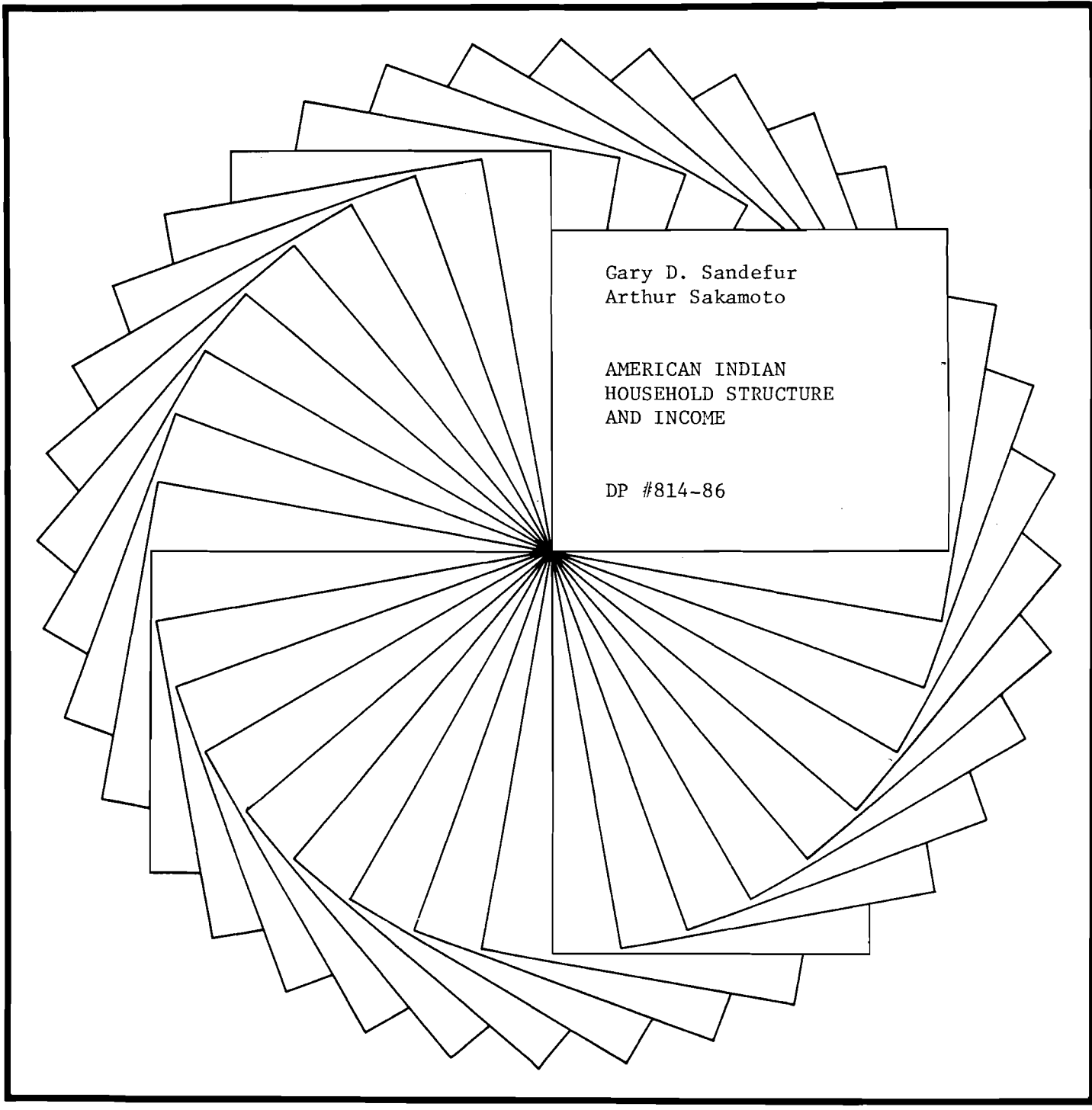

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AMERICAN INDIAN
HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE
AND INCOME

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American Indian Household Structure and Income

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Abstract

In this research we use the 1980 Public-Use Microdata Sample to consider the relationship between household structure and economic well-being among American Indians. We focus in this analysis on the residents of 19 "Indian states" where, as suggested by Passel and Berman (1985), there has been relatively little growth in the Indian population by means of changes in racial self-identification. The results of our analysis indicate that mean per capita household income is lower for Indians than for blacks or whites in Indian states. Then, using Sweet's (1984) scheme of household types, we find that for virtually all household categories Indians have the lowest mean per capita income. Poverty rates for specific household types tend to be highest for Indians, but their overall poverty rate is approximately the same as that of blacks. This occurs because the Indian household distribution is heavily weighted by couple-headed household types, which have lower poverty rates than other household types. Racial differences in mean per capita income among female-headed households and among married couples with children mostly reflect racial differences in mean per capita incomes for each specific family size.

