

How Does Color Shape Inequality in Brazil?

New Research Shows Skin Tone a Better Predictor of Educational and Occupational Outcomes

HOUSTON, TEXAS, USA, August 16, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Skin color is a strong predictor of an individual's life outcomes. In fact, it's an even stronger predictor than race, research from Ellis P. Monk, Jr., a sociologist at Princeton University shows.

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For each increase in the darkness of an individual's skin color, the odds of that person having a less prestigious job increases by 10%, even after taking account of other factors.

Ellis P. Monk, Jr., Ph.D.

Using survey data from Brazil, Monk found that skin color is a more robust predictor of both education and occupational outcomes than one's racial category on Brazil's Census.

For example, he found that for each increase in the darkness of an individual's skin color, the odds of that person having a less prestigious job increases by 10%, even taking into account other factors like that person's educational background. And the gap in years of schooling between the lightest and the darkest skinned Brazilians is more than two

times larger than the gap between whites and nonwhites.

“Race and color tap into different dimensions of individuals' life experiences and the ethnoracial disparities that they face,” said Monk sates in a recent article in the academic journal "[Social Problems](#).”

He added that the research suggests that this same relationship between skin color and race may also be operating within the United States. Given the ongoing discussion about the importance that race plays in Americans' experiences, this research shows that it may be essential to measure both skin color and racial categorization to understand how racial discrimination functions.

Monk was able to measure skin color by seeing how outside observers rate individual's skin tones and how that rating compares to the individual's self-identified racial category in the Census. He suggests that others' ratings of skin color are a better predictor of life outcomes than self-classified race because outsiders' perceptions more closely align with the discrimination that individuals face in everyday life. By not accounting for skin color, researchers may be underestimating the amount of discrimination that individuals experience.

For further information, please contact the author Ellis P. Monk, Jr. (emonk@princeton.edu). The article appears in the August 2016 Issue of "Social Problems" and is entitled "[The Consequences of 'Race and Color' in Brazil](#).”

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