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CIP & Dewey Section

To: Melissa Parent, Chair  
Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee

Cc: Members of the Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee  
Caroline Saccucci, Chief, U.S. Programs, Law, and Literature Division

From: Kathryn Becker, Editor in Residence  
Dewey Decimal Classification  
OCLC, Inc.

Re: Black people and White people

Original term	Proposed change
Blacks/black	Black people
Whites	White people
Caucasian	White people

### Introduction

As the second Editor in Residence, my first task was DDC training which includes working with WebDewey. During this time, I noticed several instances of terms that had not been updated to reflect the most up to date terminology. Often, this was with built numbers or in the notes. Wanting to edit these terms, Alex Kyrios suggested I use this opportunity to prepare my first exhibit.

Overall, their numbers are few, and as mentioned above are mostly in built entries and notes. However, it is also important to have consistent standards, and this is the focus of this exhibit.

### Black and White and their capitalization

In the question of the capitalization of the words “Black” and “White” when referring to racial groups, there are several aspects to consider as there is no consensus across publishing styles and guidelines on what should be done with the W. Most publications agree that “black” is in reference to a color while “Black” refers to race, common history, and experience, such as within the United States for people of African descent. The arguments both for and against a capital W have validity and include the argument that use of the capital W will force the thinking of racial constructs (for) and the use from white supremacy groups (against). In researching the preferences, it should be noted that most publications released statements in the summer of 2020

regarding the issue. Therefore, I tried to use resources no older than five years if unable to find statements in the past three years.

*The Chicago Style Manual* (2020), the DDC's preferred style manual, advocates for Black and White capitalization for "editorial consistency", but also recognizes an author's preferences dependent upon content.

The 7th Edition of the American Psychological Association's *Publication Manual* also is in favor of "Black" and "White" but warns against the use of colors in reference to other groups to avoid pejorative tones.

*The Washington Post*, the *Chicago Tribune* and the Center for the Study of Social Policy advocacy group use the capitalized W in their writings. All are using arguments mentioned earlier.

However, the Associated Press, *The New York Times*, and the *Columbia Journalism Review* use "Black" and "white," as does Canada's *The Globe and Mail* in its publications.

Some sources, however, still use lowercase for both groups. The *MLA 9th edition* guides its users to lowercase for both "black" and "white" when referring to race. The United Kingdom's *The Guardian Style Guide* uses "black," but also recognizes authors may prefer "Black." *The Oxford English Dictionary* lists "black," (but the *Oxford Dictionary of African American English* has "Black" and as it is still a work in progress, I was unable to identify the use of w/W) Australia's ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) guidelines suggest not using it as a noun, but to respect the capitalization when quoting. In general, Australia's focus is on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and I was unable to find examples of their capitalization usage for "black." Many of the global publications did reference the AP's capitalization of the B as part of their decision on the matter.

Looking at LCSH, "Black" is capitalized, but "white" is not, e.g., "Poor Black people" vs "Poor white people". The LCSH instructions are as follows:

Black people (May Subd Geog) Here are entered works on Black people as an element in the population. Theoretical works discussing the black race from an anthropological point of view are entered under Black race. / Works on Black people in countries whose racial composition is predominantly black are assigned headings appropriate for the country as a whole without the use of the heading Black people. The heading Black people is assigned to works on such countries only if the work discusses Black people apart from other groups in the country.

White people-(May Subd Geog) Here are entered works of a sociological nature that discuss white people as an element in the population, especially in countries where they are a minority. Works of an anthropological nature focusing on the physical features that characterize Caucasians and distinguish them from other races of mankind are entered under Caucasian race.

Using the same argument as outlined in the LCSH instructions for Black people regarding predominantly Black countries, the Relative Index terms "Caribbean Blacks" in T5--969729, should be made obsolete, but the notes should remain intact. There is no need for a replacement RI as "Caribbean peoples" is already present.

During editorial discussions, there was no consensus. There was strong disagreement between some editors and classifiers about capitalization of the W. Some felt the lowercase "white" was racist, while others felt that it would make bulk changes easier if it were in line with LCSH practices.

After creating a post on The Dewey Blog asking for the public's opinion, comments ranged from support of "White" out of fairness, to a hope of not needing racial constructs, to accusatory remarks of "American identity politics."

There is certainly validity to both arguments, but since our goal is to debias our system, I recommend we should capitalize "White" for entries specifically talking about racial concepts.