American Indian Household Structure and Income

There has been very little demographic research on American Indians, though recent years have seen an increase in work in this area. Some research has examined the historical demography of American Indians and explored the reasons underlying the destruction and subsequent recovery of the American Indian population (Dobyns, 1983; Thornton, forthcoming). Other research has examined the recent resurgence of Indian ethnic identity reflected in the population counts from the 1960, 1970, and 1980 censuses (Passel, 1976; Passel and Berman, 1985). In addition, some work has examined the labor force participation and earnings of the Indian population (Sandefur and Scott, 1983) and the migration of American Indians (Sandefur, 1986). There has been, however, no research on two of the most basic demographic issues: household structure and household income.

Careful analysis of American Indian household structure and income is important for at least two reasons. First, available statistics indicate that American Indians are a very poor and disadvantaged group relative to the white population. Statistics from the 1980 Census showed that in 1979, 23.7 percent of American Indian families had incomes below the poverty line, whereas 7 percent of white American families had incomes below the poverty line. Median household income among households headed by Indians was \$12,256; median household income among households headed by whites was \$17,680 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983b).

Second, discussions of policy issues regarding American Indians need better information on this group. Although it is clear that Indian

households are more likely to be poor than white American households, it is not clear how the distribution of the American Indian population across types of households (e.g., female-headed households; households headed by couples) or the size of Indian households is related to poverty and income. Many researchers have argued that female headship is a major factor in producing black poverty. The high incidence of female headship among blacks is well known. In 1980, 41.8 percent of black family householders were women, whereas only 14.2 percent of white family householders were women (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983a). In 1980, 60.6 percent of poor black individuals were members of female-headed families, whereas 25.8 percent of poor white individuals were members of female-headed families (Bane, 1986). It is unlikely that female headship accounts for as much American Indian poverty, since in 1980 26.9 percent of Indian householders were women, a figure intermediate between that of whites and blacks (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983a). Consequently, analyses of the relationship of household structure to poverty and income among Indians could provide information that would be useful in directing antipoverty efforts for this population.

In this paper we examine more carefully the relationships between household structure, poverty, and income among American Indians. The issues that we address are straightforward. First, we compare the distribution of household types among blacks, whites, and Indians, and examine the poverty rates and incomes for these different types of households. Second, we examine the effects of household structure and household size on racial income differences.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF AMERICAN INDIAN HOUSEHOLDS

An analysis of American Indian households must face two unique problems. First, Passel and Berman (1985) have documented the changes in racial self-identification in Census reports from non-Indian to Indian that have taken place since 1960. Between 1960 and 1970, 67,006 or 9.2 percent of the 1970 American Indian population changed their self-identification from non-Indian to Indian; between 1970 and 1980, 357,655 or 25.2 percent of the 1980 American Indian population changed their self-identification from non-Indian to Indian. These changes in self-identification probably explain part of the improvement of economic conditions among Indians relative to other groups in recent years. For example, the statistics suggest that Indians have been making more rapid gains than blacks. Yet as recently as 1960, Indian income was significantly lower than black income. In 1960, American Indian median personal income was 88 percent of black median personal income (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1963). The 1980 statistics indicate that Indians were slightly better off than blacks.¹

Second, published statistics for Indian families and households are based only on those households in which the householder, who is usually a man or a single woman, is an Indian. Those households which contain Indian women married to non-Indian men are excluded. Although the same practice is used to define white, black, and other households, it is especially significant in the case of American Indians because in 1980 over 50 percent of married American Indian women were married to non-Indians (Sandefur and McKinnell, 1985).

