SKIN COLOR DIFFERENCES IN STRATIFICATION OUTCOMES: Colorism Over Time and Across Race

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Recently released data has opened the opportunity to reexamine the phenomenon known as colorism. Although skin tone differences in SES have been empirically recognized, past studies utilize data from the 1980s. In 2012, the General Social Survey measured skin tone of their respondents. This measure was uniquely recorded for respondents of all races. The new data was utilized to 1) compare skin tone's effect on SES outcomes of Blacks in 1982 to 2012 and 2) evaluate colorism's exclusivity to the Black community. Results show that, among Blacks, stratification differences have increased but are not statistically significantly. The study also finds that colorism is present among all racial groups, but operates differently by socioeconomic status characteristics.

Introduction

In 2010 American funnyman, Kevin Hart, posted tweets that started viral debates and outrage among Black America –especially Black women. Kevin Hart stated, "#handsdown light-skinned women usually have better credit than a dark-skinned women …broke *** hoes…lol". As Hart later tweets "…I'm joking jeeeez", there is some underlying truth to his "joke". Although not limited to credit and/or women, there has been stratification by skin tone among the Black community dating back to slavery. Numerous studies have revealed differences in life outcomes by complexion. Such differences include income, educational attainment, occupation, and even political involvement (Hochschild and Weaver, 2007; Hunter, 2002; Keith and Herring, 1991). In each realm, lighter-skinned Blacks, on average, surpass their darker-skinned counterparts. This phenomenon has become known as "colorism".

Past research has illustrated the association among complexion with education and income. There are notable outcomes favorable of Blacks with light skin. As skin tone darkens, both years of education and income decrease. Hunter (2002) illustrates this discrepancy in the yearly income among Black women. She reveals that the lightest skinned woman earns, on average, $2600 more per year than the darkest skinned woman. Field of occupation also tells a story of colorism. Individuals with dark skin have been found more likely to work as laborers while light skinned persons are more likely to hold professional and technical careers (Keith and Herring, 1991).

The purpose of this study is to update the existing literature that supports the presence of skin tone stratification. Skin tone is proving more and more salient among Blacks today, especially among younger generations. The trend of hashtags has surfaced an overt divide between skin tones. Hashtags "#teamdarkskin" and "#teamlightskin" are less than uncommon captions of online pictures and posts. Gullickson (2005) suggests that the achievement gap between light and dark skinned Blacks has declined and the data on skin tone are out of date.

Past research has utilized data from 1979 through 1992. As two decades have passed and there have been monumental strides (such as the election of a Black president) and relevant media trends in the black community, it is more than worth re-analyzing the occurrence of stratification by tone of skin.

With the availability of new data, I seek to investigate the existence and magnitude of stratification by tone of skin in the present day. Furthermore, this paper intends to examine the exclusiveness of colorism by extending the analysis of skin tone stratification among other racial groups –non-Black. Shaped by available data, I will look at the racial categories "White" and "Other". Examining skin tone differences among Whites may seem odd, but skin tone variation exists even for this group –both naturally and with tanning. Although "Other" is a racial category that encompasses multiple ethnicities, these individuals are of the minority and measuring skin tone may provide insight. Research has shown lighter skin and European features are preferred among other minority groups (Villarreal, 2010). Overall, comparison to these non-Black groups will explicitly assess the distinctiveness of this phenomenon. It could be a "Black thing", a "minority thing", or a collective thing.

The History of Colorism

Colorism has been called the new "ism" in America. Although interconnected, racism and colorism are two different notions. Racism is the belief that all members of a racial/ethnic group share the same abilities and characteristics; such capabilities are usually defined as inferior. Colorism is the structure that gives more favorable treatment and higher social status to individuals of light skin. This style of privilege is generally practiced towards a racial community of color. Ultimately both were intended to perpetuate White domination and reward emulations and adoptions of "whiteness". The notions differ in their chosen characteristic to guide discrimination; racism by race and colorism by complexion. Although the system of colorism pertains to a specific racial group, Americans both within and across such group facilitate this hierarchical divide. There are negative stereotypes and expectations associated to having darker skin as there is preference for lighter skin and Eurocentric features. From here forward, I will refer to the socioeconomic differences by tone of skin as colorism and/or skin tone stratification.

