

# A Forgotten Minority? A Content Analysis of Asian Pacific Americans in Introductory American Government Textbooks

Okioyoshi Takeda, *Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo*

## ABSTRACT

Textbooks are the most important pedagogical tools in higher education and they should convey sufficient and accurate information on minority groups and women in the United States. Yet textbooks tend to marginalize these groups in their depictions. This article examines the coverage of Asian Pacific Americans in twenty-eight American Government or Politics textbooks. Asian Pacific Americans have faced a unique history of exclusion, discrimination, and stereotyping. The content analysis of the textbooks reveals that textbooks do not fully cover their history and contributions to US politics, either measured by page numbers or by historical events and figures important to Asian Pacific Americans. To rectify this lack of coverage, this article concludes with five constructive recommendations, including an option to invite scholars on Asian Pacific American politics to serve as textbook reviewers and textbook coauthors.

Providing ample and accurate information on racial minorities to college students is an essential purpose of political science education. This is particularly true in the case of Asian Pacific Americans, because they are often seen as a non-minority facing no problems of racial stereotypes and discrimination. They are also seldom seen as actors in US politics, despite the facts that millions of Asian Pacific Americans cast their votes and thousands of Asian Pacific Americans hold elected and appointed offices across the United States (Nakanishi and Lai 2014-15). Correcting these misunderstandings and conveying knowledge of Asian Pacific Americans' contributions to US politics will lead to a better understanding of this racial group within American society. The proper place to conduct this task within the political science curriculum is an introductory American Government/Politics (hereafter "Government") course. Although instructors of introductory courses may adjust course curriculum by supplementary readings and teaching styles (Cassese and Bos 2013, 216), the

content of textbooks carries the heaviest weight on the information transmitted to students.

Introductory-level textbooks are important for at least two reasons. First, textbooks determine and legitimize what the discipline deems as "mainstream" or "legitimate" knowledge. As Wallace and Allen (2008, 153) point out, "textbooks are political statements or messages to and about the future of a society. They function as the cultural vehicle and means of social control." Monforti and McGlynn (2010, 309) similarly assert that "[t]extbooks thus become agents of socialization as limited classroom time leads to students taking the majority of what they read in textbooks at face value." In other words, what is written in textbooks becomes the "standard" of the discipline, while what is not written becomes easily interpreted as unimportant or insignificant. Second, textbooks play a crucial pedagogical role in teaching about racial minorities in US politics. Textbooks literally "introduce" the discipline of American Government to introductory-level students. Because most students do not major in political science, introductory American Government textbooks are most likely the last place to convey knowledge on American politics. If information on Asian Pacific Americans, or racial and ethnic minority groups in general, is missing from textbooks, these students will graduate without fully learning about the increasingly multiracial aspect of US society.

This article reports the results of the content analyses of Asian Pacific Americans' in twenty-eight introductory American

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Okioyoshi (Oki) Takeda is an associate professor in the School of International Politics, Economics, and Communication at Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo. This piece was written on behalf of the APSA Committee on the Status of Asian Pacific Americans in the Profession. A companion paper, "A Model Minority? A Qualitative Analysis of Asian Pacific Americans in Introductory American Government Textbooks" will be posted on the webpage of the Committee at <<http://www.apsanet.org/status-committees>>. He can be reached at [otakeda@sipeb.aoyama.ac.jp](mailto:otakeda@sipeb.aoyama.ac.jp).

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Government textbooks widely used in colleges in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Although analyses of American Government textbooks abound, this is the first study to analyze textbooks with regard to Asian Pacific Americans. The method of analyses used in this report is consistent with the survey of African Americans in similar textbooks (Wallace and Allen 2008) and the analysis of Latinos and Latinas (hereafter Latino/as) by the same textbooks of previous editions as the ones covered in this report (Monforti and McGlynn 2010). Following their examples, this article examines in what way and to what extent Asian Pacific Americans are depicted in American Government textbooks. More specifically, it asks the following research questions:

- (a) To what extent (how many actual pages overall) are Asian Pacific Americans mentioned in textbooks?
- (b) When Asian Pacific Americans are mentioned, in which chapter(s) do they appear?
- (c) Which political figures and what historical events important to Asian Pacific American politics are mentioned, and if they are, in how many textbooks?

The outline of this article is as follows. The first section will review existing studies of textbooks in American Government and related fields. Then the next section will discuss the methods used in this study. The results section will show that mentions on Asian Pacific Americans are limited—at the most 2.68 pages and in the least 0.04 pages in a textbook, with a mean coverage of 1.13 pages (research question (a)). It will also demonstrate that other than the internment of people of Japanese descent and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, important Asian Pacific American historical events and figures are scarcely mentioned (research question (c)). After considering the significance of limited coverage, five proposals to make textbooks more inclusive of Asian Pacific Americans will be made.

## RACIAL MINORITIES AND WOMEN IN TEXTBOOKS

### Research on Introductory Textbooks

Given their importance in pedagogy, it is not surprising that the contents of American Government textbooks have been scrutinized from a wide range of perspectives. Some studies found positive aspects of textbooks. For example, contrary to the researchers' expectations, images in American Government textbooks were found to portray religion positively, although they overrepresented Muslims (Eisenstein and Clark 2013). Moreover, a close examination of the chapter on the presidency revealed that the emphases, illustrations, and evidence of textbooks differed from one another (Evans and Lindrum 2013).

