

# Racism, Colorism, and Health

*Frameworks and Methodologic Approaches for Health Disparities Research*

*RCCN Workshop*

*June 28, 2022*

Taylor W. Hargrove, PhD

Assistant Professor of Sociology

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

# Definitions

- **Racism**: organized social system that divides individuals and differentially allocates valued resources, opportunities, and power
  - Vs. race (proxy measure)
  - Vs. ethnicity
- **Colorism**: structural and ideological system of inequality that provides those with lighter skin complexions with privileges and advantages over their darker-skinned counterparts
  - Vs. skin color (proxy measure)

# State of the Research: Racism and Health

# Capturing Structural Racism

*“ ‘...the totality of ways in which societies foster [racial] discrimination, via mutually reinforcing [inequitable] systems...(eg, in housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, criminal justice, etc) that in turn reinforce discriminatory beliefs, values, and distribution of resources’ (Krieger 2014), reflected in history, culture, and interconnected institutions.” (Bailey et al. 2017)*

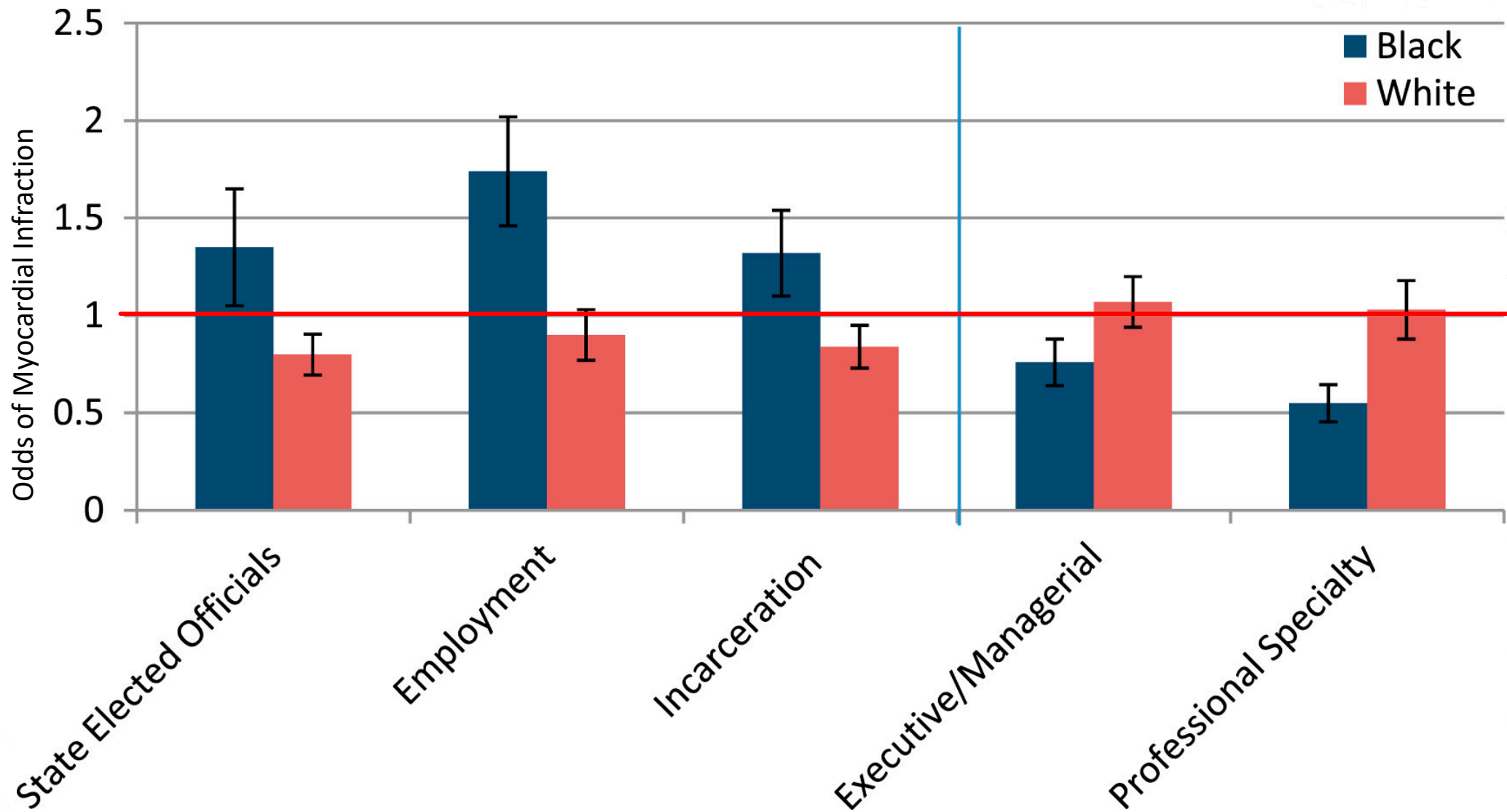
## HEALTH EQUITY

By Rachel R. Hardeman, Patricia A. Homan, Tongtan Chantarat, Brigette A. Davis, and Tyson H. Brown

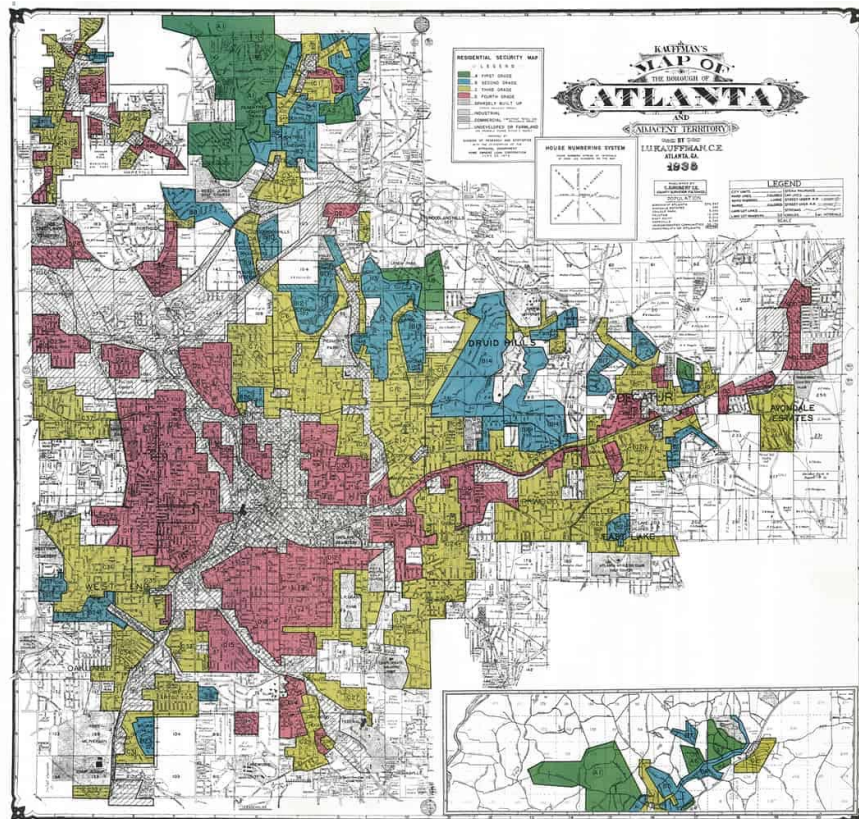
### OVERVIEW

## Improving The Measurement Of Structural Racism To Achieve Antiracist Health Policy

**ABSTRACT** Antiracist health policy research requires methodological innovation that creates equity-centered and antiracist solutions to health inequities by centering the complexities and insidiousness of structural racism. The development of effective health policy and health equity interventions requires sound empirical characterization of the nature of structural racism and its impact on public health. However, there is a disconnect between the conceptualization and measurement of structural racism in the public health literature. Given that structural racism is a system of interconnected institutions that operates with a set of racialized rules that maintain White supremacy, how can anyone accurately measure its insidiousness? This article highlights methodological approaches that will move the field forward in its ability to



