

# “White Culture ?”

A ~provocative~ Zine

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# Project Overview

For our final project we collected data by interviewing Colorado College students using some of Dr. Leza's research questions, as well of one of our own. We chose to present our interpretations of the data through this zine.

Our interview questions were the following:

How do you define ethnicity?

How do you identify in regards to your ethnicity?

How do you identify in terms of your racial identity?

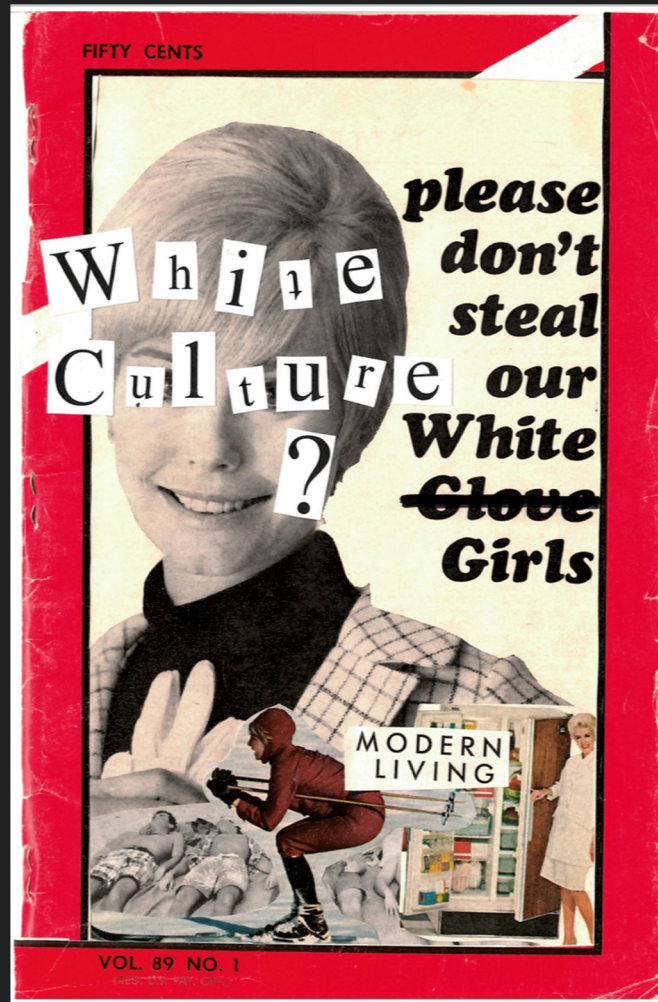
Do you believe there is a relationship between race and ethnicity? If so, how would you explain this relationship?

How do you define your culture and how do you feel that it has shaped you as a person?

As a result of our results, we came up with two research questions:

What rhetoric do Colorado College students subscribe to regarding race and ethnicity?

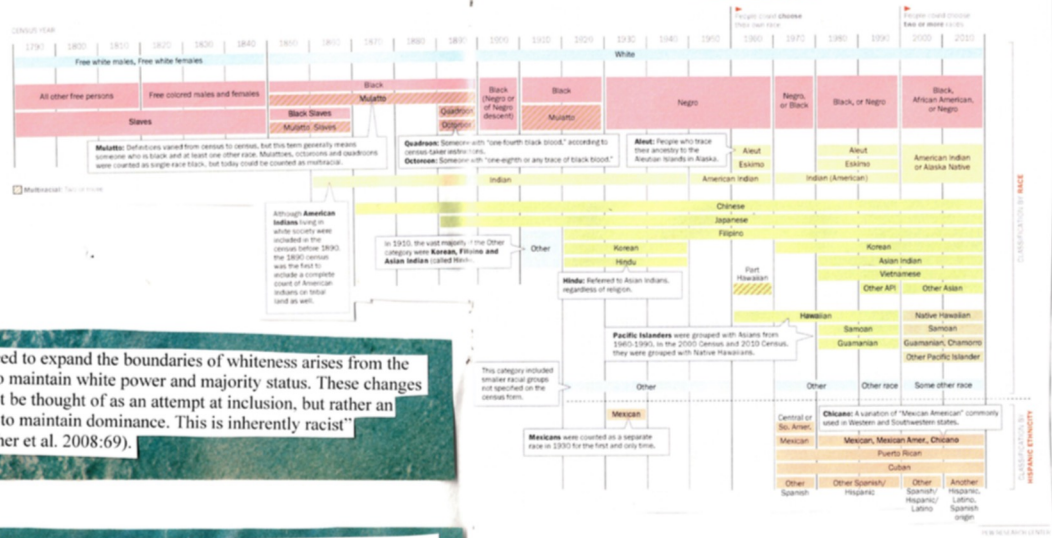
How does the respondent's certainty change when speaking about their race and ethnicity depending on their personal identification?



