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Jews On The Move: Jewish Migration & Connection to Whiteness

Part I: Introduction

This research project will explore the usefulness of the main frameworks used by scholars and others to explicate the pattern of Jewish migration from urban to suburban areas during the mid-twentieth century. Although some scholars have viewed these migration patterns in terms of particular local contexts, without situating them in the context of larger patterns of Jewish migration throughout the United States, others view it as part of the broader process of white flight. Primarily used to describe United States migration patterns during the twentieth century, white flight is "the departure of whites from places (as urban neighborhoods or schools) increasingly or predominantly populated by minorities."[1] Using demographic information from census data and accompanying scholarship to compare three cities – New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles – were the experiences of Jews in these locations unique, local, and particular, or part of larger migration patterns in the United States during the mid-twentieth century?

In order to understand the migration of Jews during the mid-twentieth century, an assessment of the factors involved in this sociological phenomenon is required. The research literature indicates some of the factors that influenced these migration patterns such as age, governmental policies of the cities they moved from and into, and the socio-economic status of the individuals and families who moved at this time. In order to develop a nuanced explication of these movements of Jews, I will investigate both those factors that pushed Jews away from urban

[1] Merriam Webster, White Flight (Merriam Webster), April 20, 2016, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/white%20flight.

areas, as well as the attractions that pulled Jews toward suburban areas. Did increased migration of racial minorities into urban areas, increased integration in educational institutions, and fears that the closeness of minorities would lower their property values push Jews out of urban areas? Did the quiet lifestyle, better educational opportunities, more upscale selection of houses, and possibility of increased property values pull Jews toward suburban areas? This research project will consider and analyze all of these factors, as well as analyze the plausibility of the connection between these factors and larger phenomenon of white flight during the mid-twentieth century.

To achieve a more thorough analysis of the processes Jews participated in through their migration patterns, an exploration of how these migrations differed in various geographic areas throughout the United States is required. An examination of both local and national demographic data and scholarship on the factors contributing to white flight will provide important information. This research project will analyze the population movements of the urban and suburban areas of New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles, all areas that were geographically diverse and held large Jewish populations throughout the twentieth century. Probing and comparing the demographic data detailing the movement of Jews from urban to suburban areas of these regions during the mid-twentieth century will not only allow me to identify the processes involved in each local area, but also to situate each site within regional and national trends. Before analyzing the causes of Jewish migration patterns, including the factors that pushed them out of urban areas and the factors that pulled them into suburban areas, it is necessary to examine the demographic information detailing these population movements during the mid-twentieth century. Following the examination of demographic information and scholarship on Jewish migration patterns, this research project will explain and argue for an interpretation of these migration patterns in terms of white flight.

Part II: Jewish Migration Patterns – Urban to Suburban Areas

This section focuses specifically upon the data concerning Jewish migration patterns from urban to suburban areas during the mid-twentieth century. Although some researchers study population migration patterns from a national perspective, this research project draws its primary material from the data collected in population studies conducted by the local Jewish federations in New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles. The analysis of these surveys by scholars studying Jewish migration patterns during the twentieth century in the United States will further inform this research project. In addition to historical information demonstrating the broad social factors shaping Jewish migration at this time, the synthesis of scholarship includes additional demographic information. This research project focuses upon both urban and suburban areas, allowing for an analysis that reflects the distinctive characteristics of both cities and suburbs, and also develops a comparative analysis of how certain features of urban and suburban areas influenced migration patterns. However, it is important to note that the materials available for understanding the demographic information for each geographic area vary in depth and scope, making it difficult to develop complete and holistic comparisons between the different areas.

In examining the migration of Jews within the New York City area during the mid-twentieth century, there is a difference between the municipal definition of a city, bounded by particular geographic limits, and the qualitative distinctions between dense, urban-style areas with tall apartment buildings, high levels of walkability, and public transportation, and more sprawling, suburban-style areas that feature private, single-family homes with lawns and fences that may nonetheless be included within the bounds of the municipal definition of a city. For the purposes of this research project, after examining all of the demographic studies utilized in this examination and their selected areas of study, the urban area includes the five boroughs of New

York City (Queens, Manhattan, The Bronx, Brooklyn, and Staten Island), and the suburban area includes the counties of Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester. For example, the study of Jewish migration patterns in New York City reveals that the distinctions between urban and suburban areas are not so clear. Although Queens is technically within New York City, many parts of Queens hold suburban characteristics, including lower population density and fewer multiple unit residential buildings. This research project has an expanded focus upon urban and suburban areas, examining beyond the clearly defined geographic entities of cities and suburbs.