These methodological problems make it difficult to assess the impact of existing social programs on the American Indian population and to plan future programs. Fortunately, there are ways to deal with the changes in self-identification and the definition of Indian households using the 1980 Public-Use Microdata Sample. Passel and Berman (1985) identified areas of the country in which Indian identity has been consistent over the period 1960-1980. They refer to these areas as "Indian states"--states that had 3,000 or more Indians in the 1950 Census. (California is excepted because the changes in self-identification there have been very similar to those in "non-Indian states.") The Indian states are: Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. These states contained 87 percent of the American Indian population in 1950, and 66 percent of the American Indian population in 1980 (Passel and Berman, 1985).² In this paper, we focus our analyses on the population in these states. In doing this, of course, we exclude those Indians residing in non-Indian states. In addition, we define Indian households as those with an Indian householder or spouse. This is important even in Indian states, where 42 percent of married Indian women were married to non-Indian men in 1980.

DATA AND METHODS

In this study we use the 1980 1 percent Census Public-Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). This data set represents a random sample of households from across the entire United States. The Census Bureau created this

file from a subsample of the records for those households which received the "long-form" questionnaire of the 1980 Census. Because of its large size, we do not use all the available cases from the 1980 PUMS data. In order to reduce costs, we selected all Indian households, 25 percent of black households, and 3 percent of white households. We define race at the level of the household. Indian households refer to households in which either the household head or the head's spouse is Indian. White households are defined as households in which the household head is white and the spouse is not Indian. Black households refer to households in which the household head is black and the spouse is not Indian.

In describing racial differences in economic well-being, our unit of analysis is the household. Since the consumption and production activities of individuals are scheduled and organized in the context of their household living arrangements, the household is an appropriate unit for the study of economic well-being. In order to standardize for the different kinds of household structures, we utilize a classification of family/nonfamily household types. This classification follows Sweet (1984, p. 131) and includes eight different types: (1) married couples without children; (2) married couples with children; (3) mother-child families; (4) father-child families; (5) other families; (6) men living alone; (7) women living alone; and, (8) multiperson nonfamily households. As a measure of the central tendency for household income we use mean per capita income.

RESULTS

Household Structure, Poverty, and Income

Table 1 shows, for each racial group, the frequency distribution of households by household types. As expected, the frequency distribution for white households closely follows the results of Sweet (1984, p. 131), which refer to the national aggregate. In particular our data indicate that almost three-quarters of white households are family households. Of family households, most are married couples, who are about evenly split between those with and those without children. The largest component of the nonfamily households is the category of women living alone: 14 percent of all white households.

For blacks, the distribution between family and nonfamily households is about the same as for whites. But within these two broad groupings there are sizable differences. For example, in sharp contrast to whites, the black household distribution is more heavily weighted by mother-child families than by married couples without children. Compared to whites, a smaller percentage of black households are represented by the traditional grouping of married couples with children. Furthermore, while only 5 percent of white households are represented in the "other family" category, 11 percent of black households fall into this residual group. As for nonfamily households, the men-living alone category is significantly higher than it is for whites. In short, in comparison to whites, blacks have a greater propensity to form nontraditional households.

The opposite extreme seems to be represented by the Indian household distribution. Indians appear to be more likely than whites to live in

Table 1

Distribution of Households by Type and Race, 1980
(based on data pertaining to the 19 "Indian states")

| HOUSEHOLD TYPE | INDIAN HOUSEHOLDS | BLACK HOUSEHOLDS | WHITE HOUSEHOLDS |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS | 83% | 72% | 73% |
| Married couple, no children | 21 | 16 | 30 |
| Married couple, with children | 43 | 24 | 32 |
| Mother-child | 11 | 19 | 5 |
| Father-child | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Other family | 7 | 11 | 5 |
| NONFAMILY HOUSEHOLDS | 17% | 28% | 27% |
| Men living alone | 7 | 12 | 8 |
| Women living alone | 7 | 13 | 14 |
| Multiperson | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| TOTAL PERCENTAGE | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| N | 3173 | 4746 | 6204 |

Notes: Indian household: householder and/or spouse is Indian.
Black household: householder is black and spouse is not Indian. White household: householder is white and spouse is not Indian.

