

Skin color linked to social inequality in contemporary Mexico, study shows

October 6 2010

Despite the popular, state-sponsored ideology that denies the existence of prejudice based on racial or skin color differences in Mexico, a new study from The University of Texas at Austin provides evidence of profound social inequality by skin color.

According to the study, individuals with darker skin tones have less education, have lower status jobs, are more likely to live in poverty, and are less likely to be affluent.

Andrés Villarreal, an associate professor in the Department of Sociology and the Population Research Center affiliate, published his findings in the October 2010 issue of the *American Sociological Review*.

He found a high level of agreement among respondents of a nationally representative survey of more than 2,000 participants about who belongs to three basic skin color categories (blanco/güero - or white; moreno claro - or light brown; and moreno oscuro - or dark brown). In addition, he investigated how skin color is associated with a person's socioeconomic status.

Respondents who are light brown have 29.5 percent lower odds of having a college education or more compared to those who are white, while those who are dark brown have 57.6 percent lower odds.

The difference in occupational status between light-brown and white respondents, and especially between dark-brown and white respondents,

is substantially reduced once education level is introduced as a predictor. In other words, the disparity in access to education among respondents in different color categories may explain a large part, but not all, of the observed differences in occupational status.

Respondents in the lowest occupational categories, such as [domestic workers](#), manual workers, drivers, and security guards, are much more likely to be in the dark-brown category and less likely to be in the white category than are respondents in the highest status occupations, such as office supervisors, professional workers, and employers. Only 9.4 percent of manual workers are considered white, compared with 28.4 percent of professionals. Light-brown workers have 25.2 percent lower odds of being a professional worker than whites, while a dark-brown respondent has 35.9 percent lower odds of being in the top two occupational categories than a white respondent.

"These differences in socioeconomic outcomes are, of course, insufficient to demonstrate the persistence of discriminatory practices against individuals based on the color of their skin," Villarreal says.

"However, the fact that differences in occupational status across [skin color](#) categories cannot be fully explained by other factors, suggests that Mexicans with darker skin tones may in fact face discrimination in the labor market."

Provided by American Sociological Association

Citation: Skin color linked to social inequality in contemporary Mexico, study shows (2010, October 6) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-10-skin-linked-social-inequality-contemporary.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.