Small numbers of Jews have lived in New York City since the seventeenth century; however, the immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe to the New York City area increased steadily from the mid-nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century, reaching 2,597,000 Jews in 1957, or 25.1 percent of the entire population of the area.[2] The data show that although there was an increase in in the first half of the twentieth century in the numbers of Jews living within New York City and its suburbs, from 1930 to 1957 there was actually a decline in the population of Jews in New York City and its suburbs. The borough of Queens, however, showed an increase in its Jewish population, going from 4.8% of New York City Jews in 1930 to 20% in 1957.[3] Perhaps this exception demonstrates the ways in which Jews and other people considered many areas of Queens more suburban than other parts of the city, leading Jews to not feel as compelled to move away from there. The decreasing Jewish populations of the other boroughs, particularly Manhattan and the Bronx, however, conform to the pattern of Jews' movement to areas outside the most central and urban parts of New York City.

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[2] C. Morris Horowitz and Lawrence J. Kaplan, *The Estimated Jewish Population of the New York Area, 1900-1975* (New York, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Table 6), 1959.

[3] Sidney Goldstein, *American Jewry, 1970: A Demographic Profile, The American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 72* (New York, American Jewish Committee, 1971), 40.

As a result of these trends during the first half of the twentieth century, the distribution of New York area Jews in 1957 showed 81.9% living in New York City, and 18% in suburban areas: 12.8% in Nassau, 0.8% in Suffolk, and 4.5% in Westchester.[4] However, by including Queens as part of the suburban population toward which Jews migrated, only 62% of the Jews in New York City at the time lived in the city, whereas 38% lived in the suburban areas. While not an especially large suburban Jewish population had accrued between 1930 and 1957, these migration trends continued to grow throughout much of the remainder of the twentieth century. For example, 32% of Jews in the New York City area lived in the suburban areas (including Queens) in 1957; by 1981, the number had risen to 50%: 18% in Nassau, 6% in Suffolk, 7% in Westchester, 19% in Queens, and 50% living in New York City.[5] This demographic information demonstrates that during the mid-twentieth century half of the Jewish population living in the New York City area migrated away from urban areas toward suburban areas.

In order to later consider the interpretation that the effects of white flight influenced Jewish migration patterns, it is necessary to examine additional demographic information about the New York City area at this time. Throughout the first part of the twentieth century, racial minorities, and especially Black people, in the United States gained more economic opportunities and access to resources, including housing.[6] As a result of this trend, New York City's non-White population increased from 7.3% in 1940 to 19.3% in 1957.[7] Another aspect that may have contributed to Jewish migration patterns was a disparity in age demographic for the different parts of the New York City area. For example, by 1981, Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester had

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[4] Horowitz and Kaplan, Jewish Population of the New York Area, 1959, Table 7.
[5] Paul Ritterband and Steven M. Cohen, *The Jewish Population of Greater New York [1981]: A Profile* (New York, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, 1984), Table I.
[6] Matthew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1998), 246-250.
[7] Horowitz and Kaplan, *Jewish Population of the New York Area*, 1959, Table 3.

more families with children living there, holding a higher average number of persons in Jewish households (3.1 persons per household) than the boroughs of New York City (2.4 persons per household).[8] Overall, the demographic information presented here demonstrates a greatly increased number, although not the majority, of Jews in the New York City area migrating from urban to suburban areas during the mid-twentieth century.

In examining the migration patterns of Jews living in the Chicago, Illinois area during the mid-twentieth century, it is important to define the parts of the area that constitute urban and suburban. Drawing upon demographic information from the mid-twentieth century, researchers considered all of the surrounding areas of Chicago as suburban and not within the city limits of Chicago. However, since then, the Chicago city limits may have geographically incorporated some of these areas.[9] For the purposes of this research project, all areas discussed below as part of the suburban areas of Chicago, such as Logan Square and Woodlawn, were individual suburbs or featured suburban characteristics, similar to Queens in the New York City area.