The color divide is most prominent in the African American community and such practice has a historical origin embedded in slavery (Frazier 1957; Reuter, 1917). European descent has played an important role in the system of stratification by colorism. Enslaved women were, more than often, sexually exploited by their owners. Repeated victims of sexual violence, many enslaved women were raped by their owners and even traded to other slave-holders for the sole purpose of sex-enslavement. The history of such relations are controversially debated. It has also been noted that some of the relations were consented and involved love. This inter-mating often led to children and such breeds the possibility of colorism. These continued relations have resulted in the phenotypic diversity among Black Americans today.

The emerging phenotypic differences played a dividing role during slavery. Slaves of lighter skin often received "better" treatment than their darker counterparts. The dichotomous notions

"house-slave" and "field-slave" explain duties, but more importantly the task delegation by complexion. Lighter-skinned slaves were likely to perform household chores as darker-skinned slaves performed harder labor and outdoor tasks. Alongside household chores, light skinned blacks often received skill training (Margo, 1992); working as apprentice or craftsmen. Among slaves, this divide resulted in unequal shelter, food, skills, and relationships with the slave-holders. This practice of task assignment was also a tactic to breaking down intergroup solidarity. By building animosity among the group, chances of revolt were weakened.

A large perpetuation of inequality occurred through the improved life outcomes of owner's slave-children. The illegitimate children were often secretly acknowledged and received money in the event of the owner's passing. These children were more likely to be literate and occasionally freed through manumission. This created a small elite class of light-skinned free Blacks (Reuter, 1917) and an achievement gap between the light and dark skin. This set of economic and social opportunities extended as the lighter Blacks married –usually other light-skinned Blacks or even Whites (Bodenhorn, 2006) –and had children. Thus repeating and continuing to better the life outcomes of their descendants.

Embedded in the historical summation are colorism's two elements: 1) the stratification of outcomes as a result of unequal intergenerational assets (Hochschild, 2006) and 2) the internalization of the historical skin tone divide resulting in a deliberate practice of prejudice and discrimination. Both elements, mostly through their combination, result in favoring outcomes of light-skinned blacks. Hunter (2002) develops the idea of light skin as a form of social capital. Understanding this historical divide, she theorizes that light skin will dictate higher economic and educational achievement in comparison to dark-skinned counterparts. Such theory is warranted due to the vast empirical support of stratified life outcomes by skin color.

Literature Review

Past Research

Colorism's existence has not only been presented historically, but has gained the attention of sociologists. Numerous empirical studies reveal the greater social and economic achievements attained by lighter-skinned Blacks. It has been invariably found that lighter skin toned individuals have higher earnings, education, occupational prestige, and experience better marriage markets when compared to darker individuals of the same ethnicity. There have been three influential studies that evaluate this skin tone hierarchy (Hughes and Hertel 1990; Keith and Herring 1991; Seltzer and Smith 1991).

Although using different data sets and running slightly different analyses, the founding studies that evaluate skin tone stratification in the Black community arrive at parallel conclusions. Seltzer and Smith (1991) utilize the 1982 General Social Survey (GSS), which included a special over sample of 510 Blacks. They found that lighter-skinned respondents had higher education, occupational prestige and were more likely to be married than darker-skinned Blacks. In their analysis, Seltzer and Smith (1991) do not control for parental background. However, studies that have controlled for intergenerational differences, have congruent findings.

Even after controlling for differences in parental background, Hughes and Hertel (1990) find statistically significant differences by tone of skin. Lighter skinned Blacks had higher educational attainment, income, occupational prestige, and spouses with higher socioeconomic status. Using the same data sources and controlling for intergenerational characteristics, Keith and Herring (1994) had similar findings. Both Hughes and Hertel (1990) and Keith and Herring (1991) utilized the first wave of the National Survey of Black Americans (NSBA). The NSBA is a nationally representative survey of adult Black Americans, which was conducted in 1979-80.

