



The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics, Revised and Expanded Edition

George Lipsitz

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In this unflinching look at white supremacy, George Lipsitz argues that racism is a matter of interests as well as attitudes, a problem of property as well as pigment. Above and beyond personal feelings and acts of individual prejudice, whiteness is a structured advantage that produced unfair gains and unearned rewards for whites while imposing impediments to asset accumulation, employment, housing, and health care for members of aggrieved racial groups. Reaching beyond the black/white binary, Lipsitz shows how whiteness works in respect to Asian Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. Lipsitz delineates the weaknesses embedded in civil rights laws, the racialised dimensions of economic restructuring and deindustrialization, and the effects of environmental racism, job discrimination, and school segregation. He also analyzes the centrality of whiteness to U.S. culture, the racial appeals encoded within patriotic nationalism, commercialized leisure, and political advertising. Perhaps most important, he identifies the sustained and perceptive critique of white privilege embedded in the art and politics of the radical black tradition. This revised and expanded edition includes an essay about the impact of Hurricane Katrina on working class Blacks in New Orleans, whose perpetual struggle for dignity and self determination has been obscured by the city's image as a tourist party town.

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