Research on textbooks in American Government and related fields, however, has found racial minorities and women are given limited space, concentrated in one chapter, or seen in stereotypes. In other words, racial minorities and women are "marginalized" in textbooks. Here, "marginalization" means the process in which some groups are relegated from the center of political power to the periphery of the political world.

More than three decades ago, Boneparth (1980) pointed out that American Government textbooks did not adequately discuss women's political behavior and sex discrimination. Ashley and Jarratt-Ziemski's (1999) content analyses of American Government textbooks revealed that Native Americans were the least mentioned minority groups along with Asian Americans and

were largely omitted in the discussion of federalism and tribes' unique legal status. Clawson and Kegler (2000) found that African Americans were overrepresented in pictures of poor people in introductory American Government textbooks, intensifying the racialized image of poverty prevalent in mass media. Replicating this study with introductory economics textbooks, Clawson (2002) discovered that African Americans were overrepresented in pictures of people in poverty and as recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). In their analysis of American Government textbooks Allen and Wallace (2010) identified a larger number of positive pictures of African American men than African American women. Using the same textbooks, Wallace and Allen (2008) reported that discussions of African American politics were confined to a single civil rights chapter, although textbooks varied in the extent to which they referred to African Americans outside the civil rights chapter (see also Wallace and Clayton 2009). Monforti and McGlynn's (2010) research of American Government textbooks similarly showed that Latino/as' discussions were limited to a civil rights chapter but were often situated in the context of ("illegal") immigration.

On gender and sexual orientation, Eksterowicz and Watson (2000) noted that the first ladies, powerful political figures who could become role models for female students, received minimum to at best moderate coverage in both introductory American Government and more advanced presidency textbooks. Novkov and Gossett's (2007, 393) analysis of American Government textbooks found that gays and lesbians, too, were "almost universally" discussed in a civil rights chapter, "as 'another' structurally disempowered group, often grouped with the disabled and listed after longer substantive sections on gender and race." Olivo (2012a) detected that the coverage of women in American Government textbooks was relegated to images and such graphics as sidebars, tables, figures, and charts rather than in texts, where women could be discussed in more detail. Building on this finding, Olivo (2012b) suggested several topics in which women could be more fully incorporated into textbooks—such as explanations of the gender gap, media bias, the underrepresentation of women in elective office, and women in the revolutionary era (see also Olivo 2012a). Cassese and Bos' (2013) keyword search found a wide variation across American Government textbooks as to the times female-related words appear, but that among the key words those denoting political actors such as feminism/feminist and Congresswomen were used less often. Cassese, Bos, and Schneider (2014) extended this research and revealed that women were mentioned mostly in the contexts of reproductive rights and family policy—that is, in traditional roles as wives and mothers.

On the depiction of Asian Pacific Americans in history textbooks, Okihiro (1997, 2-3) argued that they were either treated as "victims" (e.g., those of the 19th century Chinese exclusion movement and the internment of people of Japanese descent) or those who provided "contributions" to white society (such as by building railroads and growing vegetables). Similarly, Okihiro (1997, 25) reported that when he gave students an exercise to "survey US history texts for depictions of Asian Americans," "[i]nvariably, they find that Asians are largely absent, and that when included, Asians are presented mainly as victims."<sup>3</sup> Reviewing American history textbooks, Limerick (1992) noted a similar pattern that "Asian Americans thus make brief appearances for the building of the Central Pacific Railroad, the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Japanese-American [sic] relocation

campus, and the upsurge in Asian immigration in the last twenty-five years.”

These previous studies suggest that racial minorities and women in textbooks in American Government and related fields are portrayed as politically marginalized groups, rather than political agents who actively participate in US politics. The textbooks mask the roles that racial minorities and women play in American politics. The studies, however, have not researched Asian Pacific Americans as their central themes. Investigating whether these same patterns apply to Asian Pacific Americans in American Government textbooks is the main purpose of this article.

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### The Asian Pacific American Population

Asian Pacific Americans are the fastest growing immigrant group in the nation, even surpassing the growth of Hispanics (to use the Census term) when measured by the percentage change between 2000 and 2010 (US Census Bureau 2014). According to one of the most recently available sources of information, 18.9 million Asians (including non-citizens) reside in America, many of whom have checked off the single race category “Asian alone” (under the US Census); however, those who check off the “Asian in combination” (that is, multiracial Asian) are also rapidly rising. The Asian group is diverse in terms of ethnic background, which includes East Asians such as Japanese and Koreans on the one hand, and South Asians such as Indians and Pakistanis on the other.<sup>4</sup> The Chinese are the largest group (4.2 million), followed by Filipinos (3.4 million) (US Census Bureau 2014).

### Stereotypes of Asian Pacific Americans

Asian Pacific Americans have faced a unique history of exclusion, discrimination, and stereotyping. Starting from the end of the 19th century (Chinese in 1882) to the beginning of the 20th century (Japanese in 1924), laws barring Asian immigrants from entering the United States were enacted. During the same period, the Supreme Court cases declared that Asians (Japanese in 1922 and Indians in 1923) were not allowed to naturalize. It was only during and after World War II that these restrictions were removed. Originating from these eras, a perception began to be rooted in American society—the “forever foreigner image”—that any Asian American is looked at as a foreigner, whether the person is third, fourth, or even fifth generation American.

