



Pedagogy Across State Lines: Critical Race Theory as a Response to Teachers Vs. The State

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Pedagogy Across State Lines: Critical Race Theory as a Response to Teachers Vs. The State

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for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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Abstract

James W. Loewen begins his book, *Lies My History Teacher Told Me*, with a dedication to all “American history teachers who teach against their textbooks,” challenging the standardized education system. Lauding teachers for going against the textbook procures a curious truth about the realities in the U.S. history classroom. From the mandated state guidelines and the textbooks being used to the teachers themselves, this study addresses the application of Critical Race Theory in the classroom at a time when CRT laws are being debated nationally. CRT was referenced on Fox News in 2021 sixteen times the amount it was referenced in 2020.

In this study, we look at three states’ – Mississippi (Republican), Iowa (Moderate), and California (Democratic) – political climate, U.S. History frameworks and textbooks, and ethnographic landscapes of U.S. history teachers. *Speech communities* of a state dictate the discourse in the U.S. history classroom. Most teachers abandon the textbook to teach a curriculum that is consistent with the state guidelines. Guidelines in the three states varied in their rigidness and the teacher’s predilections had more control over the content than they believed. Choice of people and events in the guidelines and teachers’ classrooms reinforced the concept of the *Other* and the awareness that students would have as civically engaged community members. Further impacts can percolate to neighboring communities through globalization and federal policies. Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and CRT are the lens with which to view equitable education and its application to American history.

Dedication

To my parents, Madhavi Prabha and Pranay Varma; for enduring the brutal journey of coming to this country as immigrants and combatting the erasure of their cultural identity.

To my mother, whose tenacity to follow multiple career paths led her to teaching, and whose strength I didn't appreciate until much later in my life.

To my father, who took the time to learn all the minority histories of America, so he could be a sounding board for my thesis.

To my brother, Oomung Varma, for always challenging me and pushing me to think outside the confines of the known.

To my partner, Ajay Srinivas, for educating me on the ways in which history is not uniform and reminding of the long-standing need for continuous learning.

To the teachers who silently dedicate their lives to furthering the future of generations to come; Underpaid and overworked, they are the heroes of our community.

And to my dead and living ancestors; my rich history is informed by them.

Acknowledgments

This study is a culmination of a tumultuous eight years in the Harvard extension program. There were moments when I really did not think I would complete this Masters. I want to acknowledge the many battles I faced in the Harvard classroom as a woman of color – my experiences were discredited, my intelligence questioned, my confidence shaken. Yet, here I am now, presenting this thesis.

One of the first classes I took in the anthropology program was taught by Professor Richard Martin. His class was engaging, challenging, and inclusive. If it were not for his classes and support, my interest in the subject of anthropology would have waned.

Lastly, I could not have done any of this study without the guidance of Dr. Marcyliena Morgan.

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Chapter I.

The History of Race, Politics, Religion, & Literature in Education

Introduction

“I teach history in a way that is neutral. I let the students decide what they think,” an Iowa high school social studies teacher tells me. Neutral – a term that evokes clarity, comprehension, and impartiality; what sounds like the *correct* way to teach history. Yet, with all its conflicts and resolutions, U.S. history has been all but neutral. The history of the United States is riddled with racial divisions, oppressive policies, equality asks, and, most importantly, progress. Civil War, Reconstruction, Civil Rights Movements, United Farm Workers’ Uprising, Chinese Exclusion Act, Imperialism in nations like the Philippines, and the Indigenous fight for reparations are a few examples of events that are possibly covered in high school U.S. history classrooms, and all are consequences of prejudice – BIAS. Can these topics be discussed in a neutral way? And should they?

Progress is a far-fetched dream without the acknowledgment of a recent segregated past, one that still includes redlining, voter suppression, and mass incarceration of marginalized communities.¹ Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire insightfully notes, “Indeed, the interests of the oppressors lie in “changing the

¹Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York; London: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017), 1-345; “Voting Laws Roundup: May 2021,” Brennan Center for Justice May 28, 2021, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-may-2021>; Ashley Nellis, “The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons,” The Sentencing Project, October 13, 2021, <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/>.

consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them”; the oppressed can be led to adapt to that situation, the more easily they can be dominated.² To achieve this end, the oppressors use the banking concept of education in conjunction with a paternalistic social action apparatus, within which the oppressed receive the euphemistic title of “welfare recipients.” They are treated as individual cases, as marginal persons who deviate from the general configuration of a “good, organized, and just” society.”³

Just, correct, and good are subjective terms and as Freire stipulates, those are defined by the majority and ostracize the minority. Through the course of this thesis, teachers in Mississippi and Iowa claim that their biases are not present in their classroom instruction, nevertheless, after a line of questioning, their personal biases become apparent in what is covered in their U.S. history curriculum, why it is addressed, and what constitutes a *just* society. Neutrality is impractical, and the lack of neutrality emerges in two forms: first, in the framing and choice of events covered by the state guidelines and textbooks; second, in the teacher’s awareness of their bias.

Erasure, omissions, and misrepresentation pervade the U.S. history classrooms, delineating what is American. “Dedicated to all American history teachers who teach against their textbooks,” James W. Loewen begins his book, *Lies My History Teacher Told Me*, challenging the standardized education system.⁴ In an attempt to regulate what children learn in school, culture wars erupted in the U.S. as early as the 1920s when protestant fundamentalists changed the curriculum in response to Charles Darwin’s

² Simone De Beauvoir and Osiris Troiani, *El Pensamiento Político de La Derecha* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Leviatán, Impresión De, 1956), 34.

³ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 1970), 165.

⁴ James W Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything American History Textbooks Get Wrong*. (New York: The New Press, 2007), v.

theory of evolution. Yet, culture wars are as relevant today as they were in the 1920s. Adam Laats, a Professor of American History at Binghamton University comments: “Dissension and debates that exploded in the 1920s are still a part of today's public schools and society, whether focused on evolution, sex education or saying the Lord's Prayer in the classroom”.⁵

First evolution, religion, and patriarchal norms were points of contention and now, Critical Race Theory (CRT) has entered the dialogue. The seminal 1995 text *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed The Movement* edited by Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, noted the works of Derrick Bell Jr., Alan Freeman, Richard Delgado, and others who “challenge[d] the way race and racial power are constructed and represented in American legal culture, and more generally, in American society as a whole.”⁶ CRT and associated work were primarily covered in graduate-level courses or law school courses due to the material's breadth, depth, and academic language. With the rise of Anti-Asian sentiments—violent attacks on Asian Americans like the Atlanta Spa shooting, the Black Lives Matter movement gaining traction—the disproportionate deaths of African Americans at the hands of the police, and the overturning of *Roe V. Wade*—women's inability to have a right to choice over their own body, CRT's concepts and the scholars advocating for it are crucial to education and the history of the U.S. today, illuminating the underpinnings of oppressive policies and reductive literature of minority communities in America.⁷ The CRT lens had

⁵ Eric Coker, “Historian Examines Roots of the Culture Wars,” Binghamton Research, April 14, 2010, <https://discover.binghamton.edu/faculty-spotlights/laats-2854.html>.

⁶ Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas..*Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York: The New Press, 1995), 15.

⁷ Francis Kai-Hwa Wang, “How Violence against Asian Americans Has Grown and How to Stop It, according to Activists,” PBS NewsHour, April 11, 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/a-year-after-atlanta-and-indianapolis-shootings-targeting-asian-americans-activists-say-we-cant-lose-momentum>;

been used to evaluate education in America since the nascence of the movement.

Scholars like Richard Delgado address the black-white binary in education and Peter McLaren positions the multicultural movement in pedagogical spaces – in cyclical nature, the same theories are applied to sections of classroom curriculum in piecemeal form.

In June of 2020, Critical Race Theory came under scrutiny when President Trump signed an executive order barring any federal training addressing fundamental racism. Between 2021 and 2022, Education Week reports that 42 states have created legislation to limit the teachings of CRT, and 17 states including Iowa and Mississippi, two of the states where my research has been conducted for this thesis, have signed it into law.⁸ Seventeen states have passed laws to expand teachings on racial and ethnic teachings, which includes California, the third state where research is being conducted for this thesis.⁹ Left-leaning media watchdog group, Media Matters For America, finds that Fox News has mentioned the topic over 1900 times in three and a half months, setting the stage for the 2022 midterm elections.¹⁰ The neighboring communities inform politics, policy, and laws within states and districts and without critical analysis and exploration

Lynne Peoples, “What the Data Say about Police Brutality and Racial Bias — and Which Reforms Might Work,” *Nature* 583, no. 1476-4687 (June 19, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-020-01846-z>; Josh Gerstein and Alexander Ward, “Exclusive: Supreme Court Has Voted to Overturn Abortion Rights, Draft Opinion Shows,” *POLITICO*, May 2, 2022, <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/05/02/supreme-court-abortion-draft-opinion-00029473>

⁸ Sarah Schwartz, “Map: Where Critical Race Theory Is under Attack,” *EducationWeek*, June 11, 2021, <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/map-where-critical-race-theory-is-under-attack/2021/06>.

⁹ Cathryn Stout, “CRT MAP: Efforts to Restrict Teaching about Racism, Bias Have Multiplied,” *Chalkbeat*, June 9, 2021, <https://www.chalkbeat.org/22525983/map-critical-race-theory-legislation-teaching-racism>.

¹⁰ Lis Power and Rob Savillo, “Fox News’ Obsession with Critical Race Theory, by the Numbers,” *Media Matters for America*, June 15, 2021, <https://www.mediamatters.org/fox-news/fox-news-obsession-critical-race-theory-numbers>.

by the US history teachers, there can be chain reactions in impressionable communities, in and out of the classroom.¹¹

A comprehensive history of America is taught in the 9th or 11th grade and is the information that is later tested through civic engagement – it is how one builds the historical narrative of the world they live in and of the *imagined communities* that inhabit it. Benedict Anderson’s work in his book, *Imagined Communities: Reflections On The Origin And Spread Of Nationalism*, introduces the concept of a community that is imagined because all the people within the community may never meet, hear, or see other members.¹² Despite inequity and inequality, there is a horizontal camaraderie. Pedagogical practices in the US history classroom are carried into a student’s adult life and can affect how they perceive the world.¹³ For this reason, I have chosen to use the 9-11th grade US History textbook as a template for my inquiry.

State policies, textbooks, and teachers can act as the cultural threshold for the American population – the quotient that reinforces racial stereotyping, misrepresentation, or lack of representation. Progressive and conservative dogma tugs at the bindings of past, present, and future; it constructs the high school U.S. history frameworks and what can be said within the classroom. Inevitably, then, the question becomes what is the US history teacher teaching in the classroom? To what extent are pedagogical practices reflective of the political leanings of a state?

¹¹ Jane Hansen, “Multiple Literacies in the Content Classroom: High School Students’ Connections to U.S. History,” *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 52, no. 7 (April 2009), 599

¹² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. (London: Verso, 1982), 6.

¹³ Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, 23-24; Hansen, *Multiple Literacies in the Content Classroom*, 13-26.

My thesis will have three elements: the state climate specifically around CRT, the state guidelines and modal textbooks, and interviews with the 5 teachers from each state to assess their bias and curriculum. Three states were selected by geographic location and political preference and have been determined to be the focal point of this study. Based on federal voting patterns from 1992 to 2020, I have selected California - a consistently blue state, Iowa - an oscillating state, and Mississippi- a consistently red state.¹⁴

I have found that state frameworks and textbook choices are consistent with the political directives of the state, which has an impact on how the teachers maneuver in the classroom. However, regardless of the state, the majority of 15 teachers interviewed for this thesis are teaching their own curriculum with little to no oversight. Through the lens of scholars of Critical Race Theory, a linguistic analysis of the state frameworks and the modal textbook of 50 districts surveyed in each state, this thesis will provide a better understanding of what the state standard expectations are and how *imagined communities* are viewed. An analysis of the teachers within the classroom will provide insight into how they view their own bias and address marginalized communities.

Bias in Education: Race

Minority communities have often been overlooked in education within the curriculum and within the classroom. The landmark 1954 Supreme Court case, *Brown vs. Board of Education*, desegregated schools but did not correct for the rippling aftermath of integration. And the history of the fight for equal education began long before this case.

¹⁴ Taegan Goddard, “2020 Presidential Election Interactive Map,” Electoral Vote Map, November 28, 2018, <https://electoralvotemap.com/>.

Native American, Black, and Hispanic families had unique experiences battling the public school system. The one-drop rule, which excluded Black students from the white school system, introduced the stipulation that mixed race and Native American students could go to white schools if they voluntarily adopted the customs, usages, and habits of civilized life.¹⁵ *Crawford v. School District 7*, a 1918 case in Oregon where a father wished for his daughters of native descent to be sent to a white school, set the precedent of forced assimilation for native communities to remain in desegregated schools – this occurred prior to the mandated segregation of schools. Similarly, in 1913 Colorado, a Mexican American family fought to have their kid placed in the white school near their home to avoid the dangerous route the child would have to take to get to the closest Mexican school.¹⁶ *Maestas v. Stone* codified that if Mexican American children could speak English, they should be allowed to attend the closest white school. Access to decent, well-resourced education relied heavily on the erasure of culture, enculturation, or lawfully enforced segregations.¹⁷ The National Trust for Historic Preservation finds that 35 cases spanning 12 states from 1885-2006 exemplify the trends that perpetuate race as a component of equity in education.¹⁸

Immigration from various parts of the world to America has exacerbated the inequity in education. Education is not a confined space, rather, there is a correlation

¹⁵ Sarai Dai, “How Native American Families Challenged School Desegregation | National Trust for Historic Preservation,” savingplaces.org, December 8, 2021, <https://savingplaces.org/stories/how-native-american-families-challenged-school-desegregation#.Yqf9xnbMJPY>.

¹⁶ Sarai Dai, “These Children Do Speak English: Language and the Fight against School Segregation | National Trust for Historic Preservation,” savingplaces.org, November 2, 2021, <https://savingplaces.org/stories/these-children-do-speak-english-language-as-a-tool-of-school-segregation#.Yqf9dnbMJPY>.

¹⁷ John Bowen, “Civil Enculturation: Nation-State, School and Ethnic Difference in the Netherlands, Britain, Germany and France – Editors by Werner Schiffauer, Gerd Baumann, Riva Kastoryano & Steven Vertovec,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12, no. 3 (September 2006), 695–96.

¹⁸ Sarai Dai, *How Native American Families Challenged School Desegregation*.

between the under-resourcing of education as a result of resources being diverted to a capitalistic economy and communities of color being left behind. Ladson-Billings and Tate highlight three central principles upon which school inequity is contingent:

1. Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States.
2. U.S. society is based on property rights.
3. The intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social (and, consequently, school) inequity.¹⁹

They append these propositions with an analysis of democracy and capitalism.

They provide a narrative where poor students of color are more unlikely to have access to those same resources or be held to the same educational standards.

The availability of “rich” (or enriched) intellectual property delimits what is now called “opportunity to learn”—the presumption that along with providing educational “standards”^{4 6} that detail what students should know and be able to do, they must have the material resources that support their learning.²⁰

Similarly, in the book, *Education at War*, Ali and Buenavista note the impact of materialism, militarism, and racism in education – resources are diverted from educational spaces to fund economic growth and imperialism.²¹ Racism in education relies on two oppressive models - the School to Prison Pipeline and the Prison Industrial Complex. The School to Prison Pipeline is a failure of public institutions to meet the educational and social development needs of a large segment of the children they are charged with serving. Upstream in the pipeline, lack or denial of necessary educational

¹⁹ Edward Taylor, David Gillborn, and Gloria Ladson-Billings, *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education* (New York; London: Routledge, 2016), 48.

²⁰ Taylor, *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education*, 48.

²¹ Arshad Imtiaz Ali and Tracy Lachica Buenavista, *Education at War: The Fight for Students of Color in America's Public Schools* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), 17-44.

resources puts students of color at a disadvantage. Socioeconomic and racial resources exist due to insufficient funding in low-income neighborhoods; this could mean isolated environments, high student-to-teacher ratios, and the inability to access special education services. The educational gap increases with age, at which point students feel they are too far behind and drop out of school.²²

Downstream in the pipeline, researchers come to the consensus that over-disciplining students of color, in direct and indirect ways, tracks with their journey into the prison system -- normalizing punishment and incarceration of people of color. A school's reliance on law enforcement for random sweeps, drug tests, and policing pushes a disproportionate number of colored youth in juvenile halls. U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights presents these facts:

- Preschool enrollment is 18% Black and 43% white, yet 48% of black students receive suspension vs. 26% of white students receiving suspension.²³
- School enrollment projects 16% of its students being black but accounts for 27% of police referrals and 31% of school-related arrests.²⁴

Juvenile hall is only the beginning of incarceration for students of color, as the school-to-prison pipeline is proven to flow in only one direction.²⁵ Once in the prison system, access to opportunity becomes limited. The prison industrial complex exposes the relationship between government structures, corporations, and private interest groups

²² Kathleen Nolan, *Police in the Hallways: Discipline in an Urban High School* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 19-38.