### **Caucasian vs White**

The term "Caucasian" does not always refer to the people of the Caucasus Mountain regions, but instead has been used as to encompass the white race based on very unscientific reasoning. "Caucasian" has also been recognized as problematic and has largely been replaced with the term "White" to refer to people of European origins.

While many of the "Caucasian entries" in WebDewey refer to the geographical region, there are some leftovers where numbers have been built such as T5--09073 Caucasian race--United States. LCSH has their heading listed as "White people--United States" with the corresponding 680 reading "Here are entered works on white people in the United States as a racial group. Works on white people in the United States of European origin that focus on their ethnic or national background are entered under \$a European Americans."

### **"of African origin"—is it still needed?**

Although the term "African American" can be traced to post-Revolutionary times, it was popularized in the 1980s by Reverend Jesse Jackson as a replacement for the term Black. However, while popular, it did not solve the debate between the two terms. Taking this into account, I examined the term "of African origin" that is often used. Much like Black and African American, "of African origin" has debate on its usage as well.

The arguments against the "African origin" qualifier are due to concerns about essentially erasing other people's origins, such as those from the Caribbean Plate who may be descendants

of the Carib or Arawak of northern South America (Puerto Rico, Antilles, Jamaica, the Bahamas, etc.). The arguments in favor of the qualifier are based on being recognized for descending from enslaved people as part of their collective heritage.

Diving into how LCSH and LCDGT use similar terms, we find that “origin” is usable as a subdivision under ethnic groups, with an example of “Indians of North America–Origin,” but this does not work for us. “Black people of North America of African origin? Certainly not a smooth entry to be able to find what is needed. “African Americans of North America (of African origin)” is redundant.

We wondered: Is it needed? Does the inclusion of ‘African origin’ add to the entry? Will the user find what they are looking for without the term? Is there a better way to include the idea fully?

We certainly do not want to complicate matters, but we also want to be as complete as possible. WebDewey’s T5–96 notes read “Class here Blacks of African origin” (with “Blacks”

needing to be changed to “Black people”). Does a work on ‘Black university students in the US’ need a qualifier “of African origin”? With the qualifier, will that exclude any Black student that does not have an Africa connection? Without the qualifier, does that skew the information that a researcher may be looking for? Was the qualifying question even part of the author’s intention of focus? Of course, if the work were “Black university students in the US who have recently immigrated,” that would certainly most likely be a candidate for the qualifier.

Juli Beall was able to give some history and context for the “of African origin” entry. She said that it was intended to make clear that notation T5--96 is not intended to be a comprehensive number for all the peoples who have ever been called “black” in any country, e.g., including South Asians and Aboriginal Australians. (Notation from Table 5 would not be used for such a broad work; it would be classed in the base number, e.g., T1--089 Ethnic and national groups)

Juli then suggested a terminology replacement to “African ancestry,” e.g., in the class-here note at T5--96, “Class here Black people of African ancestry”, so that it does not give the impression that we intended to limit the number to recent immigrants from Africa. Further, the Relative Index term for T5-9607 would then become Black people (African ancestry) -- North America. We felt this was a good solution.

The question of whether a qualifier is still needed at all remains. Perhaps it is needed if warranted in cases where its inclusion reflects the author or work, but not included if more specific descriptors are possible. I think that it should remain on our radar for potential future changes.

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**T5—96073****African Americans (United States Black people)**

The 073 in T5—96073 signifies U.S. nationality rather than location. It is never omitted even where it would be redundant if it simply signified location, e.g., 973.0496073 African Americans in U.S. history (as distinct from 973.0496 for noncitizens of African descent in U.S. history). Area subdivisions are added to it in the usual way, e.g., 305.8960730747 sociology of African Americans in New York (as distinct from 305.8960747 sociology of non-U.S. citizens of African descent in New York).

**Differential and developmental psychology**

Some works on the psychology of sensory perception, movement, emotions, physiological drives (152) and conscious mental processes (153) use as research populations people belonging to differential groups, or people subject to environmental influences, that are given in 155.3–9. Use 152–153 for works in which there is clearly little or no interest in the distinctiveness of the group or influence, or in which the researcher has simply used convenient samples. This is particularly applicable to ethnic and national groups (155.8), adults (155.6), and social environment (155.92).

**Sex psychology**

Use 155.3 for a study on sex psychology, drawing almost exclusively upon adult middle-class White people, but showing only marginal interest in the class, age, or ethnic group of the respondents. Use 155.3 also for discussion of the social class, national, or ethnic bias of such research, as the interest is in the validity of the findings about sex psychology.