Our zine grapples with what it means to be white in America today, as well as the question of  
*“What is white culture?”*

Our thesis for our essay and zine is the following:  
Students at Colorado College and perhaps by extension throughout the United States who identify as ethnically white, Jewish, and of color all identify themselves in regard to their relationship with whiteness in this current cultural context.

# Changing Definitions of Race



"The need to expand the boundaries of whiteness arises from the desire to maintain white power and majority status. These changes must not be thought of as an attempt at inclusion, but rather an attempt to maintain dominance. This is inherently racist" (Gallagher et al. 2008:69).

Throughout this timeline, it can be seen that a number of groups of people become assimilated under the label of whiteness, while different groups of people of color are split up over time. This may be to keep people of color from becoming the majority group, for example there has never been a category on the census that asks people to categorize themselves as Irish or German etc. This could be an attempt to keep the most oppressed group the most oppressed and separated from each other.

It only takes furthering the white racist agenda to be seen as white.

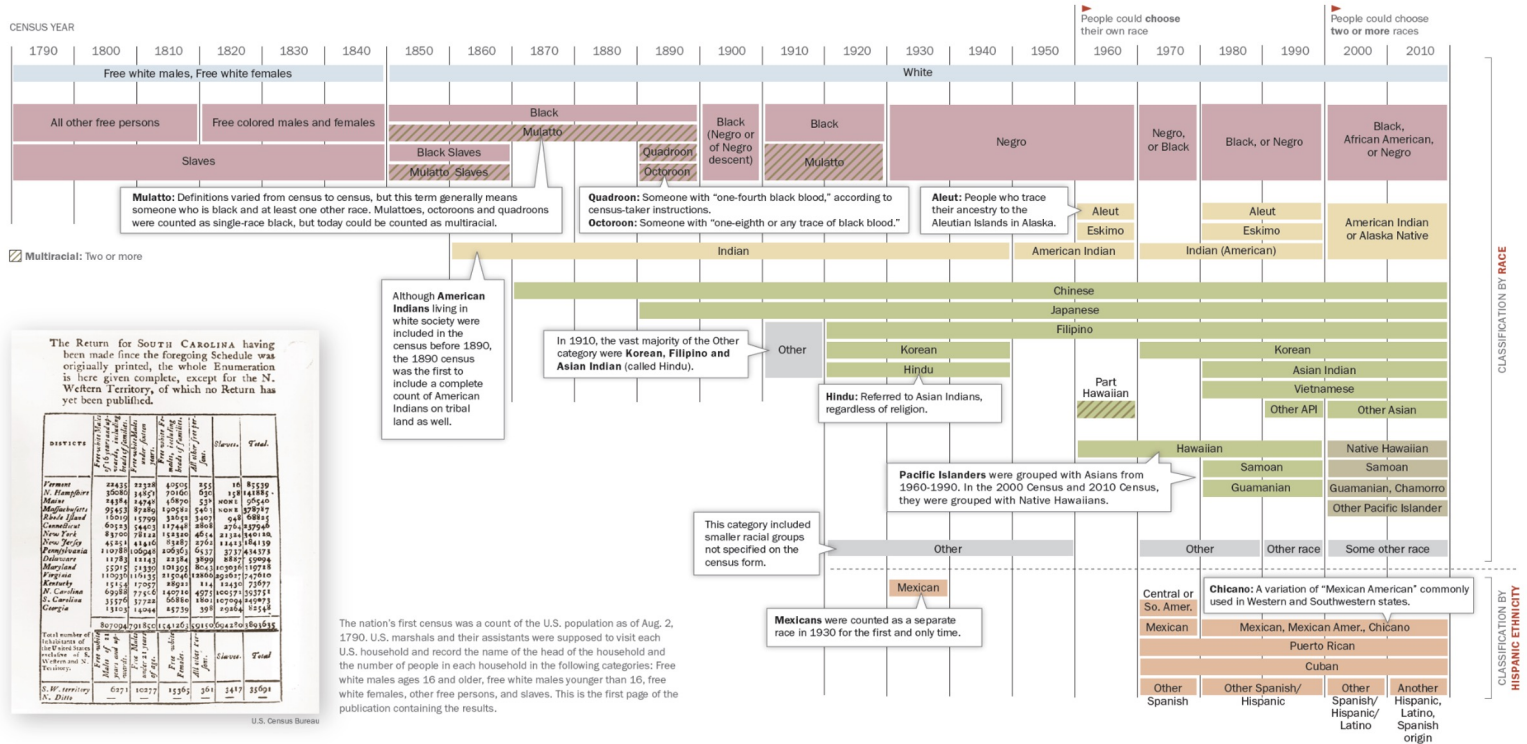
"When the primary focus on the dominant population was the control of blacks, other minority populations enjoyed an 'honorary white' status" (Gallagher et al. 2008:68).