²³ "Expansive Survey of America's Public Schools Reveals Troubling Racial Disparities | U.S. Department of Education," www.ed.gov, March 21, 2014, <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/expansive-survey-americas-public-schools-reveals-troubling-racial-disparities>.

²⁴ "Expansive Survey of America's Public Schools Reveals Troubling Racial Disparities | U.S. Department of Education," www.ed.gov, March 21, 2014, <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/expansive-survey-americas-public-schools-reveals-troubling-racial-disparities>.

²⁵ Nolan, *Police in Hallways*, 19-38.

who abuse U.S. prisons for personal gain under the pretense of safety; by and large, people of color are disproportionately affected.²⁶ Multiple scholars within education find evidence that indicates that the prison industrial complex shapes the educational experiences of students of color and feeds into the school to prison pipeline. Ali and Buenavista quote Professor of Law and Justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago, David Stovall:

The realities of housing, education, and law enforcement, paired with gun violence, create an instance where these communities have the greatest potential to become collective open air cages for people to exterminate one another in.²⁷

What Stovall communicates so effectively is the intricacy of all the systems that are interlinked, education being central in that network. What happens in the classroom is imperative to growth opportunities for people of color. Many of the current trends in racial disparity have been caused by the pre-existing decisions made in the educational sphere.

Asian Americans have been subjected to educational disparity of a unique kind. Not a monolith, Asian Americans of variegating cultures, religions, customs, and tradition are grouped as one homogenous entity. Misperceptions and inaccuracies in the educational sphere position Asian students for differing levels of success. In one implementation of a Critical Race Theory study, Chinese and Filipino students are monitored on the effects of educational processes and opportunities.

“Chinese and Filipinos had very different experiences regarding how race and ethnicity affected their treatment by teachers, counselors, and peers at

²⁶ Russell J Skiba et al., *The Color of Discipline: Sources of Racial and Gender Disproportionality in School Punishment. Policy Research Report.* (Indiana Education Policy Center, Smith Research Center, 100, East Tenth Street, Indiana University, Bloomington, 317-324.

²⁷ Ali and Buenavista, *Education at War*, 11.

school, the experience within each respective ethnic group was not uniform. Both Chinese and Filipino students felt that teachers, counselors, and their peers would treat Asians differently depending on their perceptions of whether the student was an immigrant.”²⁸

One student reports that the assumptions that the teacher’s impression of immigrants and their grasp of English could change their access to opportunity. Although, Chinese and Filipino students were seen as homogeneous in data, history, and policy, Filipino students were less likely to identify with the Asian American demographic; they were not associated with the stereotype of overachieving. Rather, Filipino students were categorized as underperformers, prone to gang-related activity, and delinquency. Erasure of the immigrant positionality in America lends itself to the gap in awareness about AAPI students.

Bias in Education: Publisher, Author, Teacher

Bias in education is also fueled by the proclivities of publishers, authors, and teachers. Things that need to be addressed within the context of content and content delivered include gaps in their own understanding of history, their reluctance to challenge the existing beliefs, and the mandate imposed upon them by districts, counties, states, and the nation.

Implicit biases of the teachers affect the content they teach as well as their interactions with students of different demographics. Studies show that students flourish in the classroom when taught by someone of a similar descent.²⁹ Unfortunately, black

²⁸ Robert T. Teranishi, “Asian Pacific Americans and Critical Race Theory: An Examination of School Racial Climate,” *Equity & Excellence in Education* 35, no. 2 (May 2002), 150, <https://doi.org/10.1080/713845281>

²⁹ Douglas B. Downey and Shana Pribesh, “When Race Matters: Teachers’ Evaluations of Students’ Classroom Behavior,” *Sociology of Education* 77, no. 4 (October 2004), 281.

educators have a history of discrimination in public schools, generally being replaced by white, middle-class educators who have difficulty resonating with the students of color in classrooms³⁰. With fewer teachers of color in schools due to systematic removal, students of color were placed at a disadvantage. The bias of the textbook authors leads minority students to disconnect and, eventually, drop out of school. In 2011, Christine Skeeter's research exposed that the dominant Euro-American perspective in learning results in a disengaged student body.³¹ A less diverse teacher group poses the problem of the cultural bias of one narrative and a smaller selection of qualified candidates.

A New York Times article written in January 2020, took the approach of comparing eight textbooks between California and Texas. The article illuminated the omissions and the switched vernacular of the textbooks in the two states prominently featuring the states' political preferences within the literature as the force behind these alterations. The same McGraw Hill history textbook in Texas and in California discusses the second amendment in the Bill of Rights - the Californian version annotates that the second amendment allows for some regulation, whereas the Texas version leaves a blank space in the same spot. With the Harlem renaissance: Californian students were taught of the impact it has on African American lives and Texan students were exposed to the criticism of the movement.³² Similarly, Loewen reviews 18 textbooks to expose events and figures such as glorification of Christopher Columbus, the harrowing reality of

³⁰ Kritika Agarwal, "Texas Revises History Education, Again | Perspectives on History | AHA," *Www.historians.org*, January 11, 2019, <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2019/texas-revises-history-education-again-how-a-good-faith-process-became-political>.

³¹ Alia Wong, "Lessons from McGraw Hill: The Eurocentric Influence on History Textbooks and Classrooms," *The Atlantic*, October 21, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/10/the-history-class-dilemma/411601/>.

³² Agarwal, *Texas Revises History Education*.

Thanksgiving, invisible racism and antiracism movements, the one-note coverage of the Vietnam War, and the problematic history of the federal government towards minorities.³³ Even more recently, in 2019, Texas debated the removal of Hellen Keller and Hillary Clinton from U.S. history textbooks and placed Moses as a fundamental figure in the conception of the American founding documents. This came as an effort to move toward historical thinking and away from historical instruction, when in reality, it was a gilded effort to shy away from sexism.³⁴

Bias in Education: Politics, Religion, Culture Wars

A Struggle to Define America is what James Davidson Hunter names his book on culture wars.³⁵ Aptly so, history validates that culture wars in education have utilized identity politics to dictate what is taught in schools. An intricate, inexplicable mosaic emerges from a myriad of religions, cultures, and languages inhabiting the same space. It is this search for identity and representation that breeds polarization in the US. Culture wars regarding multiculturalism, theology, and sexuality make public schools a battleground.

Some scholars question the efficacy of the first amendment, the right to religious freedom, in textbooks.³⁶ Andrew Hartman's perspective piece for the Washington Post reveals the oppression that religious conservatives felt when the Bible was removed from education. He states, "In this new America, instead of working-class Catholics resisting

³³ Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. 1-466.

³⁴ Agarwal, *Texas Revises History Education*

³⁵ James Davidson Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 1.

³⁶ Charles C. Haynes, "Beyond the Culture Wars - Educational Leadership," [www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec93/vol51/num04/Beyond-the-Culture-Wars.aspx), January 1994, <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec93/vol51/num04/Beyond-the-Culture-Wars.aspx>, 30-34.

Protestant control, religious conservatives began protesting the hold that secular liberals had on the school curriculum, epitomized by the fact that an increasing number of schools quit requiring mandatory Bible reading.”³⁷

Adam Laats reveals in his book, *The Other School Reformers*, that culture wars began in the 1920s over the introduction of evolution in textbooks. Laats analyzed four seminal events ranging from the 1920s to the 1970s – the Scopes Monkey trial on anti-evolution law in teaching, Harold Rugg’s left-leaning social studies textbooks, the removal of a left-leaning superintendent, and a violent outrage at school in West Virginia as a result of conservative educational activism – to ascertain the involvement of progressive and conservative doctrine in each scenario. The most notable finding was that progressive ideologies have not been the only source of progress in the education sphere. Educational conservatism has been a consistent presence with the intent of preserving what conservatives deem as the sanctity of the content being taught in schools.³⁸

Diane Ravitch, Assistant Secretary of Education under the Clinton Administration, has a centrist take on the culture war in education. After auditing many multicultural guidelines for textbooks, including that of McGraw-Hill, she felt that censorship took a toll on the content disseminated, the authors, and the illustrators. In fact, Ravitch posits that cultural sensitivity in education has gone too far:

Current textbook guidelines have an insidious effect not just on writers and artists, but on the integrity of the texts themselves. Today’s textbooks in science and mathematics abound in references to the race, ethnicity, and gender of scientists and mathematicians and to events that occurred in

³⁷ Andrew Hartman, “Perspective | How the Culture Wars Destroyed Public Education,” *Washington Post*, September 5, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/09/05/how-the-culture-wars-destroyed-public-education/>.

³⁸ Adam Laats, *Fundamentalism and Education in the Scopes Era: God, Darwin, and the Roots of America’s Culture Wars* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 3-6.

other cultures, even when the references and events bear no relation to the lessons.³⁹

However, the consensus from experts on culture war indicates bias within pedagogy in the US has been attributed to forces in power around and within education. As an educator, Laats described his own prejudice as a response to a more conservative take on pedagogy. A consistent throughline in education is religion. Before the Civil War, schools were mostly run by Christian institutions. Colonial American textbooks were founded on religious and moral lessons. After the Civil War, a seminal event in the history of the United States, North and South had different interpretations of the war. On one end, Civil War veterans fought for a schoolbook that would bring unity and bridge barriers. On the other end, Confederate veterans wanted reconciliation of whites across America but did not want a schoolbook that advocated for equality for all citizens and strong central government. Alia Wong wrote about this 1890s phenomena in an article for the Atlantic, noting that textbook publishers had to adapt:

In response to the southern market, mainstream publishers minimized discussion of slavery and excised events such as Higginson's account of the Confederate massacre of black prisoners of war at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, and the history of African American soldiers in the Civil War.⁴⁰

What began as religious discourse surrounding education matured into policy-making and political platforms. Lawmakers ran on educational policy platforms, promising right or left-leaning revisions to the textbook. Lynne Cheney, The Second Lady of the US and the former head of the National Endowment for the Humanities steered the structuring of history standards in 1994. She felt the history textbooks did not

³⁹ Diane Ravitch, "Education after the Culture Wars" (Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2020), <https://www.amacad.org/publication/education-after-culture-wars>, 9.

⁴⁰ Wong, *Lessons from Mcgraw Hill*.

echo the sentiments of American culture. Rather than giving importance to abolitionists like Harriet Tubman or blunders made by the KKK, Cheney felt that figures like Robert E. Lee and the Wright brothers should be highlighted instead.⁴¹ Cheney's position as a political figure and her privileged ingress in education law caused a paradigm shift.

Clearly, politics has far-reaching implications on the educational system. Case in point, Texas' conservative State Board of Education changed the contents of the history textbook in 2010 (and later in 2014) to suit its own agenda at the expense of history itself:

A Republican-dominated State Board of Education (SBOE) has tentatively adopted social studies standards that retreat from the teaching of multicultural and social history while requiring more study of the Christian heritage as well as American exceptionalism and other nationalistic views.⁴²

The Texas State Board of Education's decision can have ramifications nationally; Texas is the second-largest purchaser of textbooks and the core text of textbooks in Texas is used as a template for all textbooks across the board.⁴³ Religion and politics have, together and individually, worked to distort history. Neither questions the biased role they play in education.

Peter Smagorinsky and Joel Taxel note the role of politics in character education in schools, a movement pushed by George W. Bush. They reference Loewen's analysis of spacial and hieratic scale which pushes marginalized communities to the sidelines.

Inferences are made on imagery posed:

A Native American figure, for instance, might be partially clothed and kneeling at the feet of a White explorer, or positioned behind or beneath him. Viewers then infer dominant and subservient positions relative to one

⁴¹ Robin Lindley, "Textbooks and History Standards: An Historical Overview | History News Network," Historynewsnetwork.org, 2010, <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/130766>.

⁴² Lindley, *Textbooks and History Standards*.

⁴³ Agarwal, *Texas Revises History Education*; Brian Thevenot, "TribBlog: SBOE vs. the Media," *The Texas Tribune*, March 22, 2010, <https://www.texastribune.org/2010/03/22/sboe-removes-thomas-jefferson-blames-media/>.

another. We also see a rhetorical hieratic scale at work in the character education proposals. The positioning is established through descriptions of we and us as occupying the moral high ground, with people living by a different standard diminished and deficient, beneath and behind.⁴⁴

Smagorinsky and Taxel use Loewen's study of American monuments, where the text draws attention to glorifying the subjects while ignoring their less admirable qualities, to typify that it is the silences that reveal the ideology of a text.⁴⁵ They find that omissions, inaccurate representation, and educational policy position people of color at a disadvantage.

Education in schools frames the characterization of America and what it means to be an American. Pew Research finds that in 2020, 77% of Americans felt that the U.S. was divided.⁴⁶ And with a bipartisan Congress gridlocked, what it means to be an American varies from state to state. Notable Supreme Court Cases have served as indicators of the dialectal debate over curriculum in the country and states. The Scopes Monkey Trial placed evolution at the forefront of the discourse around education in 1925. The Supreme Court's decision to ban evolution was upheld till it was repealed in 1967. In 1962 and 1963, two cases - *Engel V. Vitale* and *Abington School District V. Schempp* - solidified that religion in the classroom was an imposition on the Constitution's first amendment. The Schempp trial removed the use of bible teachings in a Pennsylvania classroom, denoting that education should be a neutral space.⁴⁷ However, culture wars in

⁴⁴ Smagorinsky and Taxel. *The Discourse of Character Education*.

⁴⁵ Ali and Buenavista, *Education at War*, 6.

⁴⁶ Kat Devlin and Aidan Connaughton, "Most Approve of National Response to COVID-19 in 14 Advanced Economies," Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project, August 27, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/08/27/most-approve-of-national-response-to-covid-19-in-14-advanced-economies/#little-consensus-on-whether-the-pandemic-has-brought-people-together>.

⁴⁷ Jonathan Stahl, "10 Important Supreme Court Cases about Education - National Constitution Center," *National Constitution Center – Constitutioncenter.org*, October 30, 2015, <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/10-important-supreme-court-cases-about-education/>.

education have been far from unbiased, whether it swings to the left or to the right end of the political spectrum. *Schema-consistency bias* from the policies, then from the district, and ultimately the teacher reinforces the way students navigate the world.⁴⁸

The curriculum within states is regulated through legal precedents set by the State’s congress, after which every district has some power over the pedagogy. The culture wars in education vary from state to state and an analysis of the education policies can provide insight into whether the policies reflect the bias of the state. Further, enculturation, the gradual acquisition of traits exhibited by the dominant culture, can follow suit as these policies are implemented at the high school level when children learn about civic engagement and *imagined communities*.

The Internet Archive’s data reveals an uptick in the mention of Critical Race Theory on TV news from 2010-to 2022, with the highest number of incidences being attributed to Fox News Network at 2227 mentions. In second and third place are MSNBC at 795 mentions and Russia Today at 660 mentions.⁴⁹

Table 1.1: Critical Race Theory on News Networks

Year	Number of mentions on the news
2017	1
2018	9

⁴⁸ M. B. Fallin Hunzaker, “Cultural Sentiments and Schema-Consistency Bias in Information Transmission,” *American Sociological Review* 81, no. 6 (October 26, 2016), 1223–50, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122416671742>.

⁴⁹ “Internet Archive TV NEWS: Search Captions. Borrow Broadcasts,” *Archive.org*, 2022, <https://archive.org/details/tv?q=%22critical+race+theory%22&sort=-publicdate>.

2019	14
2020	292
2021	4925
May 2022	1397

Table 1.1 showcases the cross-section of years and the number of times CRT is mentioned on news networks. From the table, the increase in mentions of CRT by year is evident.

Starting in June of 2020, CRT became a term galvanized by Fox news with the intent of crafting party platforms for the 2022 midterm elections. An analysis from the left-leaning nonprofit media watchdog group, Media Matters Action Network, found that in June of 2021, there were 901 mentions of CRT on their network, an almost 100% increase from May of 2021.⁵⁰ On May 24, 2021, Representative Nancy Mace (R-SC) in conversation with Fox news co-anchor John Roberts noted that two bills were circulating around Congress to defund Critical Race Theory teachings in the military and in education under the assumption it would not pass currently but would lay the groundwork for the 2022 midterm elections:

President Biden, he’s reversed almost every good decision that President Trump and his administration did, including defunding critical race theory

⁵⁰ Eric Kleefeld, “Fox News’ Fearmongering about Critical Race Theory Is a Sham -- and Now Some Are Admitting the Real Purpose,” *Media Matters for America*, May 26, 2021, <https://www.mediamatters.org/diversity-discrimination/fox-news-fearmongering-about-critical-race-theory-all-about-midterm>.

in our country,” Mace said. “And it's important for Republicans to stand up, have their voices heard in 2022 — we have a lot to run on.”⁵¹

Between 2021 and 2022, Education Week reports that 42 states have created legislation to limit the teachings of CRT, and 17 states, including Iowa and Mississippi, have signed it into law.⁵² Seventeen states have passed laws to expand teachings on racial and ethnic teachings, which includes California, the third state where research is being conducted for this thesis.⁵³ My research will build upon these biases in education and their function as actors in our imagined communities. Equity for all begins with culturally aware and inclusive pedagogy. Our textbooks, their authors, and their spokespeople create a line of cultural transmission in danger of schema-consistency bias. An exegesis of U.S. history taught in the school classrooms is the first step in understanding this bias.