## Table 5. Ethnic and National Groups

The following numbers are never used alone, but may be used as required (either directly when so noted or through the interposition of notation 089 from Table 1) with any number from the schedules, e.g., civil and political rights (323.11) of Navajo Indians (—9726 in this table): 323.119726; ceramic arts (738) of Jews (—924 in this table): 738.089924. They may also be used when so noted with numbers from other tables, e.g., notation 174 from Table 2

In this table racial groups are mentioned in connection with a few broad ethnic groupings, e.g., a note to class Black people of African descent at —96 Africans and people of African descent. Concepts of race vary. A work that emphasizes race should be classed with the ethnic group that most closely matches the concept of race described in the work

Except where instructed otherwise, and unless it is redundant, add 0 to the number from this table and to the result add notation 1 or —3–9 from Table 2 for area in which a group is or was located, e.g., Germans in Brazil —31081, but Germans in Germany —31; Jews in Germany or Jews from Germany —924043. If notation from Table 2 is not added, use 00 for standard subdivisions; see below for complete instructions on using standard subdivisions

Notation from Table 2 may be added if the number in Table 5 is limited to speakers of only one language even if the group discussed does not approximate the whole of the group specified by the Table 5 number, e.g., Bavarians in Brazil —31081 (because German is the primary language spoken by Bavarians), but Amhara in United States —928 (*not* —928073 because Amharic is not the only language spoken by the peoples included in —928)

Notation from Table 2 may be added for either present or past specific location of the group discussed if only one specific location is relevant, e.g., sociology of Jews from many different countries now in United States 305.8924073, contributions to music around the world of Jews who previously lived in Poland 780.899240438

If both present and past specific locations of the group discussed are relevant, then notation from Table 2 is added only for present location of the group, e.g., Jews from Germany in the United States —924073 (*not* —924043). An exception occurs when the present location of the group is defined by the class number to which ethnic or national group notation is added, e.g., Jews in United States history 973.04924. The area notation added to Table 5 numbers is then available to show the past location of the group, e.g., Jews from Germany in United States history 973.04924043, Jews from Germany in United States higher education 378.73089924043

Standard subdivisions may be added to Table 5 notation when that notation is added directly to the base number, e.g., periodicals about sociology of Irish Americans 305.8916207305. However, standard subdivisions are not added to Table 5 notation when that notation is used through interposition of notation 089 from Table 1, e.g., an exhibition of ceramic arts of Russian Jews 738.089924047 (*not* 738.089924047074)



## Table 5. Ethnic and National Groups

When Table 5 notation is not followed by 0 plus notation from Table 2, use 00 for standard subdivisions, e.g., periodicals about sociology of Japanese 305.8956005, collected biography of Irish Americans in New York City 974.71004916200922. When Table 5 notation is followed by 0 plus notation from Table 2, however, use 0 for standard subdivisions, e.g., periodicals about sociology of Japanese Americans 305.895607305. (For the purpose of this rule, notation 96073 African Americans is treated as Table 5 notation, e.g., periodicals on sociology of African Americans 305.896073005, periodicals on sociology of African Americans in Ohio 305.896073077105)

Except where instructed otherwise, give preference to ethnic group over nationality, e.g., United States citizens of Serbian descent —9182073 (*not* —13). In this table “ethnic group” most often means a group with linguistic ties, but it can also mean a group with other cultural ties

Except where instructed otherwise, when choosing between two ethnic groups, give preference to the group for which the notation is different from that for the nationality of the people, e.g., a work treating equally Hispanic and native American heritage of bilingual Spanish-Guaraní mestizos of Paraguay —9838220892 (*not* —68892)

Except where instructed otherwise, when choosing between two national groups, give preference to the former or ancestral national group, e.g., people from the former Soviet Union who became United States citizens —917073 (*not* —13)

*See Manual at Table 5*

### —09 Europeans and people of European descent

Class here people who speak or whose ancestors spoke languages traditionally spoken in Europe; comprehensive works on Indo-European peoples; comprehensive works on White people

Class works that emphasize mixed ancestry with origins from more than one continent in —05, e.g., works emphasizing mixed Hindi-English ancestry —059143021

*For a specific ethnic or regional group, see the group, e.g., Germans —31, Bengali —9144, Arabs —927, people of Middle Eastern origins —94*