Indian states: Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

traditional household forms. First of all, Indians have a greater propensity than whites to form family households (83 percent versus 73 percent). For Indians, in contrast to whites, most family households are married couples with children. In fact, fully 43 percent of all Indian households are married couples with children, compared with 32 percent for whites and 24 percent for blacks. Indians are also less likely to live alone than either blacks or whites. Only 7 percent of Indian households are women living alone compared to 13 percent for blacks and 14 percent for whites. There are, however, proportionately more mother-child families among Indians than among whites, though not as high a proportion as is the case for blacks.³

In Table 2 we report, for each race and household type, one of the most basic indicators of economic well-being: the percentage of households whose posttransfer income falls below the Census poverty line.⁴ The most obvious racial difference that one can discern is that, for every household type, whites are much less likely to be in poverty than are either Indians or blacks. (The one exception here appears to be the small residual category "multiperson household," for which whites and Indians have equal poverty rates.) For example, while 5 percent of white married couples with children are in poverty, the corresponding figure is 14 percent for blacks and 20 percent for Indians. Consequently, when we weight each household-specific poverty rate by the corresponding percentage of the total household distribution--that is, when we compute the poverty rate across all households--we find that whites have the least poverty (i.e., 11 percent versus 28 percent for either blacks or Indians.)

Table 2

Percentage in Poverty, by Race and Household Type, 1980
 (based on data pertaining to the 19 "Indian states")

| HOUSEHOLD TYPE | INDIAN HOUSEHOLDS | BLACK HOUSEHOLDS | WHITE HOUSEHOLDS |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS | | | |
| Married couple, no children | 14% | 10% | 5% |
| Married couple, with children | 20 | 14 | 5 |
| Mother-child | 59 | 51 | 35 |
| Father-child | 28 | 33 | 9 |
| Other family | 35 | 22 | 9 |
| NONFAMILY HOUSEHOLDS | | | |
| Men living alone | 38 | 28 | 16 |
| Women living alone | 45 | 40 | 22 |
| Multiperson | 26 | 32 | 26 |
| ALL HOUSEHOLDS | 28 | 28 | 11 |

Notes: Indian household: householder and/or spouse is Indian.
 Black household: householder is black and spouse is not
 Indian. White household: householder is white and spouse
 is not Indian.

Indian states: Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota,
 Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York,
 North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon,
 South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and
 Wyoming.

As for the Indian-black comparison of poverty levels, Table 2 indicates that the poverty rate across all households is the same for the two races, namely 28 percent. However, there is significant variation between the two races in their respective household-specific rates.⁵ Blacks have higher rates for father-child families and for multiperson households, but these two categories constitute a relatively minor proportion of all households (and this holds true for any race). Although for the rest of the household types the Indian poverty rates are higher, the distribution of Indian household types serves to ameliorate the effects of poverty so that blacks and Indians have approximately the same overall poverty rate. In particular, the Indian household distribution is heavily weighted towards married couples, who tend to have low poverty rates. The distribution of black households, on the other hand, is more heavily weighted towards female-headed families and nonfamily households, which tend to have high poverty rates.⁶

In Table 3 is presented, for each race and household type, the mean per capita total household income. Since these measures are meant to be indicative of average economic well-being, we have standardized them for variations in household size by deriving per capita figures.⁷

Since whites have the lowest poverty rates, it should not be surprising that whites also clearly have the highest mean per capita incomes for every household type. For married couples without children, for example, per capita household income is \$10,463 for whites, \$7565 for blacks, and \$7162 for Indians. Similar levels of income disadvantages for the minorities are evident for the other household types as well. Accordingly, the mean per capita income over all households is around \$3000 greater for whites than for blacks or Indians.

Table 3

Mean Per Capita Total Household Income
 For Each Household Type, by Race, 1980
 (based on data pertaining to the 19 "Indian states")

| HOUSEHOLD TYPE | INDIAN HOUSEHOLDS | BLACK HOUSEHOLDS | WHITE HOUSEHOLDS |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS | | | |
| Married couple, no children | \$7162 | \$7565 | \$10463 |
| Married couple, with children | 4407 | 4922 | 6372 |
| Mother-child | 2359 | 2661 | 3568 |
| Father-child | 4812 | 3826 | 6978 |
| Other family | 4288 | 5220 | 7490 |
| NONFAMILY HOUSEHOLDS | | | |
| Men living alone | 8058 | 9497 | 13348 |
| Women living alone | 6018 | 6730 | 8432 |
| Multiperson | 8069 | 9533 | 11330 |
| ALL HOUSEHOLDS | 5282 | 5944 | 8729 |

Notes: Indian household: householder and/or spouse is Indian.
 Black household: householder is black and spouse is not
 Indian. White household: householder is white and spouse
 is not Indian.

Indian states: Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota,
 Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York,
 North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon,
 South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and
 Wyoming.

Figures rounded to the nearest dollar.

