inequality have either completely failed to consider race and gender jointly or assumed what is referred to as the "double jeopardy"—non-white women incur both a race penalty and gender penalty in their earnings, which when "added" together

becomes a double disadvantage in the workplace (Donato, Piya, and Jacobs 2014). Although Greenman and Xie (2008) explicitly focus on the interaction of gender with 19 mutually exclusive racial categories on earnings, they only include U.S.-born workers in their study. Thus, it is not only interesting, but essential for the current study to incorporate the combined effect of gender and race on recent immigrants' earnings in the United States.

In their study on the earnings of U.S.-born workers, Greenman and Xie (2008) found that the race penalty in earnings for minority racial groups is less significant for women than it is for men. In other words, "it is clear that minority women's relative earnings are higher than those of minority men" (Greenman and Xie 2008:1228). Although they are unable to provide a conclusive explanation, Greenman and Xie (2008) suggest that these differences are a result of family factors (e.g., marital status). More specifically, Toma and Vause (2014:976) suggest that family members of migrants provide a "shield and control function" that is more beneficial to women than it is to men.

In her study on Latino/a immigrants in the northeast, Gomez (2000: 99) points out that women who migrate and work in the U.S. may be concentrated in low-wage jobs whereas men may have a more "diversified industry representation and receive higher wages." Therefore, the effect of skin color may be benign for women, or at least less significant. Unlike Gomez (2000), who simply speculated on the relationship between skin color classification and gender, I plan to empirically test this relationship using data from the New Immigrant Survey. My study is the first to use data from recent immigrants to examine the effect of the interaction between gender and skin color classification--as opposed to self-identified race—on income.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the current study, I propose to answer the following research questions:

1. Are there differences in income among new working immigrants in the United States based on their skin color?
2. If so, do these variations in income support a white/non-white, black/non-black, or tri-racial theoretical perspective on the racial color line for immigrants in the United States?
3. How might gender, racial classification, and income be related?

I propose that there will be significant differences in income across skin color gradations among new legal immigrants in the United States because, regardless of their immigrant status and the human or financial capital that they bring with them, these immigrants will be subject to the racial stratification processes that affect native white and black Americans. I also suggest that skin color (as classified by others) will be a more significant predictor of income than self-identified race and ethnicity. Lastly, I suggest that skin color will negatively affect income for both men and women, but it will be more significant for men.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1a: Income increases as immigrants' skin color "lightens" on a classification scale from 0 to 10.

Hypothesis 1b: Gender will have a moderating effect between skin color and income—for both male and female immigrants, income will decrease as skin color darkens, but the slope will be steeper for females than it will for males.

Hypothesis 2a: Non-black immigrants have a higher average income than black immigrants.

Hypothesis 2b: Gender will have a moderating effect on skin color (i.e., black vs. non-black) and income—non-black male immigrants will earn the most, followed by black males, non-black females, and black females.

Hypothesis 3a: White immigrants have a higher average income than non-white immigrants.

Hypothesis 3b: Gender will have a moderating effect on skin color (i.e., white vs. non-white) and income—white male immigrants will earn the most, followed by non-white males, white females, and non-white females.

Hypothesis 4a: There is an intermediate group of immigrants who have a higher average income than darker-skinned immigrants but a lower average income than lighter-skinned immigrants.

Hypothesis 4b: Gender will have a moderating effect on skin color (i.e., three-category) and income—white male immigrants will earn the most while "collective black" females will earn the least.

Variables

For analyses, individual (or per-capita) income is the dependent variable. Moreover, skin color classification and gender are my focal independent variables. The control variables in my analyses include the following: self-identified race/ethnicity (i.e., how respondent identifies), age, years of education acquired only in the U.S., total years of education, region of origin (i.e., where respondent came from), marital status, English language proficiency, and legal permanent resident (LPR) status (i.e., visa type).

METHODS

This study is a secondary analysis of data from New Immigrant Survey (NIS). The NIS is a multi-cohort, longitudinal study of new legal immigrants in the United States aged 18 and older. Thus far, the NIS consists of a pilot study, a first-wave survey interview, and a second-wave survey interview. The first and second waves were in-person survey interviews conducted from June 2003 to June 2004 and from July 2007 to December 2009, respectively. I focus my analysis on the first wave of NIS data because the immigrants are more recent in the U.S. at the time of the interviews. All respondents lived in the U.S. for approximately five years at the time of the first wave interviews (NIS 2003).

Sample

Wave one of the New Immigrant Survey is a nationally representative sample of immigrants with legal permanent residence in the United States. Respondents in the sample were recruited using probability sampling from the Immigration and

Naturalization Service (INS) records. Wave one consists of 8,573 respondents (NIS 2003). However, income data were not available for all respondents. Moreover, there was a significant amount of missing data associated with my primary predictor variable, skin color. More specifically, there were over 3,500 missing values for the skin color variable, which consisted of about 40 percent of the sample. These missing data were the result of phone interviews in which interviewers were unable to visually classify respondents by race. After these omissions, the effective size of the sample for regression analyses is 1,589 observations. Thus, to ensure the representativeness of my final sample, I ran summary statistics for the interval-ratio variables before and after omitting missing cases. Tables 1, 2, and 3 display the results (see Appendix). As illustrated, there is very little difference between the means and standard deviations in the full sample and in the final sample (i.e., with all missing cases omitted).

Measures

The dependent variable—income—is a composite measure consisting of four individual sources of pre-taxed (absolute) income earned over the last 12 months for each respondent with available data—wage/salary, tips, professional practice, and self-employment. All of the sources of income were acquired through open-ended items on the survey instrument, and since I did not recode income into categories for analyses, composite income is an interval-ratio variable in which the minimum value is zero and the maximum value is 2,681,564 (see Table 3). However, in my analyses, income is used in its logged form in order to obtain values that are closer to a normal distribution.

Skin color classification—one of the primary predictor variables—is also a interval-ratio variable ranging from 0 (i.e., lightest possible) to 10 (i.e., darkest possible) and is determined by the survey interviewer at the time of the interview. However, because many of the interviews were conducted exclusively over the phone, skin color could not be recorded for those respondents. Moreover, skin color was not always recorded for those interviews which were started in person but were *completed* over the phone. Thus, there were much missing data for this measure. The known interviewers in the study (i.e., the principal investigators) consisted of one white female and three white males. Information on other interviewers is not available. Specifically, interviewers rated each respondent's skin color on this scale from 0 to 10 *after* the interview was completed. Interviewers memorized a diagram that displayed a photograph of a hand for each skin color gradation (see Appendix). Respondents were not aware of this procedure. Figure 1 shows the percentages of respondents in each skin color category. The modal category is 5 (moderately-dark skin) with approximately twenty percent of the respondents, while the category with the least amount of respondents is 9 (nearly the darkest skin) with around two percent of respondents. The second focal predictor variable is gender, which is dichotomous in my analyses—male or female. Figure 2 shows the relationship between skin color and gender.

The first control variable in my analyses is self-identified race and ethnicity. In the demographics portion of the NIS, respondents were asked a series of dichotomous "yes or no" questions pertaining to their own race and ethnicity. For example, the first question was "are you Latino or Hispanic?" For my analyses, I created a new nominal variable with the following categories: non-Hispanic white, white Hispanic (i.e., identify

as Hispanic ethnicity but white race), non-white Hispanic (i.e., identify as Hispanic ethnicity but non-white race), black, Asian, and Native American, Pacific Islander, or Hawaiian. For the control variable age, I generated a variable that equaled the year of birth (i.e., the question in the survey) subtracted from the year of the interview (i.e., 2003).

