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**1. "Are Jews White?", Emma Green, *The Atlantic*, December 5, 2016.**

On the extreme right, Jews are seen as impure—a faux-white race that has tainted America. And on the extreme left, Jews are seen as part of a white-majority establishment that seeks to dominate people of color. Taken together, these attacks raise an interesting question: Are Jews white?

"Jewish identity in American is inherently paradoxical and contradictory," said Eric Goldstein, an associate professor of history at Emory University. "What you have is a group that was historically considered, and considered itself, an outsider group, a persecuted minority. In the space of two generations, they've become one of the most successful, integrated groups in American society—by many accounts, part of the establishment. And there's a lot of dissonance between those two positions."

...Over time, Jews have become more integrated into American society—a process scholars sometimes refer to as "becoming white." It wasn't the skin color of Ashkenazi Jews of European descent that changed, though; it was their status. Trump's election has convinced some Jews that they remain in the same position as they have throughout history: perpetually set apart from other groups through their Jewishness, and thus left vulnerable....

Especially during the peak of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many Jews lived in tightly knit urban communities that were distinctly marked as separate from other American cultures: They spoke Yiddish, they published their own newspapers, they followed their own schedule of holidays and celebrations. Those boundaries were further enforced by widespread anti-Semitism: Jews were often excluded from taking certain jobs, joining certain clubs, or moving into certain neighborhoods. Insofar as "whiteness" represents acceptance in America's dominant culture, Jews were not yet white.

Over time, though, they assimilated. Just like other white people, they fled to the suburbs. They took advantage of educational opportunities like the G.I. bill. They became middle class. "They thought they were becoming white," said Lewis Gordon, a professor of philosophy at the

University of Connecticut. “Many of them stopped speaking Yiddish. Many of them stopped going to synagogue. Many of them stopped wearing the accoutrements of Jewishness.”....

Jonathan Greenblatt, the CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, argued that Jews do grapple with race—and in fact, they have been at the forefront of struggles for racial equality like the civil-rights movement. “There’s no doubt that the vast majority of American Jews live with what we would call white privilege,” he said. “They aren’t looked at twice when they walk into a store. They aren’t looked at twice by someone in uniform. ... That obviously isn’t a privilege that people of color have the luxury of enjoying.” And yet, even though light-skinned Jews may benefit from being perceived as white, “[Jewish] identity is shaped by these exogenous forces—ostracism, and exile, and other forms of persecution [like] extermination. I think there is this sense of shared struggle ... programmed into the DNA of the Jewish people.”

As much variability as there is in how Jews might see their own whiteness, there’s even greater variability in how others see them. “For many Americans, if there’s a secular European Jew walking [down the street], Americans are not going to see the difference between a Polish Jew ... and a Polish Catholic,” said Gordon.....

And yet, no matter how much prestige Jews may amass, their status is always ambiguous. “White” is not a skin color, but a category marking power. American Jews do have power, but they are also often viewed with suspicion; and having power is no assurance of protection. According to the FBI’s hate-crime statistics, a majority of religiously motivated hate-crime offenses are committed against Jews each year. This has been the case every year since the FBI first began reporting hate-crime statistics in 1995, when more than 80 percent of religiously motivated crimes were against Jews. These days, that percentage is closer to 50 percent—a sign not that Jews are safer, but that other groups have been increasingly targeted.

“It’s not that unprecedented that groups of disillusioned, disaffected populations of workers ... lash out and use Jews as a scapegoat for problems that are really caused by a quickly changing society,” said Goldstein. “It is instructive to know that Jews have been in situations in which they were integrated and had status, and that hasn’t necessarily protected them. Sometimes, it makes them vulnerable.”

“Are Jews white?” is another way of asking, “Are Jews safe, in this unknown future that is to come?” To some, it seems unthinkable that they would not be. To others, it seems unthinkable that they would.

## **2. Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*, pp. 160–161**

Considered in the context of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, however, the harms inflicted on blacks by exclusion from national public policies invite a basic shift in focus and justification for affirmative action. Because such policies in the last-gasp era of Jim Crow constituted a massive transfer of privileges to white Americans, affirmative action can be redirected to this imbalance. The history of advantages offered to most whites and denied to many blacks in New Deal and Fair Deal policies is a particular story of targeted official institutional

bias and great consequence. By understanding how the playing field fashioned by such fundamental public policies as Social Security, the Wagner Act, military segregation, and the GI Bill was racially skewed by design, and how their powerful negative effects have compounded in the past two generations, Lyndon Johnson's specific type of affirmative action can be advanced.