Mean per capita income is higher for blacks than for Indians for every household type except father-child families (who represent the smallest proportion of all household types for any race). Across all households the black-Indian differential amounts to \$662. Although this black-Indian differential is much smaller than the white-black differential (in terms of both absolute dollars and percentages), note that the black-Indian differential is not greatly ameliorated by the weights embodied in the distribution of Indian households (as was the case with poverty rates). Although married couples without children have a high mean per capita income, it is low for married couples with children, who constitute 43 percent of the Indian households but only 24 percent of the black households.⁸

The Impact of Household Structure on Racial Income Differences

To assess the impact of family structure on racial differences in mean per capita income, we have utilized Kitagawa's (1955) decomposition technique to derive the components of the difference in two rates (see also, Bianchi, 1980). In this instance the difference that is to be decomposed is the racial differential in mean per capita household income. The "rates" refer to each of the household-specific means of per capita income (given in Table 3) and the "weights" are represented by the distribution of family types (given in Table 1). In the following decompositions we have chosen the white "rates" and "weights" as the standards.

As shown in the top panel of Table 4, the black-white differential in mean per capita family income is about \$2785. About 72 percent of this

Table 4

Decomposition of White-Black, White-Indian, and Black-Indian Differences in Mean Per Capita Household Income, 1980 (based on data pertaining to the 19 "Indian states")

white-black decomposition using white distributions as the standard:

$$\begin{aligned} S P_w M_w - S P_b M_b &= S M_w (P_w - P_b) + S P_w (M_w - M_b) - S (P_w - P_b) (M_w - M_b) \\ 2784.84 &= 732.88 + 2177.90 - 125.94 \\ 100\% &= 24.13\% + 71.72\% + 4.15\% \end{aligned}$$

white-Indian decomposition using white distributions as the standard:

$$\begin{aligned} S P_w M_w - S P_i M_i &= S M_w (P_w - P_i) + S P_w (M_w - M_i) - S (P_w - P_i) (M_w - M_i) \\ 3446.40 &= 870.71 + 2818.10 - 242.41 \\ 100\% &= 22.15\% + 71.68\% + 6.17\% \end{aligned}$$

black-Indian decomposition using black distributions as the standard:

$$\begin{aligned} S P_b M_b - S P_i M_i &= S M_b (P_b - P_i) + S P_b (M_b - M_i) - S (P_b - P_i) (M_b - M_i) \\ 661.54 &= 82.23 + 652.06 - 72.75 \\ 100\% &= 10.19\% + 80.80\% + 9.01\% \end{aligned}$$

Notes: The percentages are calculated by using the absolute values of the components of the differences.

P : the frequency distribution across household types for whites.
 P_w^w : the frequency distribution across household types for whites.
 P_b^b : the frequency distribution across household types for blacks.
 P_i^i : the frequency distribution across household types for Indians.
 M_w^i : household-specific mean per capita income for whites.
 M_b^w : household-specific mean per capita income for blacks.
 M_i^b : household-specific mean per capita income for Indians.
 S^i refers to summation across all of the categories for the subscript.

Indian states: Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

is attributable to the rates component--that is, to the racial differences in household-specific means--and about 24 percent reflects the effect of the black distribution of family structure being more heavily weighted towards family types which have below average mean per capita incomes. While the white-Indian differential is larger (\$3446), the proportions due to the rates component and to the weights component are approximately the same as the black-white case. Thus, the distribution of Indian family types is about equal to that of blacks in affecting the respective racial income differentials vis-à-vis whites.

However, as we noted in our discussion of Table 1, the Indian and black distributions of family types do differ substantially. The Indian household distribution is more "traditional" than the white distribution, whereas the black household distribution has been termed "pathological." Especially relevant here is that the Indian distribution is more heavily weighted towards married couples with children, while the black distribution is more heavily weighted towards female-headed households. Since both of these family types have below average per capita incomes (for any race), one might surmise that the effects of household type, although equal in magnitude for the two minority groups, differ between them in terms of the importance of these particular household types. In sum, these results show that a more traditional household distribution is not necessarily associated with higher per capita income, and that factors other than the distribution of household types are most responsible for racial inequality in household income.

The Impact of Household Size on Racial Differences in Income

In order to examine the effects of household size on racial differences in income, we considered both married couples with children and female-headed households (with or without children) separately in decompositions by family size and family-size-specific mean per capita incomes. In these decompositions, the "rates" refer to each of the family-size-specific means of per capita income, and the "weights" are represented by the distribution of family sizes. Again we have chosen the white figures as the standards. We have restricted the analysis to households with nonelderly heads, and the upper interval of the family size distributions includes households with 6 or more family members. (Note that elderly households were included in Table 3 and that the category of female-headed households in Table 5 includes households other than the mother-child households in Table 3.)