### —96 Africans and people of African descent

Class here Black people of African descent

*For peoples who speak or whose ancestors spoke Ethiopian languages, see —928; for non-Semitic Afro-Asiatic peoples, see —93; for Malagasy, see —993*

—960 73

African Americans (United States Black people)

Unless it is redundant, add 0\* to —96073 and to the result add notation 1–9 from Table 2 for area, e.g., African Americans in England —96073042, African Americans in New York —960730747, but African Americans in United States —96073

When instructed to add from Table 5 for the group only, class African Americans in —96

*See Manual at T5—96073*

—969

Other regional and national groups of largely African descent

Limited to the following groups viewed as a whole: people of multi-country regions outside Africa; citizens of independent and partly independent jurisdictions outside Africa; former citizens and descendants of citizens of these regions and jurisdictions

Add to base number —969 notation 4–9 from Table 2, e.g., West Indians —969729, Haitians —9697294, Virgin Islanders —96972972; then add further as instructed at beginning of Table 5, e.g., Haitians in the United States —9697294073

Subdivisions are added for either or both topics in heading

Class Cubans in —687291; class Dominicans (Dominican Republic) in —687293; class Puerto Ricans in —687295; class minority groups of African descent in —9604–9609, plus notation from Table 2 as instructed at beginning of Table 5 to show where the groups are located, e.g., people of African descent in Canada —96071. Class citizens of these countries belonging to other ethnic groups with the ethnic group, e.g., Bahamians of English origin —2107296

*See Manual at Table 5*

—969 729

Caribbean peoples of largely African descent

Number built according to instructions under —969

Class here comprehensive works on Caribbean peoples

*For Caribbean peoples of other ethnic groups, see the ethnic group, e.g., Spanish Americans —68729*

\*Add 00 for standard subdivisions; see instructions at beginning of Table 5

<b>A</b>		Differential psychology <i>see Manual at 155</i>	
<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> African American History		<b>E</b>	
Month	973.049 607 3		
<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> African Americans	973.049 607 3	Europeans	T5—09
	973.049 607 3		
	T5—960 73	<b>I</b>	
civilization	973.049 607 3	Indo-Europeans	T5—09
<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> History	973.049 607 3	Intelligentsia	
<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Intellectual life	973.049 607 3	Black people (African descent)	
<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Social life and customs	973.049 607 3	England	305.552 089 960 42
<i>see Manual at T5—96073</i>		<b>K</b>	
Africans	T5—96	<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Kalunga (Brazilian people)	T5—960 81
Afro-Americans	973.049 607 3		
	T5—960 73	<b>P</b>	
<i>see also African Americans</i>		<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Poor Black people	305.569 089 96
<b>B</b>		<b>I<sub>a</sub></b>	362.508 996
Black Americans	973.049 607 3	Poor Black people (African descent)	305.569 089 96
	T5—960 73	social welfare	362.508 996
<i>see also African Americans</i>		<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Poor white people	305.569 089 09
<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Black History Week	973.049 607 3	Poor White people	305.569 089 09
Black people		<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Poor white people	362.508 909
<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Nazi persecution	940.531 808 996	Poor White people	
Black people (African descent)	T5—96	social welfare	362.508 909
Brazil	T5—960 81	<b>S</b>	
Canada	305.896 071	<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Scientists, Black	500.899 6
civil and human rights	323.119 6	South African Black people	T5—968
Holocaust, 1933–1945	940.531 808 996	South Africans (National group)	T5—968
mass media	302.230 899 6		
<b>P</b> United States	973.049 607 3	<b>U</b>	
<b>P</b>	T5—960 73	<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Urban Black people	305.896 017 32
<i>see also African Americans</i>		<b>W</b>	
urban areas	305.896 017 32	<b>P</b> White people	305.809
Black people (African descent) in science	500.899 6	<b>P</b>	T5—09
<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Black people and mass media	302.230 899 6	motion pictures	791.436 529 09
<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Black power	323.119 6	race identity	305.809
<b>C</b>		<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Race identity	305.809
Caribbean Black people	T5—969 729	television programs	791.456 529 09
Caribbean peoples	T5—969 729	<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> White people in motion pictures	791.436 529 09
<b>E</b> Caucasian race	305.809	<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> White people on television	791.456 529 09
<b>E</b>	T5—09		
<b>D</b>			
Developmental psychology			
<i>see Manual at 155</i>			

*Dewey Decimal Classification*

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White race	305.809
	T5—09
Whites	305.809
	T5—09
Working class White people	305.562 089 09