This history has been missing from public debate. Discussion about affirmative action usually begin with the 1960s, when its beneficiaries shifted from white to black. Such historical amnesia has weakened the case for affirmative action. ...Since all the major tools the federal government deployed during the New Deal and the Fair Deal created a powerful, if unstated, program of affirmative action for white Americans, the case for even more extensive affirmative action is more compelling than current arguments favoring such policies. Even today's proponents of affirmative action pay almost no heed to this recent record of profound and pervasive racial bias. Such a serious omission produces more than defective history. It limits the scope of public debate about affirmative action.

### **3. Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, 2017 (Preface)**

*De facto* segregation, we tell ourselves, has various causes. When African Americans moved into a neighborhood like Ferguson, a few racially prejudiced white families decided to leave, and then as the number of black families grew, the neighborhood deteriorated, and "white flight" followed. Real estate agents steered whites away from black neighborhoods, and blacks away from white ones. Banks discriminated with "redlining," refusing to give mortgages to African Americans or extracting unusually severe terms from them with subprime loans. African Americans haven't generally gotten the educations that would enable them to earn sufficient incomes to live in white suburbs, and, as a result, many remain concentrated in urban neighborhoods. Besides, black families prefer to live with one another.

All this has some truth, but it remains a small part of the truth, submerged by a far more important one: until the last quarter of the twentieth century, racially explicit policies of federal, state, and local governments defined where whites and African Americans should live. Today's residential segregation in the North, South, Midwest, and West is not the unintended consequence of individual choices and of otherwise well-meaning law or regulation but of unhidden public policy that explicitly segregated every metropolitan area in the United States. The policy was so systematic and forceful that its effects endure to the present time. Without our government's purposeful imposition of racial segregation, the other causes--private prejudice, white flight, real estate steering, bank redlining, income differences, and self-segregation--still would have existed but with far less opportunity for expression. Segregation by intentional government action is not *de facto*. Rather, it is what courts call *de jure*: segregation by law and public policy....

By failing to recognize that we now live with the severe, enduring effects of *de jure* segregation, we avoid confronting our constitutional obligation to reverse it. If I am right that we continue to have *de jure* segregation, then desegregation is not just a desirable policy; it is a constitutional as well as

a moral obligation that we are required to fulfill. “Let bygones be bygones” is not a legitimate approach if we wish to call ourselves a constitutional democracy.

**4. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, 1985 (pp. 197–201)**

Aside from the number of mortgages that it helped to refinance on a long-term, low-interest basis, the Home Owners Loan Corporation systematized appraisal methods across the nation. Because it was dealing with problem mortgages--in some states over 40 percent of all HOLC loans were foreclosed even after refinancing--the HOLC had to make predictions and assumptions regarding the useful or productive life of housing it financed....

With care and extraordinary attention to detail, HOLC appraisers divided cities into neighborhoods and developed elaborate questionnaires relating to the occupation, income, and ethnicity of the inhabitants and the age, type of construction, price range, sales demand, and general state of repair of the housing stock....

Four categories of quality--imaginatively titled First, Second, Third, and Fourth, with corresponding code letters of A, B, C, and D and colors of green, blue, yellow, and red--were established. The first grade (also A and green) areas were described as new, homogenous, and “in demand as residential locations in good times and bad.” Homogeneous meant “American business and professional men.” Jewish neighborhoods, or even those with an “infiltration of Jews,” could not be considered “best” any more than they could be considered “American.”

The Second security grade (blue) went to “still desirable” areas that had “reached their peak,” but were expected to remain stable for many years. The Third grade (yellow or “C”) neighborhoods were usually described as “definitely declining,” while the Fourth grade (red) neighborhoods were defined as areas “in which the things taking place in C areas have already happened.”....

The Home Owners Loan Corporation did not initiate the idea of considering race and ethnicity in real-estate appraisal. Bigotry has a long history in the United States, and the individuals who bought and sold houses were no better or worse than the rest of their countrymen. Realtors were well aware of the intense antagonisms which attended the attempts of middle-class black families to escape from ghetto areas, and their business practices reflected their observations....

The HOLC simply applied these notions of ethnic and racial worth to real estate appraising on an unprecedented scale. With the assistance of local realtors and banks, it assigned one of the four ratings to every block in every city....