Research Methods

Through this study, I will be analyzing the states’ educational climate, their guidelines, and how it feeds into the classroom via teacher interviews. This project has multiple input points, the first of which begins with the selection of the states in which to conduct the proposed research. Using data by the Associated Press and voting patterns from 1992-2020, I have chosen three states that span the country and have three different political proclivities: California - a Democratic State, Iowa - a toss-up state, and Mississippi - a Republican state.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Kleefeld, *Fox News Fearmongering*.

⁵² Sarah Schwartz, “Map: Where Critical Race Theory Is under Attack,” *Education Week*, June 11, 2021, <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/map-where-critical-race-theory-is-under-attack/2021/06>.

⁵³ Cathryn Stout, “CRT MAP: Efforts to Restrict Teaching about Racism, Bias Have Multiplied,” *Chalkbeat*, June 9, 2021, <https://www.chalkbeat.org/22525983/map-critical-race-theory-legislation-teaching-racism>.

⁵⁴ Goddard, *Electoral Vote Map*.

I have evaluated the state's boundaries on the U.S. history curriculum at the high school level to delineate what informs the state's guidelines. Critical Race Theory in education became a party platform and was hotly contested in most states. The history of the state and its education is contingent on how critical race theory is addressed and applied in the state. After which, the state's guidelines are assessed for what each of them is covering.

A randomization code in excel chose 50 districts to contact in each state to find the average textbook being used. It must be noted that this information was not easily accessible and was acquired through cold-calling schools and teachers and emailing using the databases found on schools' websites. Each state had a varying number of districts; During the course of my research, California had 443 high school districts, Iowa had 327 high school districts, and Mississippi had 128 high school districts. I chose to sample 50 districts in each state as a precursor indicator for the average textbook being used in each state.

Events were selected based on minority groups that are less amplified and covered by the U.S. history classroom: Vietnam War, Korean War, and Immigration. Textual analysis was used to evaluate the projection of the minorities in the history textbooks. Textual analysis methodology is a judicious approach to interpreting literature. It is a technique used by scholars in the past to ascribe value to language media and books and considers the culture in which the text is being analyzed.⁵⁵ In a 1991 journal article, *The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male Female Roles*, Emily Martin unmasks the way gendered language in science directs

⁵⁵ Alan Mckee, *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003), 2.

thought. She notes that the egg (female) is associated with passive words like “drifts or “is swept”, unlike the sperm (male) which is an active actor and is affiliated with words like “propel” and “penetrate.”⁵⁶ Her paper’s use of textual analysis links language with bias and drives home the necessity to approach text within pedagogy with a critical eye. In my research, words within textbooks are cross-referenced with events to associate potential bias with specific historical narratives. To have a comprehensive grasp of the literature, I will also skim the textbook for omissions of different viewpoints, critical data, and events. Lastly, I will review the textbook for incidents of marginalization of the accomplishments and adversity of people of color.

This feedback loop intersects with the last portion of this project where I conducted 15 ethnographic interviews with high school U.S. history teachers, five in each state. The interviews were conducted over Zoom with teachers from the districts I had surveyed for the average textbooks. I cold-emailed/called teachers who had responded to me during the initial search of the textbooks. The first five to agree were sent the consent form with the purpose of the study, after which I sought district approval to conduct the interview with teachers. If I did not receive district approval, the teacher was not contacted for the interview or their data point was removed. I did not have any teachers that wished to end the interview early or be removed from the study as a data point. I did have districts that did not allow me to conduct studies in their district.

⁵⁶ Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 16, no. 3 (April 1991): 485–501, <https://doi.org/10.1086/494680>, 489.

The interview questions begin with demographic information (Age, Ethnicity, Gender, Location, Level of Education) of the U.S. history teachers. Find them in the *Appendix* section of this paper.

Interviewee Demographics: Fifteen teachers were interviewed: five in each state and each from a different district.

California

- Gender: 2 men and 3 women
- Ethnicity: 1 identified as mixed Indigenous, Spanish, and White; 2 identified as White; 1 identified as White and Caucasian; 1 identified as German, Swedish, Dutch, Scottish, Irish
- Education: BA in Peace and Conflict Studies and MA in Interdisciplinary Studies; BA in Anthropology and Sociology; BA in History and Secondary Education; BA in History and MA in American History; BA in Sociology with a minor in Human Social Studies and MA in Education.

Iowa

- Gender: 4 men and 1 woman
- Ethnicity: 2 identified as Caucasian; 2 identified as White and Caucasian; 1 identified as White.
- Education: BA in Sociology and Physiology; BA in Education with a focus on History; BA in History and MA in History; BS in Political Science and Public Administration, and BA in Secondary Education with a focus on Social Studies; BA in Geography and Teaching and MA in Social Studies.

Mississippi

- Gender: 0 men and 5 women
- Ethnicity: 1 identified as African American and Caucasian; 2 identified as White; 1 identified as European; 1 identified as Caucasian
- Education: BA in Education and MA in Education Administration; BA in History and MA in Secondary Education and History; BA in History and MA in Secondary Education with an emphasis on Social Studies; BA in History and MA in Educational Leadership; BA in Elementary Education with endorsements in English and Social Studies and MA in Gifted Education.

The second portion interview involves questions regarding food to assess the bias of the teacher. Food behavior and its associated language is indicative of cultural identity. Globalization and immigration to the U.S. creates a landscape of diverse food culture. One ethnographic study in Japan finds that “many of the constitutive elements that today stand for culinary “Japaneseness” are indeed deeply rooted in Japan. They often date back to several centuries and are intricately tied to the past of a particular community. Some of these elements were embraced as national icons, relatively unchanged, others were transformed by new technologies, needs, and tastes.”⁵⁷ Though westernization takes hold of Japan, national identities are formed from relationships to local foods. Discussing a teacher’s relationship with food, exposure to new foods, and willingness to seek new foods is template for their community culture. A teacher’s background informs the pedagogy in the classroom – from what events they fixate on to what events they do not prioritize in the classroom.

⁵⁷ Katarzyna Joanna Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 175.

The last part of the interview asks questions about student demographics, assessment of students, teaching style, texts used, and historic events covered by the teacher within the classroom. All teacher names will remain confidential in this study and will be referred to by regional location and number. Find the interview questions in the *Index*.

Research Limitations

The thematic limitations of this study were overwhelmingly around transparency. Accessibility to information was inhibited by the Critical Race Theory rhetoric. Overall, in all three states, getting textbook or teacher information required multiple attempts, and many were afraid of being linked to CRT. In Iowa and Mississippi there were more attempts required and more negative responses received such as: no response to voicemails or emails, dropped calls, and redirection.

The first limitation must acknowledge any pre-existing bias from the researcher. My efforts will include acknowledging and being conscious of the bias with which I approach this research. My identifiers are: Indian-American, queer, first-generation immigrant, and non-binary. I was born in Canada and I have lived in California for most of my life with the exception of going to college in Boston for 8 years. My parents are upper-middle class U.S. citizens with higher education degrees. I have my bachelor's degree, work as a full-time journalist, and would fall in the low-middle income socio-economic strata.

Interview: The National Center of Education Statistics reported the average salary of teachers is \$78,711 (California), \$55,443 (Iowa), and \$42,925 (Mississippi).⁵⁸ In each of these states, the median household income is \$78,672 (California), \$61,836 (Iowa), and \$46,511 (Mississippi).⁵⁹ In Iowa and Mississippi, teachers are making below the median salary which makes asset development on a teacher's salary nearly impossible and can act as a stressor. From my interviews I found that, in Iowa and Mississippi, 50% of teachers reported having a second job. Furthermore, Education Week reports that the average teacher works 54 hours a week or more to keep up with the workload.⁶⁰

Working with limited time, some teachers didn't have the luxury to accommodate my interview. There were cases where the teacher was willing, but the district denied my request. Here are some of the district responses received after the teacher agreed to the interview:

- “At this time, [the superintendent] is not interested in having teachers participate in surveys. Thank you for reaching out!” - IA
- “I'm going to pass on the interview” - IA
- “I apologize, as we are stretched very thin. Our teachers are not likely to have an additional 1-2 hours for a survey.” - IA
- “Thank you for your interest in our district, but we will have to decline this opportunity. If we can help in the future, please do not hesitate to contact us.” -

MS

⁵⁸ “Digest of Education Statistics, 2017” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016), https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_211.60.asp.

⁵⁹ US Census Bureau, *Quick Facts*.

⁶⁰ Ileana Najarro, “Here's How Many Hours a Week Teachers Work,” *Education Week*, April 14, 2022, sec. Teaching Profession, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/heres-how-many-hours-a-week-teachers-work/2022/04#:~:text=But%20everything%20from%20answering%20emails>.

None of these districts had legal precedent to deny my request and when pushed, they terminated communication. Due to the IRB protocol request to receive district approval, the variety of teachers interviewed was limited.

California posed another set of barriers – though teachers were more likely to be open to an interview, district protocols were more rigorous. In some cases, the approval took more than a month. I went forth with the districts with more lenient regulations around teacher interviews. This could bias what kind of teachers I get access to: teachers with less regulation and oversight.

Since all answers are self-reported, the teacher could attempt to answer the questions in a manner that satiates them, even if their in-person applications are different. This particular error is hard to control unless I conduct in-classroom research – further research in the classroom would be additive to this work. All the research for this thesis was done during the COVID-19 pandemic, thus in-person research was not recommended.

Additionally, students and the surrounding community will not be interviewed, thus the study might not adequately reflect the community's response to the teachers and their teachings. Lastly, since only 5 teachers in each state were interviewed in the interest of time and effort, this data set serves as a preliminary finding of the teacher's conduct in the classroom by state.

Textbooks: My textbook survey depended on the randomization of districts utilizing an excel code. Who responded and what response I got could have skewed my results. In all states, the textbook used in the classroom was not publicly available information. Various methods were adapted to attain said information:

1. In California, the teachers' emails were not on the school websites, therefore I cold-called the school; most librarians were able to answer my question. However, under-resourced or rural schools did not have dedicated librarians with curriculum insight, and I was directed to the teacher themselves. Due to the nature of school hours, there were times when the teacher was unreachable, and I would move on to the next school. This could skew results, as access was easier in schools with more staff.
2. In Iowa, teachers' emails were on school websites and cold emailing proved to be more effective. While it took a few attempts, most teachers did respond. Teachers that were unresponsive through email could be overworked or less likely to share information with an outside source. In this case, if the teachers' emails were not on the school website, I moved on to the next school. This could influence the data I've received. Schools with less transparency or fewer resources might have been overlooked in my research.
3. In Mississippi, I had to use a combination of cold-calling and emailing. This was my best sample size, but it took the longest to complete.

Textual Analysis: Interpreting language, text, and culture will always have subjective undertones. Further, culture is ever evolving, and the result of this study will mirror the time point at which the thesis is written, however, it might not be emblematic of the cultural attitudes after that instance in time

Chapter II.

Legislation Impact on High School U.S. History Curriculum

State dialectics on Critical Race Theory and education policies can enforce the censoring of curriculum and amplification of *otherization*. U.S. history is tied to the narratives of the successors and behavior that is normalized and affirmed through years of policies. Ironically, policies against CRT, previously understood as multiculturalism or culture wars in schools, enact the very thing that CRT education scholars have been positing. Mike Cole quotes Peter McLaren in his book *Critical race theory and Education: A Marxist Response*:

Resistance multiculturalism doesn't see diversity itself as a goal but rather argues that diversity must be affirmed within a politics of cultural criticism and a commitment to social justice.⁶¹

Comparison of State Policies

In this section, I conduct a comparative study of the disquisition surrounding CRT, history frameworks, and textbooks in Mississippi, Iowa, and California.

Mississippi Lawmakers: First article Google searched.

Republican Lawmaker: If this piece of legislation is affirmed by this body today, then the tenets...that where any person is considered inferior and superior would not be allowed. - Representative Joey Hood, R-Ackerman⁶²

⁶¹ Mike Cole, *Critical Race Theory and Education: A Marxist Response* (New York, Ny, U.S.A.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

⁶² Geoff Pender et al., "Despite Objection from Every Black Mississippi Lawmaker, Anti-Critical Race Theory Bill Passed to Governor," Mississippi Today, March 3, 2022, <https://mississippitoday.org/2022/03/03/mississippi-sends-anti-crt-bill-to-governor/>

Democratic Lawmaker: The language means something to me... You cannot pass a bill like this and continue the rhetoric that we can all work together. - Representative Zakiya Summers, D-Jackson⁶³

Iowa Lawmakers: First article Google searched for Republican quote and multiple searches for Democratic quote.

Republican Lawmaker: “Critical Race Theory is about labels and stereotypes, not education. It teaches kids that we should judge others based on race, gender or sexual identity, rather than the content of someone’s character... I am proud to have worked with the legislature to promote learning, not discriminatory indoctrination.”⁶⁴ - Governor Kim Reynolds⁶⁵

Democratic Lawmaker: We can't say on one hand we want freedom of speech, on another hand... say we want to hear both sides — then stifle those sides.⁶⁶ - Representative Ako Abdul-Samad, D-Des Moines⁶⁷

California Lawmakers: Multiple Google searches for both viewpoints; the Republican quote was harder to find.

Republican Lawmaker: Critical race theory is not what we’re teaching in school... What we’re really trying to do is provide multiple points of views, diverse stories and opinions within a variety of groups, races and thought. Promoting critical thinking and seeking different levels of

⁶³ Pender et al, *Despite Objection from Every Black Mississippi Lawmaker*.

⁶⁴ Ian Richardson, “Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds Signs Law Targeting Critical Race Theory, Saying She’s against ‘Discriminatory Indoctrination,’” *Des Moines Register*, June 8, 2021, <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/2021/06/08/governor-kim-reynolds-signs-law-targeting-critical-race-theory-iowa-schools-diversity-training/7489896002/>.

⁶⁵ Ian Richardson, “Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds Signs Law Targeting Critical Race Theory, Saying She’s against ‘Discriminatory Indoctrination,’” *Des Moines Register*, June 8, 2021, <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/2021/06/08/governor-kim-reynolds-signs-law-targeting-critical-race-theory-iowa-schools-diversity-training/7489896002/>.

⁶⁶ Ian Richardson, “Iowa House Passes Bill Seeking to Ban ‘Divisive’ School, University, Government Diversity Trainings,” *Des Moines Register*, March 17, 2021, <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/2021/03/17/critical-race-theory-iowa-house-votes-end-divisive-diversity-training-legislature-2021/4717023001/>.

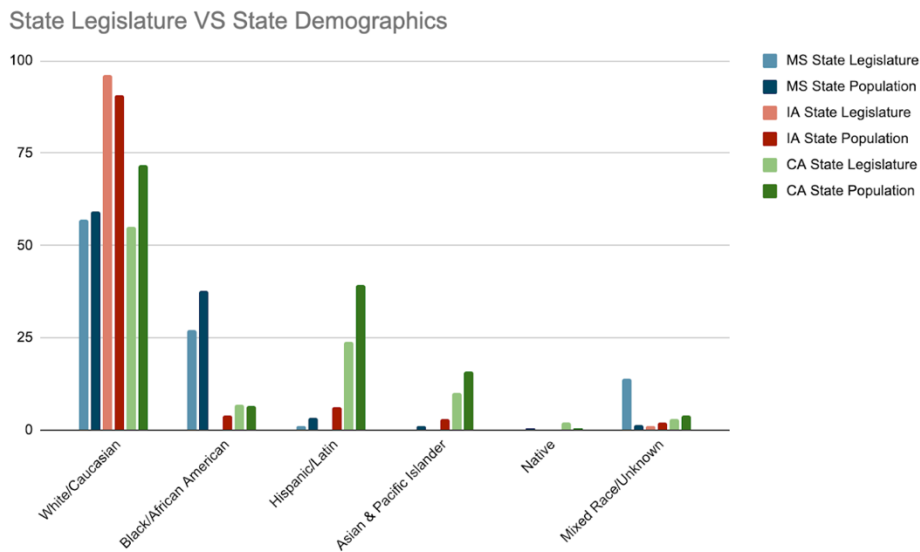
⁶⁷ Ian Richardson, “Iowa House Passes Bill Seeking to Ban ‘Divisive’ School, University, Government Diversity Trainings,” *Des Moines Register*, March 17, 2021, <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/2021/03/17/critical-race-theory-iowa-house-votes-end-divisive-diversity-training-legislature-2021/4717023001/>.

understanding are goals. - Andrew Pulver, superintendent of Los Alamitos.⁶⁸

Democratic Lawmaker: America is shaped by our shared history, much of it painful and etched with woeful injustice...Students deserve to see themselves in their studies, and they must understand our nation’s full history if we expect them to one day build a more just society.⁶⁹ - Governor Gavin Newsom⁷⁰

The complexity of each state’s approach of marginalized communities are reflected in the CRT debate and the availability of information on the political spectrum. California’s Governor Gavin Newsom points to representation – each state’s demographics indicate the cultural and social tendencies of the state.