For marital status, I recoded the survey item into four categories: married, cohabiting, post-married (i.e., divorced or widowed), and single. Marital status is included as a control variable because past research has shown that spousal reunification or the presence of close family members, more generally, may have a differential effect on the earnings of male and female immigrants (Greenman and Xie 2008; Toma and Vause 2014). As for region of origin, I recoded twenty-one region and country responses into six region categories: Europe, Asia, South America, Central America and Caribbean, Africa, and other. Although I had preferred to separate Latin/Central American and the Caribbean into distinct groups, I was unable to do so as a consequence of how the data were originally coded (NIS 2003). Lastly, for legal permanent resident (LPR) status, I used a survey information regarding which type of visa respondents currently hold—spouse of U.S. citizen, diversity visa, employment visa, or other type of visa. Diversity visas are given to 50,000 immigrants annually who are from countries with low rates of immigration to the U.S (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services 2016).

Finally I included several variables pertaining to respondents' human capital, as this form of capital has been shown to have significant effects on immigrants' experiences in the labor market. The first such variable represents the years of education respondents have received since their arrival in the U.S. (see Table 3 for summary statistics). Additionally, I included a variable representing the total years of education respondents

have received, ranging from one year to 30 years (see Table 3). Next, I included a measure of respondents' English language proficiency, which is based on self-report data: respondents are asked how well they speak English. The responses are very well, well, not well, or not at all. Past studies have found that a positive relationship exists between English language proficiency and immigrants' earnings on the job market in the U.S. (e.g., McManus, Gould, and Welch et al. 1983). More specifically, English fluency helps immigrants to transfer the human capital (e.g., education or labor skills) that they had obtained abroad, whereas immigrants who are not fluent in English may have to regain some forms of human capital once they arrive in the U.S. **(**Park 1999**).**

Regression analyses will consist of nine models. In Model 1 (the baseline model), I will estimate an OLS regression analysis that includes logged income (dependent), skin color, and the control variables age, gender, marital status, and region of origin. I treat skin color classification as a continuous variable because it is assumed that it can take on any value between two specified values (e.g., 1.5). In Model 2, I include control variables associated with human capital—education in the U.S., total education, and English language proficiency—as well as two other important controls—type of visa and self-identified race or ethnicity. Model 2 will show whether a relationship still exists between skin color classification and income when other explanatory variables are added (Hypothesis 1a). In Model 3, an interaction term between the quantitative variable, skin color, and the dummy variable, gender, will be added in order to test whether the relationship between skin color and income depends on gender (Hypothesis 1b).

In Model 4, I will recode skin color into a dichotomous variable—black and non-black, where "black" contains gradations 6 through 10 and "non-black" contains

gradations 0 through 5 (Hypothesis 2a). In Model 5, I will add an interaction term between the dummy variable, skin color (i.e., black), and the dummy variable, gender, to the black/non-black model (Hypothesis 2b). In Model 6, I will recode skin color classification into a different dichotomous variable—white and non-white. The "white" includes the skin color scale ratings 0, 1, and 2 while "non-white" includes the rest (Hypothesis 3a). In Model 7, an interaction term between the dummy variable, skin color (i.e., white), and the dummy variable, gender, will be included in the white/non-white model (Hypothesis 3b). In Model 8, I will instead recode skin color into *three* categories—light (i.e., white), medium (i.e., honorary white), and dark (i.e., collective black)—according to Bonilla-Silva's (2010) "Latin Americanization" theory. Light-skinned includes scale values 0, 1, and 2; medium-skinned includes values 3, 4, and 5; dark-skinned includes values 6 through 10 (Hypothesis 4a). In the final model of my analysis (i.e., Model 9), I will include interaction terms between gender and the dummy variables for skin color (not including the reference category)—"honorary whites" and "collective blacks" (Hypothesis 4b).

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the summary statistics for the interval-ratio variables—age, U.S. education, total education, and skin color—in the *full* sample (N=8.543). Table 2 introduces my dependent variable (i.e., income) and presents the summary statistics for all of the interval-ratio variables in my analyses after omitting the missing cases associated with income. As shown, there are 3,362 cases where income—as

operationalized—is available. Finally, Table 3 shows the summary statistics for the same variables after omitting the missing cases associated with skin color, which brings about my final sample (N=1,589). As briefly mentioned above, I have presented these three tables in order to illustrate that the sample before the omission of cases is comparable to the final sample, so I could demonstrate that my final sample maintains the representativeness of the full sample. After omitting all missing data from analyses, the mean income for respondents in my sample is $29,057 a year with a maximum income of $2,681,564 and a minimum of zero. The mean age for respondents in the range of 18 to 76 is about 37 years old. Furthermore, the mean amount of *total* education for respondents in my sample is just over 13 years, or just over a high school diploma. However, upon arrival in the U.S., respondents have received less than one year of education, on average. Lastly, the average skin color rating is approximately 4, or darker brown.

Figure 2 is a percent line graph of skin color by gender. Although there are significantly more males (N=984) in the sample than females (N=606), this figure illustrates that the percentage of respondents belonging to each skin color category is similar between males and females. Figure 3 is a series of histograms that show the distribution of skin color classification (with ratings 0 through 10) by respondents' self-identified race or ethnicity. For the most part, these histograms tell us that skin color classification is comparable to self-identified race/ethnicity. For instance, the majority of respondents who self-identified as "black" were classified as 5 or higher by interviewers on the skin color scale (see Appendix). Conversely, the majority of respondents who self-identify as "non-Hispanic white" were classified by interviewers as 3 or lower on the skin

color scale. However, Figure 3 also illustrates the fact that self-identified race and classified race (by others) is not always aligned. For example, there are some respondents who self-identified as "black" but who were classified by interviewers as white with ratings as low as 0 on the skin color scale. Table 3 is a frequency distribution for respondents' region of origin. Not surprisingly, the largest group of immigrants comes from Central America and the Caribbean. The second and third largest are Asia and Europe, respectively. Figure 4 presents another series of histograms on the distribution of skin color by respondents' region of origin. The results from Figure 4 aligns with our expectations regarding the skin color of immigrants moving from the five main regions of interest in this study. For instance, immigrants from Africa tend to have darker skin (i.e., the majority are classified a 5 or higher), while those from Europe tend to have lighter skin (i.e., the majority are classified a 3 or lower).

Multivariate Analyses

Prior to analyses, several outlying and influential cases were discovered running diagnostics, such as the DFITS and DFBETA methods; therefore, to remedy the problem for all nine of my models, I employed iteratively reweighted least squares (IRLS), a form of robust regression analysis which down-weights outlying cases in the sample.

Table 4 displays the first three models of regression equations for logged income on skin color (as a continuous variable) that test my first two hypotheses (i.e., Hypotheses 1a and 1b). Model 1 is the baseline model that includes skin color and the control variables age, gender, marital status, and region of origin. Here, skin color has a statistically significant effect on income at the 0.01 alpha level. More specifically, for

every one point increase in skin color from light to dark, there is a seven percent decrease in income, on average. However, when all of the control variables are added in Model 2 (including human capital variables), the effect of skin color on income is no longer significant. Instead, there are other variables in Model 2 that significantly affect income. For example, gender is statistically significant at the 0.001 alpha level, where male immigrants receive 44 percent more in income than female immigrants on average, net of all other factors. Moreover, for every year increase in age, there is a one percent increase in income on average ($p<0.01$); however, this effect is likely to be curvilinear (effect not shown in this manuscript). Model 2 also shows that immigrants who are single earn 59 percent less, on average, than those who are married ($p<0.001$).