The average size of white female-headed households is 2.9 compared to 3.4 for blacks and 3.6 for Indians. As indicated in Table 5, there is a \$1197 difference in mean per capita income between white and black nonelderly female-headed households. About 64 percent of this differential is due to racial differences in family-size-specific means in per capita income, and about 36 percent is due to racial differences in family size. For the white-Indian differential of \$1685, the respective components are 70 percent and 26 percent. Thus, in terms of proportions, these results suggest that (at least for female-headed households) differences in family size are somewhat more important for blacks than for Indians in explaining their overall income disparities with whites. In absolute dollars however, the Indian component for family size is still greater than that for blacks.

Table 5

Decomposition of White-Black, White-Indian, and Black-Indian
Differences in Mean Per Capita Income by Family Size for
Nonelderly Female-Headed Households, 1980
(based on data pertaining to the 19 "Indian states")

white-black decomposition using white distributions as the standard:

$$\begin{aligned} S P_w M_w - S P_b M_b &= S M_w (P_w - P_b) + S P_w (M_w - M_b) - S (P_w - P_b) (M_w - M_b) \\ 1196.56 &= 430.77 + 770.32 - 4.53 \\ 100\% &= 35.73\% + 63.89\% + .38\% \end{aligned}$$

white-Indian decomposition using white distributions as the standard:

$$\begin{aligned} S P_w M_w - S P_i M_i &= S M_w (P_w - P_i) + S P_w (M_w - M_i) - S (P_w - P_i) (M_w - M_i) \\ 1685.08 &= 478.11 + 1271.50 - 64.53 \\ 100\% &= 26.35\% + 70.09\% + 3.56\% \end{aligned}$$

black-Indian decomposition using black distributions as the standard:

$$\begin{aligned} S P_b M_b - S P_i M_i &= S M_b (P_b - P_i) + S P_b (M_b - M_i) - S (P_b - P_i) (M_b - M_i) \\ 488.53 &= 47.34 + 455.60 - 14.41 \\ 100\% &= 9.15\% + 88.06\% + 2.78\% \end{aligned}$$

Notes: The percentages are calculated by using the absolute values of the components of the differences.

P_w : the frequency distribution across family sizes for whites.
 P_b : the frequency distribution across family sizes for blacks.
 P_i : the frequency distribution across family sizes for Indians.
 M_w^i : family size-specific mean per capita income for whites.
 M_b^i : family size-specific mean per capita income for blacks.
 M_i^i : family size-specific mean per capita income for Indians.
 S^i refers to summation across all of the categories for the subscript.

Indian states: Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

The case of nonelderly married couples with children is reported in Table 6. The average size of white households in this category is 4.2 compared to 4.5 for both blacks and Indians. The differences in size are smaller than in the case of female-headed households, and the effects of size are also smaller. Here the white-black differential is \$1340 and the rates and weights components are 88 percent and 6 percent respectively. Clearly in this case, differences in family size do not account for much of the racial income disparity. For the white-Indian differential of \$1897 however, the corresponding figures are 83 percent and 14 percent. That is, for Indians, the relative effect of family size differences on the income gap is greater than is the case for blacks. Further, not only is the proportionate effect of family size larger for Indians than for blacks, but in absolute dollars as well the Indian family size effect is significantly greater.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Our results show that in 1980 Indians were much more likely to live in family households, and in traditional family households (couples with children) than either blacks or whites. Although the overall household poverty rates for blacks and Indians were approximately the same, more specific types of Indian households were likely to be poor than the same types of black households. Overall, per capita household income was lower for American Indians than for blacks. A decomposition of black/white and Indian/white income differences shows that differences in the distribution of household types had about equal effects on the two sets of differences. Among nonelderly female-headed family households,