# Historical Racism



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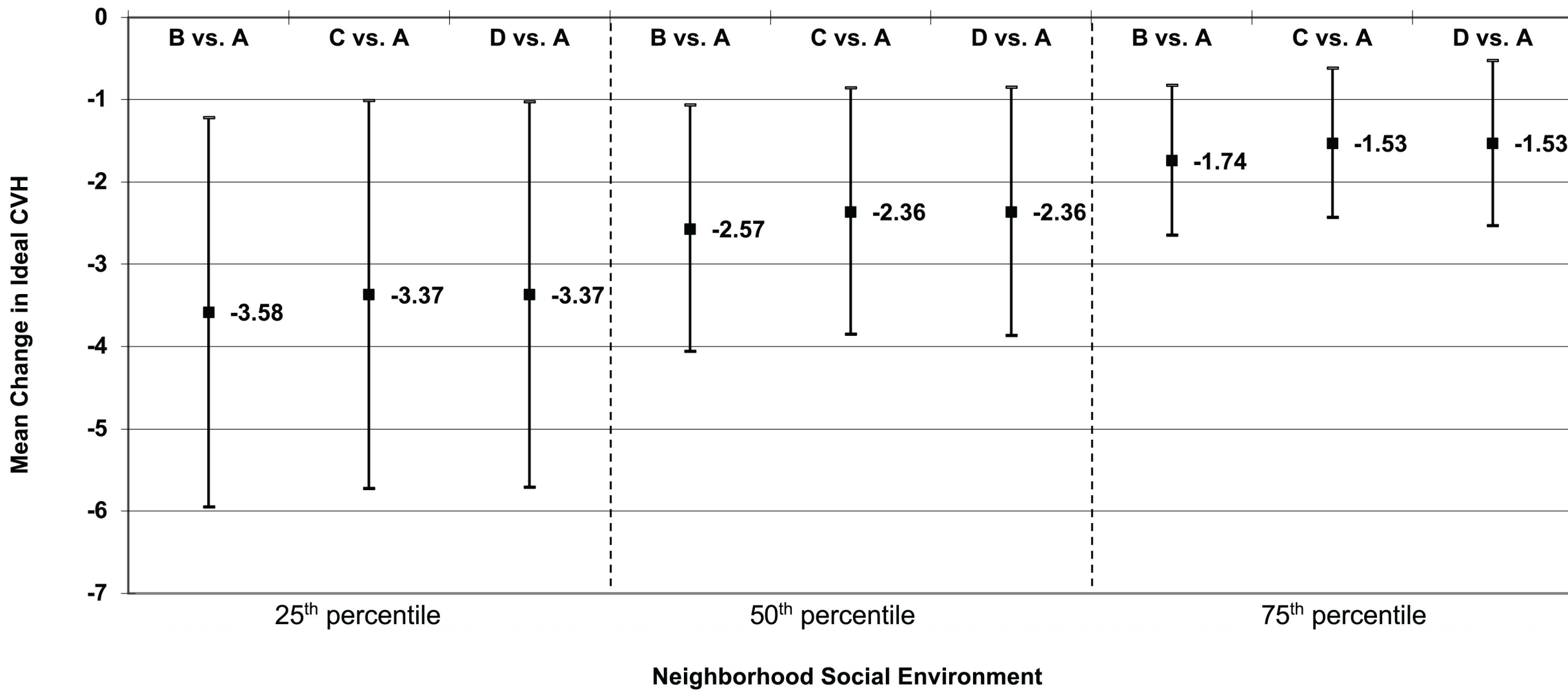


## Historical redlining and cardiovascular health: The Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis

Mahasin S. Mujahid  , Xing Gao, Loni P. Tabb,  , and Tené T. Lewis  [Authors Info & Affiliations](#)

Edited by Douglas S. Massey, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, and approved September 30, 2021 (received for review June 16, 2021)