A shift in demographic patterns occurred when the immigration act of 1965 stripped away quotas imposed on individual countries. A large number of professionals came to the United States from such areas as South Korea, Taiwan, and India. Then two new stereotypes of Asian Americans were born. One is a “forgotten/token minority” myth. According to this stereotype, Asian Americans do not face any racial discrimination and therefore do not have to be treated as a minority group. A second related stereotype is called the “model minority myth.” According to this view, Asian Americans achieve high educational and professional achievements with hard work supported by Asian

cultural values—and thus, become a “model” for other minorities, implicitly African Americans and Latino/as. While the “forever foreigner,” “forgotten/token minority” and “model minority” images do not correctly reflect the diverse Asian American demographics, they have an impact on American politics, especially in the area of discrimination. For example, former member of Congress David Wu (D-OR) was briefly denied entry to a federal building where he was scheduled to give a speech, ironically in celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month because the security guards suspected he was a foreigner (Aoki and Takeda 2008, 143–51).

### METHODOLOGY

To investigate the research questions set above, a content analysis of twenty-eight introductory American Government textbooks was conducted. Content analysis “is particularly well suited to the study of communication and to answering the classic question of communications research: ‘Who says what, to whom, why, how, and with what effect?’” (Babbie 1995, 307). Here, the communication outlets are textbooks, and receivers are students. The criteria for textbook selection are as follows: (a) the textbooks are the same as those used in the analysis of the representations of Latino/as (Monforti and McGlynn 2010);<sup>5</sup> (b) of these textbooks the most recent edition available during the 2011–12 academic year was used; (c) when complete and brief editions of the same textbook are available, the complete edition was used; and (d) when a national only edition and national, state, and local editions of the same textbook are available, the more inclusive edition was used (see Appendix for more information on the surveyed textbooks). While this sample of textbooks does not perfectly reflect the entire universe of American Government textbooks, as it may miss newer textbooks and those from smaller publishers, it covers the significant part of the textbook market, which is dominated by major publishers.

Several strategies were used to locate Asian Pacific Americans in the content. First was to refer to the index to find where Asian Pacific Americans are cited in the text. Most textbooks have an index entry called “Asian Americans” (see Novkov and Gossett (2007) in the case of gays and lesbians). A search was also made for ethnic-specific groups such as Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans, for well-known figures such as Gary Locke and Bobby Jindal, and for historical events such as the murder of Vincent Chin in 1982 and the “espionage” case of Wen Ho Lee that arose in 1999 (neither of them turned out to be mentioned in any textbook). Sections that are written on Hispanics/Latino/as were also scrutinized because Asian Pacific Americans are sometimes “tacked on” to Latino/as in discussions of non-white minority groups. Sections that are listed under index entries such as diversity, immigration, minorities, and race were also read because the text discussing these terms could possibly include Asian Pacific Americans. Finally, a check was made to see if Asian Pacific Americans are mentioned in chapters of the three branches of the government and in most chapters on “behavior” (such as political opinion, interest



group, election and voting). Chapters on civil liberties and civil rights were also examined, although in most cases, referral to Asian Pacific Americans in these chapters already overlapped with entries found under the “Asian American” entry in the index.<sup>6</sup>

## RESULTS

### Index Entry for Asian Pacific Americans

Table 1 summarizes the results of the content analyses of the textbooks. The first column (a) shows whether or not the textbook index has an entry related to “Asian Americans.” While three-fourths of the textbooks (twenty-one) have an “Asian Americans” (or Asians) entry, seven textbooks do not even have an “Asian American” entry. This omission means that even if the textbook may have some references to Asian Pacific Americans in the text, a student will be unable to find mentions of Asian Pacific Americans in a textbook from the index.

### Asian Pacific Americans in the Civil Rights Chapter

The next column (b) indicates whether or not the textbooks have separate sections that are set aside for Asian Pacific Americans in the civil rights chapter. The civil rights chapter is important to focus on because references to minority groups tend to be concentrated in this chapter (Novkov and Gossett 2007; Wallace and Allen 2008; Monforti and McGlynn 2010). Of the twenty-eight textbooks, only thirteen textbooks contain a separate section for Asian Pacific Americans in the civil rights chapter. Other textbooks often discuss the civil rights of Asian Pacific Americans in a section clumsily entitled “civil rights for other minorities,” which combines Asian Pacific Americans, Native Americans, women, sexual minorities (LGBTs), and the disabled. Column (c) measures the total amount of Asian Pacific American-specific mentions in the civil rights chapter, which ranges from 0 to 2.29 pages with a mean of 0.65 pages.<sup>7,8</sup> As the mean length of mentions of Asian Pacific Americans in the entire textbook is 1.13 pages (discussed shortly), 57.5% of coverage is concentrated in the civil rights chapter. Seven textbooks do not have any Asian Pacific American-specific mentions in the civil rights chapters.