We included a timeline of the changes in the census from Pew Research Center to show changes in the ways race has been historically defined. Throughout time, racial categories have always been positioned as "white" and "other."

# What Census Calls Us

## A Historical Timeline

This graphic displays the different race, ethnicity and origin categories used in the U.S. decennial census, from the first one in 1790 to the latest count in 2010. The category names often changed from one decade to the next, in a reflection of current politics, science and public attitudes. For example, "colored" became "black," with "Negro" and "African American" added later. The term "Negro" will be dropped for the 2020 census. Through 1950, census-takers commonly determined the race of the people they counted. From 1960 on, Americans could choose their own race. Starting in 2000, Americans could include themselves in more than one racial category. Before that, many multiracial people were counted in only one racial category.



The Return for SOUTH CAROLINA having been made since the foregoing Schedule was originally printed, the whole Enumeration is here given complete, except for the N. Western Territory, of which no Return has yet been published.

DISTRICT	Free white males 16 and over	Free white females 16 and over	Free white males under 16	Free white females under 16	Free colored males 16 and over	Free colored females 16 and over	Free colored males under 16	Free colored females under 16	Slaves	Total
Sumter	4845	4236	4905	555	10	10	10	10	10	10519
Orangeburg	3586	3157	3100	361	18	18	18	18	18	11181
Charleston	8984	8241	8870	1011	23	23	23	23	23	18156
Georgetown	9743	8766	9261	1081	10	10	10	10	10	20827
Black Island	18019	17799	18458	2107	54	54	54	54	54	40041
Columbia	60143	54845	57448	6608	276	276	276	276	276	124748
New York	87209	78121	81380	9574	40	40	40	40	40	166148
New Jersey	61214	54845	57448	6608	276	276	276	276	276	118119
Pennsylvania	110781	100421	103651	12111	51	51	51	51	51	224518
Delaware	11724	10411	10764	1269	89	89	89	89	89	24078
Maryland	12241	11351	11801	1380	80	80	80	80	80	26748
Virginia	110211	10111	10461	12461	100	100	100	100	100	22461
Kentucky	15111	13711	14211	1661	111	111	111	111	111	35777
Ill. Carolina	10911	10111	10461	12461	100	100	100	100	100	22461
S. Carolina	15271	13721	14211	1661	111	111	111	111	111	35777
Georgia	11051	10111	10461	12461	100	100	100	100	100	22461
<b>Total</b>	<b>107011</b>	<b>97011</b>	<b>100011</b>	<b>11501</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>210511</b>

U.S. Census Bureau

The nation's first census was a count of the U.S. population as of Aug. 2, 1790. U.S. marshals and their assistants were supposed to visit each U.S. household and record the name of the head of the household and the number of people in each household in the following categories: Free white males ages 16 and older, free white males younger than 16, free white females, other free persons, and slaves. This is the first page of the publication containing the results.