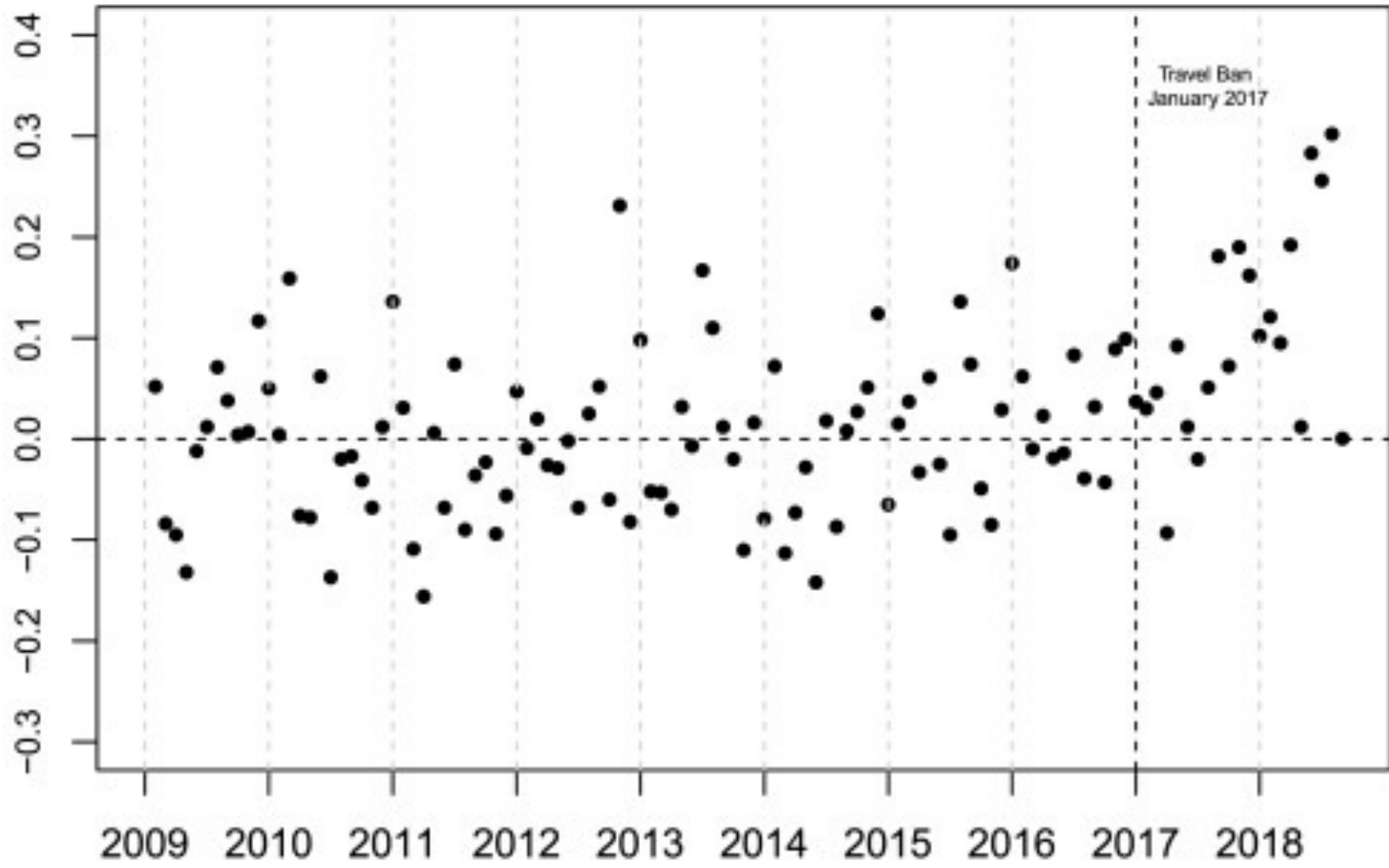
December 13, 2021 | 118 (51) e2110986118 | <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2110986118>



