

# *Applications of skin color scales to the study of racial inequality*

*Isar P. Godreau, Ph.D*

*Mariluz Franco-Ortiz, Ph.D*

*Institute of Interdisciplinary Research*

*University of Puerto Rico at Cayey*



*December, 2024*



# AGENDA

- 1. Introduction: Colorism and other key concepts*
- 2. Skin Color Scales: Methods and Studies*
- 3. Methodological challenges and future directions*

# *1. Key concepts*

<i>RACE</i>	<i>COLOR</i>
<i>RACISM</i>	<i>COLORISM</i>

*Is “color” a proxy for “race”?*

## *“Race”*

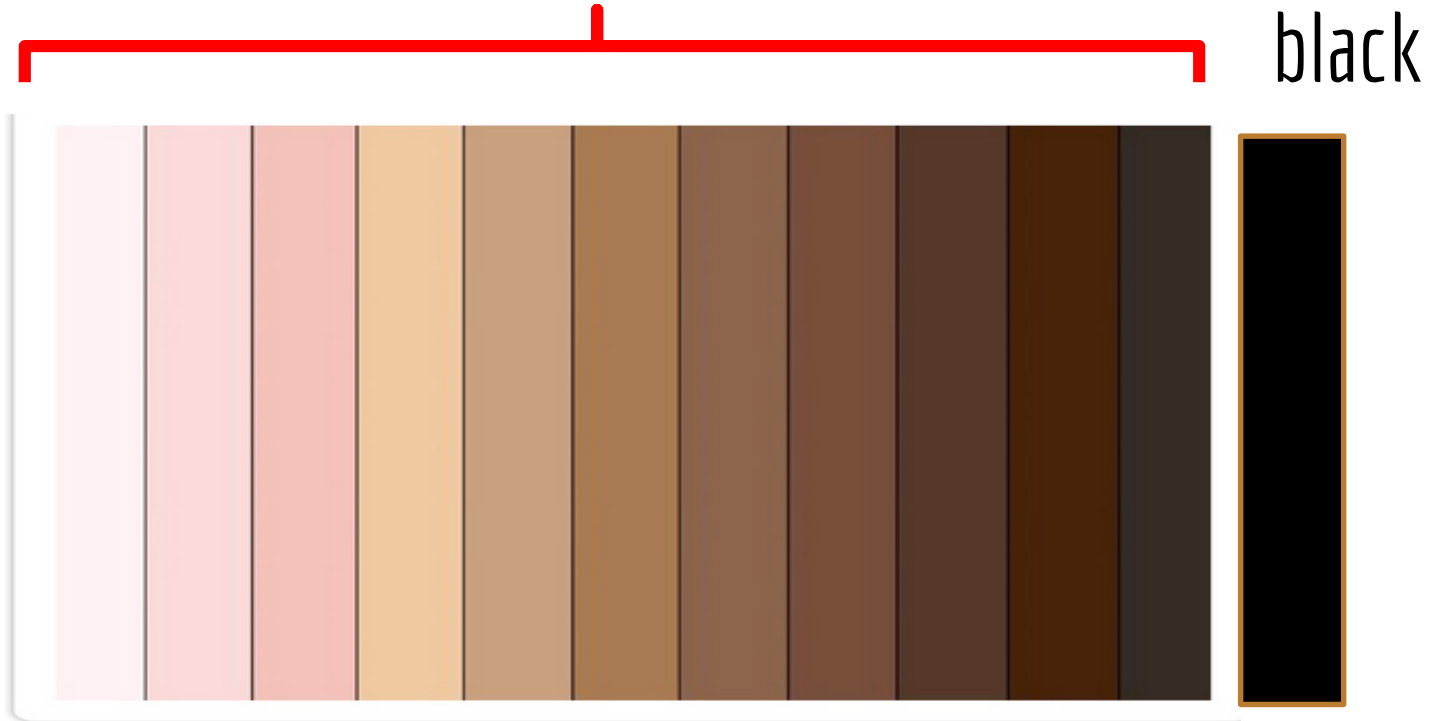
- *A social construct used to categorize and characterize seemingly distinct populations based on physical and cultural traits, such as skin tone, ancestry, or language.*
  - a. In the US, “race” is often used to categorize people into broad groups that are often assumed to share a common lineage or history.*
  - b. WE DO NOT SUPPORT THE USE OF RACE AS A BIOLOGICAL OR GENETIC CATEGORY*

## *“Color”*

- *A more specific concept that is often used in the literature to refer to phenotypic markers , especially skin color, but also eye or hair color, hair texture and facial features that are racialized.*
  - *may be used in everyday interactions to visually classify people into racial groups.*
  - *may also be used to establish distinctions and status differences within a racialized group.*

Well-suited to address the co-existence of anti-black racism and ideologies of race mixture and blanqueamiento in PR and Latin America

## “Race mixture”



Latino, hispano, trigueño , jabao, café con leche, quemaíto, taíno, indio, de color, boricua, mezclada, etc.

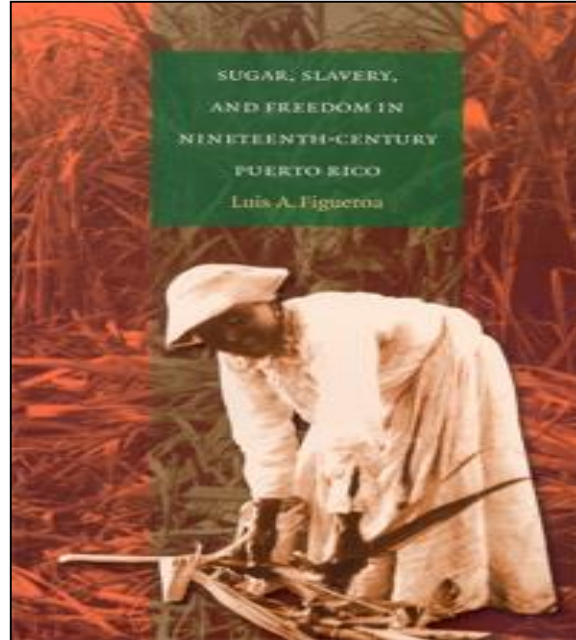
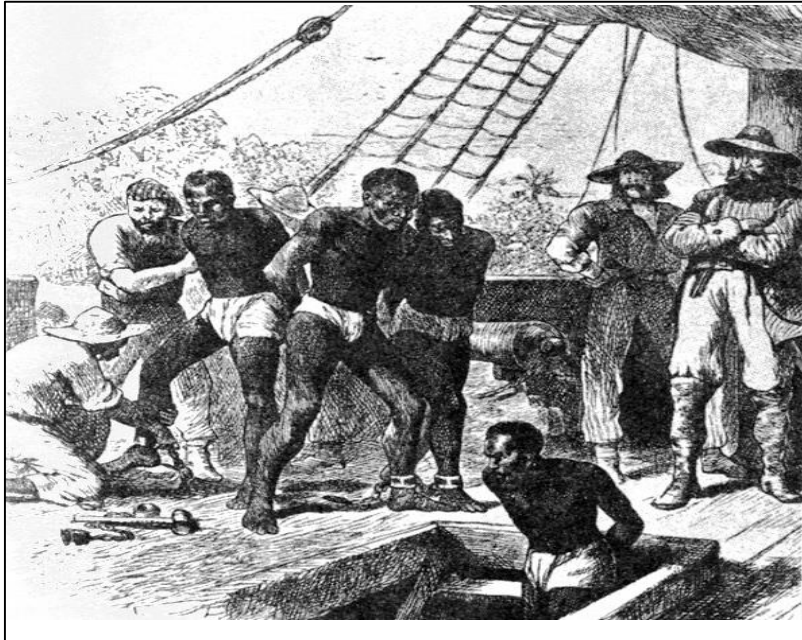
# Ethnic Classification in Southeastern Puerto Rico: The Cultural Model of “Color”\*