### Asian Pacific Americans in Congress

Column (d) indicates whether textbooks carry any information on the number of Asian Pacific American members of Congress in graphs or charts on the number of women and minority members. American Government textbooks usually include either a graph of women and minority members by year to show their increase over time, or a chart of the number of women and minority members in the most current Congress (although eight textbooks do not publish such graphics at all). Out of the twenty textbooks that have such a graph or a chart, only seven textbooks incorporate information on the number of Asian Pacific American members. In the other thirteen textbooks, what is treated as “minority” members of Congress is limited to African Americans and Latino/as and does not include Asian Pacific Americans.

### Asian Americans in the Entire Textbook in Page Numbers

Column (e) indicates the extent to which Asian Pacific American-specific mentions are made in other chapters. Asian Pacific Americans are mentioned in chapters under topics such as the three branches of government, immigration, demographics and diversity (chapter and/or section names differ by textbooks), public opinion, and voting.<sup>9</sup>

In column (f), columns (c) through (e) sum to show the total number of Asian Pacific American-specific mentions in the entire textbook. This column reveals two findings. First, not surprisingly, discussions of Asian Pacific Americans in American Government textbooks are very limited. The average coverage of Asian Pacific Americans in a textbook is 1.13 pages. While this may be progress from thirty or forty years ago when Asian Pacific Americans were probably not mentioned in textbooks at all, it does not make much progress since the 1997–1999 period when the average coverage of Asian Pacific Americans was reported to be 0.8 pages (Takeda 1999). The longest amount of Asian Pacific American-specific mentions in a single textbook is 2.68 pages (Barbour and Wright 2012), followed by 2.48 pages (O’Connor, Sabato, and Yanus 2011). The comparatively longer references by the top two textbooks can be attributed to their relatively long discussion of Asian Pacific American history in the civil rights chapter (2.29 and 1.54 pages, respectively; see column (c)), and scattered mentions of Asian Pacific Americans, such as SEARAC (The Southeast Asia Resource Action Center) in an interest group chapter (Barbour and Wright 2012, 488) and Sukhee Kang, the first Korean American elected to mayor of a major mainland city in 2008 (Irvine, California) in a state and local politics chapter (O’Connor, Sabato, and Yanus 2011, 134, although in a picture). The examples of these two textbooks suggest that textbook writers can increase mentions of Asian Pacific Americans by adding a few pertinent and meaningful sentences and images regardless of limited space.

The second finding is that wide variation in the length of Asian Pacific American-specific mentions exists among textbooks. While four textbooks exceed two pages in their Asian Pacific American-specific mentions, fourteen textbooks make mentions in only less than one page; two textbooks make mentions in even less than 0.1 pages—0.04 pages (Wilson, Dilulio, and Bose 2013) and 0.05 pages (Katznelson, Kesselman, and Draper 2011). This means that depending on which textbooks are assigned by an instructor, students will receive a very different level of exposure to Asian Pacific Americans. This type of coverage is much less compared to the case of African Americans, in which textbooks consistently include a section on their history from the slavery era to the Jim Crow era to the *Brown* case to Martin Luther King to the current affirmative action debate.<sup>10</sup> It is also different from the Latino/a case, in which they are frequently mentioned (although, albeit negatively) in relation to immigration (Monforti and McGlynn 2010, 312).<sup>11</sup>

### Asian Americans in the Entire Textbook in Percentage

To ensure that the analyses look at the percentages as well as the total number of pages of Asian Pacific American-specific mentions in textbooks, column (g) shows the number of pages of textbooks (excluding appendices, such as the US Constitution and *Federalist No. 10* and *51*, and the table of indexes). Column (h) presents the value of column (f) divided by column (g)—the percentage of textbooks devoted to Asian Pacific American-specific discussions. Again, the result is similar to that of column (f)—the maximum coverage is 0.39% (O’Connell, Sabato, and Yanus 2011), while the minimum coverage is 0.01% (Katznelson, Kesselman, and Draper 2011; Wilson, Dilulio, and Bose. 2013), with a mean value of 0.19%. None of the textbooks contains Asian Pacific American-specific mentions that exceed 0.50%.