In regards to immigrants' region of origin, Model 2 shows that immigrants from Central America and/or the Caribbean earn 64 percent more, on average, than those from Europe ($p<0.05$), which is a surprising result. Additionally, for every year increase in education *after* arrival in the U.S., there is a four percent increase in income on average ($p<0.05$). On the other hand, total education does not have a significant effect on income. In terms of English proficiency, all three dummy variables in the model are statistically significant at the 0.001 alpha level. For instance, immigrants who do not speak English at all earn 174 percent less, on average, than those who speak English "very well," net of all other factors. Likewise, all three of the dummy variables associated with visa type are statistically significant at the 0.001 alpha level. For instance, immigrants who hold a "diversity" visa earn 202 percent less, on average, than those who hold an "employment" visa. Next, self-identified black immigrants earn 60 percent less and, on average, than immigrants who identify as non-Hispanic white ($p<0.05$). Also, those who identify as

American Indian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander earn 60 percent less, on average, than non-Hispanic whites ($p<0.05$). Lastly, immigrants' visa type has a significant effect on income—those with employment visas earn much more than those with other types of visas. For instance, immigrants with a diversity visa earn 203 percent less, on average, than those with an employment visa ($p<0.001$).

Hypothesis 1b states that gender will have a moderating effect on income and skin color. Therefore, Model 3 includes an interaction term between gender and skin color (i.e., skincolor X male). However, according to Model 3 (see Table 4), the interaction term is not statistically significant. Thus, the relationship between skin color (as a continuous variable) and income does not depend on gender.

Table 5 displays the fourth and fifth models of regression equations for logged income on skin color after it has been recoded into a dichotomous variable—black and non-black (i.e., Hypotheses 2a and 2b). To test Hypothesis 2a, the dichotomous skin color variable was included in Model 4 with "non-black" as the reference category. All control variables are left in the model. Results show that there is not a statistically significant effect of skin color on income after skin color was recoded. In other words, non-black immigrants do not earn more than black immigrants. However, when an interaction term between skin color and gender (i.e., black X male) was added in Model 5—in order to test Hypothesis 2b—there resulted a significant effect. More specifically, the interaction term is statistically significant at the 0.05 alpha level. Since both variables in the interaction term are dummies, it is important to interpret the regression coefficients in regards to differences in intercept (relative to the reference category—non-black females). After a few calculations (not shown here), the results point to non-black males

as having the highest average income, followed by black males, black females, and finally non-black females as having the lowest average income. In sum, the OLS regression analyses show that the relationship between skin color (i.e., black/non-black) and income depends on gender.

Hypothesis 3a states that white immigrants earn more in mean income than non-white immigrants. To test this hypothesis using OLS regression, I transformed the skin color variable (in interval-ratio form) into a dichotomous variable—white and non-white. However, according to the results in Model 6 (see Table 6), there is not a statistically significant effect of being white on income. Moreover, when an interaction term between skin color and gender (i.e., white X gender) was added in Model 7 (see Table 6) to test Hypothesis 3b, still no significant effect was found. Thus, the relationship between skin color (white/non-white) and income is not moderated by gender.

Hypothesis 4a states that when skin color is recoded into three racial groups, the intermediate group will earn more, on average, than the darker-skinned group but less than the lighter-skinned group. Thus, in Model 8 (see Table 7), skin color rating was transformed into a series of dummy variables—whites (i.e., reference category), honorary whites, and collective black. Once more, the results show that there is no statistically significant effect of being in the honorary white or the collective black category on average income. Lastly, interaction terms between skin color and gender (i.e., honorary whites X gender; collective blacks X gender) were added in Model 9 (see Table 7) to test Hypothesis 4b. However, the results show that the relationship between skin color (i.e., light, medium, and dark) and income is not moderated by gender.

DISCUSSION

In this paper I used data from the New Immigrant Survey to examine the effects of new legal immigrants' skin color on their income—wage/salary, tips, professional practice, and self-employment—earned over the past twelve months. Furthermore, I recoded the NIS skin color classification scale three different ways in order to test the three most prominent theoretical approaches to the color line for immigrants in the United States: the white/non-white color line, the black/non-black color line, and Bonilla-Silva's (2010) three-tier "Latin Americanization" theory. An OLS regression analysis suggests that skin color—as classified by interviews—does not have a significant effect on income. In fact, the results seem to suggest that self-identified race and ethnicity has more of an effect on income than skin color classification (from an interviewer's perspective). For instance, my regression models show that identifying as black results in a 60 percent deficit in average income when compared to those who identify as non-Hispanic white. Additionally, identifying as American Indian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander results in a 70 percent deficit, on average (although the sample size for this group is too small to be definitive). Thus, we can reject Hypothesis 1a. Moreover, after including an interaction term between skin color (as a continuous variable) and gender, results show that gender does not moderate the relationship between skin color and income. Thus, Hypothesis 1b is not supported. .

In order to test the three most prominent theories on the racial color line as they relate to new immigrants in the United States, I transformed the (continuous) skin color classification variable into a dichotomous black/non-black variable for Models 4 and 5, a dichotomous white/non-white variable for Models 6 and 7, and a series of dummy

variables—white, honorary white, and collective black—for Models 8 and 9. First off, the regression results show no support for Hypothesis 2a—that skin color has a significant effect on income when conceptualized as black versus non-black. However, when an interaction term between dichotomous (black/non-black) skin color and gender is added to this model, results show a significant moderating effect. Thus, results support Hypothesis 2b—the relationship between skin color (black/non-black) and income depends on gender. In other words, only when gender is added to the model does skin color have a statistically significant effect on income. More specifically, it is non-black female immigrants who earn the least, on average, and non-black male immigrants who earn the most. I did not expect to find that *black* females earn more than *non-black* females.

As for the other theories tested in this study, no support was found for the white/non-white color line or Bonilla-Silva's tri-racial hierarchy. Put differently, results do not support Hypothesis 3a—that white immigrants earn more than non-white immigrants—or Hypothesis 3b—that an intermediate racial group (i.e., "Honorary Whites") earn more than blacks but less than whites. Furthermore, the addition of interaction terms, between skin color and gender, does not support the hypotheses asserting that gender moderates the relationship between skin color and income, whether skin color is recoded into two categories (i.e., Hypothesis 3b) or three categories (i.e., Hypothesis 4b).

CONCLUSION

The shift from primarily white European immigrants to Latin American, Asian, and Afro-Caribbean immigrants since the 1965 Immigration Act has increasingly blurred the traditional white-black color line in the United States (Alba and Nee 2003; Lee and Bean 2010). As a result of decades of predominately nonwhite, non-European immigration, some scholars argue that instead of the color line problem disappearing, there is a new color line forming in the U.S (Lee and Bean 2010). Is the traditional white-black color line evolving into a white-nonwhite or black-nonblack color line? Or are "eligible" contemporary immigrants becoming members of a racial buffer group between whites and blacks, creating a tri-racial hierarchy as defined by Bonilla-Silva (2010)?

Unlike many past studies of immigration and race, which analyze income differences among specific immigrant groups often using self-reported measures of race, my study analyzes income differences among a wide range of immigrant groups using skin color classification, one of the most straightforward measures of race. More importantly, my study is the first to comprehensively test the current theoretical perspectives on the color line as they relate to new immigrants in the United States. The results of my study do not suggest that income varies based on a tri-racial hierarchy, where "collective blacks" earn the least, "honorary white" earn more, and whites earn the most. Nor do the results suggest that income varies based on a white/non-white color line. However, results do suggest that income varies on a black/non-black color line, when the effect is moderated by gender. What is surprising about these findings is that non-black female immigrants earn *less* on average than black female immigrants. Therefore, my results suggest that immigrant women may not actually incur a "double jeopardy" penalty

on their income (i.e., a wage penalty for race and a penalty for gender). Considering that many black immigrants are arriving from African countries, my findings may be the result of better education and language skills on behalf of African immigrants, as compared with non-black immigrants (i.e., from Latin America). Although purely speculative at this point, many African immigrants in the United States may have come from countries previously under English colonial rule, where they have gained experience with English institutions prior to immigration. Furthermore, my finding that black females earn more than non-black females may be the result of black females *working more hours* than non-black females. Nevertheless, future research must examine the relationship between skin color, gender, and income in greater detail.