Since Jews first arrived in the Chicago area in the mid-nineteenth century, their population grew drastically from 1,500 in 1860 to 290,000 in 1940; however, after that the overall Jewish population in the Chicago area declined steadily for much of the rest of the twentieth century.[10] Between 1931 and 1951, within the various suburban areas of Chicago, there were drastically different Jewish migration trends. The population of the southern suburban area, including Hyde Park, Woodlawn, and South Shore, increased from 41,881 in 1931 to 55,000 in 1951. The western suburban area, including Austin, East and West Garfield Park, and the previous center of Jewish life Lawndale, experienced a severe decrease in the Jewish population,

[8] Ritterband and Cohen, *Jewish Population of New York Area*, 1981, Table 2.1.
[9] Irving Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago: From Shtetl to Suburb* (Urbana & Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1996), 269 – Table 6.
[10] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago*, 269 – Table 6.

from 130,685 in 1931 to 60,600 in 1951. The Jewish population of the northwestern suburban area, including West Town, Logan Square, and Humboldt Park, decreased slightly from 22,318 in 1931 to 18,100 in 1951. Finally, the northern suburban area experienced a significant increase in the Jewish population, from 56,425 in 1931 to 105,800 in 1951.[11] While the western and northwestern suburban areas of Chicago experienced a decrease in the Jewish population between 1931 and 1951, and the southern suburban area experienced a steady increase, the Jewish population of the northern suburban area increased enormously, expanding its percentage distribution of Jewish population from 20.6% in 1931 to 42% in 1951.[12] Additionally, research from the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago demonstrates that the migration of Jews from within the urban areas of Chicago toward northern suburban areas continued throughout the twentieth century. The percentage of Jews living in the suburban areas of Chicago "rose dramatically from about 4 percent in 1950 to 39.5 percent in 1963, to 51.2 percent in 1973, and to an estimated 67 percent in the early 1990s."[13]

In order to later evaluate the interpretation that the effects of white flight influenced Jewish migration patterns, it is necessary to examine additional demographic information occurring in the Chicago area during this time period. Similarly to New York City, one of the factors that may have pushed Jews toward suburban areas during the mid-twentieth century was the changing racial demographics within the city limits of Chicago. Between 1950 and 1957 the non-White population in Chicago increased 47%, from 509,400 to 749,000. Simultaneously, as the non-white population increased substantially, the white population of Chicago decreased 3.7%, from 3,111,600 to 2,997,300, while that of the suburban areas increased 38%, from

[11] Morris Lapidos and Morris Levin, *Report on Jewish Population of Metropolitan Chicago* (Chicago, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, 1959), 8-12.
[12] Lapidos and Levin, *Jewish Population of Chicago (1959),* 13 – Table 5.
[13] Cutler, *Jews of Chicago*, 256.

1,778,600 to 2,455,100.[14] In addition to changing racial demographics in Chicago, as Jews migrated toward suburban areas, particularly the northern suburban areas of Skokie and Lincolnwood, Jewish builders responded to these migration trends by building thousands of family houses in suburban areas and advertising these new homes to Jews currently living in Chicago.[15] Although the demographic information provides ample evidence of the large movement of Jews from urban to suburban areas of Chicago, suburban areas did not provide Jews with a fully unlimited set of housing options. According a survey performed by the Anti-Defamation League in 1963, approximately "20% of the North Shore suburban real-estate listings were still closed to Jews."[16] In attempting to participate in the Jewish migration patterns of the mid-twentieth century, a small proportion of Jews confronted barriers that slowed or stopped their movement toward suburban areas. However, overall, the demographic information presented here demonstrates a greatly increased number of Jews in the Chicago area migrating from urban to suburban areas during the mid-twentieth century.

Although the overwhelming majority of Jewish immigrants during the nineteenth century settled in eastern cities in the United States, including New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia, a small group of Jewish merchants moved from the eastern part of the country to Los Angeles during the early 1850s in order to "seize the chance for quick wealth" from the recent discovery of gold.[17] Since their arrival in Los Angeles, Jews steadily increased their population during the nineteenth century and by the mid-twentieth century the number of Jews had increased from 130,000 in 1941 to 509,000 in 1967.[18] During the mid-twentieth century, the percentage of Jews

[14] Lapidos and Levin, *Jewish Population of Chicago (1959),* 5.
[15] Cutler, *Jews of Chicago*, 260-261.
[16] Cutler, *Jews of Chicago*, 265.
[17] Max Vorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (San Marino, The Huntington Library, 1970), 6.
[18] Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 287 Appendix I.