The presence of colorism and stratification in the Black community has been empirically supported since the 1990s. In more recent examinations of colorism, studies have applied more variables to better understand the complexity of the phenomenon. As Cecelia Ridgeway (2011) reintroduces status expectations theory and applies it to gender and the persistence of gender inequality in the modern world, I believe one can apply such notion to skin tone and stratification within the Black community. Ridgeway explains that salient status characteristics such as gender, race, and age are used to guide our scripts in everyday interactions. Including skin tone into this category of characteristics and examining its interaction with other status characteristics delves deeper into the insight of colorism.

As race is a focal point in the examination of skin tone stratification, Hunter (2002) believes that the intersection of race and gender is a critical interaction of colorism. There is a camp of literature that primarily focuses on the interaction of skin tone and women; mostly inquiring its effect on self-esteem and feelings of attractiveness (Thomas and Keith, 2001; Hill, 2002a), but with some examination of stratification.

Hunter (2002) specifically examines African American and Mexican women for the intersectionality viewpoint of skin tone and patriarchy's collaboration on life outcomes. Framing light skin as social capital, her hypotheses of complexion's effect on women's outcomes are confirmed. A highlight of her findings are that the degree of skin tone's effect varied between Black and Mexican respondents. For Black women, colorism was supported in each examined area (education, income, and spousal status). Even when stratification was found for Mexican women, the effect difference was always smaller than that found for Blacks. Hunter's (2002) findings lead me to question the exclusivity of colorism to the Black community. While skin tone stratification has an effect on some areas of life outcomes for non-Blacks, I question if the effect size of this phenomenon differs significantly by race.

Another inclusion of additional elements to the examination of colorism is that of Hochschild and Weaver (2007). Investigating what they call the "skin tone paradox", the authors tack on political views and identity in their examination of skin tone stratification. Ultimately Hochschild and Weaver (2007) explain the skin color paradox as an unequal outcome among Blacks due to a political focus on fighting racial hierarchy, while ignoring the group's internal hierarchy based on skin tone. On the basis of skin tone, there is a lack of equity within the Black community. As Blacks unite together to fight injustices, the outcomes tend to disproportionately benefit those of lighter skin because of the uneven playing field within the group. From this we see more leadership and political positions held by those of lighter skin than darker complexions.

Using multiple national surveys (NSBA, MCSUI, GSS, NPPS, and Kerner), Hochschild and Weaver (2007) were successful in finding economic and social differences, but a disparity in political views was not found. While a disparate seat holding by complexion in political office exists –more light-skinned individuals, difference in political attitudes were unfound. The authors explain this lack of difference with the skin color paradox, in linking the commitment to racial identity.

Although not at the forefront of investigation, this addition of politics isn't novel. In Seltzer and Smith's (1991) examination of skin tone, political affiliation was considered as well. The leading research intent was to question skin color's role on differences in Black society and politics. Finding that lighter-skinned persons tended to be younger, born or live in the North, Catholic, and of higher social class, they questioned if these dissimilarities would translate a difference in political ideologies. Despite diverging class and lifestyles by skin tone, there were no statistically significant differences in political attitudes. These results follow the assertions of Hochschild and Weaver's (2007) skin tone paradox and are congruent with their findings as well.

Other Minority Groups

It is understood that skin tone stratification is most prominent and historically embedded in the black community. For that reason, hitherto the focus has been on Black Americans. Since colorism is based on skin tone and not ethnicity, it has also been examined and proven relevant among other racial and ethnic minority groups. There is a vast amount of literature on skin tone and Brazil, but I choose to not include an examination of this research. Skin tone has a unique role in Brazil, for the reason that racial categories are determined by skin color. Such context is different from that in America and other places where skin tone has no legal grounds and is purely social.

Most research that examines skin tone stratification in non-Black communities do so with the reference group of Latinos. Andres Villarreal (2010) asserts that although Mexico has no clear system of skin pigment hierarchy, there is a social preference for whiter skin and European features. Villarreal (2010) sets out to test stratification by skin color in contemporary Mexico. Using a nationally representative survey of Mexicans (2006 Mexican Panel Study), his findings emphasize that dark skin respondents face more disadvantages. Parallel to the literature's findings in the Black community, Mexicans with darker skin had significantly lower levels of education, lower prestigious occupations, and were more likely to be living in poverty. In a reexamination of Villarreal's (2010) work, Flores and Telles (2012) use a different dataset and as they say a "more objective" measure of skin tone. Even with these changes, their results align with Villarreal's (2010). The most important finding from this reexamination is that complexion shapes SES largely through education.