2005

CLARENCE C. GRAVLEE, *Florida State University*

- In Puerto Rico there is a coherent cultural model of color
  - 5 key salient color categories: blanco, indio, trigueño, negro, and jabao.
  - different classifications that use skin color and hair texture as the main criteria.
- Warns that “race” is a culture-bound concept that presupposes a set of meanings rooted in the North American US experience not necessarily shared by other groups.
  - Researchers should be careful of imposing “race” as an analytic framework in societies where racial hierarchies are understood differently (e.g Latin America).

*BOTH RACE AND COLOR  
DERIVE THEIR DISTINCT SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE FROM THE LONGUE  
DURÉE OF THE HISTORY OF COLONIALISM AND SLAVERY*



*Slavery in PR:  
1500-1873*

*Only 150 years since  
its abolition*

*No reparations*

## *RACE*

Developed during the European expansion and colonization of Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean since the beginning of the 16th century to justify “white” European supremacy over “non-white” colonized and enslaved populations

## *COLOR*

Played a key role in the description of enslaved bodies as property

Was (is) selectively used to read and interpret phenotypic markers according to eurocentric standards of beauty and “normality”

*BOTH RACE AND COLOR*

*OPERATE IN POWER - LADDEN CONTEXT INFORMED BY RACISM*

*Is “racism” the same as “colorism”?*

# *“Racism”*

A **system** of ideas, practices and norms, with deep historical roots, that confers privileges and opportunities based on ideas of racial superiority or inferiority

Note: A system is more than a belief, a set of discriminations, attitudes or behaviours. It is not a “bad apple problem”. A system is a broader complex apparatus that structures opportunity, organizes perceptions, norms, worldviews, tastes and even labor and economic principles.

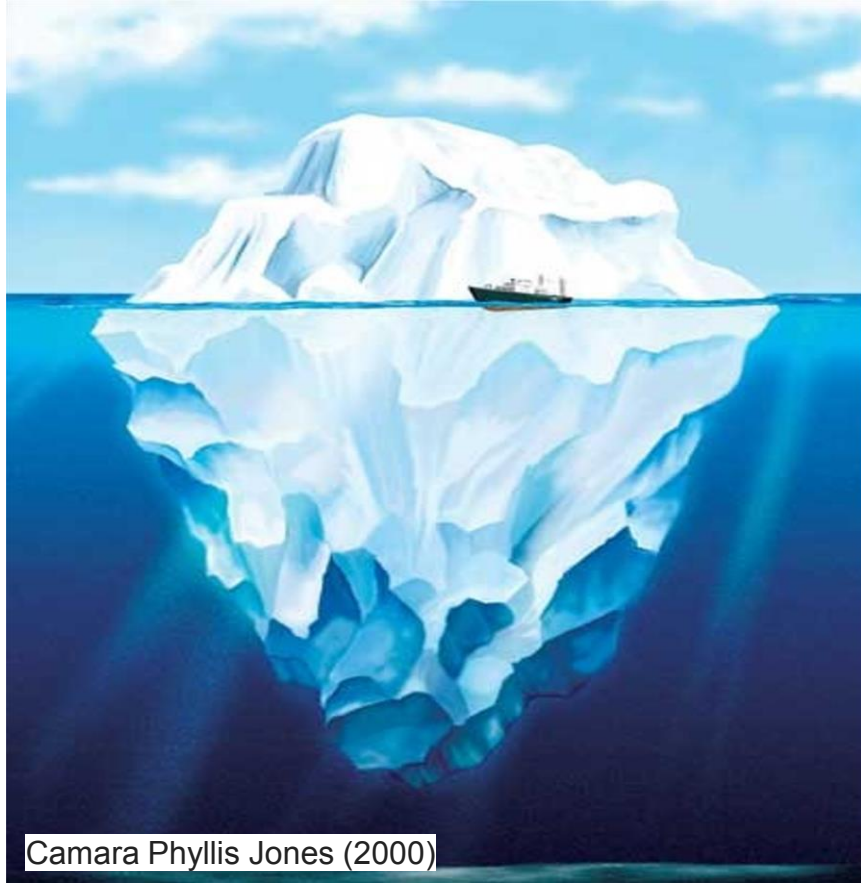
Anti-black racism in the Americas...

Has facilitated the systematic impoverishment of people of African descent since slavery.

Upholds a racial hierarchy that associates “white or European” with what is good, beautiful, civilized, professional, intelligent, disciplined, divine or normative and “black or African” with what is bad, ugly, dangerous, gross, lazy, hypersexual, criminal, or different.

Supports what Aníbal Quijano called the “coloniality of power”: global capitalist systems where non-white racialized groups and their forms of life and knowledge are relegated to subordinate positions (Quijano, 2000).

# LEVELS OF RACISM AS A SYSTEM



Camara Phyllis Jones (2000)

## **PERSONALLY MEDIATED RACISM or DISCRIMINATION**

prejudice attitudes and actions , racist jokes, mockery, "bullying" , racial harassment or discriminatory actions among individuals