# Causal Estimates

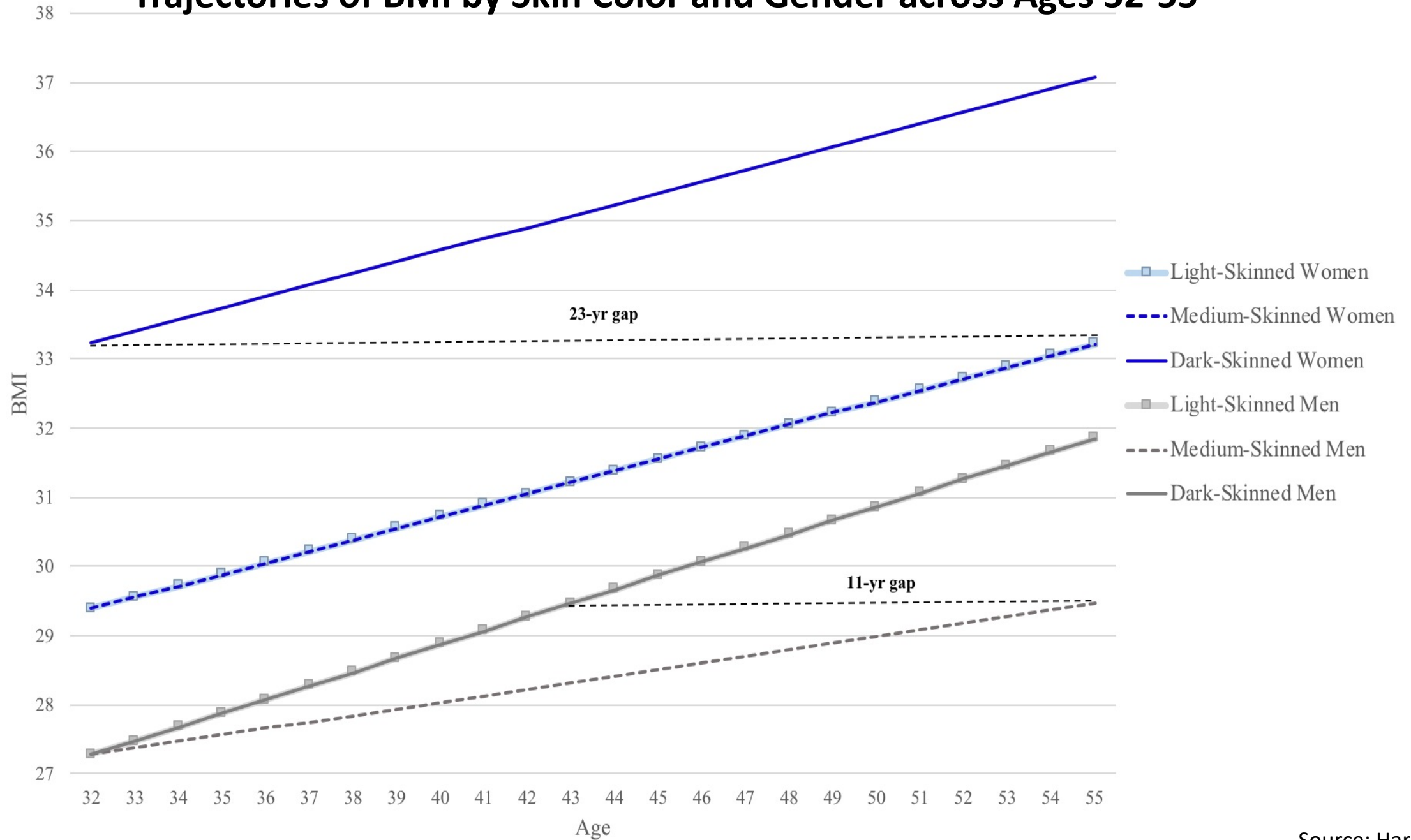


Difference between observed and expected log odds of preterm birth among women from banned countries