Skin tone stratification among Latinos resembles that of the Black community so much that even the skin tone paradox has been applied to Latinos as well. Examining multiple Latino origins, Fraught and Hunter (2012) apply Hochschild and Weaver's (2007) concept to find that while skin tone is a predictor of SES characteristics, there is no difference in political attitudes

by complexion. As the literature suggests the experience of colorism occurs for Latinos as it does for Blacks.

The analysis of colorism among other racial groups (non-black and non-Hispanic/Latino) is missing in the literature on skin tone stratification. There is cultural literature that illustrates the historical and adopted emphasis Asians put on light/pale skin (Nakano Glenn, 2008), yet the examination of colorism for this groups lacks. Whites have been excluded from the conversation of skin tone all together. Up until recently, there were no data available that allowed for the examination of White's tone of skin. Some may argue that complexions do not vary enough for an effect. I would like to emphasize that the variation is large enough to be tested and with the growing proportion of biracial individuals, it could be the case that a tan individual classifies themself as White. Furthermore, as it has yet to be empirically tested, we cannot rule out the existence of this phenomenon for non-Blacks and non-Hispanics.

Persistence of Colorism

The persistence of colorism has been questioned and challenged. Some argue that the achievement gap by skin tone remains close to that of the pre-civil rights era (Keith and Herring, 1991), while others contest the gap has narrowed (Gullickson, 2005). The three most influential studies of colorism (Hughes and Hertel 1990; Keith and Herring 1991; Seltzer and Smith 1991), conclude that skin tone stratification continues to persist in the 20th century and echoes the rates found before the civil rights period. Gullickson (2005) challenges the conclusions of these studies and explains the shortcomings that led to such inference. He stresses that the most vital error made in the past studies is their use of period analysis. Examining all individuals in the 1980s that were 18 years old and over, captures data on individuals who have completed most of their life course prior to the civil rights period. The inclusion of such individuals heightens the found differences by skin tone and makes the stratification gap appear stagnant.

The popular conclusion is deflated in Gullickson's (2005) use of a cohort analysis. To re-analyze skin tone differentials, Gullickson uses four waves of the NSBA (1979-1990) and 1982 GSS. His reexamination reveals that the skin tone stratification gap, in fact, changes across cohorts. Skin tone disparities in education and occupation declined significantly beginning with cohorts born in 1940. Also, between 1980 and 1990, there was a period decline in skin tone disparity in occupational attainment. This decline effected all cohorts that were in the labor force at the time. Although Gullickson found a decrease in educational and occupational stratification, skin tone differentials persisted in martial attainment. Lighter skinned Blacks were more likely to be married and had higher quality spouses.

Up until now, the most recent data that examined tone of skin was conducted in the 80s. The question of colorism's persistence can be addressed again with the newly available data. This paper addresses two primary questions: 1) does tone of skin effect stratification outcomes in the present day and 2) is it unique to the Black community?

Data and Methods

Data for this analysis will be drawn from the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is a nationally representative survey that has been conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) since 1972. The GSS is a full probability personal interview survey of non-institutionalized adults in the United States. The survey contains a wide-range of demographic information and attitudinal questions. My empirical investigation contains two parts[1]. For that reason I will utilize data from the 1982 and 2012 GSS files. For the first examination of change in stratification outcomes over time among the black community, I will use the 1982 and 2012 GSS as my points of reference. The 2012 GSS will be employed for the comparison across races. The GSS has only recorded skin tone in 1982 and 2012. In 1982, only Black respondents' skin complexion was measured. However, in 2012, the skin complexion was documented for all races. The presented analyses are on the 1,758 persons who have their skin tone recorded.

The independent variables are race and skin tone. Race is recorded as how one self-identifies and the included racial categories are "Black", "White", and "Other". The measure of skin tone is the key independent variable to the research question. The GSS defines skin tone as the pigment of the respondent's skin. Much like other data that measures skin tone, in GSS, the interviewers were instructed to assess the respondent's tone of skin. The interviewers were instructed to "please record the color from the color card that most closely corresponds to the respondent's facial coloring". Skin tone is then coded on a 10-point scale from lightest to darkest. I will collapse the 10 categories employed in 2012 in two ways. For the analysis of change over time, I will recode skin tone to mirror that of 1982 (5-point scale of lightest to darkest). For the across race comparison, I will dichotomize skin tone into "Light" and "Dark". The rationale for this restructuring is explained later in the paper.