**Table 1**  
**Number of Pages Which Mention Asian Pacific Americans in Textbooks 2011–12**

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	
Textbooks Listed by Last Name of the First Author (s)	Is there an Asian Pacific American-specific related entry in textbook index?	Is there a separate section for Asian Pacific Americans in the civil rights chapter?	Total number of pages with Asian Pacific American-specific mentions in civil rights chapter	Availability of information on the number of Asian Pacific American members of Congress in a graph or chart on the number of women and minority members	Total number of pages with Asian Pacific American-specific mentions in the <i>other</i> chapters	Total number of pages with Asian Pacific American-specific mentions in the <i>entire</i> textbook	Number of pages in the entire textbook	Percentage of Asian Pacific American-specific pages in textbook	Number of tables, figures, graphs and pictures which include Asian Pacific American-specific information
Barbour and Wright	Yes	Yes	2.29	No	0.39	2.68	754	0.36%	9
Berman and Murphy	No	No	0	No	0.61	0.61	585	0.10%	2
Bond and Smith	No	No	0	N/A <sup>(4)</sup>	1.47	1.47	613	0.24%	2
Coleman et al.	Yes	No <sup>(3)</sup>	1.48	No	0.24	1.72	698	0.25%	5
Dautrich and Yalof	Yes	Yes	0.56	N/A <sup>(4)</sup>	0.09	0.65	585	0.11%	0
Dye	No	No	0	No	0.10	0.10	657	0.02%	4
Dye et al.	Yes	Yes	0.72	No	0.66	1.38	376	0.37%	1
Edwards et al.	Yes	Yes	0.30	Yes	0.60	0.90	646	0.14%	6
Fiorina et al.	Yes	Yes	0.85	No	0.77	1.62	612	0.26%	1
Ginsberg et al.	Yes	Yes	1.00	Yes	1.12	2.12	719	0.29%	6
Greenberg and Page	Yes	No	0.10	Yes	1.70	1.80	646	0.28%	4
Harrison and Harris	Yes	Yes	1.28	Yes	0.57	1.85	586	0.32%	8
Janda et al.	No	No	0	No	0.15	0.15	697	0.02%	2
Katznelson et al.	No	N/A <sup>(1)</sup>	0	Yes	0.05	0.05	392	0.01%	2
Kernell et al.	Yes	No	0.64	No	0.27	0.91	701	0.13%	2
Losco and Baker	Yes	Yes	1.00	No	0.14	1.14	429	0.27%	3
Lowi et al.	Yes	Yes <sup>(2)(3)</sup>	0.93	N/A <sup>(4)</sup>	0.33	1.26	707	0.18%	2
Magleby et al.	Yes	Yes	1.55	Yes	0.81	2.36	758	0.31%	14
Miroff et al.	Yes	No <sup>(2)</sup>	0.14	N/A <sup>(4)</sup>	0.24	0.38	434	0.09%	2
O'Connor et al.	Yes	Yes	1.54	No	0.94	2.48	639	0.39%	9
Patterson	Yes	Yes	1.44	No	0.17	1.61	592	0.27%	4
Schmidt et al.	Yes	No	0.38	No	0.42	0.80	685	0.12%	5
Shea et al.	No	No	0.17	N/A <sup>(4)</sup>	0.00	0.17	629	0.03%	2
Sidlow and Henschen	Yes	Yes	1.19	N/A <sup>(4)</sup>	0.03	1.22	365	0.33%	4
Tannahill	Yes	No	0	N/A <sup>(4)</sup>	0.94	0.94	496	0.19%	0
Volkomer	Yes	No	0.50	N/A <sup>(4)</sup>	0.18	0.68	389	0.17%	1
Welch et al.	Yes	No	0.04	Yes	0.44	0.48	616	0.08%	6
Wilson et al.	No	No	0	No	0.04	0.04	594	0.01%	0
Mean			0.65		0.48	1.13	592.86	0.19%	3.79

Notes: (1) There is no chapter for civil rights in this textbook.

(2) Civil rights and civil liberties are combined in one chapter.

(3) Section on Asian Pacific Americans are combined with other minority groups such as Latinos/as.

(4) A graph or chart on the number of women and minority members of Congress is not included.

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## Asian Pacific Americans in Graphics

Coverage of Asian Pacific Americans is not limited to texts in the textbooks. Some textbooks include Asian Pacific Americans in tables, figures, graphs, and pictures (for the relative importance of these sections, see Olivo (2012a)). Column (i) displays the number of such graphics that include information on Asian Pacific Americans, which ranges from zero to fourteen. The textbook that contains the most information on Asian Pacific Americans in its graphics (Magleby, Light, and Nemacheck 2011) does so in the following contents: the percentage of Asian Americans in the cabinet (339), the percentage of Asian Pacific Americans in the federal workforce (358), the percentage of Asian Americans in public school by year and region (449), and the percentage of Asian Americans among military recruits (536). While it is better to discuss Asian Pacific Americans in text than in graphics (Olivo 2012a), as a second option, authors can convey information by including data and information via graphics.<sup>12</sup>

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## Asian Pacific American-Related Events and Individuals Mentioned in Textbooks

The foregoing analyses deal with the length and numbers of times Asian Pacific Americans are mentioned. What topics related to Asian Pacific Americans are discussed in these mentions? Table 2 shows the number of important Asian Pacific American-related historical events and political figures mentioned in two or more textbooks. The internment of people of Japanese descent during World War II was the historical event most frequently mentioned (twenty-four textbooks). While most textbooks regard the internment as a serious violation of the civil rights of the people of Japanese descent, it is noteworthy that four textbooks fail to mention this historical event in any capacity. Other events which rank high in the frequency of appearance in textbooks are also related to the internment. For example, the Supreme Court case *Korematsu vs. US* in 1944 (323 US 214) is mentioned in fourteen textbooks; the Japanese American redress of the internment, which materialized in 1988 with the passage of the Civil Liberties Act, is mentioned in twelve textbooks. It is interesting to observe that the Japanese American redress is mentioned in just half the number of surveyed textbooks which mention the internment. This means that students who are assigned the other half of the textbooks do not have a chance to learn how Japanese Americans dealt with the legacy of the internment and received justice in later years.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 is the Asian Pacific American-related event mentioned in the second largest number of textbooks (fifteen). The Act is usually mentioned in a chapter on civil rights, which textbooks often use as a place to outline the history of Asian Pacific Americans.<sup>13</sup> The Immigration Act of 1965, which triggered a rapid rise in the number of immigrants from Asia, is mentioned in only nine textbooks. Bobby Jindal, a South Asian Republican Governor of Louisiana, is mentioned in eight textbooks, often in a chapter on state and local politics. Gary Locke, a Chinese American and a former Democratic Governor of the state of Washington, is mentioned in six textbooks, usually in the

context that he was the first Asian Pacific American governor on the mainland.<sup>14</sup>

## DISCUSSION

The analyses of the contents of the twenty-eight American Government textbooks reveals that Asian Pacific Americans are marginalized in their depictions. This finding echoes the previous studies that looked at other racial minorities and women. The average coverage of Latino/as in the same textbooks as those used in this study was 0.98%.<sup>15</sup> While editions are different and direct comparison cannot be made, the percent mean coverage of Asian Pacific Americans is 0.19%, showing how Asian Pacific Americans are typically overlooked in textbooks.