# State of the Research: Colorism and Health

# Trajectories of BMI by Skin Color and Gender across Ages 32-55



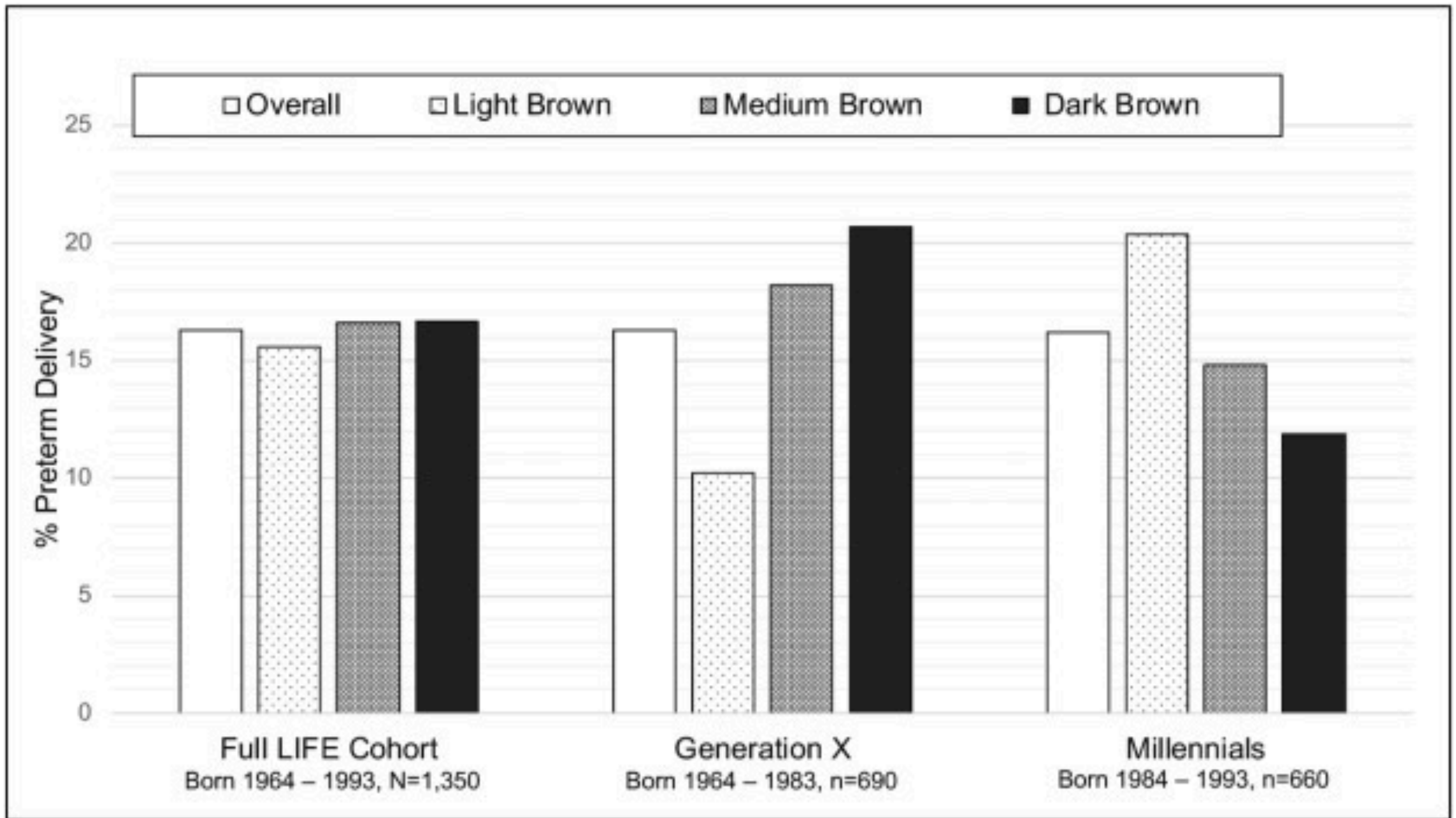


TABLE 3  
RESULTS OF ORDERED LOGISTIC REGRESSION (Weighted),  
PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION DUE TO SKIN COLOR (Whites)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Age . . . . .	.01* (.00)	.01* (.00)	.01* (.00)
Female . . . . .	-.25** (.08)	-.26** (.08)	-.25** (.08)
Educational attainment . . . . .	-.04* (.018)	-.05* (.017)	-.04* (.017)
Employed . . . . .	.22* (.10)	.22* (.10)	.21* (.10)
Poverty index . . . . .	-.04 <sup>+</sup> (.02)	-.04* (.02)	-.04* (.02)
Married . . . . .	.05 (.08)	.03 (.08)	.04 (.08)
South . . . . .	-.22* (.09)	-.21* (.10)	-.21* (.10)
Rural . . . . .	.03 (.12)	.03 (.12)	.03 (.12)
Interviewer-rated skin color scale . . .	.14** (.04)		.08 (.05)
Self-rated skin color scale . . . . .		.19*** (.04)	.11* (.05)
Constant . . . . .	-1.13** (.39)	-1.20** (.36)	-1.06* (.39)

NOTE.—Observations = 3,099. Numbers in parentheses are SEs. All analyses are weighted in order to account for the survey's complex design (e.g., clustering and stratification).

<sup>+</sup> $P < .10$ .  
\*  $P < .05$ .

TABLE 4  
RESULTS OF ORDERED LOGISTIC REGRESSION (Weighted), PERCEIVED  
DISCRIMINATION DUE TO SKIN COLOR (Blacks)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Age . . . . .	.01*** (.00)	.01*** (.00)	.02*** (.00)	.01*** (.00)	.01*** (.00)
Female . . . . .	.04 (.08)	.05 (.08)	.02 (.08)	.04 (.08)	.04 (.08)
Educational attainment . . . . .	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	-.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Employed . . . . .	.15 (.11)	.15 (.11)	.16 (.11)	.16 (.11)	.15 (.11)