The dependent variable in the analysis is socioeconomic status. SES will be measured using multiple variables: yearly income, family income, and education. Each will be assessed individually and may at times be employed as controls, but not as an index. Yearly income is the inflation-adjusted personal income of the respondent, measured in constant dollars. Family income is measured just as personal income, but for the household. Education is recorded in amount of years completed.

Stratification/colorism will be the examined outcome. It is interpreted by both skin tone and SES. In sociology, stratification is the classification of people by SES conditions. It has the underlying assertion that SES characteristics are unequally stratified. In this case I argue they are unequally stratified by skin tone, which is referred to as "colorism". To be more explicit, the outcome I expect to see is a higher SES (higher yearly earnings, higher levels education, higher occupational prestige) among lighter skinned Blacks compared to their darker counterparts.

In addition to these measures, I utilize a few control variables. Those variables are sex, occupation, age, marital status, and mother's education. These controls are for the purpose of examining yearly income. In addition to these, education and occupation will be controlled for as

[1] To attempt appropriate brevity, I will only present analyses on the second examination -2012 GSS differences across race. If accepting into the 2015 PAA meeting, analyses will be presented on both.

well when examining income disparities by skin tone. These variables will be added to the regression models in hopes of parsing out explanatory variables of earnings and narrowing in on the effect of skin tone –colorism.

Data Analysis and Results

Distributions and Normality

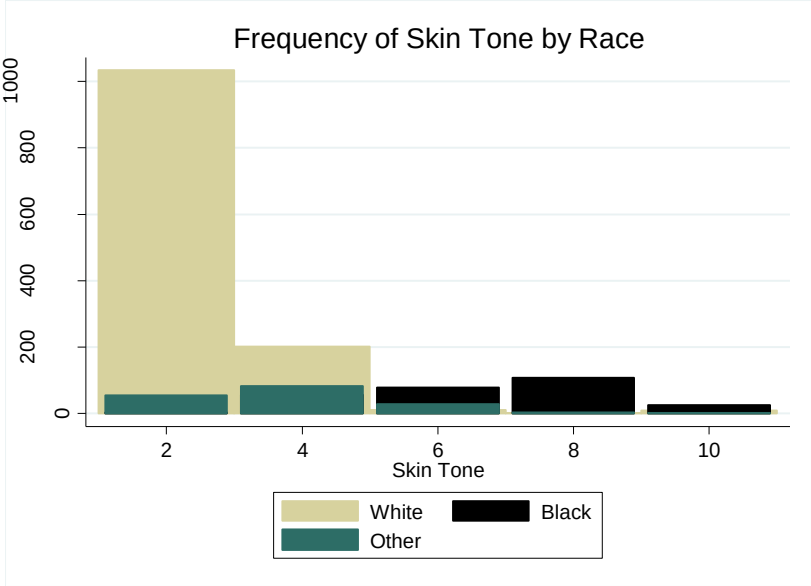
By using STATA to produce graphical summaries, I can get a sense of my variables' distributions. Knowing how the variables look and work on their own will better guide my use of them when later running statistical analyses –hopefully minimizing undesirable surprises. In this section, I will present my inspection of distributions, to provide the audience with my logic of recoding and applying of analyses.

Table 1 displays the distribution of my key variables across my sample. My sample is mostly comprised of White respondents. Almost 75 percent of the respondents are White. The remaining sample is 15.25 percent Black and 9.93 percent "Other". Table 1 presents skin tone as a dichotomous variable, which I detail that reason later. Of all respondents, 88.57 percent have a lighter skinned complexion and 11.43 percent are darker in skin tone. Knowing that most of the respondents are White, it was anticipated that most respondents would be of lighter skin.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Dependent and Independent Variable