As was the case in every city, any Afro-American presence was a source of substantial concern to the HOLC....The officials evinced a keen interest in the movement of black families and included maps of the density of black settlement with every analysis. Not surprisingly, even those

neighborhoods with small proportions of black inhabitants were usually rated Fourth grade or “hazardous.”

### 5. Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, 2014

Clyde Ross was among them. He came to Chicago in 1947 and took a job as a taster at Campbell’s Soup. He made a stable wage. He married. He had children. His paycheck was his own. No Klansmen stripped him of the vote. When he walked down the street, he did not have to move because a white man was walking past. He did not have to take off his hat or avert his gaze. His journey from peonage to full citizenship seemed near-complete. Only one item was missing—a home, that final badge of entry into the sacred order of the American middle class of the Eisenhower years.

In 1961, Ross and his wife bought a house in North Lawndale, a bustling community on Chicago’s West Side. North Lawndale had long been a predominantly Jewish neighborhood, but a handful of middle-class African Americans had lived there starting in the ’40s. The community was anchored by the sprawling Sears, Roebuck headquarters. North Lawndale’s Jewish People’s Institute actively encouraged blacks to move into the neighborhood, seeking to make it a “pilot community for interracial living.” In the battle for integration then being fought around the country, North Lawndale seemed to offer promising terrain. But out in the tall grass, highwaymen, nefarious as any Clarksdale kleptocrat, were lying in wait.

Three months after Clyde Ross moved into his house, the boiler blew out. This would normally be a homeowner’s responsibility, but in fact, Ross was not really a homeowner. His payments were made to the seller, not the bank. And Ross had not signed a normal mortgage. He’d bought “on contract”: a predatory agreement that combined all the responsibilities of homeownership with all the disadvantages of renting—while offering the benefits of neither. Ross had bought his house for \$27,500. The seller, not the previous homeowner but a new kind of middleman, had bought it for only \$12,000 six months before selling it to Ross. In a contract sale, the seller kept the deed until the contract was paid in full—and, unlike with a normal mortgage, Ross would acquire no equity in the meantime. If he missed a single payment, he would immediately forfeit his \$1,000 down payment, all his monthly payments, and the property itself.

The men who peddled contracts in North Lawndale would sell homes at inflated prices and then evict families who could not pay—taking their down payment and their monthly installments as profit. Then they’d bring in another black family, rinse, and repeat. “He loads them up with payments they can’t meet,” an office secretary told *The Chicago Daily News* of her boss, the speculator Lou Fushanis, in 1963. “Then he takes the property away from them. He’s sold some of the buildings three or four times.”

Ross had tried to get a legitimate mortgage in another neighborhood, but was told by a loan officer that there was no financing available. The truth was that there was no financing for people like Clyde Ross. From the 1930s through the 1960s, black people across the country were largely cut out of the legitimate home-mortgage market through means both legal and extralegal. Chicago

whites employed every measure, from “restrictive covenants” to bombings, to keep their neighborhoods segregated.

Their efforts were buttressed by the federal government. In 1934, Congress created the Federal Housing Administration. The FHA insured private mortgages, causing a drop in interest rates and a decline in the size of the down payment required to buy a house. But an insured mortgage was not a possibility for Clyde Ross. The FHA had adopted a system of maps that rated neighborhoods according to their perceived stability. On the maps, green areas, rated “A,” indicated “in demand” neighborhoods that, as one appraiser put it, lacked “a single foreigner or Negro.” These neighborhoods were considered excellent prospects for insurance. Neighborhoods where black people lived were rated “D” and were usually considered ineligible for FHA backing. They were colored in red. Neither the percentage of black people living there nor their social class mattered. Black people were viewed as a contagion. Redlining went beyond FHA-backed loans and spread to the entire mortgage industry, which was already rife with racism, excluding black people from most legitimate means of obtaining a mortgage.

“A government offering such bounty to builders and lenders could have required compliance with a nondiscrimination policy,” Charles Abrams, the urban-studies expert who helped create the New York City Housing Authority, wrote in 1955. “Instead, the FHA adopted a racial policy that could well have been culled from the Nuremberg laws.”