This is a troublesome finding in light of the fact that Asian Pacific Americans are the fastest growing population in the United States. Asian Pacific Americans are also significant components of college student bodies: it is typical for private universities on

the east coast to have 10 to 20 percent of the student body be Asian Pacific Americans. Some of the University of California campuses have as many as 40 to 50 percent Asian Americans (University of California 2014). These students face a problem—they cannot find their faces in American Government textbooks. Without Asian Pacific American representation and without Asian Pacific American role models in textbooks, Asian Pacific American students may come out feeling that this discipline is not relevant to their own lives. The number of Asian Pacific American students is no longer negligible among the population of textbook readers (indeed, they are a big ignored “market” for publishers).

Yet the necessity of including Asian Pacific Americans in American Government textbooks is not just based on their numbers. While Asian Pacific Americans have a unique history of exclusion and discrimination, they make their own contributions to current US politics. Nearly four million Asian Pacific Americans cast their vote in the 2012 election (National Asian American Survey 2013), and one Senator (Mazie Hirono (D-HI)) and ten members of the House served in the 113th Congress (2013-15) (Tong 2013). Although Asian Pacific Americans’ turnout rate and their level of representation in Congress are much lower than those of whites (for reasons that should be discussed in textbooks as well), textbooks should show that Asian Pacific Americans are important players in American politics.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In this section, rather than continuing to criticize the existing textbooks, I offer five constructive proposals so that American Government textbooks will be more inclusive of content on Asian Pacific Americans in the future. First, I encourage textbook authors to read books and articles on Asian Pacific American politics, and more broadly, works in Asian American Studies. The information to write about Asian Pacific American politics does exist (see, for example, the homepage of National Asian American Survey).<sup>16</sup> Scholars need to be more conscious about bridging mainstream political science with more interdisciplinary

Table 2

### Important Asian Pacific American-Related Events and Names Mentioned in Two or More Textbooks 2011–2012

Asian Pacific American-Related Event or Name	Historical or Political Significance	Number of Textbooks (Out of 28) That Mention the Event or Name
Japanese internment	Uprooting of people of Japanese descent from west coast during World War II	24
Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882	Congressional Act barring entry of Chinese laborers for ten years (later renewed)	15
<i>Korematsu vs. US</i> (1944)	Supreme Court decision upholding the exclusion order on people of Japanese descent	14
Japanese internment redress	Passage of Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which apologized to, and compensated for, people of Japanese descent	12
Immigration Act of 1965	Congressional Act replacing country quotas with family reunification and skill-based criteria	9
Bobby Jindal	First governor of South Asian descent in the US (R-Louisiana)	8
Gary Locke	First Asian Pacific American governor on the US mainland (D-Washington); Secretary of Commerce during the Obama administration (2009-11)	6
<i>Lau vs. Nichols</i> (1974)	Supreme Court decision declaring that not giving assistance to non-English speaking Chinese students was illegal	4
Daniel Inouye	US Senator (D-Hawaii); president pro tempore of the Senate (2010-12)	3
Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 <sup>(1)</sup>	Executive Order authorizing evacuation and internment of people of Japanese descent	3
Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan (1907)	Japanese government agreed to restricted immigration in the face of anti-Japanese sentiment	3
Steven Chu	A Nobel prize winner in physics; Secretary of Energy during the Obama administration (2009-2013)	3
<i>US vs. Wong Kim Ark</i> (1898)	Supreme Court decision affirming birthright citizenship for an individual whose parents were born in China	3
Anh "Joseph" Cao	First Vietnamese American member of Congress (R-Louisiana)	2
Eric Shinseki	Former Army Chief of Staff; Secretary of Veterans Affairs during the Obama Administration (2009-2014)	2
Fred Korematsu (as an individual)	A Japanese American who stayed in the evacuation area and filed a lawsuit challenging the evacuation order	2
Goodwin Liu	UC Berkeley professor who was nominated for a seat on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, but whose nomination was blocked by Republicans for more than a year	2
Immigration Act of 1924	Congressional Act officially barring Japanese immigration to the US	2
Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986	Congressional Act giving amnesty to undocumented individuals residing in the US prior to Jan. 1, 1982	2
<i>Ozawa vs. US</i> (1922)	Supreme Court decision declaring that Japanese were not white and therefore not eligible for naturalization	2
Repeal of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943	US government allowed Chinese to naturalize and gave small immigration quotas during WWII	2
<i>Yick Wo vs. Hopkins</i> (1886)	Supreme Court decision that an ordinance neutral on its face was unconstitutional when enforced in discriminatory fashion	2

Note: (1) Specific mention of the executive order (general reference to evacuation order is counted toward "Japanese internment").

