

**Glasgow, Joshua, Julie Shulman, and Enrique Covarrubias. 2009. "The Ordinary Conception of Race in the United States and Its Relation to Racial Attitudes: A New Approach." *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 9:15-38**

**PRIMARY ARGUMENT:** The authors argue that the notion of race in the United States currently deviates from traditional academic truisms (e.g., the one-drop rule is the way to determine race), thereby challenging assumptions about the uniformity of those notions and their relationship to racial attitudes.

**IMPORTANT DEFINED CONCEPTS:**

- One-Drop Rule: Racial thinking that holds that if a person has even one Black ancestor, he or she should be considered Black.
- Essentialism: The belief in an inner (usually genetic or biological) property that determines unchangeable observable properties and methods of determining someone's race.
- Racial Classification: The systematic organization of individuals into distinct racial or ethnic groups based on physical characteristics, ancestry, culture, or other criteria perceived to be associated with race

**PRIMARY FINDINGS:**

1. There is widespread rejection of the one-drop rule. People don't seem to believe that you are Black just because you have one Black ancestor. Similarly, there is considerable—but neither uniform nor majority—rejection of the criterion that one must have the same race as one's ancestors.
2. When White and non-White participants were compared, Whites were more likely than the non-White people to believe that race is socially constructed or socially determined.
3. For the most part, people aren't committed to the idea of fixed (or essential) race. Instead they are willing to allow that, over time, changes in culture or physical appearance can change someone's race.
4. Those who were more likely to reject ancestry or phenotype as the sole determinant of race scored higher on both cognitive and affective openness to racial diversity and scored lower on racist attitudes. Conversely, the more people believe in phenotype and ancestry, the more racist attitudes those people hold.

**KEY QUOTE:** "It is clear that there is no uniform criterion employed by all or even most of these participants. That is, it is not the case that the participants univocally employed a purely ancestral criterion of race, an at least partially social criterion of race, an essentialist criterion of race, or a phenotypic criterion of race, with anything approaching uniformity." (30)

**QUESTION:** If there is some moderate acceptance of the proposition that one's race can be socially determined, how does this level of acceptance vary between different societies?