Poverty index . . . . .	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	-.01 (.02)
Married . . . . .	.13 (.09)	.13 (.09)	.13 (.09)	.13 (.09)	.14 (.09)
South . . . . .	-.15 (.09)	-.15 (.09)	-.15 (.09)	-.16 <sup>+</sup> (.09)	-.15 (.09)
Rural . . . . .	.07 (.11)	.07 (.11)	.08 (.11)	.08 (.12)	.07 (.11)
Interviewer-rated skin color scale . . . . .	.05 (.05)				
Self-rated skin color scale . . . . .		.06 <sup>+</sup> (.03)			
Self-rated very light skin . . . . .			.37* (.18)		
Self-rated medium skin . . . . .				-.28** (.10)	
Self-rated very dark skin . . . . .					.48* (.19)
Constant . . . . .	.17 (.32)	.29 (.34)	.02 (.26)	-.10 (.25)	.03 (.26)

NOTE.—Observations = 3,104. Numbers in parentheses are SEs. All analyses are weighted in order to account for the survey's complex design (e.g., clustering and stratification).

<sup>+</sup>*P* < .10.

\* *P* < .05.

\*\* *P* < .01.

\*\*\* *P* < .001 (two-tailed tests).

Interviewer-rated skin color scale . . . . .	.05 (.05)			
Self-rated skin color scale . . . . .		.06 <sup>+</sup> (.03)		
Self-rated very light skin . . . . .			.37* (.18)	←
Self-rated medium skin . . . . .			-.28** (.10)	
Self-rated very dark skin . . . . .				.48* (.19) ←



# Opportunities for Future Research

# Data and Approaches

- Measures of both structural racism and colorism, especially in large, nationally representative surveys
  - Measures that cover various domains (e.g., political, carceral, cultural, historical, socioeconomic, health, residential)
- Other measures of race and color?
- Incorporate different approaches
  - Experimental and quasi-experimental designs
  - Mixed methods