Variable	All Respondents
Dependent Variables (mean)	
Personal Yearly Income	$36,724.78
95% Confidence Interval	(33,502.50 $39,947.05)
Family Yearly Income	$48,384.83
95% Confidence Interval	(46198.28 $50571.38)
Years of Education	13.53
95% Confidence Interval	(13.39 13.67)
Independent Variables	
Race (%)	
White	74.82
Black	15.25
Other	9.93
Skin Tone (%)	
Light	88.57
Dark	11.43
n	1758

Race is a moderator for skin tone; Whites tend to be lighter, Blacks varying but darker, and "Others" can widely range. The examination of skin tone's distribution across race, led me to dichotomize the variable. I used several graphical summaries to examine skin tone differences across races (stem and leaf, crosstabs, histograms, kdensity plots). Figure 1 illuminates the great difference of skin tone proportions across races.



Originally, I intended to convert the 10-point scale into a 5-point scale, but because of this great variation I decided it safer to dichotomize the variable. Using a 10 or 5-point scale could prove problematic, because the cell sizes could be too small for particular racial groups if I dissect them in such manner. Thus leading me to run statistical analyses on trivial data and weakening the reliability of my findings. The variable is divided evenly to create this two-point scale[2]. Prior research asserts that darker individuals earn less than their lighter counterparts. To better follow this finding and for an easier interpretation of future analyses, I code being dark as 0 and being light as 1. For example, if my findings follow past suggestions, I would interpret a regression as "being lighter (a one unit increase in skin tone), would provide x additional dollars in earnings".

As there are large disparities in income, variables of earnings typically have a high skew. The mean personal income of the sample is 36,724.78 dollars and the mean family income is 48,384.83 dollars. The confidence interval of both is not large, but personal income does have a larger range than family income. For clearer understanding of the skew within these variables, I conducted a ladders of power test to get the best transformation to normality. For both personal

[2] To recode, I used ratetone categories 1-5 for "light" (1) and categories 6-10 for "dark" (0)

and family income the different transformations did not statistically differ from their original format. For this reason, both variables will be presented as is.

Tests of Difference (t-test)

I investigate the research questions: "does stratification by skin tone exist in the Black community" and "does this phenomenon exist among other races". I ran three separate *t*-test by race to examine if there was a statistically significant difference in earnings by skin tone *within* racial categories. I present these results in table 2. In each racial group, darker members earned less than their lighter counterparts. But to great surprise, across every race, the differences in personal earnings did not differ with statistical significance.

It has been argued that family income rather than personal income matters the most when examining social stratification (Gilbert, 1998). The ability of a household to out-earn others because of multiple contributors embodies an important economic situation. Furthermore this includes the household income of those who do not work. I can capture the income of more persons –compared to only using personal earnings– and possibly capture those who do not work because they can afford not to. With that logic, I also examined differences in family income by skin tone across races. Table 3 illustrates that for "Whites" and "Others", family income did not statistically differ by skin tone. Among Blacks, this shift in examining skin tone differences in household income, rather than personal income, revealed a statistically significant difference. Dark-skinned Black respondents experienced a difference of 7,627.81 dollars when compared to the family income of light-skinned Black respondents.

Table 2. *t*-test Results Comparing Light and Dark Persons' Personal Yearly Incomes, by race

Skin Complexion	N	mean	St.dv.	t	p
Black					
Light	63	28070.20	41867.71	-1.089	0.139
Dark	92	22825.97	16206.48		
White					
Light	720	35105.31	53467.96	-0.702	0.241
Dark	7	20900.86	15769.20		
Other					
Light	101	31682.03	39417.29	-0.140	0.444
Dark	6	29395.25	24959.66		

Table 3. *t*-test Results Comparing Light and Dark Persons' Yearly Family Incomes, by race

Skin Complexion	N	mean	St.dv.	t	P
Black					
Light	91	34679.28	3481.57	-1.993	0.024*
Dark	155	27051.47	2104.47		
White					
Light	1129	49306.92	46015.24	-1.219	0.112
Dark	11	32346.09	32653.24		
Other					
Light	160	41967.19	41707.13	0.140	0.556
Dark	10	43915.25	54950.30		

*p<.05

Education plays a large role in socioeconomic status. It holds great explanatory power on other SES characteristics –such as occupation and income. Table 4 illustrates the differences in years of education by skin tone for each race. What intrigues me the most is that whole Whites had to statistically significant differences in income –both personal and family– by skin tone, they do have statistically significant differences in years of education my complexion. Among White respondents, lighter skinned individuals will have achieved a little over two more years of education than their darker counterparts. Although statistically significant, two additional years of education may not be substantial in reality. With the information provided from tables 2 and 3, it appears that these years are not substantive, as they do not affect the outcome of yearly income.