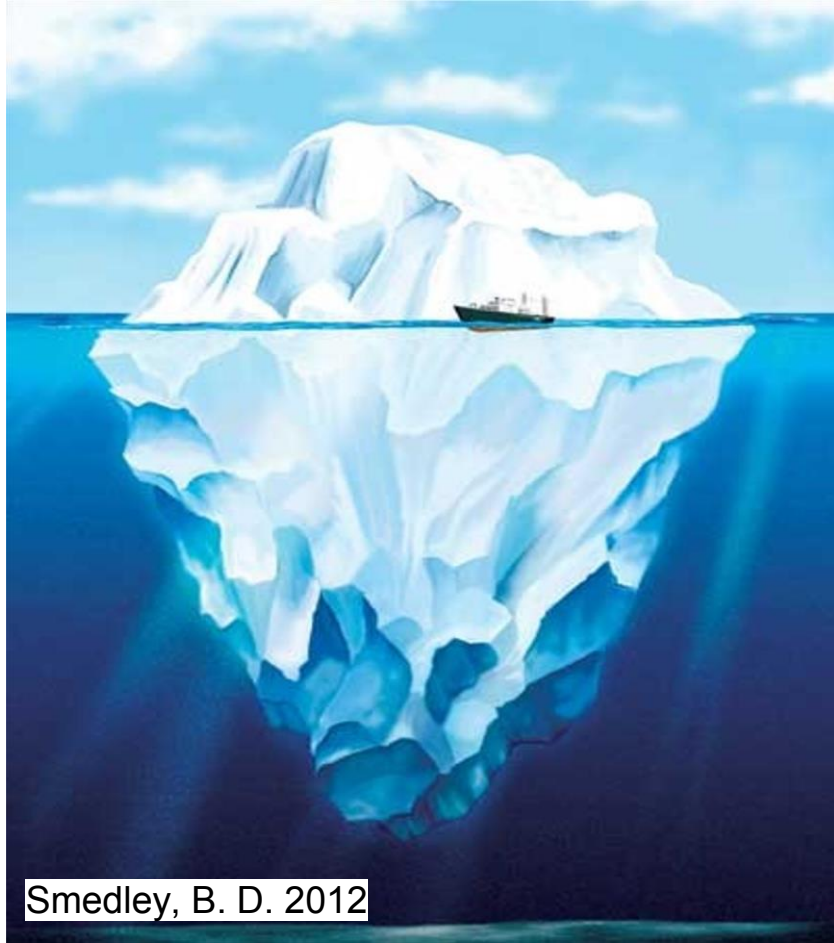
## • **INSTITUTIONAL OR SYSTEMIC RACISM**

Production and reproduction of racial hierarchies in regulations, norms, policies, economic systems, and assumptions endorsed by institutions or by individuals who represent institutions. Includes institutional inaction or omission.

## • **INTERNALIZED RACISM**

racial hierarchy that is learned, accepted or assumed as "natural" or "normal" (not questioned)

# LEVELS OF RACISM & HEALTH



Smedley, B. D. 2012

## **PERSONALLY MEDIATED RACISM or DISCRIMINATION**

stress in everyday interactions leading to hypertension, discrimination in quality of service leading to worst health outcomes or diminished trust in health services, etc.

## **INSTITUTIONAL OR SYSTEMIC RACISM**

Bias in health research funding or research design, policies that limit access to health services, the effects of historically accumulated disadvantages (lack of generational wealth), differential access to housing markets, health services and facilities in segregated neighborhoods, food deserts, exposure to environmental hazards or to systematic police violence.

## **INTERNALIZED RACISM**

Racial bias in self-perception, self-care, sense of worthiness

# Colorism

Is a dimension of racism

Speaks to the legacy of eurocentrism on the interpretation of human phenotype, particularly skin tone

M. Hunter (2007) - **The differential treatment** given to a person based on the tone of their skin, generally within their own ethnic or national group. The darker a person's skin is, the more vulnerable they are to the effects of racism in society. The lighter the skin color (and the closer to Eurocentric features) the more privileges lighter skin people will enjoy.

Behaviours, social values and institutional practices influenced by colorism can benefit or harm people depending on how close or distant their racialized physical features are to a Eurocentric norm .

## 2. Colorism & RACIAL INEQUALITY

*The Use of Skin Color Scales: Methods and Studies*

# ADVANTAGE OF USING SKIN COLOR SCALES TO STUDY RACIAL INEQUALITY

Scale of Skin Color Darkness



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The Martin and Massey NIS Skin Color Scale

Very dark	1
Dark	2
Medium	3
light	4
Very light	5

Latino National Political Survey (LNPS) 1990

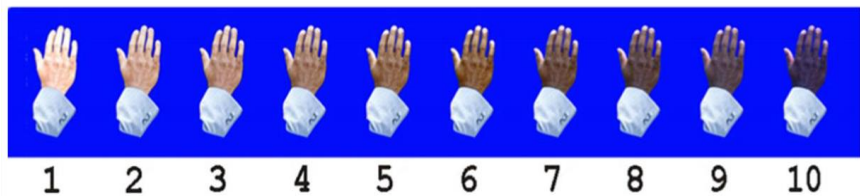


PERLA Study (2010)

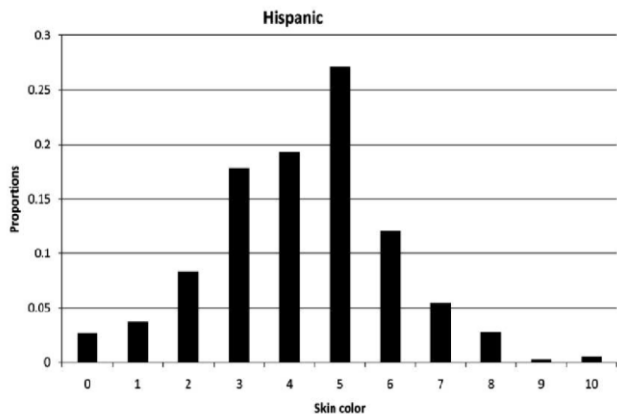
- Captures skin tone which can be an important determinant of vulnerability to racism not captured by “race” alone
- Includes intermediate racial categories and a spectrum of skin tones with which the person can identify.
- Values can be grouped for analysis in different ways, providing more flexibility
- Does not include racial terms with a strong semantic load (negro) or ambiguous meanings.
- Allows for comparing results with other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Better suited for PR and Latin America than OMB & US Census Categories

# Profiling the new immigrant worker: The effects of skin color and height by J.Hersch

Scale of Skin Color Darkness



Distribution of Skin Color in Hispanics (n=1741)



## Findings:

Immigrants in the United States, including Hispanics, who have lighter skin color, earn higher wages than immigrants who have darker skin color.

## METHOD

4,652 people interviewed; 1,741 Latinos

Interviewers classify interviewees

Massey-Martin scale or the NIS (New Immigrant Survey) skin color scale designed by Douglas S. Massey and Jennifer A. Martin (2003)

Hersch, J. (2008). Profiling the new immigrant worker: The effects of skin color and height. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 26(2), 345-386.

# “Pigmentocracy in the Americas: How is Educational Attainment Related to Skin Color?” By Telles & Steele (2012)

## Results:

- There are significant differences between education and skin tone in the vast majority of Latin American countries surveyed, where people with lighter skin tone have a higher average educational achievement than people with darker skin tone.

The relationship is more marked in the Caribbean region and in countries such as Guatemala, Bolivia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil.

- The effect of skin color on educational achievement is statistically significant, even when controlling for variables of social class, gender, and place of residence (urban/rural).

- The measure of skin color is a better predictor of educational level and income than ethno-racial categories (e.g. black, white, mulatto, indigenous, etc.) in several countries (Telles Flores & Urrea, 2011)

Figure 1. Skin Color Palette Used in the 2010 AmericasBarometer



Scale developed by Dr. Ed Telles, Princeton University. PERLA

Telles & Steele (2012). Pigmentocracy in the Americas: How is Educational Attainment Related to Skin Color? Americas Barometer Insights: 73.

