

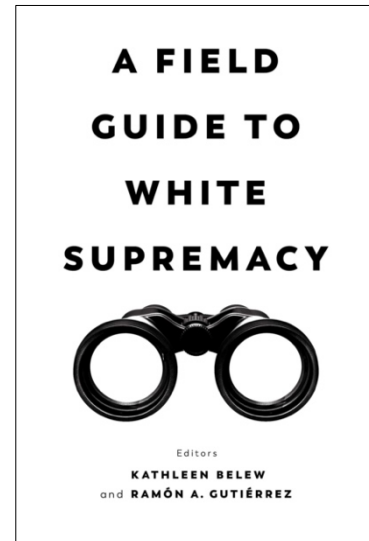
Kathleen Belew and Ramón A. Gutiérrez (Eds.), **A Field Guide to White Supremacy**, Oakland: University of California Press, 2021, 424 pp., \$85.00 (hardcover), \$24.95 (paperback), \$24.95 (ebook).

Reviewed by

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Few edited volumes begin with a style guide for journalists who follow the Associated Press (AP) guidelines in their reporting. In ***A Field Guide to White Supremacy***, an edited volume compiled by Kathleen Belew and Ramón A. Gutiérrez (both at the University of Chicago), readers are not greeted with a traditional introduction to the collection of chapters and essays but rather a style guide for journalists. Written by Belew, with contributions from Khaled Beydoun, Adam Goodman, Carly Goodman, Emily Gorcenski, Nicole Hemmer, Cassie Miller, Cynthia Miller-Idriss, Jessica Ordaz, and Croix Saffin, this opening thought piece notes a gaping issue in writing about White supremacist movements—namely, that scholars and journalists use completely different language to describe and write about the same social problems.



The terms that are disputed by the authors of this opening piece range from immigration, deportation, race, “reverse discrimination,” and the terms “White,” “White power,” and “White supremacist.” “Terrorism,” “accelerationism,” and “political extremism” are also included. The recommendations range from the need to capitalize words like “Black,” “Indigenous,” and “Latinx” to urging journalists to no longer use the term “lone wolf” to describe ideologically motivated violence. This piece serves not just as an alternative style guide but helps to set the stage for readers to have a common vocabulary about the themes that are covered in the coming sections.

Editors Belew and Gutiérrez note in the introduction that the book is meant to truly serve as a field guide, a manual, to train people to notice the social phenomenon of White supremacy and its contours. Offering the volume as a resource for journalists, academics, policymakers, and concerned citizens, *A Field Guide to White Supremacy* promises to help observers notice and name varying forms of White supremacy at both a structural (systems and laws) to hate crimes, to microaggressions (everyday interactions). The guide aids in developing readers’ understanding of the history, sociology, and rhetoric of White supremacy in all of its insidious and more obvious forms.

This publication speaks to the urgency of the issues that societies, particularly in the United States and Europe, face today and the growing fascist creep of White supremacy in the United States and beyond. After the January 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol insurrection, encouraged by former U.S. president Donald Trump and enacted by his followers who believed the November 2020 election had been stolen from them, Belew and Gutiérrez note that many Americans finally realized the power that White supremacy has on their politics and in their everyday lives. The editors continue in the introduction to describe the shifting definitions of Whiteness, and how Whiteness itself is a project in exercising and maintaining dominance in social and political systems. But

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they also identify issues in the current scholarship on White supremacy and White supremacist movements—namely, specialists often focus on one area of the problem rather than looking at it holistically and recognizing its complex forms.

Divided into four sections, the guide organizes its content in a way that allows the reader to gain a basic understanding of the long history of White supremacy, its iterations, anti-immigration rhetoric, and laws, and in the final section, it describes how White supremacy moved from the fringes to the mainstream, particularly in the United States. The topics in the four sections range from anti-Asian violence, Islamophobia, slave codes, colonization and Indigenous resistance, homophobia and transphobia, policing, and immigration reform, and serve as vantage points to see all of the different ways that White supremacy governs and structures much of the contemporary world from the interpersonal to the systemic. The book aims to serve as a guide for scholars and nonscholars, and it accomplishes this aim not just through its subject matter but in the style in which much of the content is written. The contributors within the edited volume define their terms carefully and show examples of the ways that these historical issues continue to shape political and social spheres.

