**The Impact of Colorism on African American Identity**

Colorism and African American Identity: Colorism — discrimination based on skin color — dates back centuries in the history of black existence from slavery. It is more familiar to assign house roles for people of lighter skin and field labor to those with darker skin. Such a color-coded pecking order established a social divide whose classifying, marking words would be used to leave indelible scars on African American identity. Even after emancipation, the preference for lighter skin persisted in affecting employment, education opportunities, and social climbing, as well as inflating community divisions. As Trembanis explains in "A Darker Hue," colorism influenced African American perceptions of one another and also societal views of African Americans as a whole. That legacy has persisted across many facets of American society and, over the years, transformed into a conundrum that exists today, where African Americans continue to be confronted with the conditioning of the systems that shape perceptions, access to opportunity, and self-concept. Colorism is also causing a division among African American families and self-esteem.

As shown in Kimberly R. Moffitt's autoethnography, being a dark-skinned child of a light-skinned mother molded the relationship (often) negatively affecting her behavior towards her daughter, usually associating lighter skin with beauty and thus favoritism. Colorism can lead to especially harmful family dynamics, with children absorbing the notion that their worth — and aesthetic value even — is dependent on skin color. In addition, African Americans with darker skin experience a greater probability of police violence (The Western Journal of Black Studies, 2017), and Crutchfield and Webb's research further document how colorism impacts policing amongst African Americans. As such, these examples affirm that colorism is more than just a relic of the past; it consists of ongoing, real-life experiences within various realms for African Americans, which necessitate consideration regarding its detrimental influence on identity and society.