There are several limitations to this study that should be discussed before I conclude. To start, there was one major problem with the New Immigrant Survey data set: missing observations. Because a large proportion of NIS interviews were conducted over the phone, data on skin color (as classified by the interviewer) was not obtained for about 40% of the respondents in the sample. As a result, the sample size (N) for some skin color groups in my analysis were far too small. Furthermore, this variable poses a problem in that it is based on interviewers' perception of skin color; skin color ratings may vary depending on the race of the interviewer. In particular, Hill (2002) found that white interviewers perceived the skin color of black respondents as darker, on average, than did black interviewers. In a similar vein, black interviewers perceived the skin color of white respondents as lighter, on average, than did white interviewers (Hill 2002). This problem is compounded when you take into consideration that racial classification in the NIS was done upon completion of the interview. Because racial classification was not

done *before* the interview, interviewers' perceptions of skin color could have been affected by respondents' answers to many questions regarding education, income, or national origin (Saperstein 2012).

Another limitation of this study is that the use of the NIS data set does not allow comparisons with native-born populations (e.g., African Americans). For a more comprehensive study on racial stratification in the U.S., it would be necessary to compare the income of native-born individuals with recent immigrants by skin tone. Lastly, I suggest that future studies use a longitudinal design to examine the relationship between skin color (both self-identified and other-classified), gender, and income by taking multiple generations of immigrants into consideration. This is important particularly when considering that my data is already over a decade old. As mentioned earlier, the NIS is a longitudinal survey with a *second* wave of interviews already conducted; however, the sample size in this second wave—after the omission of missing data—unfortunately did not warrant inclusion in this study.

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APPENDIX A: DATA FINDINGS

Table 1: Summary Statistics for Interval-Ratio Variables in Full Sample

Variable	*Obs*	*Mean*	*Std. Dev.*	*Min*	*Max*
U.S. Education	8,321	0.79	2.22	0	22
Total Education	8,543	12.69	5.10	0	36
Age	8,533	39.09	13.50	18	94
Skin Color	4,652	4.17	2.21	0	10

Source: NIS 2003

Table 2: Summary Statistics for Interval-Ratio Variables in First Sample

Variable	*Obs*	*Mean*	*Std. Dev.*	*Min*	*Max*
Income	3,362	32,142.72	83,085.69	0	2,681,564
U.S. Education	3,332	1.02	2.49	0	18
Total Education	3,356	13.79	4.60	0	36
Age	3,357	36.59	10.55	18	89
Skin Color	1,849	4.16	2.25	0	10

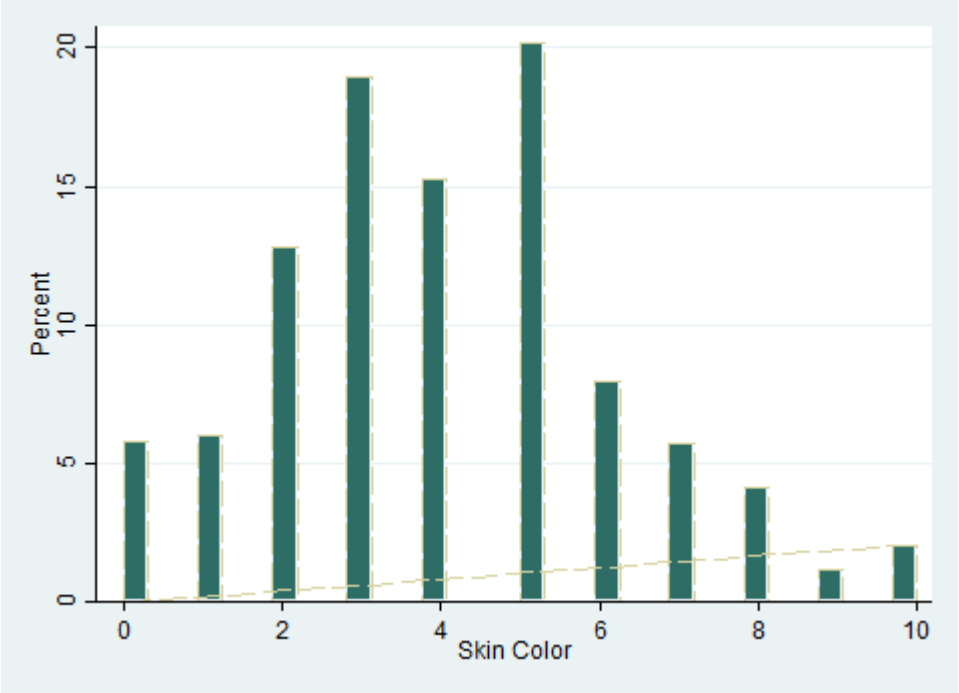
Source: NIS 2003

Table 3: Summary Statistics for Interval-Ratio Variables in Final Sample

Variable	*Obs*	*Mean*	*Std. Dev.*	*Min*	*Max*
Income	1,590	29,057	88,065.84	0	2,681,564
U.S. Education	1,590	0.98	2.45	0	18
Total Education	1,590	13.49	4.34	1	30
Age	1,589	36.76	10.57	18	76
Skin Color	1,590	4.02	2.21	0	10

Source: NIS 2003

Figure 1: Histogram of Skin Color Classification



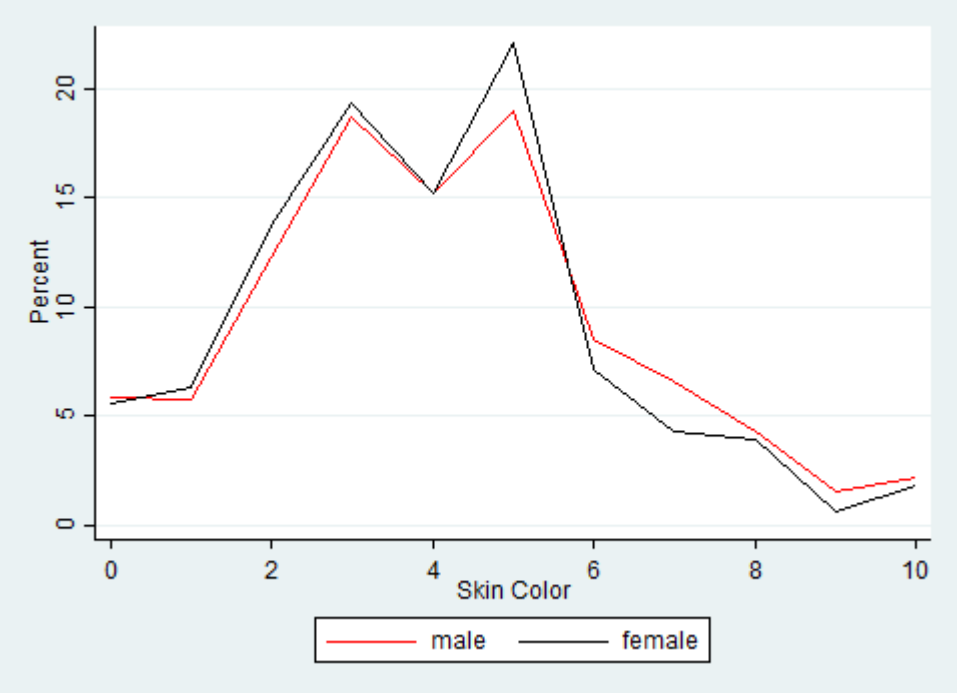
Source: NIS 2003, N=1,589

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Region of Origin

Region of Origin	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Asia	473	29.75
South America	55	3.46
Central America and Caribbean	575	36.16
Africa	142	8.93
Europe	332	20.88
Other	13	0.82
Total	1,590	100