Figure 1.1: Comparison of the 2020 State Legislature and State Ethnic Breakdowns



⁶⁸ Meryl Kornfield, “California Becomes First State to Require Ethnic Studies for High School Graduation,” *Washington Post*, October 9, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2021/10/09/california-ethnic-studies/>.

⁶⁹ Kornfield, *California Becomes First State to Require Ethnic Studies*.

⁷⁰ Kornfield, *California Becomes First State to Require Ethnic Studies*.

Chart 1.2 shows the ethnic demographic breakdown of each state legislature and compares it to the state population's ethnic breakdown.⁷¹ The purpose of this chart is to clarify whether state legislatures are representative of the populations they serve.

On March 14, 2022, Mississippi passed the CRT bill titled *Critical Race Theory: Prohibit* after 6 hours of debate, a filibuster, 17 attempted amendments, and many floor speeches from Black representatives of the state. The bill was signed into legislation after a 75-43 vote with all Black assembly members and three White assembly members voting against it.⁷² Looking at Figure 1.1, the White/Caucasian lawmakers track with the state's demographics, yet all other minority groups appear to be at a disadvantage. The National Conference of State Legislators confirms the discrepancy in the gender breakdown: the state is 52% female compared to the 17% in the legislature. Representation in Mississippi's state congress is overwhelmingly White and male, suggesting that policies do not mirror the population and overrepresent the White, male majority and underrepresent women and minorities.

Mississippi's history is fraught with infractions against Black communities. In an article in the *American Historical Review*, J. Williams Harris relays instances of racial abuse and hierarchical oppression after Reconstruction. In 1930s Natchez, "Black people could not enter or leave a white's house by the front door. So strong was this ceremonial rule, researchers observed, that whites would lock the back door, but not the front, when

⁷¹ "State Legislator Demographics," www.ncsl.org, 2020, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/state-legislator-demographics.aspx>; US Census Bureau, "Gini Index," [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/income-inequality/about/metrics/gini-index.html), January 25, 2016, <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/income-inequality/about/metrics/gini-index.html>.

⁷² Senator(s) McLendon, Blackwell, Younger, Tate, Wiggins, McCaughn, Parks, Seymour, Caughman, Chassaniol, Sparks, Kirby, Whaley, England, Chism, Michel, McMahan, Fillingane, Branning, Moran, Suber, McDaniel, Sojourner, Williams, "Critical Race Theory: Prohibit" (2022), <https://legiscan.com/MS/text/SB2113/id/2546132>; Pender, *Despite Objection from Every Black Mississippi Lawmaker*

leaving home.”⁷³ Other measures included Black deference to White people by referring to them as *Boss*, *Sir*, *Mister*, or *Missus* and in response, Black people were referred to by their first name only.⁷⁴ Further, Harris elaborates on the impunity of the white communities’ lynching of Black men as a response to interracial relationships and trivial violations. “Etiquette and violence were central to the definition and enforcement of the meanings of race because those meanings were, in the words of Michael Omi and Howard Winant, ‘unstable and ‘decentered’” and ‘constantly being transformed by political struggle’,” reminds Harris. Control of the education system and its curriculum is a pipeline for systems of oppression. As witnessed by CRT bans and policing in schools, language (or etiquette) and violence as systems of control persist in school systems today. As you continue to read, you’ll find that Mississippi’s history of continued racism is not addressed in the guidelines, textbooks, and classroom teachings in the state.

In the state of Iowa, the Des Moines Register/Mediacom Iowa Poll finds that 56% of Iowans oppose the CRT bill, 34% are in favor, and 10% are unsure.⁷⁵ Juxtaposing this, the CRT bill in Iowa’s state legislature passed with an 83-53 vote and some amendments – all Republicans voted for and all Democrats voted against the bill. Figure 1.1 indicates an overrepresentation of the White/Caucasian demographic and underrepresentation of every other minority group in Iowa including gender – women make up 50.2% of the state and make up 29% of Iowa’s congress. Iowa’s state legislature is less representative

⁷³ J. William Harris, “Etiquette, Lynching, and Racial Boundaries in Southern History: A Mississippi Example,” *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (April 1995), 391, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2169004>.

⁷⁴ Harris, *Etiquette, Lynching, and Racial Boundaries in Southern History*, 391.

⁷⁵ Samantha Hernandez and Ian Richardson, “Iowa Poll: More than Half of Iowans Oppose New Law Limiting Certain Concepts from Racism, Sexism Training,” *Des Moines Register*, June 29, 2021, <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/iowa-poll/2021/06/29/iowa-poll-law-targeting-critical-race-theory-schools-ban-teaching-some-racism-sexism-concepts/7720792002/>.

than that of Mississippi resulting again in, White men making up most of the state's legislature.

Following the Black Lives Matter protests in Iowa, Iowa Public Radio spoke with Iowa-Nebraska NAACP president Betty Andrews who chronicles historic racism in the state. Though Iowa prides itself on progress views, the state is not immune to racist exclusionary practices. In 1850, Iowa passed a law prohibiting Black immigrants to enter the state and Andrews says, "When you look at behavior and how certain communities are situated...you need to think about the set-up."⁷⁶ Iowa, like all states, is entrenched in the slave narrative; 1830s introduced the arrival of the African slaves to the state. And that narrative did not end after the civil war and reconstruction. In a 2010 paper titled, *Race, class, and the stigma of place: Moving to 'opportunity in Eastern Iowa*, researchers find that Black Chicago residents move to eastern Iowa for a better life and instead find themselves confronting stigmatization for their race, class, and Chicago-neighborhood affiliations⁷⁷. Iowa state proffers a moderate centrist viewpoint, yet its history is no different from that of the deep South. Even more jarring is the lack of diversity in the state, adding to the echo chamber of voices affirming neutrality.

California's response to CRT countered Mississippi and Iowa's. For more inclusionary practices in the history classroom, Assembly Bill 101 was passed on October 8, 2021, after amendments, 88-20, in favor of an ethnic studies course; the pedagogy will

⁷⁶ Clay Masters, "Understanding the History of Systemic Racism in Iowa," Iowa Public Radio, December 14, 2020, <https://www.iowapublicradio.org/racial-justice/2020-12-14/understanding-the-history-of-systemic-racism-in-iowa>.

⁷⁷ Danya E. Keene and Mark B. Padilla, "Race, Class and the Stigma of Place: Moving to 'Opportunity' in Eastern Iowa," *Health & Place* 16, no. 6 (November 2010), 1216–23, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2010.08.006>.

be adopted in the classrooms by 2025.⁷⁸ In contrast to the previous two states, the state legislature of California underrepresents the White demographic and tracks accurately with the Black and Mixed-race demographics. Surprisingly, state congress overrepresents the Native demographic. California remains consistent with the other two states in its underrepresentation of the AAPI, Hispanic, and female-identifying gender demographics in the legislature.

California, a left-leaning state, attempts to mitigate concern around unheard minority history. California's ethnic studies legislation provides a model for the curriculum, there is no oversight or regulation in the way the course is taught. The dispute over the new curriculum has three major points: One, the comprehensiveness of multicultural discourse and AAPI inclusion; two, the year the course is taught and a student's ability to contextualize the conversation in history; third, the need for a distinction of an ethnic studies course separate from U.S. history. The first point was contentious in state congress and hence, amendments were made to the Bill, resulting in a vagueness in the practice of the curriculum in schools. The second point places the onus on the districts to decide when the course is taught, adding to the unstable application of the legislation. The third point tugs at the feeling of belonging and what constitutes U.S. history. *Otherism*, the idea that nonconformity eventually ostracizes a person or persons, in schools has been institutionalized in classrooms finds a collaborative study by USF, Honolulu Community College, and University Laboratory Schools.

⁷⁸ California Congress. House. Pupil Instruction: High School Graduation Requirements: Ethnic Studies. AB 101. 117th Congress, Introduced in Assembly on April 7, 2021. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB101.

The school context is also a powerful socializing agent that reinforces an ‘institutional ideology, and shapes students’ expectations. Grant and Sleeter consider schools to shape students’ expectations ‘to continue their parents’ place in a stratified society.’⁷⁹

I argue that the codifying of an ethnic studies curriculum is another form of institutionalizing the idea of the *other*. Cole refers to these practices as left-liberal multiculturalism which places the predominant focus on some facets of ethnic history without a real understanding of the structural inequity.

The antiracist critique of monocultural education is that in denying the existence of, or marginalizing the cultures of minority ethnic communities, it was and is profoundly racist. The antiracist critique of multicultural education is that it was and is patronizing and superficial. It was often characterized as the three ‘Ss’, ‘saris, samosas and steel drums.’⁸⁰

This critique can be applied to the removal of ethnic education as part of America’s history and placing it in silo, absent of a scene-setting. California’s history with race involves Mexican, Black, Chinese, Indian, Indigenous and Filipino voices – each with their own account of inequity.

Comparison of State Guidelines

Mississippi, Iowa, and California have specific Social Studies guidelines that dictate what textbook is used in the classroom and what material must be covered. Each state is unique in its dissemination of the material. Mississippi requires a state test to evaluate the pedagogy in the classroom, yet they cover the whole course in one semester. Iowa and California dedicate one full year to U.S. history but do not have state standardized testing on the subject. My detailed findings are covered in the following sections.

⁷⁹ Borrero, Noah, Christine Yeh, Crivir Cruz, and Jolene Suda. “School as a Context for ‘Othering’ Youth and Promoting Cultural Assets,” *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education* 114, no. 2 (February 1, 2012) <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811211400207>.

⁸⁰ Cole, *Critical Race Theory and Education*, 72.

Mississippi: The 2018 Mississippi Social Studies standards are nine pages long, detailing events and figures that will be state tested from the Westward expansion (1829) to the election of Donald Trump (2016).⁸¹ Due to the nature of the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP), the material in the classroom is checked by the district or the schools; a U.S. history teacher's job is conditional and their students' high achievement on the standardized test is imperative. Teacher MS-BF-East notes:

In U.S. history, we have a state test at an end of the year. So, I know one of the questions you asked was, 'how rigid are we to the standards?' I try to stick just to the standards and not veer off very far at all and just, especially the specific things that are in our standard.

The state test is a looming presence in the U.S. history classrooms in Mississippi and students' graduation is dependent on their ability to pass the exam. One teacher, MS-JM-South was distressed with the process and said, "I try to help as much as possible, but again, I am limited by the fact that it is tested." As rigid as the MAAP history test may be, one teacher delves into the significance of state-mandated social studies testing.

Teacher MS-LH-Central provides the backstory:

I believe it was 2011, our state legislature passed the law saying that civil rights had to be taught in Mississippi. So, the only way to see if teachers would teach civil rights was by testing. Let's talk about dropping the test because it's not part of the national accountability of the school system. There were so many teachers in Mississippi that weren't teaching civil rights. It's still a hot button issue.

From the inflexibility of the guidelines to the historical need for the state test, teachers bring unique insight that indicates accommodating the needs of the classroom. The

⁸¹ Mississippi Department of Education, "2018 Mississippi College-And-Career Readiness Standards for the Social Studies," 2018, https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Page_Docs/final_2018_mississippi_ccr_social_studies_standards_2.pdf.

unwieldy amount of information packed into a semester-long course limits the focus in the classroom.

The most comprehensive section of the standard covers World War II to the 1960s and has eleven bullet points. Most other sections range from 4 to 6 bullet points. The minority population to which most space is dedicated is the Black community. Mississippi's standards have a comprehensive list of personalities for the Civil Rights movement and the Black Power movement: Martin Luther King, James Meredith, Medgar Evers, Thurgood Marshall, Malcolm X, and Stokely Carmichael. At the end of the Civil Rights section, the last bullet point notes:

Describe the accomplishments of the modern civil rights movement, including the growth of the African American middle class, increased political power, and declining rates of African American poverty.⁸²

This statement is misleading because it doesn't account for the rates of decline in the white community. CRT advocates that historic racist practices have permeated into the present day through law and education. Showcasing the growth of marginalized communities without contextual data minimizes the reality of invisible racism in practice today. Additionally, this specific bullet point is not descriptive, and one can infer it will not be tested – it is an insignificant point for policymakers. Most importantly, Mississippi's race-fueled past and its role in slavery and the reconstruction are absent from the state guidelines.

Mississippi omits the Vietnam War from its guideline and most other minority groups aren't given much space. Mexican communities are not cited specifically and Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Cuban, Filipino, and Pacific Islanders are referenced as

⁸² Mississippi Department of Education, *2018 Mississippi College-And-Career Readiness*.

byproducts of immigration, imperialism, or war. Native American history is linked to the Dawes Act and that is the extent to which it is part of the framework. Most AAPI communities and the entire LGBTQ community are left untouched by the Mississippi guidelines.⁸³

Iowa: Iowa's 2008 Social Studies Core is 2 pages and consists of nondescript asks. It covers events from Reconstruction (1865) to an unclear time period; the last specific date cited in the core is the Vietnam War ending in 1975.⁸⁴ It places the onus on the district, the school, or the teacher to codify the curriculum. There is no oversight in the application of the guidelines in the classroom. Here are the possible spaces where minority communities can be mentioned:

- Evaluate the impact of gender roles on economic, political, and social life in the U.S.⁸⁵
- Analyze the effects of urbanization, segregation, and voluntary and forced migration within regions of the U.S. on social, political, and economic structures.⁸⁶
- Analyze how diverse ideologies impacted political and social institutions during eras such as Reconstruction, the Progressive Era, and the Civil Rights movement.⁸⁷
- Critique primary and secondary sources of information with attention to the source of the document, its context, accuracy, and usefulness such as the

⁸³ Mississippi Department of Education, *2018 Mississippi College-And-Career Readiness*.

⁸⁴ Iowa Department of Education, "K-12 Iowa Core in Social Studies," 2008, <https://iowacore.gov/standards/social-studies/9-10-11-12/9-12-united-states-history>.

⁸⁵ Iowa Department of Education, *K-12 Iowa Core in Social Studies*.

⁸⁶ Iowa Department of Education, *K-12 Iowa Core in Social Studies*.

⁸⁷ Iowa Department of Education, *K-12 Iowa Core in Social Studies*.

Reconstruction amendments, Emancipation Proclamation, Treaty of Fort Laramie, Chinese Exclusion Act, Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, Wilson’s Fourteen Points, New Deal Program Acts, Roosevelt’s Declaration of War, Executive Order 9066, Truman Doctrine, Eisenhower’s Farewell Speech, Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, Test Ban Treaty of 1963, Brown vs. Board of Education decision, Letter from a Birmingham Jail, and the Voting Act of 1965.⁸⁸

- Analyze how regional, racial, ethnic and gender perspectives influenced American history and culture.⁸⁹
- Determine multiple and complex causes and effects of historical events in American history including, but not limited to, the Civil War, World War I and II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.⁹⁰

Black history and women’s history are referenced generically. Mexican American history or AAPI communities outside of the Korean and Vietnam war are omitted. Queer history is entirely neglected.⁹¹

When Iowa teachers were asked about oversight of curriculum, most responded similarly – there is little to no oversight of their curriculum. IA-CB-East has this to say, “I completely create the curriculum on my own.” And when asked about curriculum checks he said, “No, you think we would. We used to have it. That could change though.” Iowa’s loose U.S. history guidelines combined with the evident lack of checks and balances within the district make Iowa the state with the most possible variation in pedagogical practices.

⁸⁸ Iowa Department of Education, *K-12 Iowa Core in Social Studies*.

⁸⁹ Iowa Department of Education, *K-12 Iowa Core in Social Studies*.

⁹⁰ Iowa Department of Education, *K-12 Iowa Core in Social Studies*.

⁹¹ Iowa Department of Education, *K-12 Iowa Core in Social Studies*.

California: California’s social science framework is the most comprehensive, running at a length of 56 pages; the content begins with the Constitution and covers the 1800s to the 2010s. California specifies Mexican, Korean, Vietnamese, Indian, Chinese, LGBTQ, Black, Native, and female narratives in its framework. Here are examples of specific events in the California framework left out of the other two guidelines:

- German Americans experienced prejudice and extreme nativism. African Americans, who served in the military—in segregated units—came home and often moved to industrial centers as part of the “Great Migration,” and were typically met with hostility from locals.⁹²
- Scottsboro Boys: A 1931 trial where nine Black boys were accused of raping two White women in Alabama.⁹³
- The economic crisis also led to the Mexican Repatriation Program: a massive effort by government officials and some private groups to get rid of Mexicans, citing federal immigration law, the need to save jobs for “real Americans,” and a desire to reduce welfare costs. The resulting repatriation drives were done in violation of individual civil rights. Scholars estimate that at least one million Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans, including children, were deported from the United States to Mexico; approximately 400,000 of them were from California. Many of those who were illegally “repatriated” returned home during World War II, joining the armed services and working in the defense industry.⁹⁴

⁹² California State Board of Education, *Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.

⁹³ California State Board of Education, *Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.

⁹⁴ California State Board of Education, *Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.