living in the urban portion of Los Angeles decreased from 47% in 1959 to 34.8% in 1968. Simultaneously, the northwestern suburban area, particularly the San Fernando Valley, experienced an enormous growth in its share of the Jewish population in the Los Angeles Area, expanding from 17.3% to 25.5% during the same time period.[19] Additionally, from 1959 to 1968, the western suburban area of Los Angeles increased from 22.6% of the Jewish population to 27%, the southern suburban area from 7.6% to 7.9%, and the northeastern suburban area from 4.8% to 5.5%.[20]

In order to later consider the interpretation that the effects of white flight influenced Jewish migration patterns, it is necessary to examine additional demographic information occurring in the Los Angeles area at this time. Although the proportion of Jews living in different parts of the Los Angeles area demonstrate patterns of Jews moving from urban to suburban areas, the Jewish population in these suburban areas was further increased by a large population of Jews who arrived from other cities throughout the country. As the United States population began to spread out across the country during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Jews also participated in these migration patterns, including 44.5% of "Jewish households in Los Angeles were estimated to have resided in southern California only since 1940."[21] Jews held a significantly higher median income than the average worker did in the city. For example, in 1950, the "average Jewish head of household attained $5,077" while the "median income of employed men was $2,879."[22] Similar to Jewish builders and developers in Chicago, 20% of southern California homebuilders were economically successful Jews that often advertised their newly built homes in the suburban areas to other Jews. While not a large proportion of

[19] Fred Massarik, *A Report on the Jewish Population of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles, Jewish Federation-Council of Greater Los Angeles, 1968), 28 – Table 1.
[20] Massarik, *Jewish Population of Los Angeles*, 28 – Table 1.
[21] Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 226.
[22] Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 231.

homebuilders, this proportion is significantly more than the Jewish proportion of the Los Angeles area population during the mid-twentieth century. In examining the number of people in Jewish households in the Los Angeles area, "the largest are in the suburbs, particularly in the San Fernando Valley.[23]

Although the demographic information provides evidence of a large number of Jews moving from urban to suburban areas of Los Angeles, these trends do not represent the experience of every individual or family. For example, in the Boyle Heights area of Los Angeles, the Jewish population "plummeted by more than 72 percent" between 1940 and 1955.[24] While an extremely small portion of the Jewish population, this small group rejected the practice of the overwhelming majority of Jews living in Boyle Heights during the 1950s who were moving from the eastside of Los Angeles, where the racial minority population was growing, to the western and northern suburbs of the city, in order to more fully experience the benefits and advantages of whiteness in United States society.

Experiencing a time period of general acceptance in society and expanded opportunities for education and occupations, Jews seized more opportunities to broaden their connection with United States mainstream society through their movement to suburban areas of New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Although particular examples demonstrate some inconsistency with Jews moving to the suburban areas of cities, these counterexamples do not negate the overwhelming majority of data that demonstrate the significant movement of Jews from urban to suburban areas during the mid-twentieth century.

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[23] Massarik, *Jewish Population of Los Angeles*, 6 – Table 2.
[24] George Sanchez, "What's Good for Boyle Heights is Good for the Jews: Creating Multiculturalism on the Eastside during the 1950s" (American Quarterly, Volume 56, Number 3, 2004), 633-634.

Part III: Jewish Immigration & Racial Identity

While it is plausible to portray these migration patterns as unique and unrelated experiences, this research project presents an alternative interpretation of these events that examines the influence of white flight as it applies to Jews. The focus of this analysis begins during the late eighteenth century and continues through the mid-twentieth century. In order to more fully understand the migration patterns of Jews and analyze its connection to white flight, it is necessary to thoroughly explore the racial conceptions and perceptions of Jews and their complex relationship with the benefits of whiteness in the United States. While many Jews identified with their community through religious connections, the history of Jews in the United States makes clear that many people who identify as Jews do not see themselves as religious, but rather also connect to one another and to Judaism through culture and ethnicity. Defining Judaism as a religion, culture, and ethnicity complicates the way Jews see themselves, and how others define them in the United States. Overall, Jewish "racial identity" was ambiguous and fluid throughout their experiences in the United States. This section of this research project will examine and analyze Jews' journey in the United States toward being more fully accepted, although never completely, into mainstream, white society.