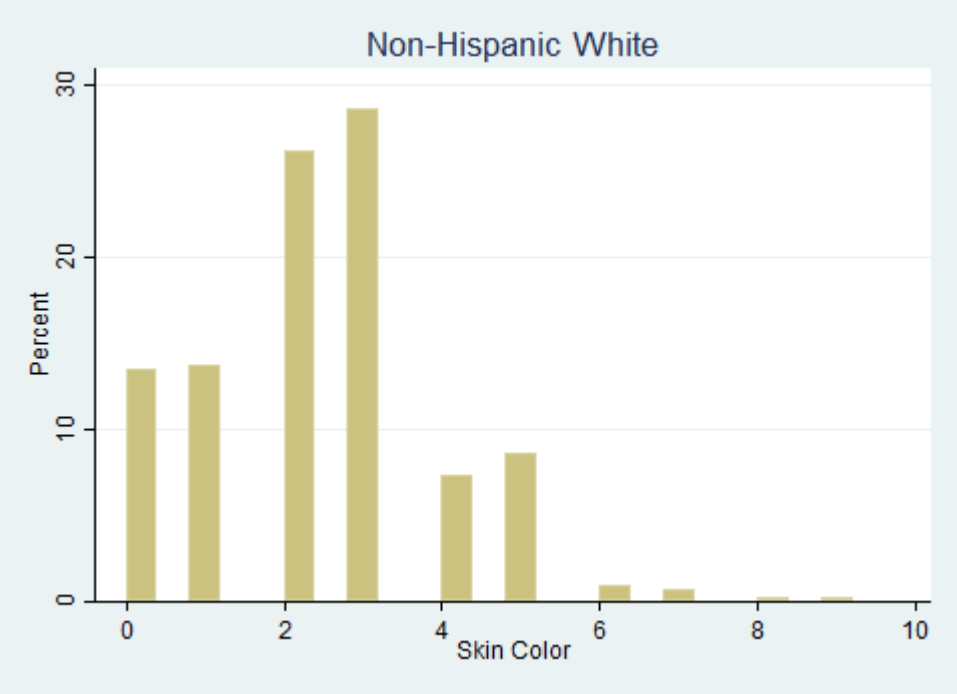
Source: NIS 2003

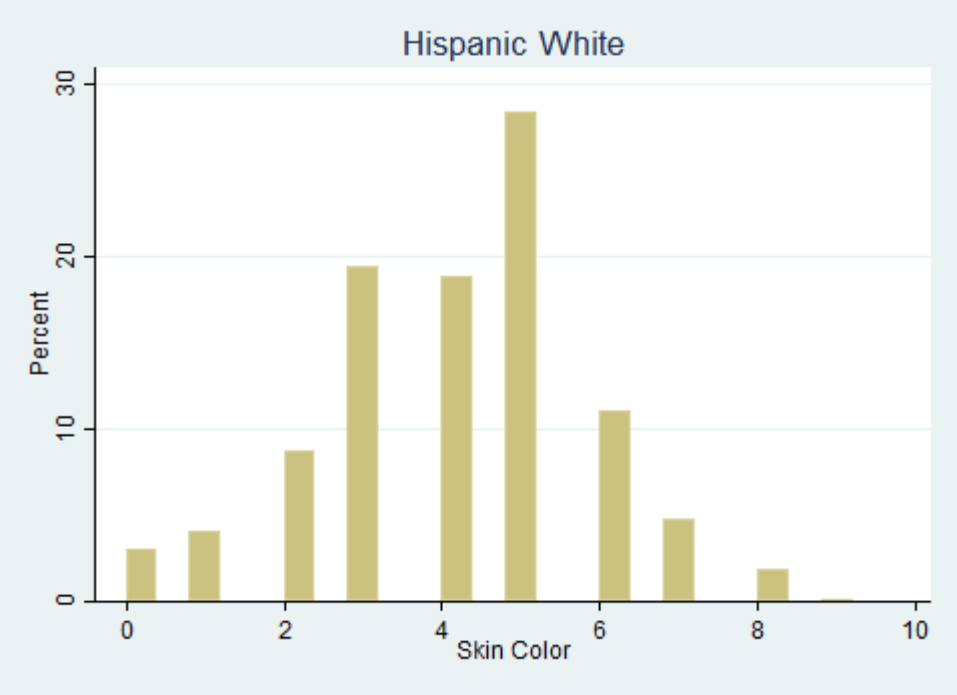
Figure 2: Frequency Polygon of Skin Color, by Gender

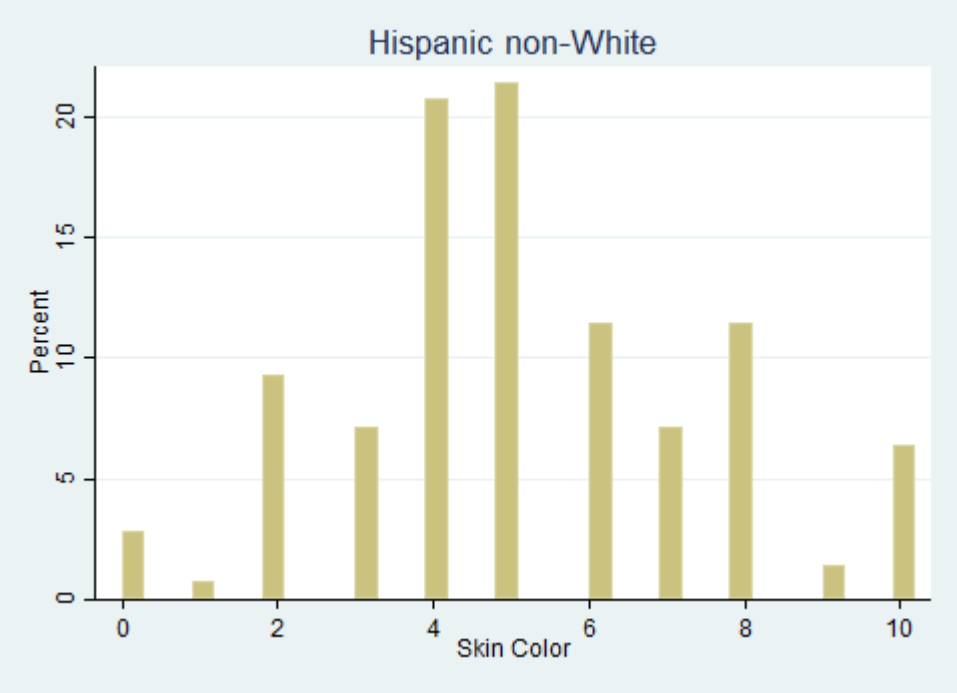


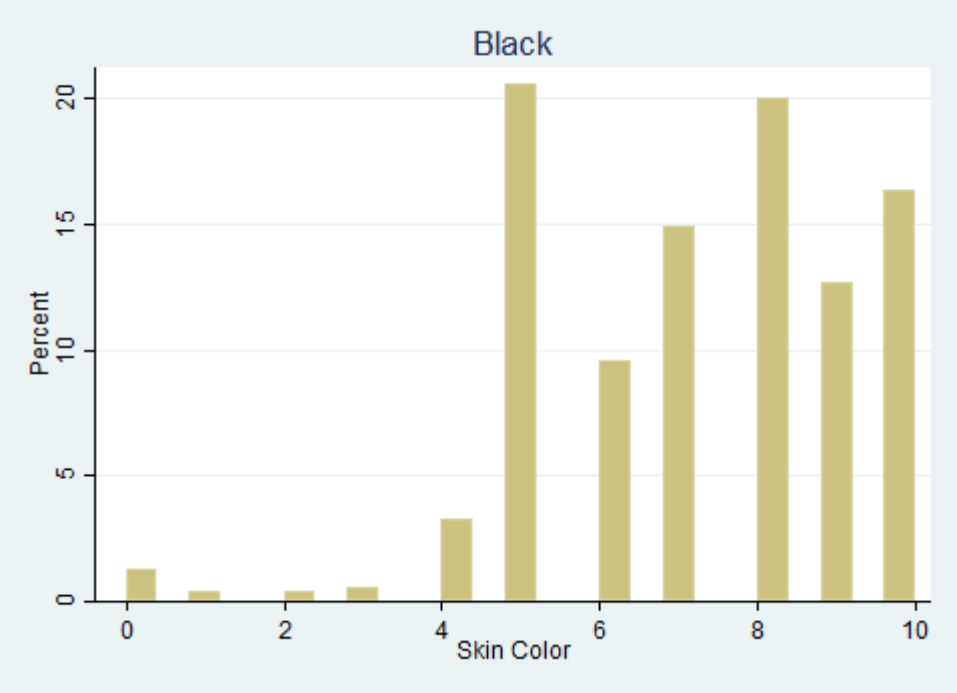
Source: NIS 2003, Number of Observations: Male=984; Female=606

