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The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 37
Issue 2 June

Article 12

2010

Review of *The Politics of Exclusion: The Failure of Race-Neutral Policies in Urban America*. Leland T. Saito. Reviewed by Jaehee Yi.

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Recommended Citation

Yi, Jaehee (2010) "Review of *The Politics of Exclusion: The Failure of Race-Neutral Policies in Urban America*. Leland T. Saito. Reviewed by Jaehee Yi.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 37 : Iss. 2 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol37/iss2/12>

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receive government or private funding and are not averse to the notion of evaluation. Indigenous programs must initially convince sources of their merit and potential for making a positive impact on the disaffected, those least likely to participate in mainstream programs. Administrators of Indigenous programs understand the need for an articulated theory of change and accountability through evaluation. The crux of the matter is about goodness-of-fit and the development of methods that best apprehend both short- and long-term programmatic impacts.

Conspicuously missing from the book is coverage of critical Indigenous concepts such as historical trauma. This concept applies to most Indigenous populations whose populations and lifeways were decimated following Western contact. Severe and persisting social problems among Indigenous groups are attributable to ancestral trauma, and the study of disenfranchisement provides critical clues into the restoration of their well-being.

Finally, the book tends to connote pure and unadulterated Indigenous cultures and practices. The use of metaphor describing fabrics with invasive Western threads detracts from the reality of most Indigenous peoples' experience. They have been Christianized, Western-schooled, become entrepreneurs, and many aspire to have the same modern materials as everyone else. Indigenous program design must have a core of Indigenous principles, but in the majority of instances must likely be based on an amalgamation of cultural techniques. Overemphasizing the exceptionality of Indigenous culture may be akin to exoticification, creating a different set of problems related to goodness-of-fit.

Jon K. Matsuoka and Peter Mataira, University of Hawai'i

Leland T. Saito, *The Politics of Exclusion: The Failure of Race-Neutral Policies in Urban America*. Stanford, California: Stanford, 2009. \$60.00 hardcover; \$22.95 paperback.

When I was an elementary school student in Korea, we were taught about the "melting pot" which characterized a country called the United States. The melting pot was defined

as "a place where a variety of races, cultures, or individuals assimilate into a cohesive whole." I always imagined a big bowl of delicious soup with lots of ingredients. Then, I grew up and came to the United States. The image of a well-blended soup disappeared as I lived in a Midwest city, where the "black" areas and the "white" areas were divided with a bridge in between. The image turned into a separated mixture of oil and water.

Nearly half a century has passed since the civil rights movement of the 1960s successfully challenged discrimination in voting, employment and other aspects of everyday life in the United States. Still, racial issues still prevail in the country. The United States has passed the era of "race-based policies" such as slavery and segregation, and most of its policies today are "race-neutral." Now, in his important new book, Leland T. Saito asks the question, "If policymakers intend to make race-neutral policies, why do policies have racial consequences?"

The book begins by providing a background to the race-neutral policies in the United States. Saito claims such policies result from the fundamental beliefs of the policymakers that the country is based on the principles of equality and democracy and that racial minorities are integrated into the society. The beliefs sound reasonable: What would be a better example of minority individuals' success than Barack Obama, a biracial American, now occupying the highest government position in the country? A few examples of minority individuals' success have been used as the rationale for blaming those who are not so successful and supporting theories or images such as "culture of poverty" and "model minority." But Saito declares: "We remain a nation divided by race." By denying this fact, race-neutral policies may, intentionally or unintentionally, produce racialized consequences. Saito uses case studies in each chapter of the book to illustrate this point. Chapters 2 and 3 describe how downtown redevelopment and historic preservation were contested and racialized in the examples of the Chinese Mission, and Douglas and Clermont/Coast Hotels in San Diego. A downtown redevelopment campaign fueled by a "growth machine strategy" placed buildings of historic importance to the minority community at risk of being demolished. The author further describes how these significant buildings

came to be considered simply “ugly-looking” structures suitable for destruction. These chapters show how the lobbying efforts of the Chinese American and African American communities preserved the buildings.

In Chapters 4 and 5, Saito examines charter reform, redistricting, and the council elections in the New York City. He asserts that “by fragmenting minority groups and placing them in separate districts, the race-neutral election policies perpetuate the practice of disenfranchising minority communities.” In Chapter 6, he uses redistricting policies in the Los Angeles region as a case study. According to Saito, Asian American, African American, and Latino organizations successfully worked together during the 2000-2002 redistricting process in Southern California, achieving their common goals through a multiracial coalition.

Saito also argues that contemporary race-neutral-looking policies may in fact support racial outcomes “because of the history of systemic racism in society.” The book’s historical and political perspectives in explaining the persistence of racial inequalities are innovative, and provide new perspectives in examining other kinds of inequalities experienced by minorities in other areas such as gender, sexual orientation, and disabilities. The book’s focus on Asian Americans is rare and valuable. However, the book does not offer suggestions other than the creation of multi-racial coalitions and race-neutral policies that have positive consequences for everyone.

The book is essential reading for future social workers and community organizers who advocate for ethnic minorities. This book should also be read by urban planners involved in redevelopment and policymakers, especially those who argue for race-neutral policies. The case studies in the book provide excellent fodder for class discussion on redevelopment and election systems, especially in interdisciplinary classes.

Jaehye Yi, University of Southern California