

**Hunter, Margaret. 2007. "The Persistent Problem of Colorism: Skin Tone, Status, and Inequality." *Sociology Compass* 1:237-254.**

**PRIMARY ARGUMENT:** The author argues that color stratification is actively reinforced by ethnocentric standards in which light skin is regarded as a form of social capital upheld by whites and communities of color alike.

**IMPORTANT DEFINED CONCEPTS:**

- Colorism: refers to discrimination based on skin tone, where individuals with lighter skin tones are often treated with social advantages opposed to those with darker skin tones, even with the same racial or ethnic group.
- Skin-color Stratification: refers to the hierarchical structure based on skin tone, where lighter skin is generally associated with higher status, greater access to resources, and positive social outcomes, while darker skin is associated with lower status and more negative outcomes.
- "Bleaching syndrome": The internalization of a white aesthetic ideal, a result of slavery and colonialism globally, that leads to practices to lighten ones skin.

**PRIMARY FINDINGS:**

1. Color stratification leads to in-group disparities in available opportunities such as housing, employment, education, dating and upward mobility. Light skinned people are found to earn more money, complete more years of schooling, live in better neighborhoods, and marry higher-status people than darker-skinned people of the same race or ethnicity.
2. Although light-skinned people systematically benefit from approximating whiteness, they simultaneously face racial discrimination and ostracization from their communities that challenge their ethnic authenticity.
3. Colorism is not a detraction from racism but rather they operate under the same system of racial discrimination.
4. A testament of the system of racial discrimination is the lengths people undergo to approximate whiteness and achieve the societal status associated with it (plastic surgery, cosmetics, hair straightening, and marketing of whitening or bleaching products).

**KEY QUOTE:** "Skin color continues to shape our lives in powerful ways in the USA and around the globe. The cultural messages that give meaning and value to different skin tones are both deeply historical and actively contemporary. People of color with dark skin tones continues to pay a price for their color, and the light skinned continue to benefit from their association with whiteness." (249).

**QUESTION:** Similar to the separation of prejudice and discrimination offered by Merton's typology, can people conform to Ethnocentric standards and behavior (changing their appearance, dating light skinned people, etc.) despite inwardly rejecting/resenting Ethnocentrism? How would we call and understand personal negotiations of conformity and their psychological impact?