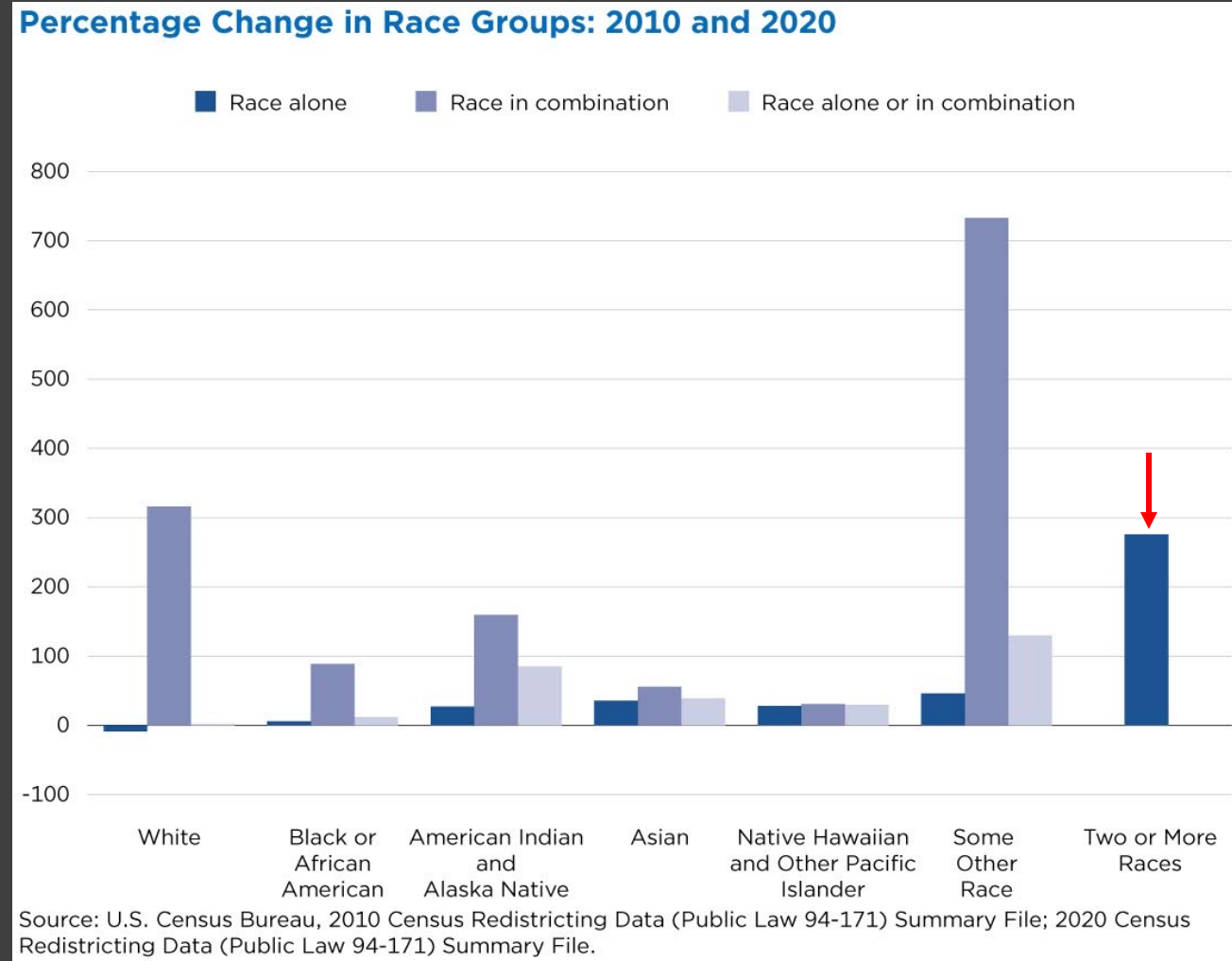
# Changing Racial Structures

- New forms or categories of stratification
  - Middle East and North Africa (MENA) descent



# Changing Racial Structures

- New forms or categories of stratification
  - Middle East and North Africa (MENA) descent
  - Multiracial identification



# Changing Racial Structures

- New forms or categories of stratification
  - Middle East and North Africa (MENA) descent
  - Multiracial identification
- Examine knowledge and understanding of racial structures

Thank You!