



Just Action: How to Challenge Segregation Enacted Under the Color of Law

by Richard Rothstein and Leah Rothstein

Discussion Guide

1. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s successfully challenged many forms of racial segregation, but residential segregation remains unchanged. Do you think that challenging residential segregation is also important for advancing civil rights?
2. *Just Action* says that it doesn't matter where you start to redress segregation, so long as you start somewhere. Which strategies that you read about could benefit your own community? What might the obstacles be to implementing them? Whom would you involve to make each strategy successful?
3. The country has experienced a backlash against programs to advance racial justice, as well as a Supreme Court decision ending affirmative action. How can we continue to redress segregation in the face of such opposition?
4. Is gentrification a positive, negative, or mixed outcome for a lower-income community? Are *Just Action's* proposals practical for mitigating its harms and preserving its benefits?
5. The authors warn that removing artifacts of segregation – such as racially restrictive covenants – risks erasing opportunities to be reminded of our history and motivated to remedy its harms. How should the balance be struck between avoiding the offense of segregation's symbols and learning from them?
6. We have limited funds for affordable housing. Should we spend them only on the lowest-income households most in need, even at the risk of concentrating these families in separate projects, or should we spend limited funds on mixed-income buildings, using some of our scarce resources on modest subsidies for moderate-income households?
7. Why does *Just Action* say that there is not only an opportunity to redress segregation, but an obligation to do so?

8. Must we understand the history of segregation's creation in order to remedy it? Is there an example from the book where understanding history helped to craft and build support for a remedy?

9. Imagine your neighborhood in ten years. Realistically, what changes might you hope to see?