Contributions include reprints like Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor's chapter, "A Culture of Racism" in the book *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, as well as a piece by Rebecca Solnit called "The Longest War: Rape Culture and Domestic Violence" from the website *TomDispatch*. But the volume includes original pieces as well, from both editors' contributions to Simeon Man's contribution on U.S. imperialism and anti-Asian violence and Carly Goodman's piece on the history of "Unmaking the Nation of Immigrants."

The combination of reprinted work and original contributions not only fulfill the range of topics from historical, sociological, and rhetorical analysis of the power of White supremacy, but they highlight the urgency of understanding these issues in our current political climate. More importantly, all of these contributions, in some form or another, help the average citizen, journalist, and scholar who is *not* an expert in these areas understand "How did we get here?"

As such, the field guide is a powerful tool and accomplishes what it aimed to do: serve as a manual and resource in recognizing White supremacy. Although there have been similar field guides published in recent years, like the more historical *The US Antifascism Reader* (Mullen & Vials, 2020) and a myriad of books on the history and strategies of the former and present White supremacist movement, this book is a refreshing and welcome collection that is desperately needed in the current post-Trump, Brexit, White supremacist era.

Despite its strengths, no edited volume is without its limitations. Most of the contributions come from journalists and law, history, and sociology scholars. Although there is the odd scholar from English, anthropology, and even American studies and ethnic studies, there were no works from scholars in communication or information studies—which, particularly for Section V and its discussion of online movements, is a large omission. Certainly, a 1,500-word review does not do all the individual contributions the justice and depth of insight that is deserved, which is a limitation on my part. Despite these constraints, the guide does accomplish what it set out to do: provide definitions, knowledge, and strategies for resisting the White supremacist movement and its growing power.

In the conclusion of the field guide, Gutiérrez and Belew note the no-end-in-sight COVID-19 pandemic that has ravaged the world, and the long history of the entangled ways disease, immigration, race, slavery, imperialism, and neoliberal capitalism (all fueled by White supremacy) are impacting responses to the pandemic—as well as the pandemic's worst effects on disadvantaged communities. The global Black Lives Matter protests that occurred in the summer of 2020 are mentioned in both the introduction and conclusion and are used as an example of how the American criminal justice system is a permutation of the racial project of White supremacy. They continue to write about the various shootings that have happened globally, from the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando that targeted LGBTQ+ people to the El Paso, Texas, Walmart and Christchurch, New Zealand, mosque shootings that were tied to the Great Replacement conspiracy (which White supremacists use to justify mass genocide and killing of members of racial and religious groups who “threaten” Whites and Christianity).

The ways that patriarchy, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and White supremacy are all informed by and informing one another in their past and current iterations are highlighted within the contributions of this field guide and brought together in the conclusion. Gutiérrez and Belew note, particularly since the January 6 insurrection, that “white power has now attacked us all, and we all hold this in common” (p. 332). What particularly stands out about the book is that it sets out to not only describe and identify all of the forms that White supremacy has taken and is currently shifting into, but it also includes an overview of different ways that marginalized communities have attempted to fight and resist its power and its capacity for destruction. They end their conclusion of the field guide with a hopeful message, rather than cynicism, and hope that this is the moment these systemic and dominant forces can be eviscerated and tempered. As Raymond Williams (1989) once wrote, “It is then in making hope practical, rather than despair convincing” (p. 118) that this field guide accomplishes. The fight against White supremacy cannot be won with pessimism and hopelessness, and focusing on how communities across time and space have come together to resist its dominance will be the only way forward and out of this bleak period.

References

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