The devastating effects are cogently outlined by Melvin L. Oliver and Thomas M. Shapiro in their 1995 book, *Black Wealth/White Wealth*:

Locked out of the greatest mass-based opportunity for wealth accumulation in American history, African Americans who desired and were able to afford home ownership found themselves consigned to central-city communities where their investments were affected by the “self-fulfilling prophecies” of the FHA appraisers: cut off from sources of new investment[,] their homes and communities deteriorated and lost value in comparison to those homes and communities that FHA appraisers deemed desirable.

In Chicago and across the country, whites looking to achieve the American dream could rely on a legitimate credit system backed by the government. Blacks were herded into the sights of unscrupulous lenders who took them for money and for sport. “It was like people who like to go out and shoot lions in Africa. It was the same thrill,” a housing attorney told the historian Beryl Satter in her 2009 book, *Family Properties*. “The thrill of the chase and the kill.”

The kill was profitable. At the time of his death, Lou Fushanis owned more than 600 properties, many of them in North Lawndale, and his estate was estimated to be worth \$3 million. He’d made much of this money by exploiting the frustrated hopes of black migrants like Clyde Ross. During this period, according to one estimate, 85 percent of all black home buyers who bought in Chicago bought on contract. “If anybody who is well established in this business in Chicago doesn’t earn \$100,000 a year,” a contract seller told *The Saturday Evening Post* in 1962, “he is loafing.”

Contract sellers became rich. North Lawndale became a ghetto.

**6. Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*, 2005**

*Chapter 6: The Fight for “Freedom of Association”: School Desegregation and White Withdrawal* (pp. 169–172)

In their struggle to preserve segregated education, these white parents insisted that they had a right to choose what kind of schools their children attended and, more important, what kind of children attended school alongside their own. Although this seemed a narrow concern, “freedom of association” would serve as a unifying principle for the different strands of segregationist resistance, linking the homeowners’ organizations of the past, who insisted they had a right to choose their neighbors, with the future campaigns of businessmen, who insisted they had a right to select their customers. Taken together, these movements in defense of whites’ freedom of association accelerated the earlier movement away from community and consideration of common interests and instead towards individuality, privatization, and concern for self-interest above all else. (pp. 163–164)

As whites abandoned public schools, private schools surfaced as an attractive alternative.....But other private schools, established by major religious denominations, long before rulings against segregated education, did, in truth, provide shelter for segregation....By the early 1960s, with the token integration of Atlanta’s public schools and the total collapse of Atlanta’s segregation academies, the city’s established private schools found themselves in the uncomfortable position of being the last bastion of segregated education in the “city too busy to hate.” Nowhere was this unease more keenly felt than in private religious schools.

**7. “Choosing a School for My Daughter in a Segregated City,” Nikole Hannah-Jones, *The New York Times Magazine*, June 9, 2016**

In a city where white children are only 15 percent of the more than one million public-school students, half of them are clustered in just 11 percent of the schools, which not coincidentally include many of the city’s top performers. Part of what makes those schools desirable to white parents, aside from the academics, is that they have some students of color, but not too many. This carefully curated integration, the kind that allows many white parents to boast that their children’s public schools look like the United Nations, comes at a steep cost for the rest of the city’s black and Latino children.

The New York City public-school system is 41 percent Latino, 27 percent black and 16 percent Asian. Three-quarters of all students are low-income. In 2014, the Civil Rights Project at the University of California, Los Angeles, released a report showing that New York City public schools are among the most segregated in the country. Black and Latino children here have become increasingly isolated, with 85 percent of black students and 75 percent of Latino students attending “intensely” segregated schools — schools that are less than 10 percent white.

For many white Americans, millions of black and Latino children attending segregated schools may



seem like a throwback to another era, a problem we solved long ago. And legally, we did. In 1954, the Supreme Court issued its landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, striking down laws that forced black and white children to attend separate schools. But while *Brown v. Board* targeted segregation by state law, we have proved largely unwilling to address segregation that is maintained by other means, resulting from the nation's long and racist history.

In New York City, home to the largest black population in the country, the decision was celebrated by many liberals as the final strike against school segregation in the "backward" South. But Kenneth Clark [an African-American psychologist whose work was cited by the Court in the *Brown* decision], the first black person to earn a doctorate in psychology at Columbia University and to hold a permanent professorship at City College of New York, was quick to dismiss Northern righteousness on race matters. At a meeting of the Urban League around the time of the decision, he charged that though New York had no law requiring segregation, it intentionally separated its students by assigning them to schools based on their race or building schools deep in segregated neighborhoods. In many cases, Clark said, black children were attending schools that were worse than those attended by their black counterparts in the South....