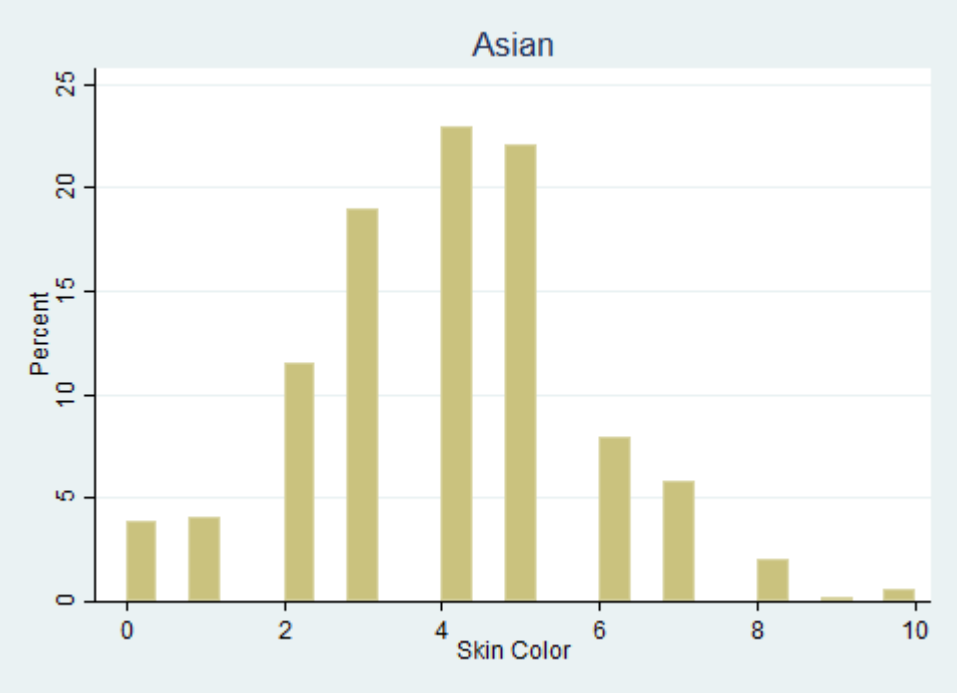
Figure 3: Histogram Distributions of Skin Color by Self-Identified Race/Ethnicity