- In 2005, the California State Legislature passed Senate Bill 670, the Apology Act for the 1930s Mexican Repatriation Program, issuing a public apology for the action and authorizing the creation of a public commemoration site in Los Angeles.⁹⁵
- In 1935, Congress also passed the Filipino Repatriation Act, which paid for the transportation of Filipinos who agreed to return permanently to their home country. Students can compare these Depression–era events to the institution of the Bracero Program in 1942, which brought Mexicans back into California (and other parts of the U.S.) to supply farm labor during World War II.⁹⁶
- American Indians also became more aware of the inequality of their treatment in many states where Indian tribes are located. American Indian veterans returning from World War II were no longer willing to be denied the right to vote by the states, which controlled the voting sites, or to be told their children could not attend state public schools. Some veterans and their families brought lawsuits in the late 1940s and the 1950s successfully challenging such practices. Some of the most successful state and federal court cases challenged racial segregation and inequality in education, including cases in state and federal district courts, such as *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947), which addressed segregation of Mexican and Mexican-American schoolchildren and involved then-Governor Earl Warren, who would later, as Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, write the *Brown* decision.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ California State Board of Education, *Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.

⁹⁶ California State Board of Education, *Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.

⁹⁷ California State Board of Education, *Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.

- American foreign policy in the Middle East included CIA involvement in overthrowing the democratically elected Mossadegh government in Iran, leading to the 26-year rule of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, an authoritarian monarch. Tension in the region would lead (much later) to the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the rise of Islamism in the Middle East, and a host of post–Cold War conflicts.⁹⁸
- As a reflection of the anxiety about the changing demographic composition of the country, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind* (1923) that the country could restrict the right to naturalization based on race. Congress, encouraged by eugenicists who warned of the “degradation” of the population, restricted immigration by instituting nationality quotas the following year in 1924.⁹⁹
- Hysteria over national security extended to homosexuals, considered vulnerable to blackmail and thus likely to reveal national secrets. The public Red Scare overlapped with a Lavender Scare. Congress held closed-door hearings on the threat posed by homosexuals in sensitive government positions. A systematic investigation, interrogation, and firing of thousands of suspected gay men and lesbians from federal government positions extended into surveillance and persecution of suspected lesbians and gay men in state and local government, education, and private industry.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ California State Board of Education, *Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.

⁹⁹ California State Board of Education, *Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.

¹⁰⁰ California State Board of Education, *Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.

- Students should understand the central role of immigrants, including Latino Americans and Filipino Americans, in the farm labor movement. This context also fueled the brown, red, and yellow power movements. The manifestos, declarations, and proclamations of the movements challenged the political, economic, and social discrimination faced by their groups. They also sought to combat the consequences of their “second-class citizenship” by engaging in grassroots mobilization. For example, from 1969 through 1971 American Indian activists occupied Alcatraz Island; while in 1972 and 1973, American Indian Movement (AIM) activists took over the Bureau of Indian Affairs building in Washington, D.C., and held a standoff at Wounded Knee, South Dakota.¹⁰¹
- Chicano/a activists staged protests around the country, such as the famed Chicano Moratorium in Los Angeles in 1970 that protested the war in Vietnam, and formed a number of organizations to address economic and social inequalities as well as police brutality, and energized cultural pride. Students should learn about the emergence and trajectory of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement by focusing on key groups, events, documents such as the 1968 walkout or “blowout” by approximately 15,000 high school students in East Los Angeles to advocate improved educational opportunities and protest racial discrimination; El Plan de Aztlan, which called for the decolonization of the Mexican American people; El Plan de Santa Barbara, which called for the establishment of Chicano studies; the formation of the Chicano La Raza Unida Party, which sought to challenge

¹⁰¹ California State Board of Education, *Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.

mainstream political parties; and Rodolfo “Corky” González’s “I Am Joaquin,” which underscores the struggles for economic and social justice.¹⁰²

- California activists such as Harvey Milk and Cleve Jones were part of a broader movement that emerged in the aftermath of the Stonewall riots, which brought a new attention to the cause of equal rights for LGBT Americans. Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment, edited by Steve Louie and Glenn Omatsu; The Latino Reader, edited by Harold Augenbraum and Margarite Olmos; and Native American Testimony, edited by Peter Nabokov, are a few of the readily available collections of personal histories and literature of a period of intense introspection and political activism.¹⁰³

The framework is detailed, descriptive, and exhaustive for a one-year course. But unregulated policy can be a breeding ground for inconsistent classroom practices and California’s U.S. history classrooms are no stranger to this. Teacher CA-JS-West capitulates that the principal at his school is not deeply invested in understanding his curriculum. He says, “We have to upload a syllabus and everything that maps out, but no one is necessarily checking it...They can't handle it as I'm talking to them about what I'm doing.” Teacher CA-JS-West is also unsure when the California Social Studies framework was mentioned. Despite claiming familiarity with the text, when shown, he said “You know, it’s funny. I don’t think I’ve seen this.” Teacher CA-DS-East reports “The framework fleshed out a lot of the things I thought were missing because only teaching from the 1988 framework had a lot missing because things have happened since then.” The framework prior to the 2016 Social Studies framework was published in 2005;

¹⁰² California State Board of Education, *Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.

¹⁰³ California State Board of Education, *Social Science Framework for California Public Schools*.

Teach CA-DS-East and CA-JS-West both seemed disoriented about the guidelines in place for their curriculum. In these occurrences, the guidelines did not play a large role in the handling of the content for the coursework.

Textbook Events and Language

In *Reproduction in Education, Culture, and Society*, Bourdieu finds that “Integration into a single ‘linguistic community’, which is a product of the political domination that is endlessly reproduced by institutions capable of imposing universal recognition of the dominant language, is the condition for the establishment of relations of linguistic domination.”¹⁰⁴ The language of omission and its following silences speak volumes about what the dominant community values. It is in between these pregnant pauses that history is repressed and forgotten. Untested and uninformed, students enter the world lacking the foresight that could have been attained through learned actions. Derek Bell writes in the *Faces at the Bottom of Well*, “The presentation of truth in new forms provokes resistance, confounding those committed to accepted measures for determining the quality and validity of statements made and conclusions reached, and making it difficult for them to respond and adjudge what is acceptable.”¹⁰⁵ CRT’s leading theorists advocated that it was erasure and misrepresentation of the realities of people of color that pushed them to the fringes of society.

My research found the most commonly used book in each state’s fifty unique districts and the state guidelines brief the districts on what textbooks can fulfill their needs. As

¹⁰⁴ Pierre Bourdieu et al., *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014), 46.

¹⁰⁵ Derrick Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

expected, the state's distribution and variation of books were constrained by the demands of the state. Due to Mississippi's standardized testing, the textbook selection toggled between 2 publishers. Iowa's broad and nondescript guidelines lent to a wide variety of textbook selection, obfuscating the modal textbook. California had a bimodal distribution, with one publisher scraping into first place. Mississippi was using a 2018 version of the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Social Studies book – American History: Reconstruction to the Present.¹⁰⁶ Iowa was using a comparable, linguistically identical McDougal Littell book from 2005 – The Americans.¹⁰⁷ California was using the 2019 McGraw-Hill California Impact book – United States History and Geography: Continuity and Change. For the purposes of this study, I will look at the Mississippi textbook (same as Iowa) and the California textbook.

Notably, U.S. History textbooks in all three states leave out key moments of oppression faced by minority communities. Omissions include:

- 1919 - The Red Summer: race riots that affected over 26 cities post World War 1. The beginning of the red summer is marked by a four-day race riot that began on July 19th when a rumor that a Black man had assaulted a White woman, incited mobs to attack local Black neighborhoods in Washington D.C. During this period, hundreds of African Americans were burned, lynched, shot, beaten, tortured, and killed – none of the perpetrators of the violence were convicted of the crimes.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Jose Colon et al., *American History: Reconstruction to the Present* (Orlando, FL: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2018).

¹⁰⁷ Gerald A Danzer and McDougal Littell, *The Americans* (Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell, 2005).

¹⁰⁸ National Archives, "Racial Violence and the Red Summer," National Archives, July 24, 2020, <https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/wwi/red-summer>.

- 1921 -- Greenwood/Tulsa Race Massacre: around 300 people died when White rioters looted and burned down Greenwood due to rumors spread about a Black man in an elevator with a White woman at Drexel University.¹⁰⁹
- 1932-1972 - Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment: an unethical study of untreated syphilis where the participants were majority low-income, Black males. Their diagnosis and future cure were withheld from the participants and many died from the disease.¹¹⁰
- 1939 – Eugenics and the forced sterilization of Black, Hispanic, and Native people: 3000,000 women were sterilized without consent when seeking healthcare.¹¹¹
- 1941-2021 -- Sundown Towns¹¹²: entire communities in the U.S. that were all White on purpose. Those in prisons, hospitals, service jobs, or colleges did not violate these towns.
- 1970 -- The War on Drugs: mass incarceration of minority communities during the Nixon administration.¹¹³
- Up to 2022 – Accomplishments of minority communities, specifically AAPI.

¹⁰⁹ Tulsa Historical Society & Museum, “1921 Tulsa Race Massacre,” Tulsa Historical Society & Museum (Tulsa Historical Society & Museum, November 2018), <https://www.tulsa-history.org/exhibit/1921-tulsa-race-massacre/>.

¹¹⁰ CDC, “Tuskegee Study and Health Benefit Program - CDC - NCHHSTP,” CDC, 2019, <https://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/index.html>.

¹¹¹ National Human Genome Research Institute, “Eugenics and Scientific Racism,” Genome.gov, December 1, 2021, <https://www.genome.gov/about-genomics/fact-sheets/Eugenics-and-Scientific-Racism>.

¹¹² Matt Cheney, “Sundown Towns by State,” History and Social Justice, 2022, <https://justice.tougaloo.edu/sundown-towns/using-the-sundown-towns-database/state-map/>.

¹¹³ Drug Policy Alliance, “A Brief History of the Drug War,” Drug Policy Alliance (Drug Policy Alliance, 2021), <https://drugpolicy.org/issues/brief-history-drug-war>.

Manfred Steger coins the term *globality* “a social condition characterized by tight global economic, political, cultural, and environmental interconnections and flows that make most of the currently existing borders and boundaries irrelevant.”¹¹⁴ Steger additionally proposes that *globalization* is “set of social processes that appear to transform our present social condition of conventional nationality into one of globality.”¹¹⁵ Omissions in the American history textbooks are glaringly evident with the advent of the internet, setting into motion the idea of *globality* and *globalization*. These theories contribute to the eventuality of the *global imaginary* or the *imagined community* – a reference to the growing consciousness of global connectivity. The omissions in these textbooks reaffirm that which is worth teaching.

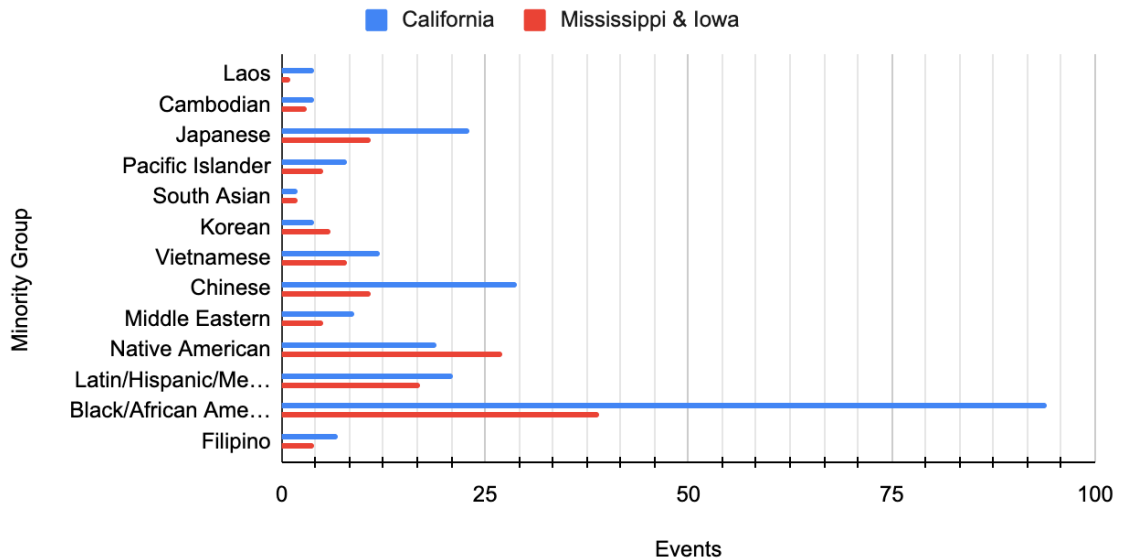
Black, Latin, and Indigenous history have been twisted, misrepresented, and ignored for many years. New immigration and migration bring the identities of Middle Eastern and AAPI communities into the fold. Figure 1.2 looks at separate event mentions of minority communities from the *Index* of the textbooks.

Figure 1.2: Incidences of Minority Reference in U.S History Textbooks

¹¹⁴ Bonnie Steinbock, “Speciesism and the Idea of Equality,” *Philosophy* 53, no. 204 (April 1978), 247–56, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0031819100016582>,

¹¹⁵Steinbock, *Speciesism and the Idea of Equality*, 247-56.

Events of Minority Reference in U.S. History Textbooks



This figure shows the number of events (not the length of said event) where specific minority groups are mentioned in the textbooks used by California, Mississippi, and Iowa.¹¹⁶

Overall, California's textbook has more events with each minority group, matching the diversity of its guidelines. Mississippi and Iowa have significantly lower mentions of each minority group than California.

This history of racism and violence against AAPI communities is not unfamiliar. A 2015 Johns Hopkins study by Museus and Park indicates that Asian Americans have been experiencing cultural – customs and values of the dominant group prescribing the customs and rituals of other groups as inferior – and individual racism – people or persons considered subordinate due to their race – in the U.S. In recent history, racism faced by Asian Americans prior to the pandemic was both violent and subtle:

Two examples of such crimes are the racially motivated beating and murder of New York advertising executive David Kao in 2009 and the

¹¹⁶ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*; Colon et al., *American History*.

racial bullying that led to the eventual suicide of Army private Danny Chen in 2011 (Chen, 2009; Shaw, 2012). In addition, higher education scholars have underscored how Asian Americans experience more subtle racism on a daily basis, including members of society rejecting their interethnic differences (“all Asians look alike”), ascribing their intelligence (“you people always do well in school”), and denying their racial realities (“Asians are the new Whites and do not face discrimination.”¹¹⁷

The study provides narratives of how Asian university students reject their culture in order to assimilate or find themselves isolated. Many feel disowned by American culture, their history in this country effaced.

I had one experience growing up where someone asked me, “So where are you from?” I told them that “I originally lived in California, but now I live in Minnesota.” She was like, “Well, where are you from originally?” I’m like, “Oh, well, I’m from France.” She’s like, “Okay. . . . What are you doing here?” I’m like “Excuse me?” It’s almost like I had to explain to her why I’m here. I felt like I had to carefully answer that question because, if my answer doesn’t justify why I’m really here in this country, then it’s almost like I don’t deserve to be here or I don’t have the right to live in this country.¹¹⁸

Being asked, ‘Where are you from?’ delegitimizes one’s feeling of belonging in America. The underpinnings of what exemplifies an American are a throughline of politics in this country. Extremist acts of violence become directly linked to skin color and Anti-American with the stipulation that the skin is not White. For example, post 9-11, brown skin and turbans came to be synonymous with terrorism, and terrorism was anti-American. When Donald Trump took office, the rate of hate crimes against Muslims and those racialized as Muslims increased. South Asians Leading Together began compiling acts of hate against South Asian immigrants:

¹¹⁷ Samuel D. Museus and Julie J. Park, “The Continuing Significance of Racism in the Lives of Asian American College Students,” *Journal of College Student Development* 56, no. 6 (2015), 552, <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2015.0059>.

¹¹⁸ Museus and Park, *The Continuing Significance of Racism*, 562-563.

A former Boca Raton Middle School teacher accused of making disparaging and anti-immigrant comments to students has been banned from teaching in Florida until at least next summer. [She] was accused of making several demeaning remarks to students, including: “I’m going to call immigration on you,” “I’m surprised your parents haven’t thrown you to a wall.”¹¹⁹

Trump administration’s xenophobic rhetoric was boundary-pushing in what was acceptable in public spaces. And then the pandemic hit. COVID-19 originating in China exacerbated the pre-existing Anti-Asian racism, spiking the number of hate crimes against the AAPI community.¹²⁰

Marcyliena Morgan, author of *Speech Communities*, hones in on the vital role of language in American education systems. Her study notes, “Although the majority of US citizens are the descendants of immigrants, the prevailing language ideology is one that attributes a lack of standard language assimilation to a lack of intelligence, laziness, and a lack of loyalty and patriotism toward the US.”¹²¹ Standard language assimilation, in the milieu of this study, involves imparting the language used within the textbook to students of racial backgrounds. Language constructs the imagined community of Middle Eastern and Vietnamese and their relationship to America.

In this section, we employ textual analysis to investigate the portrayal of two minority groups that are severely underrepresented in U.S. history textbooks and have been racially profiled: the Middle Eastern demographic for their low number of mentions, yet high incidences of hate crimes; and the Vietnamese demographic, who are viewed as part of the larger AAPI aggregate and have a significant number of mentions in the

¹¹⁹ “Post 9-11 Backlash | SAALT,” South Asians Leading Together, 2020, <https://saalt.org/policy-change/post-9-11-backlash/>.