Although Jews first arrived in the United States during the sixteenth century, a thorough examination of Jewish racial conceptions and perceptions begins in the late eighteenth century, following the independence of the United States from England. In 1790, the United States Congress passed a significant immigration law, stating "all free white persons who, have, or shall migrate into the United States, and shall give satisfactory proof, before a magistrate, by oath, that they intend to reside therein, and shall take an oath of allegiance, and shall have resided in the

United States for one whole year, shall be entitled to the rights of citizenship."[25] This law created an inherent connection between citizenship and whiteness that WASPs (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) would continue to re-establish and perpetuate throughout much of the history of the United States. Although the 1790 immigration law was radically inclusive of European immigrants and allowed for people from many different European countries to enter the country, the law directly excluded and discriminated against Asians, Hispanics, and Blacks. As Jewish immigrants came to the United States throughout the nineteenth century, WASPs racialized them, deciding who among the immigrants were white and therefore able to obtain citizenship, and who belonged to which racial group. WASPs racialized all immigrant communities, such as the Irish, the Italians, the Slavs, and the Jews, and defined them as not white in order to exclude them from certain benefits and advantages in society.[26] Although these forms of oppression would shift throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, WASPs would never fully accept Jews and other immigrant groups into white, mainstream United States society.

In addition to creating connections between personal characteristics and behavior traits, WASPs racialized immigrants and ethnic groups by expanding the prevalence and influence of eugenic science, emphasizing, "Nationality was primarily a function of race, and race was the prime determinant of behavior."[27] The expansion of eugenic theories directly supported certain advocacy efforts with immigration policies and laws, including the Immigration Restriction League wanting to exclude all immigrants that lower the "mental, moral, and physical average" of the American people[28]. During the nineteenth century, WASPs reinforced created racial "categories – designations coined for the sake of grouping and separating peoples along lines of

[25] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 22.
[26] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 14.
[27] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 78.
[28] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 80-81.

presumed difference."[29] In racializing immigrants and ethnic groups, WASPs connected physical and psychological characteristics and actions of individuals with their particular identities. For example, in 1877, the Hilton Grand Union Hotel in Saratoga Springs rejected Joseph Seligman, a Jewish immigrant and prominent businessman, from their establishment. WASPs meticulously constructed racialization tactics and strategies that connected Joseph Seligman's wealth and success in the United States to his Jewish identity because they believed that "Jewish elites had begun to challenge traditional status hierarchies in Gilded Age America."[30] Although race as a conceptual category existed, WASPs in the United States utilized racial features of Jews as a perceptual category in order to reveal certain political positions or social beliefs. While there is nothing especially fascinating with having "Jewish" physical features, societal connections between those features and certain personality traits or actions, especially thrifty or cheap business transactions, create an enormous contrast between Jews and the WASP population. Discriminatory acts, including the incident with Joseph Seligman, demonstrate how WASPs connected many stereotypes and portrayals of minorities or people in the pan-white category to other factors, including socio-economic status, profession, and living location. Complementary to the government policies surrounding the limitation of immigration to the United States, nativist social movements expanded throughout the nineteenth century, demonstrating WASPs' disapproval of the allowance of immigrants into the country through political campaigns and sustained propaganda tactics against immigrant groups.[31] In the twentieth century, the expanding support for eugenics, as well as frustrations from WASPs and nativists around the growing influence of immigrants led to the United States Congress passing the 1924 Johnson Act which constructed a limiting quota system "based on two percent of each group's populations according

[29] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 4.
[30] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 164.
[31] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 204.

to the 1890 census."[32] Through growing nativist sentiments and widespread racialization strategies, including connecting personal characteristics with particular actions and the expansion of eugenics as a means of reinforcing racial distinctions between people of different ethnic groups, WASPs successfully created strict and limiting racial categories in order to expand their power and influence in United States society and create a complicated system of racial perceptions and conceptions for pan-white groups, including Jews.