Hispanic White
Percent
0
10
20
30
0
2
4
6
8
10
Skin Color

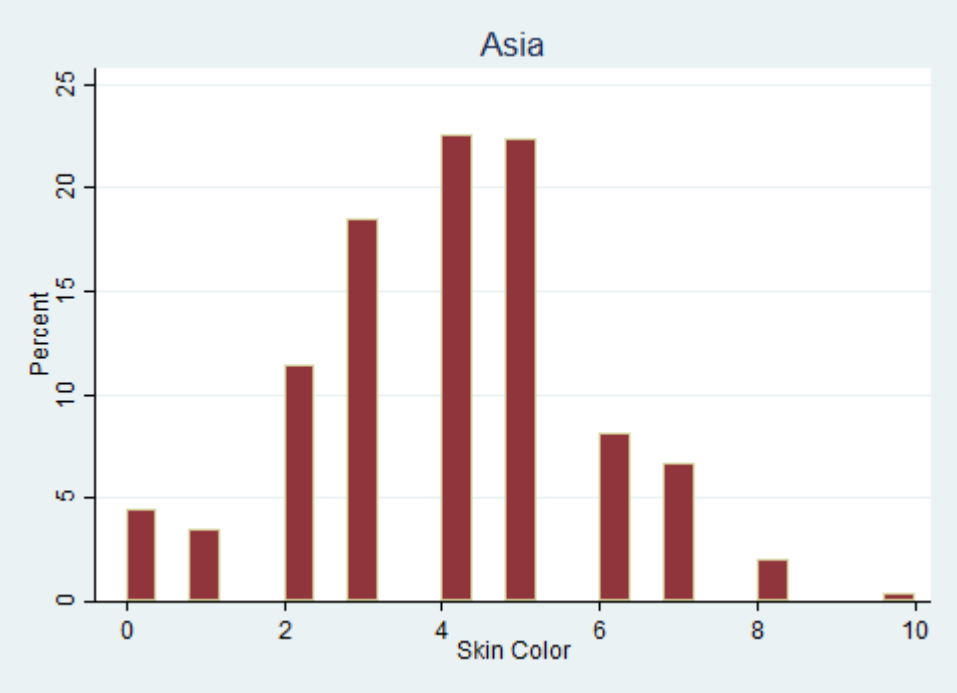

Hispanic non-White
Percent
0
5
10
15
20
0
2
4
6
8
10
Skin Color

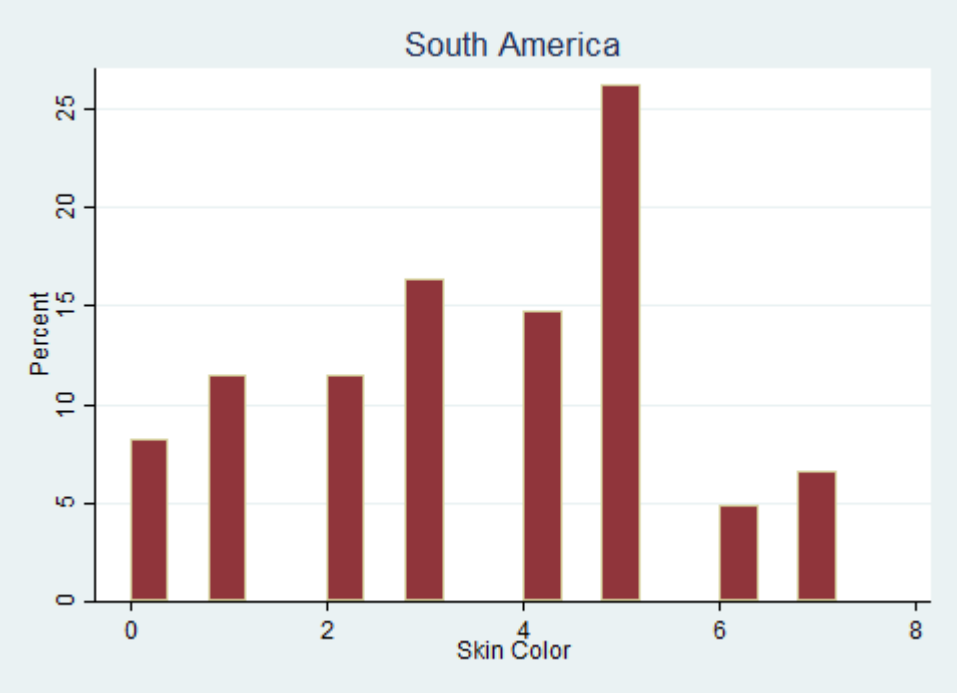


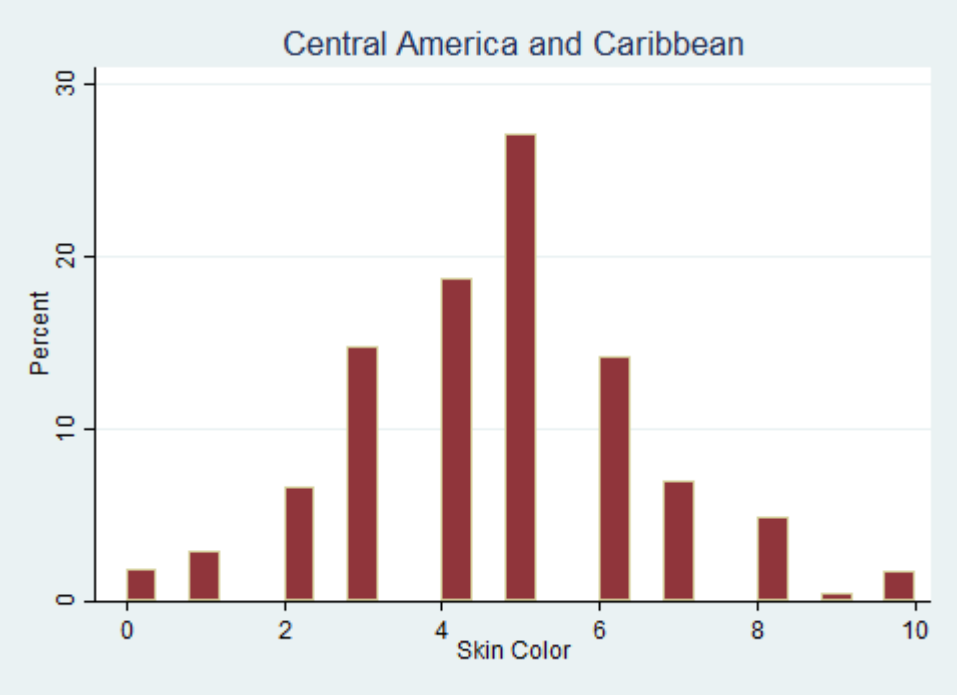


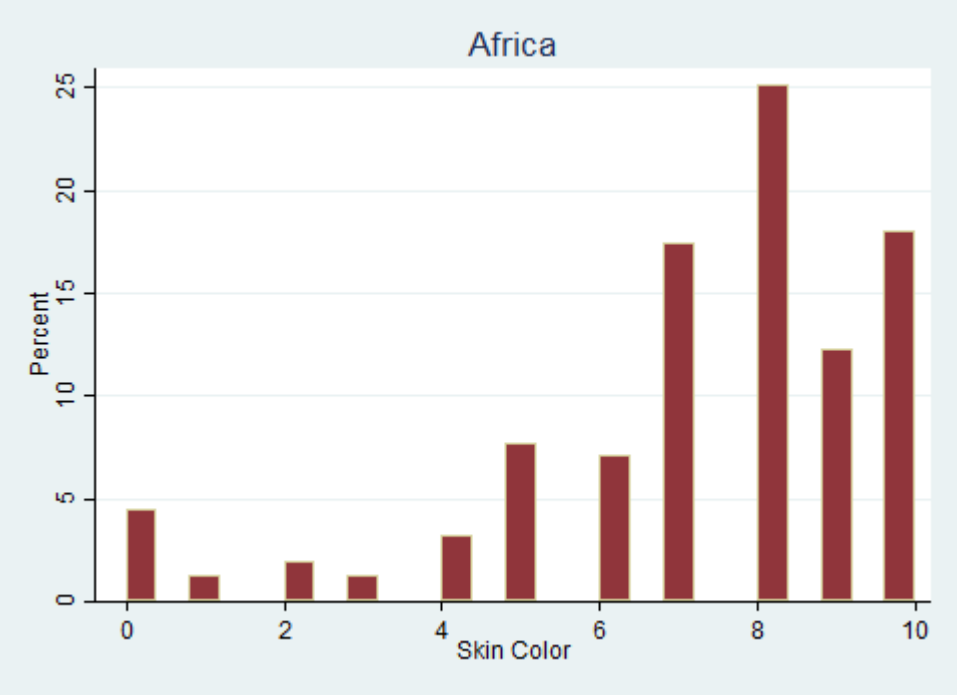
Source: NIS 2003, N=1,589

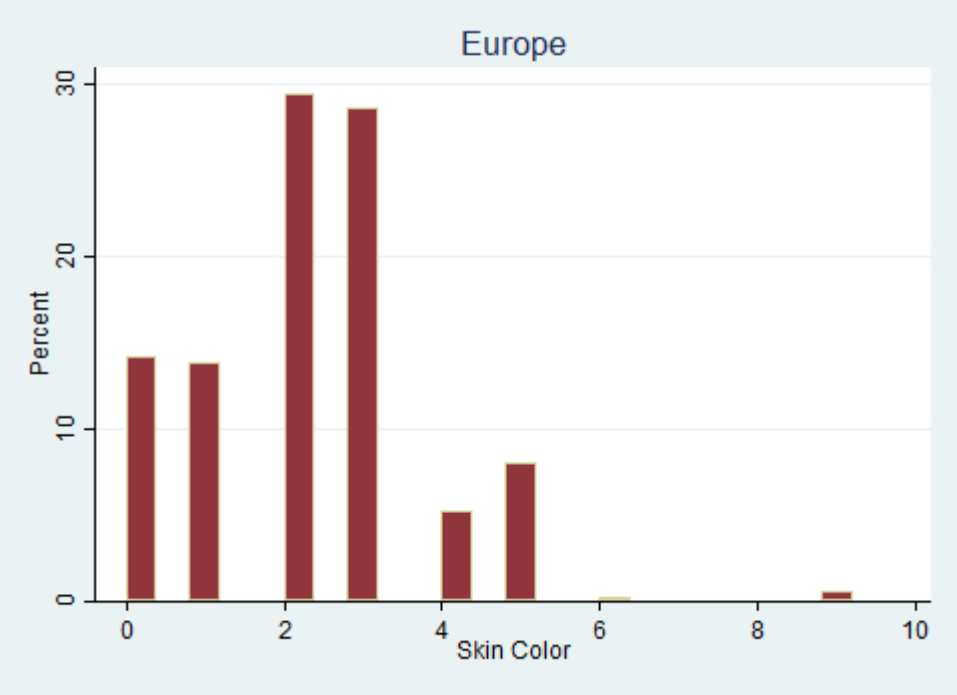
Figure 4. Histogram Distributions of Skin Color by Region of Origin






Central America and Caribbean
Percent
0
10
20
30
0
2
4
6
8
10
Skin Color


Africa
Percent
0
5
10
15
20
25
0
2
4
6
8
10
Skin Color



Source: NIS 2003, N=1,589

Table 5: OLS Regression Models for Logged Income on Skin Color

Variable	**Model 1**		**Model 2**		**Model 3**	
Skin Color	-0.07**	(.02)	0.01	(.01)	0.04	(.03)
Male	0.59***	(.08)	0.44***	(.07)	0.53***	(.14)
Age	0.00	(.00)	0.01**	(.00)	0.01**	(.00)
Marital Status (ref. Married)						
Cohabitating	0.21	(.20)	0.08	(.18)	0.09	(.18)
Divorced/Separated	-0.03	(.14)	-0.04	(.13)	-0.05	(.13)
Single	-0.82***	(.10)	-0.59***	(.09)	-0.60***	(.09)
Region of Origin (ref. Europe)						
Asia	0.21	(.12)	-0.24	(.16)	-0.25	(.16)
South America	-0.25	(.23)	0.07	(.31)	0.06	(.31)
Central America and Caribbean	0.30*	(.12)	0.64*	(.25)	0.64*	(.25)
Africa	-0.31	(.19)	-0.13	(.26)	-0.12	(.26)
Other	1.27***	(.38)	0.14	(.38)	0.14	(.38)
Education (in years)						
U.S. Education			0.04*	(.02)	0.04*	(.02)
Total Education			0.02	(.01)	0.02	(.01)
English Proficiency (ref. Very Well)						
Well			-0.47***	(.09)	-0.46***	(.09)