\* higher quality timeline

## Assimilation and

"To me, ethnicity is an identity based around what cultural group one belongs to."

"I am ethnically Anglo-Celtic-Dutch."

"I do not present myself as Celtic or Dutch, culturally speaking."

## Loss of Culture

To become a part of white culture in America, you must lose your ethnic cultural background. This loss of culture is validated through the gain of white privilege, even if this is a subconscious decision.

There is an inherent conflict between the definition of ethnicity that many white students gave and how they define their own ethnicity. For an example, look to the left. While one white student identified as Anglo-Celtic-Dutch, he revealed that he did not feel any connection to Celtic or Dutch culture.

?

The 3 quotes on the left expose the strange relationship with ethnicity, culture, and lack thereof.

We included the power of being white passing and how the ways others perceive race can impact experience.

### White Passing Students

White passing people are constantly racialized as white and therefore some have internalized this racialization and identify as white. This is also sometimes compounded by the fact that parents of color may not pass along their culture to their children in an attempt to help their child achieve higher social mobility as they will not pass on certain racialized cultural stereotypes. For an example, look below.

"My parents are Mexican but I don't really identify with a Mexican ethnicity, because it wasn't like, I guess a big part of how I was raised but it is in my blood so it's interesting. I'm also white European, of European descent. I'm an American."

History in elementary, middle and high school education is primarily focused around white people, and if you are often racialized as being a white person regardless of how you personally identify, you might see yourself as an American more strongly than a student of color would.

### What Does it MEAN to be Jewish?

"I identify more by my religion than I do by my ethnicity, because I'm Jewish...the identity that's more salient, to me, is my religious identity."

"I would say that the way that I was raised religiously gave me the whole way that I see the world and defines the values by which I live, regardless of that I don't believe in the religion."

"I most identify with [being] Jewish. And my parents are Mexican but I don't really identify with a Mexican ethnicity [because it wasn't] a big part of how I was raised, but it is in my blood so it's interesting."

What does this executive order entail for Jewish identity in the United States?

"Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the department can withhold funding from any college or educational program that discriminates "on the ground of race, color, or national origin." Religion was not included among the protected categories, so Mr. Trump's order will have the effect of embracing an argument that Jews are a people or a race with a collective national origin in the Middle East, like Italian Americans or Polish Americans." -Peter Baker and Maggie Haberman, NYT

We included quotes highlighting the confusion around what being Jewish means. We also include information about the recent executive order naming Jewish people in the U.S. a nationality or race (unclear which).



# What is "White Culture" In America?

"White identities are largely symbolic and not strongly anchored in ethnic social structures" (Gallagher et al. 2008:69).

"I would define my culture as the mix of white upper-class English and American values/pedagogies etc. that I have been exposed to through school and family and friends over the years, and I feel like these experiences etc. have shaped me to try to engage with my privilege critically and value certain types of knowledge and independence."

"I think I define my culture as American but I'm not sure what that means. I think America's culture is fully a blend of other cultures which is cool but hard to define."

"I don't know the right answer I think I'm white, but also American... I guess that's my nationality. I think I'm just white."

"I would probably just say white or Caucasian, if that is an option."

(for the fun of it!)

These quotes pose as perfect examples to the first Gallagher quote, "White identities are largely symbolic and not strongly anchored in ethnic social structures."





Emma Ulbrich (b. 2000)  
*3 Pillars of Whiteness, 2019*

Collage on printer paper



**“How come everyone’s  
so nice to us Daddy;  
do they all know you?”**

~Interesting~ Delta airline  
advertisement from the ‘60s...  
something to think about (back of  
our zine).