Table 6

Decomposition of White-Black, White-Indian, and Black-Indian Differences in Mean Per Capita Income by Family Size for Nonelderly Married Couples with Children, 1980 (based on data pertaining to the 19 "Indian states")

white-black decomposition using white distributions as the standard:

$$\begin{aligned} S P_w M_w - S P_b M_b &= S M_w (P_w - P_b) + S P_w (M_w - M_b) - S (P_w - P_b) (M_w - M_b) \\ 1339.97 &= 85.36 + 1183.80 - (-70.81) \\ 100\% &= 6.37\% + 88.34\% + 5.28\% \end{aligned}$$

white-Indian decomposition using white distributions as the standard:

$$\begin{aligned} S P_w M_w - S P_i M_i &= S M_w (P_w - P_i) + S P_w (M_w - M_i) - S (P_w - P_i) (M_w - M_i) \\ 1896.98 &= 275.37 + 1573.20 - (-48.41) \\ 100\% &= 14.52\% + 82.93\% + 2.55\% \end{aligned}$$

black-Indian decomposition using black distributions as the standard:

$$\begin{aligned} S P_b M_b - S P_i M_i &= S M_b (P_b - P_i) + S P_b (M_b - M_i) - S (P_b - P_i) (M_b - M_i) \\ 557.01 &= 172.45 + 395.24 - 10.68 \\ 100\% &= 29.82\% + 68.34\% + 1.85\% \end{aligned}$$

Notes: The percentages are calculated by using the absolute values of the components of the differences.

P_w : the frequency distribution across family sizes for whites.
 P_b^w : the frequency distribution across family sizes for blacks.
 P_i : the frequency distribution across family sizes for Indians.
 M_i^w : family size-specific mean per capita income for whites.
 M_b^w : family size-specific mean per capita income for blacks.
 M_i : family size-specific mean per capita income for Indians.
 S^i refers to summation across all of the categories for the subscript.

Indian states: Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

family size accounted for more of the black/white income difference than the Indian/white income difference. Among nonelderly couple-headed family households, family size accounted for more of the Indian/white income difference.

The greater prevalence of family households, and especially couples with children, among American Indians should be taken into account in designing social policies to assist this group. Many social programs designed to ameliorate or eliminate poverty are oriented toward female-headed households, since these are clearly the households that are most at risk. In each racial group in our sample, single mothers with children are the most likely of any household type to be below the poverty line. Further, among blacks in our sample, mothers with children make up 35 percent of the poor households, whereas couples with children make up 12 percent of the poor households. Among American Indians, however, couples with children make up 31 percent of the poor households, whereas mothers with children make up 23 percent of the poor households. Consequently, it is important that the current preoccupation of social policy discussions with the problems of female-headed households not lead us to overlook the fact that among some sectors of the population, including American Indians, couples with children constitute a larger proportion of the poor than do mothers with children.

These results demonstrate that the American Indian household distribution has a higher percentage of families than either whites or blacks, but the results do not show why this is so. Two possible "demographic" explanations come to mind. First, the relative youth of the American

Indian adult population compared to that of the black and white populations may help explain the higher propensity of Indians to live in family households. Elderly individuals are more likely to live in nonfamily households, and the Indian population has a much lower percentage of elderly individuals than either blacks or whites. To test the effect of the age distribution we standardized the household distribution of Indians and blacks using the white householder age distribution as the standard. The standardized household distribution for Indians included 81 percent family households relative to 83 in the unstandardized distribution. The standardized household distribution for blacks included 70 percent family households relative to 72 percent in the unstandardized distribution. To reiterate, 73 percent of white households were family households. The age distribution helps explain part of the difference between whites and Indians, but a substantial gap remains.

A second possible explanation is the relative concentration of American Indians in rural areas, where the likelihood of living in family households is higher for all races. Unfortunately, it is not possible with the 1 percent PUMS-A to investigate this possibility, since the data do not allow differentiation of rural and urban residents. It is, however, possible to use published Census data to shed some light on this matter. Caution must be used, since published data refer to all states rather than just Indian states, and exclude Indian women living with non-Indian householders. Published data indicate that 73 percent of white households were family households in 1980, whereas 77 percent of Indian households were family households (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983b). The figure for whites is the same as our figure for whites in

Appendix Table A, whereas the figure for Indians is considerably lower than our figure, owing to the different way we define Indian households. Using the white household residential distribution as the standard produces an Indian household distribution in which 76 percent of Indian households are family households. Residence seems to explain only a small amount of the Indian/white/black difference in the distribution of household types.