The relationship between Jews and black people demonstrates the complex development of the racial conceptions and perceptions of Jews throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. As immigrants initially marginalized from the mainstream, white society, Jews "often lived and conducted business among African-Americans"; this created areas, such as Harlem in the New York City area, which featured strong Jewish and African-American presences and interactions.[33] However, beginning in the 1920s, as black people migrated to the northern United States from southern states infused with Jim Crow laws, WASPs defined Jews, along with other immigrant groups, as white in order to buttress the numbers of white people the WASPS could rely upon in their efforts to stay physically distant from black people. Striving to maintain their political, social, and racial superiority in society, WASPs greatly contributed to the gradually shifting racial identification of Jews through their installation and maintenance of the racial binary created in the twentieth century that would divide all participants of society into two distinct categories: black and white. Following the *Halladjian (1909)* case that classified Armenian and other people from the Middle East as white, the United States simultaneously created a hierarchy that put WASPs above pan-white people, and broadened its definition of

[32] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 83.
[33] Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006), 76-77.

white to prove that "white simply meant everyone who was neither Negro nor Indian."[34] While Jews confronted societal pressures and the challenges the racial binary created in their relationship with African-Americans because of the Jews' opportunity to benefit from various forms of whiteness in the United States, Jews also struggled internally to understand society's expectations of them to maintain racism and exploit their whiteness while remaining outsiders because of their religious differences with mainstream, WASP society. Hoping to help the United States provide more opportunities for black people, Jewish philanthropists sought to use their wealth and power to contribute to organizations such as the NAACP, the Tuskegee Institute, and Black YMCAs, and meaningfully address challenges in the African-American community.[35] Additionally, rabbis such as Leonard Levy, Joseph Krauskopf, and Stephen S. Wise, allowed black organizations to use their synagogues for meetings and utilized their power and influence in the Jewish community to challenge their fellow Jews to help improve the situation for Black people in the United States.[36] The relationship between Southern Jews and black people reveal the extreme societal pressure placed Jews to maintain and perpetuate the racial binary through the oppression of black people. Southern Jews were more conflicted than Northern Jews in terms of their relationships with black people because of their fear of disassociation of whiteness and ultimate alienation in the extremely racialized Southern society. Even amongst the greatest pressure from society, Southern Jews did very little to further racism against black people.[37] Throughout much of the nineteenth century and first part of the twentieth century, as Jews experienced the pressure of WASPs in United States society to conform to a racist structure that would oppress black people, Jews constantly found themselves in between

[34] Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 232.
[35] Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*, 71.
[36] Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*, 70-71.
[37] Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*, 57.

the racial hierarchical structure, simultaneously receiving benefits of whiteness and feeling marginalized from WASPs in society.

In examining the complicated and complex circumstances and conceptions of race for Jews in the United States during this time period, it is necessary to also analyze the ways in which Jews received some of the benefits and advantages of whiteness. Through their identification under the 1790 immigration and naturalization law, Jews were able to enter the United States and become citizens because WASPs considered them "free white persons."[38] During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, WASPs continually oppressed pan-White ethnic groups throughout society; however, "as long as a group was not of color, racialization might impede socioeconomic advancement, but it never foreclosed it altogether."[39] In a 1967 New York Times opinion article, "Negroes are Anti-Semitic Because They are Anti-White", James Baldwin powerfully describes his experiences growing up in Harlem and the hatred the Black community held toward Jews because "the Jew is a white man" and gained the benefits of whiteness in society.[40] Additionally, Baldwin's experiences as a child demonstrate that Jews were "already enjoying the structural benefits" of their whiteness before World War II, the time period in which many Jewish whiteness scholars believe the connection between Jews and whiteness significantly strengthens.[41] Beginning in the early twentieth century, Jews held significant political positions and contributed to the definition of whiteness in the United States, including Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, a white Jew, ruling that "Asians and South Asians were not white" in the *Ozawa (1922)* and *Thind (1923)* cases.[42]

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[38] Jacob Dorman, *Jewish Whiteness Studies' Color Problem*, 12.
[39] Dorman, *Jewish Whiteness Studies' Color Problem*, 11.
[40] James Baldwin, "Negroes are Anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-White", New York Times, (New York), April 9, 1967.
[41] Baldwin, "Negroes are Anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-White", 1967.
[42] Dorman, *Jewish Whiteness Studies' Color Problem*, 22.

The racial conceptions and perceptions of Jews were incredibly complex and constantly shifted due to influences from government policies, relationships to other immigrants and races, and individual circumstances in United States society. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Jews in the United States struggled to understand, create, and solidify their racial identity in a society that valued whiteness more than other racial characteristics and pushed Jews to knowingly participate in aspects of whiteness. In the next section, this research project will specifically examine the relationship between Jews' connection to whiteness and its influence on Jews desiring to leave urban areas and live in homes in suburban areas.