¹²⁰ “National Report (through December 31, 2021),” Stop AAPI Hate, March 4, 2022, <https://stopaapihate.org/national-report-through-december-31-2021/>.

¹²¹ Marcyliena H Morgan, *Speech Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 121.

textbook because of the Vietnam War. From the language used, the reader will get a sense of the perceptions that follow these two minorities communities. The following quotes represent most events where the said group is intimidated.

Mississippi & Iowa Language on the Middle East & Islam: The textbook first addresses the Middle East during the Carter Administrations. The fuel shortages in the U.S. gave OPEC the upper hand. The textbook frames the fuel shortage in this way:

Renewed violence in the Middle East produced a second major fuel shortage in the U.S.¹²²

Indiscreetly, the textbooks links the Middle East to *violence*.

Americans became all too aware of the troubles in the Middle East. Since its inception in 1948, Israel has been in conflict with its Arab neighbors, any of whom refused to recognize the country's right to exist.¹²³

Other words associated with the Middle East are *troubles* and *conflict*. The interchangeability of the *Middle East* with *Arab* and then religion (Islam) convolutes the multifarious communities that inhabit the Middle East and their religious diversity.

In that region of ethnic, religious, and economic conflict, Jimmy Carter achieved one of his greatest diplomatic triumphs—and suffered his most tragic defeat.¹²⁴

Jimmy Carter's interference in the Iranian civil war is adjacent to terms like *triumph* and *defeat* suggesting that U.S. involvement was contingent on victory and loss. Even more concerning are the terms reflected in the following Iran Hostage Crisis in 1979.

Rebels, led by the Muslim religious leader by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, overthrew the shah and established a religious state that was based on strict obedience to the Qur'an.¹²⁵

¹²² Colon et al, *American History*, 842.

¹²³ Colon et al, *American History*, 846.

¹²⁴ Colon et al, *American History*, 846.

¹²⁵ Colon et al, *American History*, 848.

The adjacent terms to Muslim are *rebel* and *overthrew*. Such terms are aggressive without context and depict a Muslim Middle Eastern character that is violent, in conflict, and causing trouble.

Foreign Policy Under Reagan and Bush: The thematic approach to Muslims continues in the discussion of foreign policy in the 80s-90s. The section header is *Middle East Trouble Spots* – are a reminder that, once again, the Middle East correlates to trouble.

Muslims and Christian factions battled for control over the country. Various groups, including the Palestinian Liberation Organization, used Lebanon as a base for attacks against Israel to the south. In 1982 Israel invaded and occupied south Lebanon to expel the PLO and try to form a new reliably friendly government.¹²⁶

Muslims are adjacent to the verb *battle* and the noun *control*. Israel is adjacent to the words *invade* and *occupy*, those contentious terms are neutralized by the terms *reliably* and *friendly*. Textually, Israelis are given redemption and Muslims are not.

President Bush launched Operation Desert Storm to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi control...On February 23 they launched a successful ground offensive from Saudi Arabia...Kuwait was liberated. Millions of Americans turned out for the victory of parades that greeted returning soldiers.¹²⁷

The standout terms in relation to President Bush and America are *liberate* and *victory*. The narrative of the people involved in the conflict are left unaddressed and instead, the American narrative of imperialism and savior-complex is thrust via language.

California Language on the Middle East & Islam: California's textbook touches on World War II to familiarize the students with the Middle East and Islam. After World War II,

¹²⁶ Colon et al, *American History*, 871.

¹²⁷ Colon et al, *American History*, 874.

many places globally had to confront the formation of new nations. Naturally, this would be contentious in the regions where new nations overtake the former ones.

New countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East were born. The Middle Eastern conflict between the new nation of Israel and the Arab nations was itself a direct result of World War II.¹²⁸

Middle East is placed directly next to the word *conflict* without a backstory to the rise of the new nations: Who created the boundaries and why did the nations get formed? In this way, superpowers absolve themselves of the power they held during World War II in the history textbooks.

Crisis in Iran is the header in the section where Iran is mentioned, setting a precedent that Iran is perpetually in crisis.

The first crisis began in Iran. During World War II, the United States has troops in southern Iran while soviet troops held northern Iran to secure a supply line from the Persian Gulf. After the war, instead of withdrawing as promised, the Soviet troops remained in northern Iran.... To increase the pressure, Soviet troops helped local Communists in northern Iran establish a separate government.¹²⁹

Iranians were directly affected by the U.S. and Soviet intervention in their nation, yet their voices are unheard in this section. The assumption under which these statements are written imply that the U.S. knew what was best for the Iranian people.

The following year, a serious crisis erupted in the Middle East. Eisenhower wanted to prevent Arab nations from aligning with the Soviet Union. To build support among Arabs, Secretary of State Dulles offered to help Egypt finance the construction of a dam on the Nile River.¹³⁰

Once again, *crisis* is 3 words away from *Middle East* and U.S. intervention is the most discernable response. However, no alternative theories are proposed or mentioned.

¹²⁸ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies: United States History and Geography* (Columbus, Oh: Mcgraw-Hill Education, 2019), 448.

¹²⁹ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 468.

¹³⁰ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 484.

Two examples of covert operations that achieved American objectives took place in Iran and Guatemala...The pro-American shah of Iran tried to force Mossadegh out of office, but the Shah failed and fled into exile. The CIA quickly sent agents to organize street riots and organize a coup that ousted Mossadegh and returned the Shah to power.¹³¹

The word *achieved* is a non-neutral that signals accomplishment. The following sentences are alarming because of the veiled nature of the tactics that the U.S. commissioned. A coup was conducted with the help of the CIA and the fallout of the coup is omitted. Throughout, the Iranian perspective is neglected, and the American mission is affirmed as righteous.

Eisenhower asked Congress to authorize the use of military force whenever the president thought it necessary to assist the Middle East nations resisting communism.¹³²

President after president interferes in the Middle East. The accomplishments and wins of Middle Eastern countries are absent from the narratives in the textbook.

Triumph and Failure in the Middle East:

In 1978, Carter helped broker peace between Israel and Egypt...this was the first time Israel traded land and removed settlements for peace. Although many Arab nations did not support the treaty, it helped begin the slow peace process in the Middle East.¹³³

President Carter *helped* bring *peace* which paints U.S. foreign policy in a positive light.

Israel is portrayed as benevolent, ceding land and pushing for peace, whereas Arab nations are resistant to peace.

Just months after the treaty was signed in 1979, Carter faced a crisis in Iran.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 485.

¹³² Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 486.

¹³³ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 665.

¹³⁴ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 665.

The repetitive use of *crisis* adjacent to *Iran* is a consistent theme throughout the California textbook. However, the next section removes some of the mystery associated with the turbulence in the Middle East.

The United States had long supported Iran's monarch, the Shah, because Iran was a major oil supplier and a buffer against Soviet expansion. The Shah had grown increasingly unpopular in Iran due to his repressive rule and Westernizing reforms. The Islamic clergy opposed the Shah's reforms. In January 1979, protesters forced him to flee. An Islamic republic was then declared. Led by religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini, this new regime distrusted the United States because of its support of the Shah. In November 1979, revolutionaries stormed the American embassy in Tehran and took 52 Americans hostage. The Carter administration unsuccessfully tried to negotiate the hostages' release. In April 1980, Carter approved a daring rescue attempt that failed when several helicopters malfunctioned and one crashed in the desert. Eight servicemen died in the accident...The crisis continued. Every night, news programs reminded viewers how many days the hostages had been held. Carter's inability to free them cost him support in the 1980 election. On January 20, 1981, the day Carter left office, Iran released the Americans, ending their 444 days in captivity.¹³⁵

American support of Iran's monarch is presented as the neutral position under the circumstance, but the language used after indicates the overwhelming discontent with U.S. presence in Iran. Iranian voices are nonexistent even though the narrative directs the reader to their experience. This section dives into the failure of freeing hostages which resulted in eight deaths; this seems trivial in comparison to the number of deaths marked at different points of this textbook, such as the number mentioned in the Persian Gulf War section that proceeds this section. The deaths of Iranians as a result of the conflict in the regime is unmentioned. The Iran hostage crisis trivializes the conflict in the region and projects a nationalistic attitude towards one group over the other.

¹³⁵ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 665-66.

The Persian Gulf War was a pivotal moment in recent history because of the lack of transparency surrounding Operation Desert Storm.

President Bush faced perhaps his most serious crisis in the Middle East.”¹³⁶

Unsurprisingly, this section opens with the word *crisis* neighboring *Middle East*.

Operation Desert Storm was working under the assumption that Saddam Hussein would invade Saudi Arabia. Later it was found that there was little to no evidence to support this claim.¹³⁷

U.S. officials feared that the invasion might be only the first step and that Iraq's ultimate goal was to capture Saudi Arabia and its vast oil reserves. President Bush persuaded other United Nations member countries from Europe, the Middle East, and Canada to join a coalition to stop Iraq. The United Nations set a deadline for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, after which the coalition would use force to remove them. Congress voted to authorize the use of force if Iraq did not withdraw... On January 16, 1991, coalition forces launched Operation Desert Storm. Cruise missiles and laser-guided bombs fell on Iraq, destroying its air defenses, bridges, artillery, and other military targets. After about six weeks the coalition launched a massive ground attack. Thousands of Iraqi soldiers died. Fewer than 300 coalition troops were killed... Bush declared Kuwait to be liberated. Iraq accepted the cease-fire terms and American troops returned home to cheering crowds.¹³⁸

At the end of this segment, the high death toll of the Iraqi people is compared to the low death toll of the American troops. Iraqis are *othered* in this instance, and the juxtaposition of the *cheering* American crowd villainizes the entire nation of Iraq.

Peacemaking in the Middle East: Foreign diplomacy and its tactics are unexplained. Thematically, the *defeat* of Middle Eastern countries is the goal.

¹³⁶ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 713.

¹³⁷ Stephen A. Bourque, “The Mother of All Battles: Saddam Hussein’s Strategic Plan for the Persian Gulf War,” *History: Reviews of New Books* 37, no. 2 (January 2009): 69–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03612759.2009.10527318>.

¹³⁸ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 714.

Although Iraq was defeated in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Iraqi president Saddam Hussein was determined to hang onto power.¹³⁹

Once *defeated*, the United States' presence in Israel and Palestine is unrelenting. The U.S. decides to mitigate peace between the two nations that have their own cultural history with statehood.

In 1994, with help from the United States, Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty. In 1998, Israeli and Palestinian leaders met with President Clinton at the Wye River Plantation in Maryland. The agreement they reached, however, did not address the contested status of Jerusalem or the ultimate dimensions of projected Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. In July 2000, President Clinton invited Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to Camp David to discuss unresolved issues. Barak agreed to the creation of a Palestinian state in all of Gaza and over 90 percent of the West Bank, but Arafat rejected the deal. In late September 2000, a Palestinian uprising began. The region was as far from peace as ever.¹⁴⁰

Time and time again, Israel is shown as agreeable, and Palestine as disagreeable. The Gaza strip is a confined, restricted, small portion of Israel – the Palestinian discontent is not unfounded. Omitted are the living conditions in Gaza and its impact on the citizens of the region.

Middle East Terrorism and the United States: This section on the Middle East is the longest portion of coverage on the Middle East in the textbook, running a length of eight pages.

The September 11 attacks were acts of terrorism, which is the use of violence by nongovernmental groups to achieve a political goal. Many terrorist attacks on Americans since World War I have been carried out by groups in the Middle East.¹⁴¹

The Middle East, in its entirety, is positioned as a *terrorist*. Without data to back the claims, the textbook proposes that most terrorist attacks on Americans since World War I

¹³⁹ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 729.

¹⁴⁰ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 729-30.

¹⁴¹ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 758.

have been carried out by Middle Easterners. Data since suggests that targeted gun violence in America (~18,000 lives in 2021) has taken more lives than the 9/11 incident (~3000 lives).¹⁴²

In the 1920s, American and European oil companies invested in Middle East oil. The ruling families in some kingdoms grew wealthy, but most other people remained poor. Many Muslims feared their traditional values were weakening as the oil industrialists also brought Western ideas into the region. New political movements in Middle Eastern countries arose that called for a strict interpretation of the Quran—the Muslim holy book—and a return to traditional religious laws. Some militant supporters began using terrorism to achieve their goals. The United States support of Israel had also angered many in the Middle East. Following World War II, in 1947, as a response to global outrage over the Holocaust, the United Nations proposed to divide the British Mandate of Palestine into an Arab state and a Jewish state. The Jews accepted the UN plan and established Israel in 1948. Arab states responded by attacking Israel. The territory that the UN had proposed as an Arab state came under the control of Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. In the 1950s, Palestinians began staging guerrilla raids and terrorist attacks against Israel. Since the United States gave aid to Israel, it became the target of Muslim hostility. In the 1970s, several Middle Eastern nations realized they could fight Israel and the United States by providing terrorists money... The government of Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Iran have all sponsored terrorists.¹⁴³

Providing aid and fueling the rising tensions put the United States on the Palestinian radar, rightfully so. Israel's aggression toward Palestine is excluded. There is some context provided on why the Middle East would be resentful of the U.S. in the California textbook. Muslim culture is situated *strict* and *hostile*, which can be interpreted as Western culture being *open* and *peaceful*.

In October 2001, Bush signed into law the anti-terrorist bill called the USA PATRIOT Act, which was an acronym for Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism. On October 7, 2001, the United States began bombing al-Qaeda camps and Taliban military forces in

¹⁴² Gun Violence Archive, "Past Summary Ledgers | Gun Violence Archive," accessed August 5, 2022, <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/past-tolls>.

¹⁴³ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 758.

Afghanistan. Addressing the nation, Bush explained that Islam and the Afghan people were not the enemy and that the United States would send aid to refugees. He also declared that the war on terrorism would continue until victory was achieved.¹⁴⁴

Despite *terrorism* and *Middle Eastern* identities textually linked throughout the textbook, the address by Bush is the first sign of the humanization of Middle Eastern peoples. The blip can be easily overlooked when the next sentence continues to wage war against terrorism – a term that is now interchangeable with any Middle Eastern country. The controversial nature of Guantanamo Bay and the US Patriot Act is recognized.

Overwhelmingly, there is a lack of nuance in the discourse about the Middle East in the California textbook. Words like *crisis*, *terrorism* and *defeat* are words neighboring Middle Eastern nations. Middle Eastern voices are silenced, and the agenda of the aggressor is underscored. The textbook does not shift the dialogue inwards to critique U.S. interventions and the aftermath of said actions.

Mississippi & Iowa Language on Vietnam & Vietnam War: The Mississippi and Iowa textbook orients Vietnamese and American interaction solely on the Vietnam War. An exegesis of the Vietnam War is the common denominator in the two textbooks. The book covers the Vietnam war over 38 pages. The first paragraph begins with a letter from and death of a White Lieutenant Colonel named A. Peter Dewey.¹⁴⁵ Very quickly, the narrative shifts from Vietnam and the Vietnamese experience to that of the White-American one.

¹⁴⁴ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 765.

¹⁴⁵ Colon et al, *American History*, 780.

Like sections on the Middle East, this section also synonymizes *conflict* and *Vietnam* with the header *Moving Towards Conflict*.¹⁴⁶ Iranian chapters and Vietnamese chapters of the textbook bear a resemblance; both involve American intervention to fight communism. U.S. involvement in Vietnam is not given any other perspective. It is mentioned in the following way:

Seeking to strengthen ties with France and to help fight the spread of communism, the United States provided the French with massive economic and military support.¹⁴⁷

Vietnam, which had been under the rule of the Japanese since 1930, wanted independence in 1945 when France began to regain control over the territory. Ho Chi Minh was the leader of this movement, and despite embracing communism, and had no ties with the Soviet Union.

But by 1950 the United States had come to view its one-time ally as a Communist aggressor.¹⁴⁸

Criticism of the United States' war against communism over the plight of the Vietnamese people is ignored.

In the wake of France's retreat [1956], the United States took a more active role in the halting of spread of communism in Vietnam.¹⁴⁹

United States being an active actor in the war presents Vietnam as a passive actor that cannot control the *spread* of a disease like communism. Here is another instance where Vietnam is referenced as a passive actor:

He warned if Vietnam fell to communism, other Southeast Asian countries would follow...¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Colon et al, *American History*, 781.

¹⁴⁷ Colon et al, *American History*, 781.

¹⁴⁸ Colon et al, *American History*, 782.

¹⁴⁹ Colon et al, *American History*, 783.

¹⁵⁰ Colon et al, *American History*, 782.

Vietnam and its inhabitants are given no agency over the politics in their own country. United States acted to inhibit the democratic process that would elect Ho Chi Minh as the president when they felt their interests were being contended.

The textbook takes a turn when the U.S. increases its involvement once again under Lynden Johnson's administration. Vietnam goes from being a passive actor to an active one, though Vietnam has been retaliating against U.S. since the beginning of the war.