Table 4. *t*-test Results Comparing Light and Dark Persons' Years of Education, by race

Skin Complexion	N	mean	St.dv.	t	p
Black					
Light	101	13.15	2.471	-0.6771	0.250
Dark	170	12.92	2.848		
White					
Light	1242	13.664	2.979	-2.956	0.002**
Dark	14	11.29	4.196		
Other					
Light	160	12.69	3.942	-0.525	0.300
Dark	10	12	5.164		

**p<.01

The lack of a statistically significant difference in years of education make me ponder the role of skin tone on the family income of Blacks. In model 2, Black respondents had statically significant differences in family income by complexion. If there are no statistical differences in education, this further illuminates the possibility of skin tone discrimination in the Black community –at least on income. In the next section, I will investigate this association with the help of regression models.

Regression

The *t*-tests ran above were employed to examine the difference of colorism within racial groups. In this section, I will run a regression with an interaction model to examine if there is a statistical difference of skin tone's effect on SES *across* racial groups. In other words, I seek to investigate "does skin tone effect SES at a greater magnitude depending on race". Before running the regression models with interactions, I wanted to delve into the statistical difference in family income by skin tone among Blacks. In table 5, I added controls to the model in hopes of parsing out other explanations and narrowing in on the effect of skin tone.

Figure 5. OLS Regression of the Influence of Skin Tone on Family Income, controlling for Human Capital

	Model 1	Model 2
Light-Skinned Black	7627.81*	6800.36*
	(3827.822)	(3333.137)
Age	-	-210.7946
		(109.689)
Sex	-	-8307.108*
		(3392.235)
Education	-	4473.422***
		(604.989)
Occupation	-	-1.346685
		(.650)
Marital Status	-	-6231.289***
		(1025.366)
R-squared	0.016	0.348
Number of Obs.	246	246

Standard errors are reported in parentheses
*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

In this regression (table 5), I have two models. After running the regression of household earnings on skin tone of Blacks, I controlled for human capital. Human capital includes an individual's age, sex, education, occupation, and marital status. These typically explain a person's own contribution to the household and the likely characteristics of those in the household as well. After controlling for human capital differences, there remains a statistically significant difference in family income. When holding human capital constant, the income gap between light and dark skinned Blacks decreases, yet light-skinned Blacks make $6,800 more than dark-skinned Blacks.

Moving to the interaction of difference in skin tone's effect on SES *across* racial groups, I ran a model without controls. Does skin tone have a greater effect on family income depending on race? Presented in table 6, the effect of skin tone on income is negative. However, the effect does not vary across race with statistical significance[3]. To simplify, the effect of skin tone on family income does not differ by race.

Figure 6. Regression Coefficients of the Influence of Skin Tone on Family Income

	Model 1
Skin Tone by Race (*ref = dark-skinned Black*)	
Light Skinned White	9333.02 (14320.75)
Light Skinned Other	-9575.87 (15281.57)
R-squared	0.028
Number of Obs.	1540

Standard errors are reported in parentheses

Although the effect of skin tone on family income did not varying across race, the effect on skin tone on education did differ for Whites –as we saw earlier with the *t*-tests. In table 7, I added controls to investigate if such would change the association for Whites. The second model controls for age and sex, while the third model controls for mother's education. The rationale for using mother's education stems from suggestions from past literature. As I expressed in the literature review, colorism has two elements: disparities due to intergenerational ass down of resources and discrimination. Mother's education is used to examine the possibility of intergenerational transitions.