Part IV: Racial Identity & Housing Activities

As Jews solidified their placement as mostly white in United States society during the mid-twentieth century, their connection to the benefits of whiteness would influence their decision to move from urban to suburban areas and thus contribute to white flight. In addition to the demographic information presented above, Jews left "downtowns (usually described by contemporaries as a ghetto) and moved into the emerging suburbs" of many major American cities, including Boston, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and St. Louis.[43] As racial minorities gained more civil rights and opportunities for economic success in cities around the country, white people migrated toward the suburban areas of cities in order to seize opportunities made exclusive to them, including better housing locations, educational opportunities, and security.

Continuing to examine the demographic information concerning Jewish migration patterns during the mid-twentieth century in the United States through its connections to race and housing, several factors arise from the previous examination of demographic data from New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles and demonstrate the significant participation of Jews in the phenomenon of white flight. First, as demonstrated in the data indicating the increase in the non-

[43] Marc Lee Raphael, *Judaism in America* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2003), 54.

White population in urban areas, Jews viewed this influx as threatening to their provisionally white identity and moved toward suburban areas in order to be more closely associated with a larger population of white people.[44] Another factor that may have pulled Jews toward suburban areas in the United States was increasing family sizes and the opportunity to have a larger home for families with children. Directly connected with Jews wanting larger living spaces, another factor that pulled Jews to participate in these migration patterns and move toward suburban areas was their increasing socio-economic status in this prosperous economy. An important aspect of these economic advances and successes for Jews were the increasingly fair employment practices that finally allowed Jews to more fully participate in once exclusive fields, such as accounting and law.[45] While still not fully accepted into mainstream, WASP society, Jews generally felt more accepted by WASPs and other ethnic groups in society, correlating with "continuously higher education and changing occupations, lower levels of self-employment, weakening family ties, and reduced discrimination."[46]

Although the racist attitudes of white people sustained white flight, government policies that created exclusive opportunities for white people, encouraging them to move toward suburban areas, and reinforcing a segregated society amplified the effects of white flight. While the United States created housing anti-discrimination laws through the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) in the twentieth century, a detailed and prolonged process of "resistance, refusal, and renegotiation" from realtors ensured that racist and segregated housing laws continued to increase the power of white people in American society.[47] Some of the racist real

[44] Diane Harris, *Little White Houses: How the Postwar Home Constructed Race in America*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2013) 36.
[45] Vorspan and Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, 233-237.
[46] Goldstein, *American Jewry, 1970*, 85-87.
[47] George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2006), 29.

estate practices allowed by government policies include "redlining (denying loans to areas inhabited by racial minorities), steering (directing minority buyers solely to homes in minority neighborhoods), and block busting (playing on white fears of a change in neighborhood racial balance to promote panic sales, getting whites to sell their homes for small amounts and then selling those same homes to minority buyers at extremely high prices)."[48] The influential lobbying group, National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), supported these particular policies allowed by the United States government. The NAHB created strong alliances with the FHA and other government housing entities in order to expand the "massive development of single-family dwellings" throughout suburban areas in the United States.[49] The perpetuation of white flight during the mid-twentieth century through government policies and associated lobbying groups created exclusive opportunities for white people to benefit throughout society and continue the segregation and oppression of racial minorities.

Together with the impact of government policies upon white flight, home developers, real estate agents, and media professionals successfully constructed an image and reality of the suburban home connected to the housing benefits of whiteness during the mid-twentieth century. In addition to participating in white flight by migrating to suburban areas as a means of strengthening their connection to whiteness, Jews were also architects of white flight during the mid-twentieth century. Within New York City, Jews served as 40% of all developers in the 1930s that managed "an astounding eighty percent of all New York City real estate development."[50] In the Philadelphia area, a group of Jewish war veterans segregated their "cooperative housing development in the Philadelphia suburb of Abington Township" by "agreeing not to open their development to Blacks" because of pressure from other White

[48] Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, 27.
[49] Harris, *Little White Houses*, 36.
[50] Jacob Dorman, *Jewish Whiteness Studies' Color Problem*, 21.

community members.[51] Jews, increasingly viewing themselves as part of the white majority in United States society, chose not to utilize their positions as builders and developers within suburban communities to counteract the discrimination allowed by the government in housing practices.