The United States entered the war in Vietnam believing that its superior weaponry would lead it to victory over Vietcong. However, the jungle terrain and the enemy's guerilla tactics quickly turned the war into a frustrating stalemate.¹⁵¹

The United States positions itself as a more advanced nation, diminishing the intelligence and authority of Vietnam as a nation. The stories of the Vietcong depict a country frustrated with the U.S. presence in their nation, and their subsequent retaliation is interpreted as hostility.

The textbook has insight on the movements occurring back in America in the 1960s: Johnson's duplicitous actions to increase his military power in Vietnam; racial tension rising as many Black soldiers died as result of the Vietnam War; women of the Vietnam war; and a divided nation against the Vietnam War.¹⁵² Ultimately, the Vietnamese voice remains unheard in this entire section and is reminiscent of the exchange between the Americans and the Vietnamese during the Vietnam War. The textbook dedicates these chapters to talking about Vietnam and Vietnamese people, nevertheless the reader is left with the aftermath of a bloody war focused on communism.

¹⁵¹ Colon et al, *American History*, 789.

¹⁵²Colon et al, *American History*, 796-99.

A student could conclude that entering the Vietnam War had negative ramifications. That same student would have little to no understanding of the Vietnamese perspective or their history with and within America. In Mississippi, the state guidelines do not require a student to learn about the Vietnam War.

California Language on Vietnam & Vietnam War: The California textbook covers the Vietnam War in 32 pages. Unlike the other textbook, this chapter starts with a letter from a Black soldier named Steve. Steve illustrates the Black soldiers recruited for the Vietnam War. An integral part of the war that is not introduced in the other textbook, the letter feels out of place and distracts from Vietnamese trauma.

America's involvement in the California textbook, Vietnam and the war are framed with a drastically different lens:

The Vietminh fought back against the French-dominated regime and slowly gained control of large areas of the country. As the fighting escalated, France appealed to the United States for help. The request put American officials in a difficult position. The United States opposed colonialism. It had pressured the Dutch to give up their empire in Indonesia and supported the British decision to give India independence in 1947. American officials, however, did not want Vietnam to be Communist.¹⁵³

Vietnam is an active actor in the fight against imperial powers. The theme of colonialism is introduced, and the U.S. is portrayed as a vehicle for change. The Vietnamese wants, desires, and voices are unmentioned at this point.

¹⁵³ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 585.

The California textbook contextualized warfare in Vietnam analogously to the Mississippi and Iowa textbook. Both textbooks underestimated Vietnam's ability to wage a war against the U.S.

American military leaders underestimated the Vietcong's strength. They misjudged the enemy's stamina and the support they had among the South Vietnamese.¹⁵⁴

The major difference in the California textbook was the use positive attributes with respect to the Vietcong – *strength* and *stamina* – and a nod to the national support of the Vietcong.

This textbook has four pages dedicated to the questions “Should the United States Have Fought in Vietnam?” and “Vietnam War Conflicts and Disagreements,” which was not part of the Mississippi text. In the U.S. Senate, George F. Kennan, a former diplomat, takes the position of the rejecting the war in Vietnam:

And the spectacle of Americans grievous injury on the lives of a poor and helpless people...produces reactions among millions of people throughout the world profoundly detrimental to the image we would like that to hold of this county...¹⁵⁵

A speech by Dr. Benjamin Spock in 1967 cited this:

I am opposed to war, not only because it is morally and legally wrong, but because it is destroying the good name and the leadership of the United States.¹⁵⁶

The message minimizes the death of the Vietnamese and places an emphasis on the global perception of America. The humanization of the Vietnamese people is limited and introduced at the end of the Vietnam War section. Five pages on the Southeast-Asian

¹⁵⁴ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 591.

¹⁵⁵ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 593.

¹⁵⁶ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 601.

immigration to America elucidates the difficulties faced by Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and Filipino refugees; these narratives are written in first person and highlight the otherization experienced in America. These stories are profound and touch upon the cards that Vietnamese Americans are dealt. Le Rieu Tai says:

I ask myself, what has America learned about Vietnam? I can't answer that. I get so upset...what angers me is that way people talk about the war.¹⁵⁷

The one misgiving is the grouping of all Southeast Asians together – immigrant experiences might be universal; however, this section was specific to Vietnam and perpetuates the stereotype that Asian Americans are a monolith. The California textbook is overall much more sensitive to the way Vietnamese and the Vietnam War is approached. Still, the textbook leaves much to be desired such as: the humanization of Vietnamese during the Vietnam War, first-person accounts of Vietnamese and Vietnamese Americans, and disaggregation of Asian American experiences.

¹⁵⁷ Joyce Appleby et al., *California Impact Social Studies*, 611.

Chapter III.

Speech Communities in the Classroom

Speech communities influence discourse and interactions within the classroom and participation in society; the frameworks, textbooks, and pedagogy recognize the dominant language and movement. Morgan contextualizes literary practices in education that benefit working-class communities, most commonly intersecting with the privilege of White communities:

To receive a middle-class education, you must criticize working-class and African American cultural practices. This creates a crisis of identity and loyalty for students who want to excel academically without sacrificing membership in their community.¹⁵⁸

Teachers must invest time outside of their known and into the unknown to understand the multicultural communities they serve or address. My burden is only to exemplify scenarios in which operations in the classroom are beholden to teacher bias.

Teachers in each state approached their curriculum with the caution afforded to them by their state. Mississippi teachers were limited by time and state standards, Iowa teachers were restricted by the political sphere in their communities, and California teachers were open about their biases in the classroom. These behaviors are byproducts of speech communities – the idea that a community “shares values and attitudes about language use, varieties and practices.”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Morgan, *Speech Communities*, 121.

¹⁵⁹ Morgan, *Speech Communities*, 114-15.

Neutrality in the Classroom

Depending on the climate of the state and the communities they serve, teachers employ varying philosophies in the classroom. Some claim an unbiased approach in the classroom, positioning their students to come to their own conclusions. Others reveal their political and social preferences, making space for debate in the classroom. And though neutrality seems like the focus in Mississippi and Iowa, the teacher's agenda dictates how they navigate their classroom.

In Mississippi, MS-BC-East says:

I've taught myself to be extra careful with how I present material because it can seem like I am left-wing or right-wing. And that's why I provide [the content] sometimes even in a more monotone way. So that they can make their own opinions after.

When asked about her philosophy in the classroom she says:

[Students'] open-mindedness is limiting right now. I try to awaken that a little bit with some things that they can connect to...To shift their mindset, to know that education is critical. It's to understand the education system was created in the 1800s and we still use the system today. I am fully aware of that, which is crazy to me. The bell signifies changing of people at factories, and we still use it today. That's all significant to me. But if we're not allowing these students to grow and become accountable and responsible, it serves no purpose for me to try and teach them about history...It's important that you respect education and history enough so that you can put yourself in these situations that allows you to be successful. I really think education is a facilitator to so many things if they use it wisely.

When pushed, MS-BC-East reveals that she is not on board with either political party and has ideologies that match both parties. She says, "I'm leaning towards equality. An open-mindedness. I feel like we are kind of weird stage politically right now." One district over, White teacher MS-BF-East says:

I see comments made on Facebook and other social media that 'your students know who you voted for in the last election' and that 'you're not doing your job as a teacher.' I disagree. I don't mind telling [my students]

who I voted for and I don't mind telling them what. For the first time ever, I voted third-party candidate in that election, but then in re-election, I did vote for Donald Trump. But I always try to present both sides of the aisle. You know, we can have this discussion. We can have this debate. That's what America is all about. I'm not trying to brainwash any child into any kind of political ideology.

MS-BC-East and MS-BF-East both are undecided on political platforms, and their ideologies are similar on the state of America; it is personal lived history in the U.S. and comfort with their community that enables one to be more outspoken. MS-BF-West was born in the same town in which she currently resides and teaches, while MS-BC-West was brought up in New Jersey and traveled to Mississippi for college and her subsequent job. Mississippi as a state, though politically conservative, has ongoing strife with racial equity. Chart 1.1 indicates that 30.8% of the state identifies as African American or Black, though much of the population is still White. Community culture may not always reflect the schools or the teachers.

Both teachers referenced above instruct at predominantly Black schools in neighboring districts, yet one is declaring her opinions in the classroom. MS-BF-East is a White woman who openly admits to her majority Black classroom that she voted for Donald Trump in the 2020 election cycle, noting that this could be a cause for concern in some areas:

I feel like in some places, maybe some people would get upset about it if they knew.

However, she is not unbothered by this as a member of a community that reflects her personal beliefs. MS-BC-East, a half-black woman, relays a conflicting narrative that commands her candor in the classroom.

Social media is big right now. I don't want a parent coming to me and saying, 'I can't believe you said this.' This is my job. This is my livelihood

to raise my kids. I don't want to lose that because I have a parent who is irrational and thinks that I had some type of a ploy with the topic.

Iowa, a political swing state, has a more consistent narrative of classroom practices and personal bias. IA-MC-Southwest, who is registered Republican and has served in local government before teaching, comments:

I don't like the far left. I don't like the far right. That's just me personally. But that's, again, the best thing for my students. I mean, students can look up my background, but many of them will ask me, 'what political party are you?' They don't know. They can't tell. Like I say, I tried to bounce off their positions. The last time the caucuses were here, I helped one [student] who was a huge Donald Trump supporter navigate how that system would work. But I had another student who was a big Bernie Sanders fan, and I helped that student navigate the system too...My viewpoint is that regardless of what I view on things, I feel like I really am a person to see both sides.

IA-PS-North corroborates and says, "I don't make my political opinion known to my students." However, he finds his political views shifting as a byproduct of living in a conservative town.

I consider myself moderate. I am a Democrat. I voted Democrat almost all my life. I've been emotionally prepared to vote for Republican candidates. I have, I think, become more moderate as I've gotten older and lived in a small town and been surrounded by more conservatives.

IA-CD-Central, a left-leaning history teacher at a rural school in Iowa discusses what her students might know about her from her pedagogy:

Actually, I don't know if I've ever really been asked. I have never answered. They probably think I'm not that political...because I try to be lighthearted.

Antithetical to Mississippi and Iowa, California teachers are open about their personal beliefs in the classroom. CA-DS-East teaches in a rural town, and she has only two students in her classroom. Classroom debates are naturally supplemented by personal life experiences. She says:

I do talk about my spiritual beliefs. I do say that I don't believe in the big G - God. I call them the big G because when it's I'm an English teacher and I think it's good that they remember that when they see like a capital G, that means Christian God...And honestly, I think it's important for them to know that because I think that people who are religious and are Christian have no trouble sharing that information in class. So, I think it's kind of good that kids understand that they might have an adult in their life that they respect that is not a Christian and their world is not going to fall apart. They do know that I don't really talk about political views directly in class. You know, I certainly don't talk about political actors in class.

Though she might not be explicit in her political views, she surrounds her classroom with posters that advocate for education in communities of color. She wants her students to know her truth:

Truth that the United States of America is now and has always been an evil empire that just takes whatever it wants and exploits every resource from every place that it can get. It's also the most free, incredible country on the planet. So, it's really nuanced. I would never say anything like that in the classroom. I feel like it's very easy for me to base it on factual evidence. I do want them to understand that because I think it's a really important thing to know going forward as a citizen of the United States, to know where we come from and know what our actual goals are in the world so that we can function as intelligent people within the system.

Speech communities have a stronghold over conversations in the classroom.

Morgan finds the language policy to be rooted in race and nationalism. She says, “...Beginning in the 1780s, notions of the social and cultural consequences of immigration were popularly referred to as a “melting pot” where diverse cultures, societies and national identities could harmoniously merge as a single, homogenous nation. The melting-pot concept did not include Blacks and Native Americans...This notion of “one nation” with a unified identity was also inherent in the ideology of the beginnings of US public schooling, which was conceived as a key socializing agent and resource for individual improvement and economic equality.”¹⁶⁰ What can or cannot be

¹⁶⁰ Morgan, *Speech Communities*, 118.

discussed in the classroom is a function of response by its neighboring community stakeholders – the parents, the students, and the local and state politicians. Teachers can be afraid to rock the boat and be subject to public shaming or job loss.

Personal Experience Matters: Teacher's Focus in the Classroom

Teacher demographics and their identifies factors into pedagogical decision-making. A study by Keith Richards on identity and classroom convention adds to the three existing identities in the analysis of interactions in the classroom.

The default position is characterized by orientation to situated identities, realized through their characteristic discourse identities and with no evidence of transportable identity...student and teacher identities are omnipresent. It is the teacher who, as a teacher, controls the floor, asks questions, issues instructions, prompts, and evaluates, while the students, addressing their responses to the teacher, respond directly to these turns.¹⁶¹

Classroom dynamics depend on the omnipresent *default identity* to which the students respond. In my study, two out of fifteen respondents were people of color, six men, and nine women, shaping the coursework in U.S. history classrooms.

Gender identities quickly come to the forefront when asked about inclinations in the classroom. Teachers from California, Mississippi, and Iowa all favored teaching the same time period in U.S. history. White, female teacher CA-LR-Central chooses eras that resonate with her *default identity*:

I like teaching the 1920s...It's just interesting...There's so much. Earth shattering change that happens during the twenties. My other favorite topic would be the Cold War. And it's because I grew up during the Cold War...And the other favorite one I do is women's suffrage. I have a male teacher will come in. I have classroom readers for my class, which is unconnected to the lesson, but they vote for them. So, when I have the

¹⁶¹ Keith Richards, “‘Being the Teacher’: Identity and Classroom Conversation,” *Applied Linguistics* 27, no. 1 (March 1, 2006): 61, <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/ami041>.

election for the class readers, a male teacher will come in and take all my female students' ballots and rip them up. And then I will teach them the 19th Amendment.

IA-CD-Central, a White woman, echoes these sentiments:

So, for instance, I especially like the 1920s and again a little bit with the fifties of like really emphasizing popular culture but trying to show it to them in a way that's like, you know, it's not just a sporting event...there's implications.

Teachers that self-identified as female gravitated to the era of the 1920s – a time when women's movements gained traction. Gender identity overlapped with race-related identities for women. MS-BC-East, a half-Black woman, found the same era in history to be profound:

Oh, I love teaching the 1920s...I love the shift in lifestyle. I love the shift in equality and in civil rights. Obviously, everybody loved the shift of the economy, but I felt as though it was a time of where there was devastation and war and it led and there were still a lot of people who were broken because of World War One. But I felt it was a time where people could thrive and live and breathe. Finally, after ten years of just destruction.

The 1920s marked the beginning of the Harlem Renaissance and progress for women.

Teacher MS-JM-South, a queer White woman, mirrors the sentiments above and adds to it:

I love teaching about the 1920s because I make a parallel between the twenties, the sixties and current day. My great grandmother was a flapper and I have a photo of her that she also played one of the first high school girls basketball teams in Tennessee.

MS-JM-South's *default identity* permits her to be a primary source for information about the 1920s and embraces the lessons on non-conformity – a deeply personal topic.

Most male teachers that were part of this survey did not showcase the same disadvantage as their female counterparts. A result of this was that they had a wider

distribution of interests. In Iowa, White, male teacher IA-CB-East chose World War II as the topic he was most interested in:

I mean, World War II is probably my favorite topic. Unfortunately, it happened, but it's interesting to talk about...Good versus evil...World War II is about love, and loss. So maybe you don't want to learn about the battles but think of all the love stories, all those letters that are sent home from husbands and wives and boyfriends and girlfriends and all that. There are so many stories that it hits every type of interest

IA-CB-East spent time relating World War II narratives to those his students would connect with. White, male teacher IA-MC-Southwest employed a similar tactic. He tried to find points of commonality between themselves, students in the classroom, and history:

Yes, history is about war battles, presidents and leaders. But we're involved a little bit with our existence...I do a lot on pop culture, on everyday life. You know, just in the 1920s, we talked about prohibition, mafia, Babe Ruth. I talked about Jesse Owens at the Olympics in the thirties.

In California, White, male teacher in CA-TS-North focused on a completely different topic.

I like to focus on the development of the Constitution. But not because it's the great American document. It's the great American document of who it leaves out and why.

There were no clear trends with male teachers and their choice of events to focus on in the classroom. Their *default identity* was less dominant and meaningful, and their *situated identity*, the “contributions of participants engaging in activities and respecting agendas that display an orientation to, and an alignment of, particular identity sets,” took precedence.¹⁶² The *default identity* made itself evident when it was a marginalized

¹⁶² Richards, ‘*Being the Teacher*’: *Identity and Classroom Conversation*, 60.

identity. CA-CJ-Mideast, a queer mixed-race male teacher at a crossroads of multiple identities, focused on numerous minority-driven movements:

I really like the civil rights movements, the Chicano movement, the LGBT movement socially as it comes out of the Lavender Scare. I also love the 1920s, especially the Harlem Renaissance and just seeing the shift in the identity of the American woman coming in.

Teachers with *default identities* that had a history of being oppressed were more likely to cover events with minorities. Neutrality in the classroom is disproved by the subjectiveness of events focused on in the classroom and the rationale behind the choice.