# The Color of Health: Skin Color, Ethnoracial Classification, and Discrimination in the Health of Latin Americans by Perreira & Telles (2014)

## Findings:

Persons with the darker skin tone reported having lower levels of health. This result was obtained after controlling for age, gender, country, among other demographic variables.

Sample population: N: 4,921

- Brazil
- Colombia
- Mexico
- Peru

Figure 1. Skin Color Palette Used in the 2010 AmericasBarometer



The interviewer is the one who answers the question about skin color (not the interviewee)

- Three questions about health:
  - perception of your health status
  - quality of health services
  - frequency of use of health services

# Caraballo-Cueto & Godreau (2021). **Colorism and Health Disparities in Home Countries: The Case of Puerto Rico.** *Journal of Immigrant Minority Health*

## Findings:

- People with darker skin tones report worse health than those with lighter skin.
- Skin color works better than OMB categories to assess the effects of racism on health disparities in Puerto Rico.
- Access to health care is critical to understanding racial health disparities.

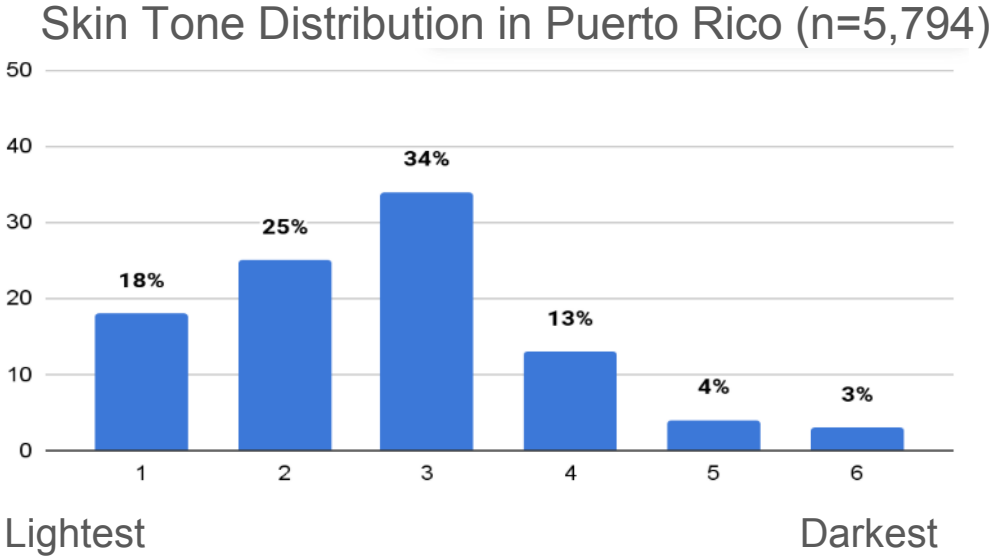
**Logit** : “.. the average dark-skinned individual had a 4.4 percentage point higher likelihood of not feeling well in general health than the average light-skinned individual, after controlling for socio-demographic characteristics and access to health insurance”

**PMS** “ ..on average, being dark-skinned in Puerto Rico increases by 2-8% one’s probability of reporting feeling worse than light-skinned people in terms of general health “

# Phone survey n= 5,794 in 2016

How would you describe your skin color, using a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 is the lightest skin tone and 6 is the darkest skin tone?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_



# No Son Complejos: An Intersectional Evaluation of Afro-Puerto Rican Health (Capielo Rosario, et al., 2021)

Objective: To identify unique intersectional profiles of Afro-Puerto Ricans based on skin color, internalized colorism, racial and ethnic discrimination, years in the U.S., marital status, and neighborhood poverty.

Methodology:

- Sample: 115 Afro-Puerto Rican participants.
- Indicators Measured:
  - Skin color (posterior and anterior forearm)
  - Internalized colorism
  - Perceived ethnic and racial discrimination
  - Sociodemographic variables (marital status, years in the U.S., neighborhood poverty)

Analysis: Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to identify distinct profiles.

# Capielo Rosario, et al., 2021 (Cont.)

## Key Findings:

### 1. Profiles Identified:

- Profile 1: Lightest Visible Skin & Low Discrimination
- Profile 2: Medium Visible Skin & Low Discrimination
- **Profile 3: Darkest Visible Skin & High Discrimination**

### 2. Psychological Distress:

- **Profile 3 reported significantly more psychological distress.**

### 3. Discrimination:

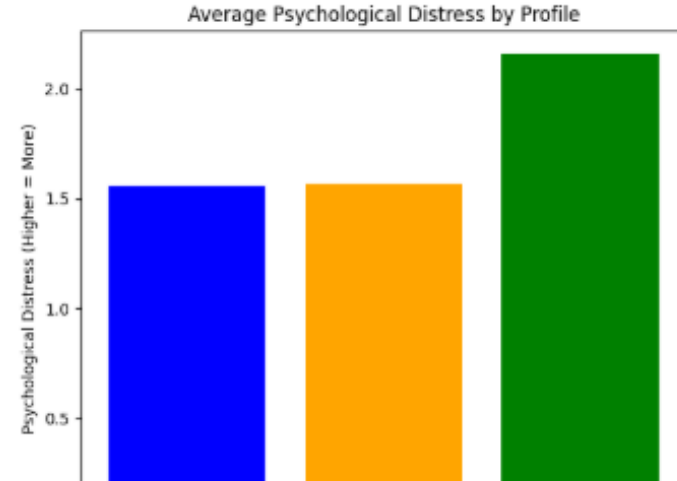
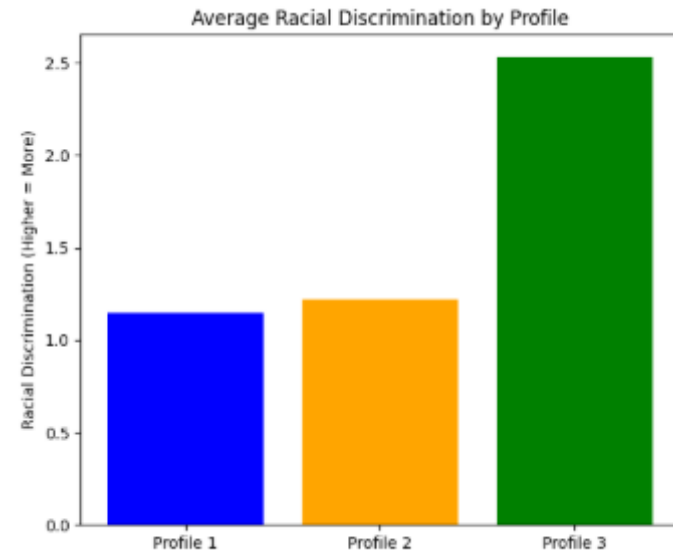
- Higher levels of intergroup and intragroup discrimination in Profile 3.

### 4. Marital Status:

- Lower likelihood of being married in Profile 3.

