

George Lipsitz “The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy

Main Point: Whiteness has affected all aspects of America. The emergence of whiteness became a reality to Americans due to the segregation of whites and minorities, such as slavery and immigration restriction. The power whiteness possesses moved past segregating whites and minorities socially or culturally. It went forward to segregate whites from others economically as well as politically. The possessive investment in whiteness is very present in public policy. Laws and acts have passed in America which covertly and in some instances overtly separates whites and minorities by having an underlying rule that seems to be fair but truly segregates minorities and whites. A great example is the Federal Housing Act of 1934. It allowed for many Americans to take possession of a home. The Federal Housing Administration conducted appraisals and surveys that appointed money to whites and not to minorities.

Central Issues and Concepts:

Segregation has a place in all avenues of America. This is most significant in public policy in recent years. De jure segregation: segregation that is imposed by law. To keep America from becoming a melting pot whites initiate different acts, laws, and other initiatives to keep America segregated. Some initiatives that were in place to aid minorities actually made their situations worse. One example is urban renewal: slum clearance, these policies attempted to renew blighted urban areas by redeveloping the land. Another example is superfund: aid to communities to cleanup and abatement of the effects of living near abandoned industrial waste sites.

Two Key Quotes:

“Conscious and deliberate actions have institutionalized group identity in the United States, not just through the dissemination of cultural stories but also through systematic efforts from colonial times to the present to create a possessive investment in whiteness for European Americans.” (Pg. 147)

“Political and cultural struggles over power shape the contours and dimensions of racism in any era.” (pg. 147)

Two Questions:

--Does the success of some minorities blind whites of the still existing racist society in which we live?

--Money rules all of America this is evident in urban renewal but does race surpass the all mighty dollar?