**James Thomas**
**Whiteness in Crisis**
**Fluxx Request ID: R-2101-30264**

**Reviewer:**

This is a really interesting project and I look forward to seeing the full proposal. It may be useful to consider recent work in social psychology and political science that examines how White Americans' are responding these "identity threats." Work, for instance, by Robb Willer, Maureen Craig, Chris Parker, Eric Knowles, just to name a few.

**Investigator Response**
Please respond to the reviewer in this space.

Thank you very much for your encouraging words. I appreciate your recommendation to consult some of the recent work in social psychology and political science. In the full proposal, you’ll note I’ve provided a review and discussion of the sociology of whiteness to date, with some references to political scientists and social psychologists. Along with this, you’ll also find in the full proposal my discussion of Ashley Jardina’s recent *White Identity Politics.* This work, which I had the pleasure of reviewing in *AJS,* strikes me as one of the more robust and comprehensive examinations of how White Americans are responding to the changing social, political, and even demographic landscape of the US.

**Reviewer:**

A strength of this project is its focus on southern whites, a theoretically important and understudied group. An enormous amount of attention has been paid to Arlie Hochschild’s study of Tea Party members in Alabama, but they are hardly a representative group. An in-depth exploration of a broader sample of white southerners’ understanding of their racial identities would be welcome, especially as they are sharpened by conflicts over Confederate monuments. There are a couple of elements of the current design that are somewhat problematic: 1) The use of mail invitations to establish the sampling frame seems like overkill. Diversity and range can, in the context of an interview study where there will be no attempt to approximate a population, be obtained through various types of targeted convenience sampling that are quicker and cheaper. 2) Will each of the interviews in Oxford be conducted by two undergraduates? There will be three people in a room, all of them with almost no experience interviewing? This has considerable potential to go wrong.

**Investigator Response**
Please respond to the reviewer in this space.

Thank you for your comments on the strengths of my project proposal. I take your point that my sampling strategy may be, as you say, overkill. At the same time, you note correctly that we need more in-depth studies of a broader range of White southerners than what currently exists in the scholarship. I had considered building a convenience sample from young Whites involved in the efforts to remove Confederate monuments, as well as those active in trying to keep them in place. However, my concern here was that I would ultimately produce a study of extremes. This wouldn’t be a bad thing, but also would not completely answer my research questions. I should note, however, that the concern about costs for this type of sampling strategy are mitigated by a recent development – a proposal for parts of this project that I submitted to NSF was recommended for funding, and once finalized NSF’s funding will cover the recruitment costs for the sampling strategy.

To your second point, the strategy for interviews will be that each team of two undergraduate students will be accompanied by either myself, or one of the graduate student researchers, for each interview they conduct. I have several years’ worth of interview experience and training, and our graduate students receive significant training in research methods, including qualitative interviewing techniques. That, coupled with the training I will provide the graduate students in the lead-up to January 2022 as well as the training we will then impart to the students in the first four weeks of the Spring 2022 semester, I think will address the very real concern that interviews would be conducted by people – including the respondent – who have no experience interviewing at all.

**Reviewer:**

I like the research questions and the topic and feels this falls squarely within the Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration program. The topic is important and the proposed field sites and methods can provide insights into the topic and advance our understanding. I believe Thomas has the expertise, training, and experience to conduct this study and meet the proposed objectives.

I like the idea of involving undergraduate and graduate students, I think this is a strength of the project. I also like the sampling frame, randomly selecting households from the two field sites. This feels like a good mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches, still definitely a qualitative study, but borrowing from some quantitative approaches in the study and sample design. Fair or not, some quantitative scholars, reviewers, etc. can be critical of qualitative sampling and recruiting methods. This approach, building in some random selection, can strengthen the project and help avoid some common criticisms of studies of this nature.

The study, methods, data collection, and analysis plan all look promising to me. This is important work and we need more empirical evidence on whiteness, especially right now at this point in our history given all the trends and events discussed.

**Investigator Response**
Please respond to the reviewer in this space.

I am really thankful for your kind and supportive comments. I am glad you see the benefits and potential impact this study can have on our knowledge and understanding of whiteness today.