## Conclusion:

Skin color and discrimination significantly impact the psychological well-being of Afro-Puerto Ricans. Clinical Practice should consider skin color



### Summary of Research that Use Skin Color Scales with Latinx

Author	Sample	Ethnic Groups	Type of Survey		Identification		Related factors	Scale												
			Phone	In Person	Self-described "ethnicity/race"	Interviewer described skin color		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
Araujo-Dawson	8065	Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans in USA	X		X		Discrimination and race perception	VL 23.6%	L 20.2%	M 39.2%	D 7.2%	VD 3.2%								
Golash & Darity	2788	LNPS survey Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans in USA		X	X	X	Discrimination	VL 14.3%	L 33.3%	M 35.6%	D 14.7%	VD 2.1%								
Espino & Franz	1736	Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans in USA		X	X	X	Occupational status	VL 14%	L 32%	M 37%	D 15%	VD 2%								
Caraballo Cueto & Godreau	5794	Puerto Ricans in PR	X		X		Health	18%	25%	34%	13%	4%	3%							
Hersch	1741	Hispanics from 7 countries in USA		X	X	X	Occupational status and height	0 2.5%	1 3%	2 7%	3 17%	4 19%	5 26%	6 12%	7 6%	8 2.5%	9 1%	10 1.5%		
Telles, Flores, Urrea	Varies (approx. 1500 per country)	LatinAm (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dom. Rep., Ecuador, Guatemala, México, Perú)		X	X	X	Education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Results vary according to the country	
Telles	4921	LatinAm (Brazil, Colombia, México, Perú)		X	X	X	Health	VL 6.89%	L 40.03%	M 36.07%	D 17.01%									

Araujo-Dawson (2015), Caraballo Cueto & Godreau, (2021), Golash-Boza & Darity (2008), Espino & Franz (2002), Hersch (2008), Telles (2014), Telles, Flores y Urrea-Giraldo (2014)

*The analysis of the distribution across skin color scales supports the use of skin color scales to establish correlation between skin color and inequality.*

*3. Methodological challenges :  
Open questions & future directions*

# Only skin color?

Skin color does not capture other important phenotypic criteria that affect racialization processes.

PRODER Survey 2019



Bienvenidos/as al sitio del Proyecto sobre Discriminación Étnico-Racial en México (PRODER), un proyecto con sede en El Colegio de México.

---

## Hair Color

- Black
- Brown
- Natural Blond
- Dyed Blond
- Bald
- Gray
- Other

## Eye Color

- Black
  - Brown
  - Green or Blue
- 

*“We also find that phenotypical characteristics other than skin tone (**eye and hair color**) are significant predictors of socioeconomic outcomes” (Solís et al, 2023)*

Patricio Solís, Braulio Güémez and Raymundo Campos Vázquez 2023 “ Skin Tone and Inequality of Economic Outcomes in Mexico: A Comparative Analysis Using Optical Colorimeters and Color Palettes” 2023 Working Paper #8 Proyecto sobre Discriminación Étnico-Racial en México (PRODER) El Colegio de México. <https://discriminacion.colmex.mx/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Working-Paper-8-.pdf>

[https://discriminacion.colmex.mx/proder-survey-2019/#\\_ftnref1](https://discriminacion.colmex.mx/proder-survey-2019/#_ftnref1)



# *Diamontocracy, gender violence and ne...*



1

2

3

4

5

6



Morales Suárez, M. et al (2022). Pigmentocracia, violencia de género y necropolíticas: Feminicidios y reportes de desapariciones de mujeres visiblemente negras en Puerto Rico. Revista étnica.

# *Self- evaluation or interviewer evaluation?*

No consensus

Monk (2015) finds self-reported skin color to be a better predictor of perceived discrimination among African- Americans than interviewer-rated skin tone because it captures the **relational sense of position** that individuals have vis-a-vis their social circles and context

Telles (2012) and colleagues find that the assessment of a trained external observer can provide more consistent data across studies and countries in Latin America. Also, an external evaluation of skin color better aligns with how an individual is perceived and treated by others in **discriminatory context** and is thus a better method for assessing the role of skin color in shaping social outcomes.

# *Self-evaluation or interviewer evaluation?*

No consensus

Hill, M. E. (2002) and others have found evidence that the **race of the interviewer** impacts how they rate people's skin tone. Interviewers perceived greater variation in the skin tones of same-race respondents than among other-race respondents. Other characteristics (gender, race, their amount of contact with diverse racial groups, and immigration status) also affect skin tone ratings, no matter the type of measurement (Campbell, et al., 2020).

Roth, Solís, and Sue (2022) found that people rate others and themselves as lighter than they are when they have higher **socioeconomic status**.

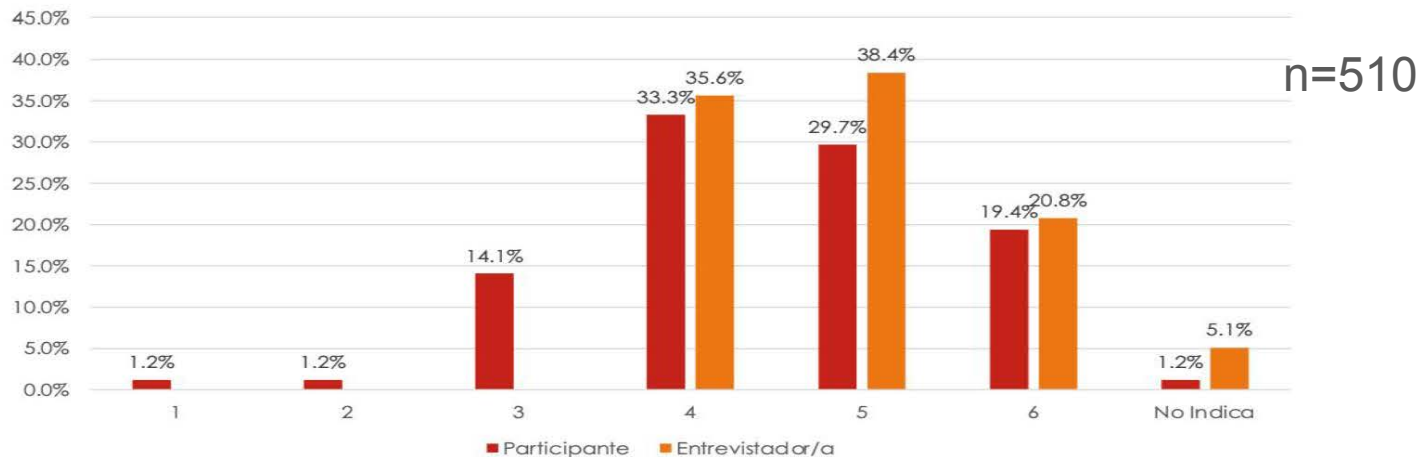
Fuentes, et al. (2021) argue that skin color scales such as the Massey-Martin scale can be very reliable if done by diverse coders who are cognizant of skin color variations and **if coding is done while referencing the scale** (not based on memory after the fact).