Legally and culturally, we've come to accept segregation once again. Today, across the country, black children are more segregated than they have been at any point in nearly half a century. Except for a few remaining court-ordered desegregation programs, intentional integration almost never occurs unless it's in the interests of white students. This is even the case in New York City, under the stewardship of Mayor de Blasio, who campaigned by highlighting the city's racial and economic inequality. De Blasio and his schools chancellor, Carmen Fariña, have acknowledged that they don't believe their job is to force school integration. "I want to see diversity in schools organically," Fariña said at a town-hall meeting in Lower Manhattan in February. "I don't want to see mandates." The shift in language that trades the word "integration" for "diversity" is critical. Here in this city, as in many, diversity functions as a boutique offering for the children of the privileged but does little to ensure quality education for poor black and Latino children....

While suburban parents, who are mostly white, say they are selecting schools based on test scores, the racial makeup of a school actually plays a larger role in their school decisions, according to a 2009 study published in *The American Journal of Education*. Amy Stuart Wells, a professor of sociology and education at Columbia University's Teachers College, found the same thing when she studied how white parents choose schools in New York City. "In a post-racial era, we don't have to say it's about race or the color of the kids in the building," Wells told me. "We can concentrate poverty and kids of color and then fail to provide the resources to support and sustain those schools, and then we can see a school full of black kids and then say, 'Oh, look at their test scores.' It's all very tidy now, this whole system."

Last June, de Blasio signed the School Diversity Accountability Act into law. But the law mandates only that the Department of Education report segregation numbers, not that it do anything to integrate schools. De Blasio declined to be interviewed, but when asked at a news conference in November why the city did not at least do what it could to redraw attendance lines, he defended the property rights of affluent parents who buy into neighborhoods to secure entry into heavily



white schools. “You have to also respect families who have made a decision to live in a certain area,” he said, because families have “made massive life decisions and investments because of which school their kid would go to.” The mayor suggested there was little he could do because school segregation simply was a reflection of New York’s stark housing segregation, entrenched by decades of discriminatory local and federal policy. “This is the history of America,” he said.

Of course, de Blasio is right: Housing segregation and school segregation have always been entwined in America. But the opportunity to buy into “good” neighborhoods with “good” schools that de Blasio wants to protect has never been equally available to all....

Housing discrimination was legal until 1968. Even if black Americans managed to secure home loans, many homes were off-limits, either because they had provisions in their deeds prohibiting their sale to black buyers or because entire communities — including publicly subsidized middle-class developments like Levittown on Long Island and Stuyvesant Town in Manhattan — barred black home buyers and tenants outright. .... Scholars attribute a large part of the yawning wealth gap between black and white Americans — the typical white person has 13 times the wealth of a typical black person — to discriminatory housing policies....

This sense of helplessness in the face of such entrenched segregation is what makes so alluring the notion, embraced by liberals and conservatives, that we can address school inequality not with integration but by giving poor, segregated schools more resources and demanding of them more accountability. True integration, true equality, requires a surrendering of advantage, and when it comes to our own children, that can feel almost unnatural. ... Even Kenneth Clark, the psychologist whose research showed the debilitating effects of segregation on black children, chose not to enroll his children in the segregated schools he was fighting against. “My children,” he said, “only have one life.” But so do the children relegated to this city’s segregated schools. They have only one life, too.

#### **8. “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review*, July, 1991.**

The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite--that it frequently conflates or ignores intra group differences. In the context of violence against women, this elision of difference is problematic, fundamentally because the violence that many women experience is often shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class.

My objective here is to advance the telling of that location by exploring the race and gender dimensions of violence against women of color....I consider how the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism, and how these experiences tend not to be represented within the discourse of either feminism or antiracism. Because of their intersectional identity as both women *and* people of color within discourses that

are shaped to respond to one *or* the other, the interests and experience of women of color are frequently marginalized within both.



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### **Suggested Supplementary Reading**

#### **Structural Advantage and Disadvantage**

When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America by Ira Katznelson

The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America by Richard Rothstein

#### **History**

Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America edited by James Allen (also an online exhibit: [withoutsanctuary.org](http://withoutsanctuary.org))

Slavery By Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II by Douglas Blackmon

Blood At the Root: A Racial Cleansing in America by Patrick Phillips