Increasingly aiming to more fully gain the benefits of whiteness, including security, organization, and privacy, Jews increased their migration into suburban areas of United States cities while remaining complicit with discriminatory policies and actions. For many people in the United States, the connection between housing and the ideals of security, organization, and privacy were valued aspects of society because of their appreciation in architectural drawings, purchasing options in stories, television advertisements, and landscape plans. One of the main reasons Jews migrated toward suburban areas during the mid-twentieth century was the opportunity for a more secure location for themselves and families. From a practical security perspective, "homeownership served as a safeguard against the vicissitudes of unfair landlords, unpredictable rents, and homelessness."[52] Additionally, Jews were seeking security in their assimilation into United States society and the further erasure of their identity as a non-White ethnic group. From a logistical perspective, privacy in suburban areas included a "well-designed postwar garden" surrounded by fencing that emphasized separation between homes in a neighborhood.[53] Living in suburban areas created opportunities for privacy, something that Jews had been seeking throughout their volatile racial experience in order to escape the minority label and the negative stereotypes and racialization that often accompanied this label. One of these stereotypes that Jews strived to avoid was that of the "dirty nonwhite", describing people of color

[51] Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, 154.
[52] Diane Harris, *Little White Houses*, 15.
[53] Diane Harris, *Little White Houses*, 279.

who did not have the opportunities or access to "home and personal sanitation".[54] Overall, Jews viewed homeownership as an investment in their ability to succeed in the United States because it "represented the ownership not just of real property but of a crucial piece of the American Dream."[55] In addition to factors concerning governmental policies, Jewish builders and developers, and the physical construction and organization of homes in suburban areas, the demographic information presented here demonstrates the crucial component of race in understanding these Jewish migration patterns during the mid-twentieth century.

Part V: Conclusion

As a half-white, half-black Jew, I am incredibly intrigued by the methods used, or not used, by white Jews in the United States to more fully understand their racial identities and privileges in society and support racial minorities. While many Jews proudly declare the role of Jewish leaders and organizations during the American Civil Rights Movement in the mid-twentieth century, Jews' attraction and contribution to Whiteness, segregation, and racism is the component of history the Jewish community fails to take ownership for and declare to society. However, in order for American Jews to fully address contemporary forms of racial injustice, contribute to the current conversations on race throughout the United States, and continue their commitment toward justice and equality for all human beings, Jews in the United States must understand and confront the ways they have contributed to the oppression of racial minorities throughout history. Additionally, this topic has enormous implications for the political, economic, and social position of Jews for the latter half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century because of its discussion of the ways in which Jews identified racially and utilized that identification in United States society.

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[54] Diane Harris, *Little White Houses*, 103.
[55] Diane Harris, *Little White Houses*, 315.

As more American citizens appear to have noticed the harmful effects of mass incarceration, police killings of citizens, and other forms of systemic racism throughout the past several years, American citizens, and in turn members of the American Jewish community, have increasingly chosen to explore and grapple with the concepts of race, privilege, power, and identity. While these conversations may occur because of forced means or pressure from communities and activist groups, I believe some Jews may be participating in these conversations and paying attention to these harmful aspects of society because of their commitment to *Tikkun Olam*, the Jewish value of "repairing the world". One particularly powerful component of racism in the United States is housing discrimination, in which government policies and individual racist actions prevented racial minorities from living in certain areas of cities in order to perpetuate segregation and oppression throughout cities around the country. Observing these practices and their effects upon United States society was especially important during the tumultuous period of the United States Civil Rights Movement in which much of the country was considering the ideas of racism, bigotry, equality, and freedom.

Following the demographic information presented here, it is evident that Jews participated in the large migration patterns that witnessed many white people leaving urban areas and settling in quickly growing suburban areas during the mid-twentieth century in the United States. Although some Jewish whiteness scholars view this phenomenon in strict local contexts and do not connect these movements to larger Jewish migration patterns, others view it as Jewish participation in white flight. Rooted in demographic information and extant scholarship on Jewish movement from urban to suburban areas, this research project explains and argues how an examination of these migration patterns during the mid-twentieth century in the United States demonstrates the impact of white flight and its connecting influence upon race and housing

practices. While Jews suffered from anti-Semitism upon their arrival to the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they held many of the advantages afforded by whiteness in United States society and even perpetuated these inequalities through their participation in the systems that supported white flight during the mid-twentieth century. The combination of a racially volatile and complex experience with racial identity, and their structural opportunities provided through their pan-Whiteness in United States society, created the motivation and opportunity for Jews to seize the advantages of whiteness through white flight during the mid-twentieth century.