# PROYECTO RACISMO E IDENTIDAD RACIAL DRA. DANIELLE CLEALAND (FIU) Y DRA. MARILUZ FRANCO ORTIZ (2016)

## ESCALA DE COLOR DE PIEL

CLARO 1---2---3---4---5---6 OSCURO

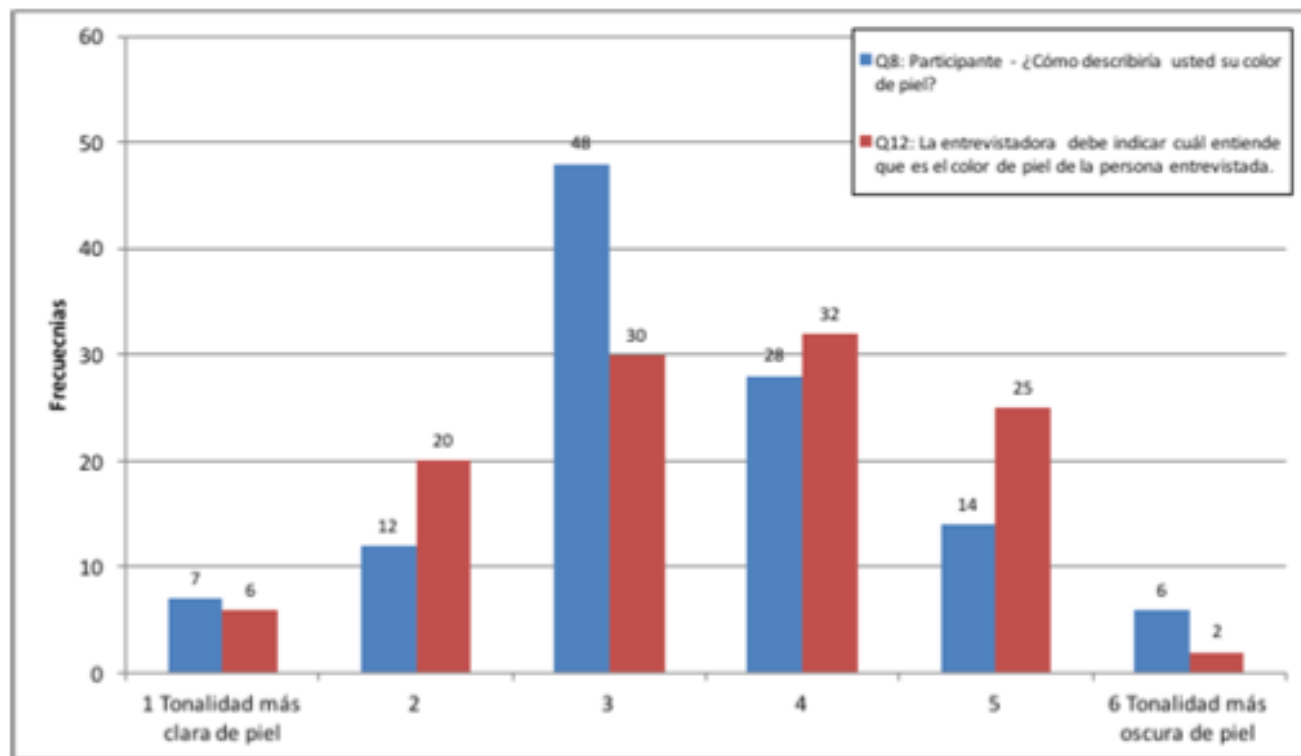
Clasificación de color de piel autoatribuido por participante y según entrevistador/a



Este proyecto exploró el racismo en Puerto Rico y la opinión pública en relación con su existencia en 6 pueblos de la Isla (Loíza, Arroyo, Maunabo, Río Grande, Carolina y San Juan). N=510

# Entrevistado vs. Entrevistador

n=120



# Machine or Human Classification?

No consensus

- Machine is a more objective measure (Hill 2002).
- Human rating is better: Villarreal, Andres. 2012. Argues that “adherence to a notion of objectivity in the measurement of skin color is incongruent with much of what we have learned about race and ethnicity over the past several decades. Like perceptions of race, perceptions of individuals’ skin color are necessarily subjective. Thus, a better measure of skin color to examine potential discrimination is how individuals are perceived rather than an ‘objective’ measure of their skin pigmentation”
- Gravlee & Dressler 2005 found that in PR social classification into self-rated color categories was related to blood pressure, but skin pigmentation measures done by a machine were not.
- Either work fine: “For practice, if skin darkness is the focus, our findings suggest that correlational results would be similar if either a handheld device or a rating scale were used” (Gordon et al 2024: see also Gordon et al 2022)



# Visual support vs. No visual support

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

- Visual support can make the exercise more expensive, subject to printing variations or influence results.

PERLA (2014)

Figure 1. Skin Color Palette Used in the 2010 AmericasBarometer



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Martin and Massey NIS (2003)

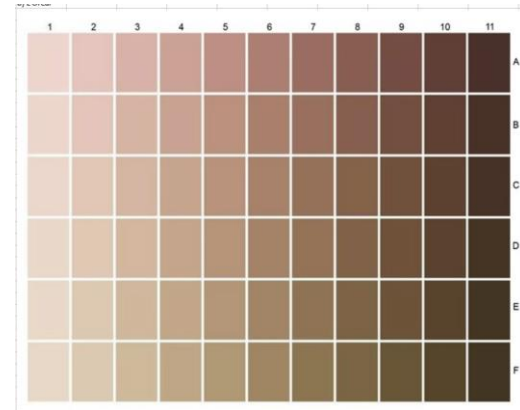
Yadon-Ostfeld (2022)



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The L'Oreal scale = 66 tones

PRODER 2019 Color Palette



# Yadon-Ostfeld (2022) skin color scale

## INSTRUCTIONS

This survey asks about your skin color. Your response is important because research suggests that individual perceptions of skin color can impact social interactions and opportunities for health promotion and prevention.



1. As you know, human beings display a wide variety of physical characteristics. One of these is skin color. Displayed above is a skin color scale that ranges from 1 (representing the lightest possible skin color) to 10 (representing the darkest possible skin color). The 10 shades of skin color are represented by a hand of identical form but differing in color. Please indicate which hand depicted above comes closest to your skin color.

- <sub>01</sub> 1
- <sub>02</sub> 2
- <sub>03</sub> 3
- <sub>04</sub> 4
- <sub>05</sub> 5
- <sub>06</sub> 6
- <sub>07</sub> 7
- <sub>08</sub> 8
- <sub>09</sub> 9
- <sub>10</sub> 10
- <sub>-7</sub> Prefer not to answer
- <sub>-8</sub> Don't know

Setting				Mode	
<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>01</sub> Clinic or site	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>02</sub> Phone	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>03</sub> Other location	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>04</sub> Video	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>01</sub> Self-administered	<input type="checkbox"/> <sub>02</sub> Staff-administered

Ostfeld MC, Yadon ND. ¿Mejorando La Raza?: The political undertones of Latinos' skin color in the United States. *Social Forces*. 2022 Jun;100(4):1806-32.  
 Yadon N. "They Say We're Violent": The Multidimensionality of Race in Perceptions of Police Brutality and BLM. *Perspectives on Politics*. 2022 Dec;20(4):1209-25.

