

## Preface

WHEN I BEGAN RESEARCHING THIS BOOK on race and public policy, I expected that people with strong and explicit racial biases would be one of the central themes of the story. In fact, this was absolutely not the case. Instead, I encountered people such as Beverly Schroeder, a senior planner for the San Diego Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC), an agency in charge of planning and implementing redevelopment projects in downtown San Diego. My long-term experience working with Schroeder during the decade I spent in my roles as a member of the CCDC Asian Pacific Thematic Historic District Advisory Committee and as a researcher collecting data challenged my assumptions about people involved in economic redevelopment and historic preservation in San Diego. Always professional in demeanor and action, extremely skilled and knowledgeable, Schroeder went out of her way to help me, and my student assistants, in my work as a CCDC committee member and researcher. She graciously and efficiently responded to all my requests for information, meticulously working to dig out obscure files and reports. Reflecting on my experience with Schroeder, I believe that her actions stemmed in part from her confidence in the importance and quality of the projects created and built by the CCDC. If this was the case, I agree with Schroeder's assessment, and my experience with Schroeder led to my complete rethinking of race and racism in my case studies. With Schroeder's professionalism in mind, I began to consider that the wide range of people connected to policy formation, such as city staff members and members of commissions, include many individuals who see themselves operating in a way that they consider free of racial prejudice. If that is the case and if policymakers intend to make race-neutral policies, why do policies have racial consequences? That is the question I address in this book.

I spent more than a dozen years conducting this research, and many, many people provided assistance. Thanking those who have helped is always challenging because I am sure that, as a result of my faulty memory and incomplete records, I will miss naming friends and colleagues who have provided valuable assistance. In the early 1990s, I began working as assistant professor at the University of California at San Diego. Eager to learn about the Asian American political scene, I began attending events and met one of the key persons in city politics, Dorothy Hom. Energetic and full of warmth, she literally embraced me, always greeting me with a big hug and introducing me to everyone at community events. As a result, although I was a newcomer to the city, she made me feel welcome. She passed away in 1999, and the enormous and diverse gathering of people at her memorial service was a testament to the many lives she touched. Tom Hom, a successful business entrepreneur and former city council member and assemblyman, always agreed to talk and sit for interviews. Don Estes, who passed away in 2005, was the foremost expert on Japanese American history in San Diego, and he enthusiastically educated me about the region's history. Murray Lee, the main historian on Chinese Americans in the region, helped me through his research and extensive archives. Ralph Lewin, working in the San Diego office of the California Council for the Humanities at the time, invited me to present a talk on San Diego's historic Gaslamp District. This was one of the first opportunities I had to think deeply about development downtown and who was included in and excluded from the process. A number of other people provided help on the San Diego project, including Lilly Cheng, Alexander Chuang, Karen Huff Willis, and Elizabeth Yamada. Students at UCSD provided essential research assistance on this project, especially Hope Chau, Erika Gutierrez, and Liliana Rodriguez. Other students include Ben Bunyi, Judy Cho, Therese Cervas, Sandra Chong, Melany Dela Cruz, May Fu, Michelle Magalong, Jesse Mills, and Antonio Tionson Jr. In the Los Angeles community, among those who provided important help or information are Judy Chu, Mike Eng, Kathay Feng, Daniel Ichinose, Stewart Kwoh, Paul Ong, Arturo Vargas, and Amadiz Velez.

I was looking for a new research project when I talked with Margaret Chin (then a graduate student at Columbia University and now a professor at Hunter College, not the city council candidate Margaret S. Chin) in New York City. She told me about the 1990 City Council redistricting in the city that divided Chinatown activists. That proved to be a perfect issue, complementing my work on the 1990 redistricting of state election districts in the San Gabriel

Valley of Los Angeles County. Arriving in New York as a stranger to the city, I was pleasantly surprised by all the help and information I received from such a wide range of people, including Sushan Chin, Fabiana Chiu, and Cynthia Lee at the Chinatown History Museum; and Devra Zetlan and the late Mary Ann Passadin in the New York Public Library. John Kuo Wei Tchen provided valuable help through his historical work, but he also arranged my stay as visiting scholar with the Asian Pacific American Studies Program and Institute at New York University. Margaret S. Chin, Rockwell “Rocky” Chin, Angelo Falcon, Margaret Fung, Andrew Hsiao, Peter Kwong, Gary Okihiro, Tito Sinha, William Sites, and Eric Tang were among the scholars and community activists who generously provided their time to help me learn about the city.

A number of people have provided comments by reading sections of this book or by responding to conference papers or presentations, including Bruce Cain, Sucheng Chan, Yen Espiritu, Joe R. Feagin, Colin Fisher, Herbert Gans, Alan Gartner, Ramon Gutierrez, Gregg Hennessey, Michael Jones-Correa, Moon-Kie Jung, Morgan Kousser, Jan Lin, George Lipsitz, John Logan, John Mollenkopf, Mike Murashige, Paul Ong, Edward J. W. Park, Laura Pulido, and Janelle Wong. My book is much improved by responding to their criticisms, and although I am sure that disagreements remain with my analysis and conclusion, I have enjoyed immensely the collegial discussions.

Kate Wahl, the acquisitions editor, Joa Suarez, assistant editor, and Carolyn Brown, production editor, at Stanford University Press, provided invaluable help throughout the publication process. Wendy Saito Lew, Albert Lew, Christopher Odoca, Melissa Hernandez, and Amber Thomas helped me with a number of tasks, especially computer issues. I am grateful for research support from the University of Southern California, the University of California at San Diego, Michael Schudson and the UCSD Civic Collaborative, and the Mott Foundation through Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics. I spent many, many hours working on this manuscript in the Pacific Beach and Chula Vista libraries in the San Diego area when I needed to leave my office and have a change of scenery. Thank goodness that our public libraries are still operating and now include free Wi-Fi.

I especially thank my family for the warm and caring support that they have always provided. My parents, George and Clara Saito; my spouse and her son, Sonia Ruan and Alexei; my sisters Wendy Saito Lew and Nadine Tateoka and their families, Albert and Sofie Lew, and Paul, Joseph, Elise, and Benjamin Tateoka; and my spouse’s mother and her husband, Eliacer and Enrique Rieger.