One "social" explanation of the high proportion of female-headed families among blacks is the lack of economic opportunities available to black men (Rainwater, 1970; Wilson and Neckerman, 1986; Walker, 1985). Given the poverty and low per capita incomes of Indian households, it is difficult to believe that the preponderance of Indian couple-headed households is due to better economic opportunities for Indian men than are available to black men. A second possible social explanation is the relative absence of barriers to Indian/white intermarriage compared to continuing white disapproval of black/white intermarriage (Sandefur and McKinnell, 1985). Indians have access to a source of potential mates that is not available to blacks. Finally, a third possible social explanation is that certain features of American Indian culture may be responsible for the family distribution. Anthropologists and sociologists who study American Indians have noted consistently that traditional Indian culture places a strong emphasis on family and community (Wax, 1971). Perhaps this helps explain the Indian household distribution. In sum, it is probably a combination of age, residential distribution, the relative absence of barriers to Indian/white intermarriage and the cultural emphasis on families that explains the relatively high proportion of American Indian family households.

Appendix
Table A

Household Structure by Race, and Poverty in All States, 1980

| HOUSEHOLD TYPE | INDIAN HOUSEHOLDS | BLACK HOUSEHOLDS | WHITE HOUSEHOLDS |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS | 82% | 72% | 73% |
| Married couple, no children | 23(11) | 17(13) | 31(4) |
| Married couple, with children | 43(16) | 24(15) | 30(5) |
| Mother-child | 9(54) | 18(53) | 5(34) |
| Father-child | 2(26) | 2(29) | 1(10) |
| Other family | 5(29) | 11(26) | 5(8) |
| NONFAMILY HOUSEHOLDS | 18 | 28 | 27 |
| Men living alone | 8(27) | 11(26) | 8(15) |
| Women living alone | 7(39) | 13(45) | 14(23) |
| Multiperson | 3(21) | 4(33) | 5(21) |
| TOTAL PERCENTAGE | 100(22) | 100(29) | 100(10) |
| N | 5774 | 21,052 | 21,009 |

Notes: Indian household: householder and/or spouse is Indian.
 Black household: householder is black and spouse is not
 Indian. White household: householder is white and spouse
 is not Indian.

The numbers in parentheses are the percentage of each group with
 incomes below the poverty line.

Notes

¹Those recruited into the Indian population may be much better off than Indians in general. Coleman and Rainwater's (1978) analysis of the "ethnic revival" found that upper-middle-class professionals (especially the younger ones) were most likely to become interested in their ethnic roots. The lower-middle and lower-class respondents wanted to make sure that their primary identity was viewed as American. Coleman and Rainwater attribute this to the secure life chances of the upper middle class, which allow them to engage in ethnic revival without fear of negative consequences. Lower-middle and lower-class persons don't want others to suspect them of being disloyal, since they are still trying to get ahead.

²The procedure used by Passel and Berman (1985) to assess changes in self-identification involves an analysis of state variation in implied birth, death, and migration rates. This analysis showed that states which have historically had large Indian populations in general had high birth and death rates and reasonable migration rates. Many other states, however, had anomalously low birth and death rates with extraordinarily high implied migration rates. The high implied migration rates are attributed to changes in self-identification.

³As we pointed out above, published statistics on household composition for Indian households exclude those Indians who are married to non-Indians. This, of course, reduces the proportion of Indian households that are family households, and within family households, it reduces the proportion that are couples.

⁴Posttransfer income refers to total household income, including income from public assistance and social security.

⁵Appendix Table A gives the distribution of household types and poverty rates in the United States as a whole. A comparison of Table 1 with Table A shows that the distribution of household types among the three racial groups is quite similar in the two sets of states, but that there are significant variations in poverty rates. The overall poverty rate among blacks and whites is approximately the same in the United States as a whole as in the Indian states, whereas the overall poverty rate among Indians is higher in Indian states than in the United States as a whole. There are wider variations among specific household types. Note that the overall poverty figures for whites and Indians refer to households and thus differ from those given in the introductory section of the paper, which referred to families.

⁶There appear to be some basic similarities in the rank ordering of poverty levels across the household types for each race. For all three races the household types with the least poverty are married couples without children and married couples with children. On the other hand, the household type most likely to be in poverty is clearly the mother-child family. Furthermore, for each race, women living alone have a poverty rate much higher than the corresponding racial average. For the other household types, however, the rank ordering of the poverty levels does vary slightly between racial groups. For example, among whites, multiperson households have a relatively high poverty rate, while in the case of Indians, it is relatively low. The poverty rate for men living alone has a relatively low rank order in the case of blacks, but a relatively high rank order in the case of Indians.

However in the case of mother-child families the expected relationship holds for each race: the poverty rate is relatively high and mean per capita income is relatively low.