## Puerto Rico Panel Survey of Income Dynamics

- Comparable to the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) in the US
- Target sample for 2025 : 1,000 households

## Cognitive Interview Study 2022 in PR

- 21 interviews
- All 21 respondents found the scale user-friendly and cultural fitting.
- All found the question to be clear and relevant.
- No resistance or difficulty ranking skin color using the scale, affirming the scale's utility.
- Strong agreement between Interviewer's observations and Respondent's Self-assessments.

Thompson-Colón, Theresa, I. Godreau and E.Fussell (2024) *Because Color Matters": Evaluating Skin Color Questions for the 2025 Puerto Rico Panel Survey of Income Dynamics*. Presentation for The 79th Annual Conference of the American Association of Public Opinion Research Atlanta, Georgia, May 16, 2024

# *Other dimensions of racialized experience ?*

## **RACE AS LIVED EXPERIENCE:**

### **The Impact of Multi-Dimensional Measures of Race/Ethnicity on the Self-Reported Health Status of Latinos**

**John A Garcia, Sanchez GR, Sanchez-Youngman S, Vargas ED, Ybarra VD. in Du Bois Rev. 2015 Fall;12(2):349-373. doi: 10.1017/S1742058X15000120.**

Authors argue for “race” as a multidimensional concept in which context, societal relations, and institutional dynamics are key components

Advocate for the utilization of multiple measures of race/ethnicity to assess the impact of race as a lived experience on the health status of U.S. Latinos and other social outcomes.

- Measures should include **skin color**, **ascribed race**, and **discrimination experiences**

“Our analysis reveals that among these three factors, both skin color and discrimination experiences are significantly and negatively correlated with Latino self-rated health status” pg.17

# PARA RETAR LA INVISIBILIDAD ESTADÍSTICA

**Grupo de Saberes: SABER ES PODER**  
octubre 2021 – al presente

## Colaboradoras

**Isar Godreau, PhD Investigadora**  
Instituto de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias  
Universidad de Puerto Rico – Cayey

**Mariluz Franco Ortiz, PhD Investigadora**  
Instituto de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias  
Universidad de Puerto Rico – Cayey

**Debora Upegui, PhD, Analista**  
Observatorio de Equidad de Género PR

**Mayra I. Díaz-Torres, MPH Directora Administrativa**  
Colectivo Ilé

**Irma Lugo Nazario, EdD, Coordinadora**  
Observatorio de Equidad de Género PR

**Gloriann Sacha Antonetty-Lebrón, Directora**  
Revista Étnica

**Caridad Arroyo, Analista**  
Instituto del Desarrollo de la Juventud



1. Nacionalidad o etnicidad

2. Términos raciales comunes en PR

3. Identidad étnico-racial

4. Colorismo

5. Discrimen por apariencia racial o color de piel

## PROPUESTA PARA LA INCLUSIÓN DE VARIABLES ÉTNICO-RACIALES EN FORMULARIOS DE PUERTO RICO

### Párrafo introductorio a las preguntas

Agradecemos conteste las siguientes preguntas. La información recopilada ayudará a investigar y monitorear el discrimen por razón de origen nacional, etnicidad, apariencia racial o color de piel en la prestación de servicios y en otras áreas pertinentes de la sociedad puertorriqueña. Estas respuestas solo se usarán para propósitos estadísticos y de manera agregada. [Este párrafo se puede modificar según la necesidad de la entidad o grupo]

### → 1. Indique su nacionalidad o etnicidad: (Marque todas las que apliquen)

- puertorriqueña/o
- dominicana/o
- cubana/o
- mexicana/o
- colombiana/o
- español/a
- venezolana/o
- peruana/o
- argentina/o
- hondureña/o
- ecuatoriana/o
- estadounidense
- china/o
- japonés/a
- haitiana/o
- otra/o: \_\_\_\_\_

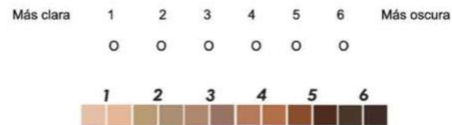
### → 2. Indique cuál o cuáles de estos términos considera que le describen mejor: (Marque todas las que apliquen)

- Negra/o
- Trigueña oscura/o
- Trigueña clara/o
- Blanca/o
- Otra/o \_\_\_\_\_

### → 3. Se considera usted:

- a) ¿Afrodescendiente?    Sí     No
- b) ¿Indígena?    Sí     No
- c) ¿Otra/o? \_\_\_\_\_

### → 4. ¿Cómo describiría usted su color de piel utilizando una escala del 1 al 6, donde el 1 es la tonalidad más clara y el 6 es la tonalidad más oscura de piel?



### → 5. ¿Alguna vez usted ha sentido que lo han tratado de manera injusta por su apariencia racial o su color de piel en Puerto Rico?

- Muchas veces
- Algunas veces
- Nunca

### → 6. Durante los últimos 3 años, ¿cuán frecuentemente usted ha sentido que le han tratado de manera injusta por su apariencia racial o su color de piel en Puerto Rico?

- Muchas veces
- Algunas veces
- Nunca

### → Comentarios e impresiones

---

---

---

---

*Although there are still methodological questions left unanswered, skin color scales have proven to be better for capturing racial inequality among Latinx than the racial categories established by the OMB and the US Census Bureau*

*They are also better suited for capturing the impact of colorism among other racialized groups (i.e African Americans or Asians)*

**Changes to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive #15 on Race and Ethnicity will result in a combined race and ethnicity question. The new SPD 15 directive sets guidelines for how race and ethnicity data are collected by all federal agencies**

**Previous census 2020 form**

**Are you Hispanic or Latino?**

- No, not Hispanic or Latino
- Yes, Hispanic or Latino

**What is your race? *Select one or more.***

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

**New 2030 census form**

**What is your race or ethnicity?**  
***Select all that apply.***

- White
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

# 2030 Race/ Ethnicity Question

## Disadvantages

**What is your race and/or ethnicity?**  
*Select all that apply and enter additional details in the spaces below.*

**American Indian or Alaska Native** – Enter, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, Aztec, Maya, etc.

**Asian** – Provide details below.

<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Filipino
<input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese	<input type="checkbox"/> Korean	<input type="checkbox"/> Japanese

Enter, for example, Pakistani, Hmong, Afghan, etc.

**Black or African American** – Provide details below.

<input type="checkbox"/> African American	<input type="checkbox"/> Jamaican	<input type="checkbox"/> Haitian
<input type="checkbox"/> Nigerian	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethiopian	<input type="checkbox"/> Somali

Enter, for example, Trinidadian and Tobagonian, Ghanaian, Congolese, etc.

**Hispanic or Latino** – Provide details below.

<input type="checkbox"/> Mexican	<input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvadoran
<input type="checkbox"/> Cuban	<input type="checkbox"/> Dominican	<input type="checkbox"/> Guatemalan

Enter, for example, Colombian, Honduran, Spaniard, etc.