Asian American studies. Second, if textbook authors do not have time to read books on Asian Pacific American politics (Limerick 1992, 1393), I ask them not to hesitate to contact scholars who specialize in Asian Pacific American politics.<sup>17</sup> The Asian Pacific American Caucus (APAC), a related group of the APSA, has many such scholars who can gladly provide help.<sup>18</sup> Third, textbook publishers may want to actively recruit scholars in the field of Asian Pacific American politics into their groups of reviewers.

Fourth, more broadly, textbook authors may consider adding scholars specializing in race and ethnicity in America as coauthors. As the discipline becomes increasingly specialized, the number of coauthors in a textbook has increased (for example, the famous "O'Connor and Sabato" is now "O'Connor, Sabato, and Yanow,,"; similarly, "Wilson and Dilulio" is now "Wilson, Dilulio, and Bose"). It thus makes sense to add another scholar in race and ethnicity studies to cover that growing field. Indeed, Cassese, Bos, and Schneider (2014) found that American Government textbooks with



one or more female coauthors (some of them who specialized in women and politics) included more female-related content. The Race, Ethnicity, and Politics (REP) section of APSA has many scholars qualified to fill that role.<sup>19</sup>

Fifth and finally, authors may consider writing an American Government textbook around the theme of race and ethnicity. Each

Americans is correct, and to what extent textbooks cite or quote studies of Asian Pacific American politics. Still other studies may look at more advanced race and ethnicity course syllabi and examine the extent to which Asian Pacific Americans are included. This study is a first step to such examinations of Asian Pacific Americans within the political science curriculum.

## *Without Asian Pacific American representation and without Asian Pacific American role models in textbooks, Asian Pacific American students may come out feeling that this discipline is not relevant to their own lives.*

existing textbook makes its own effort to differentiate itself from others by setting a unique theme<sup>20</sup>—for example, Dye, Zeigler, and Schubert (2012) frame American politics from the standpoint of tensions between elites and masses; Katznelson, Kesselman, and Draper (2011) do a similar job using tensions between capitalism and democracy. One may then write a unique American Government textbook focused on race—in fact, McClain and Tauber’s (2010) *American Government in Black and White* does exactly that. This textbook, not analyzed in this report (partly because it had not been published when the Latino/as report was written), sets as one of its aims to let students “have a sense of how race has played out in the American Governmental system and its politics” (McClain and Tauber 2010, xix), and carries a picture of African American(s) and a corresponding caption at the beginning of each chapter. To that end, and as one may assume from the title of the book, the textbook has a biracial, black-white aspect; nevertheless, the book covers Asian Pacific Americans to a significant degree, indicating, for example, Asian Pacific American committee chairs in Congress (Senators Daniel Inouye (D-HI) and Daniel Akaka (D-HI), 139), fractions of Asian Americans in the federal civilian workforce by the General Schedule (200), the Asian American movement in the 1960s (316), Asian Americans’ voter turnout in 2008 (429), and the percentage of Asian Americans who voted for Obama in the 2008 election (441).<sup>21</sup>

### CONCLUSION

In “Reflections and Recommendations from the APSA Teaching and Learning Conferences (TLC)” section, the APSA Task Force Report (2011, 37) argues that “[i]n particular, there is a need to modify introductory textbooks in American government and politics.” The findings of this study confirm the observation of the Task Force Report that one “arena in which the absence of any discussion of the demographic changes taking place is noticeable is in the general introductory texts used to teach American politics to undergraduates” (12). Like other racial minorities and women, Asian Pacific Americans are marginalized in American government textbooks. As was discussed in the final section, correcting for this lack of coverage is not an impossible task; just adding one textbook reviewer familiar with Asian Pacific American politics can make a significant change.

This study is by no means exhaustive. Future studies on the coverage of Asian Pacific Americans may include more qualitative studies of textbooks, such as finding the strengths and weaknesses of each textbook (Novkov and Gossett 2007; Wallace and Clayton 2009). Other studies may investigate what images (or stereotypes) of Asian Pacific Americans are produced by textbooks, whether the factual information on Asian Pacific

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank the past and present members of the Status Committee of Asian Pacific Americans in the Profession—Andrew L. Aoki, Pei-te Lien, Claire Jean Kim, Don T. Nakanishi, Janelle Wong, Paul Watanabe, Wendy K. Tam Cho, and Kira Sanbonmatsu—for reading the manuscript and for their continuous support. I also thank Sherri L. Wallace, Marcus D. Allen, Jessica Lavariega Monforti, and Adam McGlynn for sharing their ideas in writing their own status committee reports. Kim Mealy played a vital role as the contact person of the Status Committee within APSA. The idea of writing this report originated from my participation in Jennifer Hochschild’s Spencer Foundation Workshop in 1999. I benefited from constructive comments by two anonymous reviewers as well as from feedback from the Immigration Studies Group meeting held in Tokyo led by Masako Iino and Tomoko Ozawa. Makiko Deguchi, Kira Sanbonmatsu, and Janelle Wong helped edit the manuscript. The remaining errors are mine. ■