Student Demographics Shift the Narrative

The *default identity* is the identity with which disenfranchised teachers lead, after which the *situated identity* signals the teacher-student role in the classroom, commanding the type of content taught. Teachers in the classroom pander to their student demographics. Additionally, language used when describing their classroom demographics was telling of the comprehensive understanding of *transportable identities* -- visible identities -- dissimilar to theirs.

Two out of three teachers in Mississippi had races outside of Black and White in their classroom. MS-JM-South notes the students in classroom:

We have like 50-50 Black and White. There's maybe like one Hispanic family. And I think at this moment, we have maybe one Asian student.

When probed of the Hispanic and Asian student's ethnicity might be, she is unsure.

Hispanic students and Asian students are grouped into large catch-all identities, restraining the discursive elements of race for Asian Americans and Hispanics. MS-BF-East comments on her classroom demographics:

So, we have about 88% African-American, probably about 10% White, and then a few Hispanics and Asians.

With some doubt she categorizes the ethnicities of the Asian students upon further questioning.

In Iowa, IA-MS-Southwest says:

Vast majority of [students] would be Caucasian. I have a few Hispanic students this year. I've had some Black students and Asian students in the past.

Another teacher, IA-CD-Central, reproduces the ideology:

Mostly white, mostly lower class. I have. Two black students out of 110. I have two Asian-American students. I am not entirely sure from where...

Ambiguity with Hispanic and Asian students' ethnicity spans classrooms in Iowa and Mississippi.

Contrasting this, teacher IA-MS-Northeast breaks the conventional norm and is detailed: "96% White, some Hispanic, one Indian American, two Laotian Americans, one Vietnamese-American and maybe three African-Americans." Uniquely, IA-MS-Northeast provides these specifics with no prompting,

In California, CA-CJ-Mideast must be prodded to get ethnic breakdowns of the classroom:

Latin makes up the majority of it. Then the next group after that is typically Asian-American...As far as Asian-American goes, it would be Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese, and Indian...

CA-TS-North's initial response is also one of generalizations. He says his classroom is "40% white, 40 Latinx, and 20% Asian or African-American." CA-JS-West notes, "I believe the school demographic breakdown is 74% Asian, East Asian, South Asian. And then it breaks down evenly from there. I want to say Caucasians, roughly around 20%, and then African Americans about 4.5%." Demographic language is an extension of the

literature the teachers are exposed to and the speech communities they inhabit. Language socialization and literacy in education in the U.S. which has been indicative of “the workings and politics of dominant speech communities and the power and complexities of marginalized speech communities” for African American children can be applied to the lesser recognized minority students in the country.¹⁶³ In all three states, Asian American and Hispanic students were oriented by their teachers as aggregates, eradicating their distinctive cultural identities.

The Approach to Minority Communities in History

Teachers’ assessment of their own work was an indicator of their awareness in the dialogical debate on CRT. When asked what minorities events they covered, here are responses by state:

California Responses

CA-JS-West: All of them. There's always a section on minorities involvement, both in the country domestically and in the fighting of the war. The Harlem Hellfighters fought with the French Foreign Legion. And it's about African-Americans involvement in every American war, every war fought in America. African-American males coming home and having fought in a somewhat desegregated fighting unit, especially after the Korean War, when desegregation had happened within the military, and then coming home, having died and or got shot maimed, lost family to that war for the country and to be put back in that position...I mean, another thing that a lot of people don't talk about is the reason why the Japanese attacked us. And that was the oil embargo we put up. Right. People think, ‘Oh, they attacked us because they wanted to help Hitler.’ They simply wanted the oil we cut them off from. And we cut them off from that oil because they were committing major human atrocities throughout China.

CA-TS-North: I did a lot on Native Americans. So the civil rights movement is the most because that includes the responses, especially in the sixties, the radical responses of like the American Indian Movement, Peace Corps, the Brown Power Movement, the Black Power Movement,

¹⁶³ Morgan, *Speech Communities*, 130.

the Lavender Movement... We took a look at the experience of historical experience of Latin peoples, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and indigenous. I discussed Native Hawaiian in the in its own context, but I always link it to indigenous. We're talking about poverty and negligence and treating Puerto Rico as a, you know, a developing world country. In the past, I've done a little bit more with the Vietnamese community and Korean-Americans. I even talked about the doorbusters once you're familiar with them. So in the late nineties, there was an anti-Indian-American hate group called the Dot Busters because of the Bindi. And one Indian man was killed by it. And in that same context, I'll talk about the attack on the Sikh temple in Detroit. I talk sometimes I talk about the series and the Arab American community. In the past, I've we've shown the movie House of Sand and Fog. So that gives me a chance to talk about the Iranian-American community and like the problem again with the Asian label, like why are Armenians who are Asian Americans? But look at how successful they are in terms of how much they've acculturated, being mainstream, you know, versus, say, other, say, Central Asian communities that are not.

CA-CJ-Mideast: I feel like we don't do a really good job of most groups. Like, for example, when it comes to like Indian Americans during World War One and World War Two, the largest military for the British, the largest amount of soldiers in their armies, receipt for the both of them outnumber the white population of their army. But you do not ever do that or talk about it. I just feel like we all limit things to fill out a fantasy ideal of what we want the American dream or the American appearance to be. And I think that's the same for Filipino Americans. We don't really unless it's like the Spanish-American War or like World War Two. We don't really talk about them, even though they're a huge part of the backbone of the labor movement, like the Filipino clap that unions do comes from the Filipino community. But we don't talk about that. We only talk about Cesar Chavez and ignore Dolores Huerta.

CA-DS-East: We watched the documentary on Black Wall Street and talked about Tulsa just totally razed. And then like I said we talked about Bayard Rustin during the um, the civil rights movement and that was, I mean that's racial, but it's really more of a queer thing. It's like he was, like he was erased from history because he was queer and he's the one Martin Luther King about nonviolent resistance.... We are about eight miles away from Manzanar, which is a Japanese internment camp. So we definitely have spent a lot of time talking about that. And it's a big part of our community. We, you know, we went for a field trip down there and walked through it and stuff. We did talk about the Korean War and then we kind of spun off on just the culture and what's going on in North Korea right now. I mean, I guess we do focus on some other cultures, but not really. I feel a little bit inadequate.”

CA-LR-Central: UFW movement and that Filipino farmworkers that had the first union in the valley and then they later united with Cesar Chavez under UFW. In this valley, a lot of the migrant worker groups have been overlooked. Poor whites, Japanese-Americans, Chinese-Americans further back, maybe like during the mining era. But there's a lot of groups I'm forgetting. Also, you know, my kids live in Firebaugh so they don't know about there's a very large Sikh American community in Fresno. We have several temples. I know they'd never known what they were. So there's a lot of local things that they could be learning that they're not getting exposed to.

Mississippi Responses

MS-JM-South: The Japanese-American internment dilemma. A lot of my kids didn't know that happened that the Chinese Exclusion Act something I was talking about earlier, I want to say maybe last semester and last year, maybe not super so much this semester was the just like kind of the insult Asian like sentiment as far as immigration goes. Like a lot of people were like, oh, this is brand new. Like with COVID and everything this has been going on. This is very much like ingrained.

MS-BC-East: Civil rights...mass genocide Native Americans. Welcome to U.S. history. Like, that's how I feel sometimes, though, like. I'm teaching the Doors Act and the Indian Removal Act, which relocated Native Americans. I'm just telling them and they're creating their own stories... We talk about, like, Japanese-Americans.

MS-HS-Southwest: So I cover there a lot, but with emphasis placed upon them, not many. And of course, the civil rights movement we're going to talk about at great length. Women's suffrage – that movement we speak a lot about. [I] teach about Japanese-Americans and the internment and restriction of civil liberties in the name of national security. And we talk about the immigration or migration of farmers moving into the United States during World War Two from Mexico and then remaining within America a little bit with Cesar Chavez. We talk about Chinese immigration quite a bit in the early years with the continual. The displacement, genocide, and massacre of Native Americans. And then we even revisit that later with the American Indian Movement and the occupation of Alcatraz. They talk about that later.

MS-LH-Central: LGBTQ, civil rights, Hispanics, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 being the first act to eliminate immigrants. And we talk about following the Vietnam War, the influx of Asians to the Vietnam War and the Refugee Act of 1986.

MS-BF-East: I've introduced that idea of the Harlem Hellfighters to them. And then, of course, in World War Two, there are all kinds of things with

the Tuskegee Airmen and the Navajo code talkers and the women in the military. Doris Miller's actions, of course, at Pearl Harbor. Oh, the 442nd Central Postal Directory, the Japanese-American unit who served so honorably in Italy in World War two. We talk about FDR integrating the defense industry in World War Two, and then we'll talk about Truman integrating the military in Korea by executive order. So, yeah, I always do try to make sure that I point out all those contributions that were made as we go to the text.

Iowa Responses

IA-PS-North: The Native American relocations, the civil rights era in general, Cesar Chavez and. Each different group has had their own part of the civil rights movement, feminist movement.

IA-CD-Central: With Reconstruction, I try to also make sure there are positives. And that is usually focused a lot on different ethnic groups from Europe primarily, but also, you know, the growing kind of anti-Asian attitudes in California. But just a lot of like. I kind of try to show like the long history. We talk about Western European and then southeastern European and Jewish immigrants. But yes, then you talk about the Chinese Exclusion Act. And also maybe Mexican-American groups, things like that. I feel like it's a lot of European or Asian immigrants, at least in terms of their research.

IA-MS-Northeast: We have a lesson plan over Native Americans and their struggle for equality. We have civil rights. You know, I don't have a specific lesson plan, but there are a couple of days over Vietnam. And the Japanese internment is during World War Two.

IA-MC-Southwest: Civil war and reconstruction...And again, that's time period of women's rights, you know, that increased and that sort of thing. And, you know, we get to World War Two, of course, and internment camps and things like that. I probably could do much better, but I do honestly try to give multiple perspectives in American West and that we you know, would we study Native Americans. We also try to I try a little bit talk about issues today with that as well.

IA-CB-East: Women's history. Asian-American history. LGBTQ, black history. And the Chinese Exclusion Act of racism during the immigration years. The gentlemen's agreement with the Japanese and of course, World War Two, the internment of the Americans. That is going to be the focus there. We're going to focus more on the Doors Act -- the Americanization of Native Americans. And then, you know, during the 1930s, there's the Indian Reorganization Act that tried to undo some of the bad things that were done.

Teachers in California are most descriptive and provide specific examples of diverse minority groups. Notably, they are the group that is most concerned about their complete coverage of the overwhelming number of groups. Teachers in Mississippi were more likely to mention Asian-American groups than teacher in Iowa.

The shorter and indistinct response in Iowa are consistent with the vague nature of the guidelines. The responses in Mississippi and California also track with the mandated framework of U.S. history in the state, constructing the mindset and dialectics in the classroom.

Chapter IV.

Conclusion

U.S. History classrooms are and have been at the cusp of political and societal upheavals. The 1920s culture wars about textbooks and curriculum in schools are not forgotten in the 2022 discourse about Critical Race Theory education. At the time this thesis was written, CRT was being debated in districts all over the U.S. Iowa and Mississippi instated laws to prohibit CRT teachings in U.S. history classrooms. In opposition, California passed a law to promote ethnic studies in schools.

From my research on the political atmosphere in each state, both states that passed CRT bans had a substantial White, male presence in the state legislature – one that was not representative of the state demographics. The state’s political attitudes were reflected in the state guidelines. California’s state framework is comprehensive and inclusive which is consistent with the state’s assembly members, a more diverse and representative cohort. Iowa’s U.S. history guidelines are up to interpretation -- they are vague and do not address minority communities explicitly. Considered a swing state, Iowa had more in common with Mississippi’s education politics – from a White, male state legislature and CRT Bans to utilization of the same textbook, the two states trended to discriminatory practices. Mississippi, which has a history of violence against Black communities, must compensate with stringent guidelines in the classroom. As a result of this, the guidelines, though not inclusive, are specific in their coverage of Black history.

The guidelines very clearly informed the textbook language. Middle Easterners and Vietnamese had nominal mentions in the two textbooks, and the degree to which they are rendered in the textbook is inadequate and inconsequential. In every state, the

coverage of Middle Eastern communities is limited, negative, and as a response to *conflict*. This type of portrayal has amplified the hatred of Middle Eastern and Islamic communities in the U.S. reported SAALT. Vietnamese communities were unheard of in the Iowa and Mississippi textbook. The same community had one page dedicated to their voice in the Californian textbook. Both communities were impacted by imperial tactics by the United States. The Californian textbook was more critical of the Vietnam war, sourcing voices for the debate in that time period. The same sensitivity was not applied to the U.S. intervention in Iran and Iraq. The Mississippi and Iowa textbook did not critically analyze the U.S. response in Vietnam or the Middle East.

Policies, guidelines, and textbooks work together in harmony to paint a distinct image. What neither textbook manages to do successfully is have appropriate language around underrepresented communities. Interestingly, teachers claim to deviate from the textbook – a resource they only use as a backup or as new teachers. Teachers in all three states report that they have full jurisdiction over the pedagogy in the classroom and are without dependable system of checks and balances. Teachers were delivered an oral survey to assess their bias in the classroom. Four major points of influence were uncovered:

- 1) The level of a teacher's indulgence of neutrality in the classroom: Teachers could claim neutrality, however, very quickly the speech communities they serve would dictate their language and openness in the classroom.
- 2) The teacher's personal identity markers: A teacher's lived experience had a space in the curriculum selection for their classroom.

- 3) Student demographics of each classroom: Teacher's awareness of the marginalized experience was connected to the representation of that demographic in their classroom. AAPI and Hispanic communities were identified as aggregates, devoid of their unique cultural identity.
- 4) Teacher's approach to minority communities in history: Teacher's events touched are influenced by those in the guidelines.

Working back to Freire's retrospective on pedagogy, it is the awareness of the systems, languages and people who invoke societal progress. He says, "The language of the educator or the politician (and it seems more and more clear that the latter must also become an educator, in the broadest sense of the word), like the language of the people, cannot exist without thought; and neither language nor thought can exist without a structure to which they refer."¹⁶⁴ Critical Race Theory applied to U.S. history policies, guidelines, textbooks, and the teacher would benefit underemphasized communities in all three states. Cole's analysis of CRT in the classroom means "Racism can be best understood by both listening to and/or learning about the life histories and experiences of those at the receiving end of racism..."¹⁶⁵ Voices that aren't given space in history teachings are stripped of their agency notes Delgado's work.¹⁶⁶ By the mode of schema-consistency bias – policies, guidelines, textbooks, teacher's bias -- pedagogy in the classroom can reproduce the cultural sentiments of their community and outline an imagined community in unimagined ways.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 96.

¹⁶⁵ Cole, *Critical Race Theory and Education: A Marxist Response*, 49.

¹⁶⁶ Jean Stefancic and Richard Delgado, *Critical Race Theory - an Introduction*. (New York University Press, 2001), 38.

¹⁶⁷ Fallin, *Cultural Sentiments and Schema-Consistency Bias in Information Transmission*, 1245.

Appendix 1.

Survey Questions

Demographic Questions

1. What is your name (If comfortable)?
2. What is your age?
3. How do you identify ethnically?
4. What is your gender?
5. What is your highest degree or level of education completed?
6. Marital status? Do you have a family or dependents?
7. Place of birth?
8. Which languages do you speak?
9. Are you working more than one job? What would you say is your employment status?
10. How would you describe your housing situation? Renting or owning a home?
11. Do you live near where you work? Why or why not?
12. How do you commute to work? How far?
13. How would you identify your economic status?
14. What is your annual income? You can give me a range.

Bias Questions

1. Is food an important part of your life?
2. Do you cook often? What kind of food do you cook regularly?

3. What kind of food do you crave?
4. What are a few of your favorite restaurants?
5. Can you describe a food memory to me?
6. Do you have grocery stores easily accessible to you where you can get the ingredients you need?
7. What is the name of the grocery store you choose to frequent?

Classroom Demographics Questions

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. How did you become a teacher? And why this subject?
3. How many classes do you teach? Are they all US history?
4. Can you tell me about your US history classroom and your students?
 - a. Classroom demographics?
 - b. How do they respond to the curriculum being taught?
 - c. How are students doing in your classes?
 - d. Pandemic impact?
 - e. How do you assess your students?

Textbook Questions

1. What is your philosophy in the classroom?
2. How do you teach?
3. Are you required to use a textbook in your classroom?
 - a. If yes, which one?
 - b. Do you like the textbook? Why or why not?
4. Do you use supplement texts in the classroom?

- a. Why or why not?
- 5. What is some material you enjoy teaching?
- 6. What is some material you don't enjoy teaching?
- 7. How is the curriculum developed?
- 8. What are events that you focus on in your classroom?
- 9. What are events that you would prefer were not covered?
- 10. How do you develop the curriculum?
- 11. What are minority-driven events that you cover?
- 12. What do you like or dislike about your state guidelines?
- 13. Are there things you can't talk about in your classroom?

Possible Personal Questions

- 8. Would you say you are religious? If yes, which religion do you identify with?
- 9. What do you think about the separation of Church and State?
- 10. Do you feel your beliefs align with your county's policies?

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