[3]The regression output with included models can be found in the appendix

Figure 7. OLS Regression of the Influence of Skin Tone on Education, controlling for Human Capital

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Skin Tone by Race (*ref = dark-skinned Black*)			
Light Skinned White	2.15* (0.911)	2.14* (0.910)	2.38* (0.926)
Light Skinned Other	0.46 (1.072)	0.47 (1.071)	0.98 (1.145)
Age	-	-0.011** (0.004)	0.02*** (0.004)
Sex	-	-0.040 (0.150)	0.03 (0.146)
Mother's Education	-	-	0.35*** (0.020)
R-squared	0.0181	0.0225	0.1869
Number of Obs.	1486	1486	1486

Standard errors are reported in parentheses
*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Age and mother's educational attainment do contribute to differences in education, but even with controls, the effect of skin tone on education differs with statistical significance among Whites. Holding all things constant, there remains no educational differences for Blacks and "Others".

Discussion

Does colorism persist today in the Black community? This paper suggests that it depends on what aspect of socioeconomic status is examined. Among Blacks, personal income and educational attainment did not vary by skin tone. However there were statistically significant differences in family income by tone of skin. Light skinned Blacks, on average, earned 6,800 dollars more than their dark skinned counterparts. This difference is after holding human capital characteristics constant. I assumed the inclusion of marital status would cancel out the effect of skin tone on family income. My logic was that maybe married individuals have higher household incomes than non-married persons. Past research (Gullickson, 2005; Seltzer and Smith, 1991) finds that light-skinned Blacks are more likely to be married. This heightened my expectation of marital status to weed out skin tone's influence. Although marital status had a statistically significant effect on family income, skin tone disparities remained.

This paper also explored uncharted territory of colorism's presence among non-Black racial groups. It was found that having a dark complexion has negative effects on income, but that effect does not vary across race. This means that being dark, regardless of your race, is not ideal in terms of the effect it will have on income. Interestingly, my findings show that education is effected by skin tone only among Whites. White individuals with fair skin obtain about 2 more

years of education than their darker counterparts. Although disparities exist for education, those disparities did not translate in differences of family income among Whites.

Stratification by skin tone seems to exist today, but it functions in different arenas depending on race. For Blacks that arena is family income and among Whites it is education. Although my findings shed light on colorism's impact today, the study has limitations. The largest limitation is that of sample and cell size. The amount of dark individuals in particular groups was very minute. Skin tone is heavily mediated by race. Although I worked to "properly" sort categories of complexion, the variability across race calls for a more sophisticated sorting. Future research would benefit from coding skin tone lightness and darkness by the spread within each racial groups –practically using a different measure of skin tone per race.

Another limitation was conjured from the examination of family income and skin tone. The GSS does not allow for the control of partner's race or partner's skin tone. The difference found in family income and the lack of difference in education may be due to the possibility that the sole provider that contributes to household income is of lighter skin. The examination of skin tone homophily is another project in itself.

The last limitation I shall mention is that of racial coding. Coding of race, for this project, effects the interpretation of skin tone. The category "Other" encompasses several racial groups. These different groups may have diverging spreads across the skin tone scale. If possible, future examination of colorism among non-Blacks should do their best to categorize race for the sake of appropriately sorting skin tone.

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Appendix

Here, I controlled for personal human capital, but also for generational pass down of resources. Mother's education is used to measure generational pass down. As expressed earlier, there are two elements to colorism: differences in generational pass down and discrimination. To gouge at the possibility of the difference in income and education being a product of differences in intergenerational transitions, I present this control in my models on table 6a.

Figure 6a. OLS Regression of the Influence of Skin Tone on Family Income, controlling for Human Capital

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Skin Tone by Race (*ref = dark-skinned Black*)			
Light Skinned White	9333.02 (14320.75)	-2961.908 (12093.49)	950.039 (13807.83)
Light Skinned Other	-9575.87 (15281.57)	-13652.4 (13483.56)	-23604.84 (16722.3)
Age	-	-311.13*** (58.808)	-252.6044 (69.096)
Sex	-	-7637.69*** (1929.950)	-7543.033 (2123.911)
Education	-	4977.36*** (355.159)	4536.60 (414.774)
Occupation	-	-2.07*** (.402)	-2.152628 (.440)
Marital Status	-	-8369.746** (612.643)	-8401.888 (666.260)
Mother's Education	-	-	757.33 (326.111)
R-squared	0.028	0.3006	0.2888
Number of Obs.	1540	1540	1540