Not Well		-0.91*** (.11)	-0.91*** (.11)
Not at All		-1.74*** (.14)	-1.74*** (.14)
Visa Type (ref. Employment Visa)			
Spouse of U.S. Citizen		-0.96*** (.13)	-0.96*** (.13)
Diversity Visa		-2.02*** (.13)	-2.03*** (.13)
Other Visa		-1.26*** (.10)	-1.25*** (.10)
Race/Ethnicity (ref. non-Hispanic White)			
Hispanic White		-0.40 (.24)	-0.39 (.24)
Hispanic non-White		-0.52 (.28)	-0.52 (.28)
Black		-0.60* (.26)	-0.60* (.26)
Asian		-0.23 (.16)	-0.22 (.16)
American Indian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander		-0.70* (.32)	-0.69* (.32)
Interaction Term			
skincolor X male			-0.02 (.03)
R^2	0.08	0.31	0.31
N	1,839	1,589	1,589

*Legend: ( ) Standard Error; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*

Table 6: OLS Regression Models for Logged Income on Skin Color (Black/non-Black)

Variable	**Model 4**	**Model 5**
Black	-0.06 (.12)	0.35 (.18)
Male	0.44*** (.07)	0.49*** (.07)
Age	0.01* (.00)	0.01* (.00)
Marital Status (ref. Married)		
Cohabitating	0.09 (.18)	0.08 (.18)
Divorced/Separated	-0.05 (.13)	-0.04 (.13)
Single	-0.59*** (.09)	-0.59*** (.09)
Region of Origin (ref. Europe)		
Asia	-0.24 (.09)	-0.24 (.16)
South America	0.07 (.31)	0.07 (.31)
Central America and Caribbean	0.66* (.25)	0.64* (.25)
Africa	-0.13 (.26)	-0.13 (.26)
Other	0.13 (.38)	0.14 (.38)
Education (in years)		
U.S. Education	0.03* (.02)	0.02* (.02)
Total Education	0.01 (.01)	0.01 (.01)
English Proficiency (ref. Very Well)		
Well	-0.47*** (.09)	-0.47*** (.09)
Not Well	-0.91*** (.11)	-0.91*** (.11)

Not at All	-1.74*** (.14)	-1.74*** (.14)
Visa Type (ref. Employment Visa)		
Spouse of U.S. Citizen	-0.96*** (.13)	-0.96*** (.13)
Diversity Visa	-2.02*** (.13)	-2.02*** (.13)
Other Visa	-1.26*** (.10)	-1.26*** (.10)
Race/Ethnicity (ref. non-Hispanic White)		
Hispanic White	-0.40 (.24)	-0.37 (.24)
Hispanic non-White	-0.52 (.28)	-0.52 (.28)
Black	-0.60* (.26)	-0.61* (.26)
Asian	-0.22 (.16)	-0.21 (.16)
American Indian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	-0.68* (.32)	-0.64* (.32)
Interaction Term		
black X male		-0.44* (.21)
R^2	0.31	0.31
N	1,589	1,589

*Legend: ( ) Standard Error; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*

Table 7: OLS Regression Models of Logged Income on Skin Color (White/non-White)

Variable	**Model 6**	**Model 7**
White	-0.11 (.08)	-0.07 (.18)
Male	0.44*** (.07)	0.45*** (.07)
Age	0.01* (.00)	0.01* (.00)
Marital Status (ref. Married)		
Cohabitating	0.09 (.18)	0.08 (.18)
Divorced/Separated	-0.05 (.13)	-0.04 (.13)
Single	-0.59*** (.09)	-0.59*** (.09)
Region of Origin (ref. Europe)		
Asia	-0.26 (.16)	-0.26 (.16)
South America	0.06 (.31)	0.05 (.31)
Central America and Caribbean	0.62* (.25)	0.61* (.25)
Africa	-0.13 (.26)	-0.14 (.26)
Other	0.13 (.38)	0.14 (.38)
Education (in years)		
U.S. Education	0.03 (.02)	0.02 (.02)
Total Education	0.01 (.01)	0.01 (.01)
English Proficiency (ref. Very Well)		
Well	-0.47*** (.09)	-0.47*** (.09)
Not Well	-0.91*** (.11)	-0.91*** (.11)
Not at All	-1.76*** (.14)	-1.76*** (.14)

Visa Type (ref. Employment Visa)		
Spouse of U.S. Citizen	-0.96*** (.13)	-0.96*** (.13)
Diversity Visa	-2.04*** (.13)	-2.04*** (.13)
Other Visa	-1.27*** (.10)	-1.27*** (.10)
Race/Ethnicity (ref. non-Hispanic White)		
Hispanic White	-0.40 (.24)	-0.40 (.24)
Hispanic non-White	-0.52 (.28)	-0.52 (.28)
Black	-0.60* (.26)	-0.58* (.26)
Asian	-0.22 (.16)	-0.21 (.16)
American Indian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	-0.71* (.32)	-0.71* (.32)
Interaction Term		
white X male		-0.06 (.16)
R^2	0.31	0.31
N	1,589	1,589

*Legend: ( ) Standard Error; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*

Table 8: OLS Regression Models of Logged Income on Skin Color (Light, Medium, Dark)

Variable	**Model 8**	**Model 9**
Honorary White	0.11 (.08)	0.02 (.13)
Collective Black	0.02 (.12)	0.20 (.18)
Male	0.44*** (.07)	0.39** (.07)
Age	0.01* (.00)	0.01* (.00)
Marital Status (ref. Married)		
Cohabitating	0.09 (.18)	0.09 (.18)
Divorced/Separated	-0.05 (.13)	-0.05 (.13)
Single	-0.59*** (.09)	-0.59*** (.09)
Region of Origin (ref. Europe)		
Asia	-0.26 (.16)	-0.26 (.16)
South America	0.06 (.31)	0.05 (.31)
Central America and Caribbean	0.62* (.25)	0.61* (.25)
Africa	-0.13 (.26)	-0.14 (.26)
Other	0.13 (.38)	0.14 (.38)
Education (in years)		
U.S. Education	0.03 (.02)	0.02 (.02)
Total Education	0.01 (.01)	0.01 (.01)
English Proficiency (ref. Very Well)		
Well	-0.47*** (.09)	-0.47*** (.09)
Not Well	-0.91*** (.11)	-0.91*** (.11)
Not at All	-1.76*** (.14)	-1.76*** (.14)

Visa Type (ref. Employment Visa)				
Spouse of U.S. Citizen	-0.30**	(.12)	-0.30**	(.12)
Diversity Visa	-1.26***	(.13)	-1.26***	(.13)
Other Visa	-0.78***	(.10)	-0.78***	(.10)
Race/Ethnicity (ref. non-Hispanic White)				
Hispanic White	-0.40	(.24)	-0.40	(.24)
Hispanic non-White	-0.52	(.28)	-0.52	(.28)
Black	-0.60*	(.26)	-0.60*	(.26)
Asian	-0.24	(.16)	-0.24	(.16)
American Indian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	-0.72*	(.32)	-0.72*	(.32)
Interaction Terms				
Honorary white X male			0.14	(.16)
Collective black X male			-0.13	(.21)
R^2	0.31		0.31	
N	1,589		1,589	

*Legend: ( ) Standard Error; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001*

APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Figure 5: New Immigrant Survey Skin Color Scale