**Middle Eastern or North African** – Provide details below.

<input type="checkbox"/> Lebanese	<input type="checkbox"/> Iranian	<input type="checkbox"/> Egyptian
<input type="checkbox"/> Syrian	<input type="checkbox"/> Iraqi	<input type="checkbox"/> Israeli

Enter, for example, Moroccan, Yemeni, Kurdish, etc.

**Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander** – Provide details below.

<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian	<input type="checkbox"/> Samoan	<input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro
<input type="checkbox"/> Tongan	<input type="checkbox"/> Fijian	<input type="checkbox"/> Marshallese

Enter, for example, Chuukese, Palauan, Tahitian, etc.

**White** – Provide details below.

<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> German	<input type="checkbox"/> Irish
<input type="checkbox"/> Italian	<input type="checkbox"/> Polish	<input type="checkbox"/> Scottish

Enter, for example, French, Swedish, Norwegian, etc.

- Combined question of race/ethnicity makes it even more difficult to efficiently measure the relationship between ethnic-racial classification and racial discrimination among Latinos
- Confuses racial identification with ethnic identification
- Represents “Hispanic/Latino” as something other than “Black”
- Racial categories are not suitable for PR. The category of “black” or “African-American” discourages people in PR from answering it (stigma / not relevant to PR)
- Does not include intermediate categories between black and white
- Do not allow to assess the impact of colorism on other racialized communities, such as African Americans or Asians

# Key points

Colorism is a dimension of racism that highlights the social benefits or harms linked to the eurocentric interpretation of phenotype, particularly skin color, in post-slave, post colonial societies.

Ample research suggests that skin color is correlated to social and health inequalities

Methodological approaches to skin color measurement are as complex as the social contexts that produce social inequalities and colorism (there is no size all, fits all).

Demographic changes as well as shifting notions of “race” (including changes in census definitions) emphasize the need for collecting skin color data, in order to better assess the effects of colorism on racialized groups.

¡Gracias!

# References

Campbell, M. E., Keith, V. M., Gonlin, V., & Carter-Sowell, A. R. (2020). Is a picture worth a thousand words? An experiment comparing observer-based skin tone measures. *Race and Social Problems*, 12, 266-278.

Mayra Díaz Torres, M., Upegui Hernández, D., Franco-Ortiz, M., Godreau, I. & Antonetty Lebrón, G. S. (In press). Retando la Invisibilidad: Inclusión de Variables Étnico-Raciales en la Recopilación de Datos para Enfrentar el Racismo Anti-Negro en la Salud Mental. *Revista Puertorriqueña de Psicología “Equidad, Racismo y Salud Mental en América Latina y el Caribe”*

Espino, R., & Franz, M. M. (2002). Latino phenotypic discrimination revisited: The impact of skin color on occupational status. *Social Science Quarterly*, 83(2), 612-623.

Fuentes, M. A., Reyes-Portillo, J. A., Tineo, P., Gonzalez, K., & Butt, M. (2021). Skin color matters in the Latinx community: A call for action in research, training, and practice. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 43(1-2), 32-58.

Garcia JA, Sanchez GR, Sanchez-Youngman S, Vargas ED, Ybarra VD. (2015). RACE AS LIVED EXPERIENCE: The Impact of Multi-Dimensional Measures of Race/Ethnicity on the Self-Reported Health Status of Latinos. *Du Bois Rev. Fall*;12(2):349-373. doi: 10.1017/S1742058X15000120.

Gordon, R. A., Branigan, A. R., Khan, M. A., & Nunez, J. G. (2024). Best practices for measuring skin color in surveys. *Survey Practice*, 17.

Gordon, R. A., Branigan, A. R., Khan, M. A., & Nunez, J. G. (2022). Measuring skin color: Consistency, comparability, and meaningfulness of rating scale scores and handheld device readings. *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*, 10(2), 337-364.

# References

- Hersch, J. (2008). Profiling the new immigrant worker: The effects of skin color and height. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 26(2), 345-386.
- Hunter, M. (2007). The persistent problem of colorism: Skin tone, status, and inequality. *Sociology compass*, 1(1), 237-254.
- Jones, Camara Phyllis. "Levels of racism: a theoretic framework and a gardener's tale." *American journal of public health* 90.8 (2000): 1212.
- Monk EP Jr. The cost of color: skin color, discrimination, and health among African-Americans. *Am J Sociol.* 2015;121(2):396–444. <https://doi.org/10.1086/682162>.
- Massey, Douglas S., and Jennifer A. Martin. 2003. The NIS Skin Color Scale.
- Mara C Ostfeld, Nicole D Yadon, ¿Mejorando La Raza?: The Political Undertones of Latinos' Skin Color in the United States, *Social Forces*, Volume 100, Issue 4, June 2022, Pages 1806–1832,
- Patricio Solís, Braulio Güémez and Raymundo Campos Vázquez 2023 “ Skin Tone and Inequality of Economic Outcomes in Mexico: A Comparative Analysis Using Optical Colorimeters and Color Palettes” 2023 Working Paper #8 Proyecto sobre Discriminación Étnico-Racial en México (PRODER) El Colegio de México
- Quijano, Anibal. "Coloniality of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America." *International sociology* 15, no. 2 (2000): 215-232.

# References

Smedley, B. D. (2012). The lived experience of race and its health consequences. *American journal of public health*, 102(5), 933-935.

Thompson-Colón, Theresa, Isar Godreau and Elizabeth Fussell (2024) *Because Color Matters”: Evaluating Skin Color Questions for the 2025 Puerto Rico Panel Survey of Income Dynamics*. Presentation for the The 79th Annual Conference of the American Association of Public Opinion Research Atlanta, Georgia, May 16, 2024

Telles, E., Urrea, F. & Flores, R. 2011. Skin Color, Racial Identity and Socioeconomic Outcomes in Latin America’s Pigmentocracy. Presented at the annual meetings of Population Association of America, Washington, DC.

Telles, E. & Steele. (2012). Pigmentocracy in the Americas: How is Educational Attainment Related to Skin Color? *Americas Barometer Insights*: 2012, 73.

Telles, E. & The Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA). 2014. *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America*.

Telles, E., Perreira, K.; The color of health: Skin Color, ethnoracial classification, and discrimination in the health of Latin Americans. 2014. *Journal Social Science & Medicine*, 116 (2014) 241-250.

Tanya Golash-Boza & William Darity Jr (2008) Latino racial choices: the effects of skin colour and discrimination on Latinos’ and Latinas’ racial self-identifications, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31:5, 899-934.

# References

Yudell, M., Roberts, D., DeSalle, R. & Tishkoff, S. (2016). Taking race out of human genetic. *Science Magazine*, 351:6273, 564-565. doi: 10.1126/science.aac4951

Villarreal, A. (2012). Flawed Statistical Reasoning and Misconceptions about Race and Ethnicity. *American Sociological Review*, 77(3), 495-502. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122412444721>