### NOTES

1. Although only one textbook mentions Pacific Islander-specific information (native Hawaiians’ failed efforts to be categorized with Native Americans in the 2000 US census) (O’Connor, Sabato, and Yanus 2011, 217), I use the term Asian Pacific Americans rather than Asian Americans because it is a more inclusive term. Many Asian American civil rights organizations include “Pacific” in their names for that reason. Although Asian Pacific Americans are often shortened “APAs,” I choose not to use the acronym because, as one anonymous referee points out, it trivializes, rather than highlights, the contributions of Asian Pacific Americans to US politics.
2. The results I show in this article are mainly quantitative; for results of more qualitative content analysis, please refer to the companion paper posted on the webpage of the Committee of the Status of Asian Pacific Americans of APSA at: <<http://www.apsanet.org/status-committees>> and the “Awards and Papers” section of the Asian Pacific American Caucus (APAC) at: <<http://www.apa-politics.org/>>.
3. I thank Erika Lee of the University of Minnesota for pointing me to this publication.
4. This definition follows that of the US Census Bureau (2012, 2). While “Asia” includes Central Asia and Middle East in some disciplines such as geography, the US Census classifies people originating from these areas as whites. For an example of a study on how arbitrarily the government has defined racial and ethnic minority groups, see Rodríguez (2000).
5. Monforti and McGlynn (2010) include one set of textbooks of national and Texas editions, the latter of which I did not use.
6. Although I did not scan every single page in the textbooks, I believe that any “missing” of Asian Pacific Americans is minimal if it exists. For example, I do not expect Asian Pacific Americans to be mentioned in a chapter on the constitutional convention.
7. By “Asian Pacific American-specific” I mean a sentence that conveys information uniquely about Asian Pacific Americans. Casual mentions such as “minorities—including African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans—all face political disadvantages” are not counted as Asian Pacific American-specific.
8. Throughout this report the length of mentions of Asian Pacific Americans is measured as follows: if the mention is 18 lines and a page consists of two columns of 52 lines, for example, the mention is  $18/104 = 0.17$  pages.



9. Some textbooks do not have a section on demographics at all. For example, Lowi et al. (2011, 370) discuss the racial composition of the current United States in a chapter on public opinion.
10. However, this line of history is usually placed at the beginning or the end, not center, of the civil rights chapter (Wallace and Allen 2008, 157; Wallace and Clayton 2009, 259).
11. Some textbooks treat immigration issues as if they are applicable only to Latino/as. For example, one textbook (Janda, Berry, and Goldman 2012, 542–46) includes a subsection “Immigrant Groups” in a section entitled “Civil Rights for Other Minorities,” but what is discussed in the text of this subsection is Latino-related issues; there is no mention of Asian Pacific Americans. Another textbook (Schmidt et al. 2012, 194) adds a section entitled “Immigration, Latinos, and Civil Rights” and states “[o]ne of the questions facing Americans and their political leaders today concerns the effect of immigration on American politics and government. This is especially true with regard to the Hispanic American or Latino community.” Here again, there is little mention of Asian Pacific Americans.
12. Magleby, Light, and Nemacheck (2011) succeed in including more information on minority groups than other textbooks because every chapter has a column titled “OF THE PEOPLE: America’s Changing Face.”
13. Harrison and Harris (2011, 18) lists the Chinese Exclusion as an Act of 1881, although later in the textbook (467) it correctly refers to it as an act of 1882. Also, although the textbook mentions that a bill to redress the internment was enacted into law in 1987 (171), it was enacted in 1988.
14. In general, American Government textbooks do not mention Hawaii as if the state is an anomaly. For example, Asian Pacific Americans have made significant contributions to Hawaiian politics through four governors in Hawaii—George Ariyoshi (Japanese American and the first Asian Pacific American governor in the fifty states, served 1972 through 1986), John Waihee (Native Hawaiian, 1986 through 1994), and Ben Cayetano (Filipino American, served 1994 through 2002). They are completely ignored in all textbooks. After the reviewed textbooks were published, the fourth Asian American governor, David Ige (Japanese [Okinawan] American), was elected in 2014.
15. Author’s calculation from Table 1 of Monforti and McGlynn (2010, 312).
16. The publication section of the survey is <<http://www.naasurvey.com/publications.html>>.
17. Boneparth (1980, 385) made a similar recommendation as the second through fourth ones on the politics of women more than three decades ago.
18. The Caucus’ website is <<http://www.apa-politics.org/>>.
19. The Section’s website is <<http://www.apsarep.org/>>.
20. Sometimes, this may work *against* incorporating race and ethnicity into a textbook. For example, Dye (2011, 3) defines political science as “[t]he study of politics: who governs, for what ends, and by what means.” Although this definition is based on a well-known definition of politics by Harold Lasswell (1936), it allows little room for discussing racial politics, because, as one noted scholar in African American politics points out, “[t]he most striking and theoretically interesting features of black political behavior have been expressed through ‘non-formal’ or often multipurpose institutions like the church or voluntary associations like NAACP or the United Negro Improvement Association of Marcus Garvey” (Wilson 1985, 604). In other words, the “who gets what” approach may fail to capture racial and ethnic politics, in which identity is the key concept (Aoki and Takeda 2008, 2).
21. This textbook is not free of human errors: it chronicles President Franklin Roosevelt’s order to uplift people of Japanese descent as the Executive Order of 9088 in 1943 (McClain and Tauber 161); it correctly shows it as the Executive Order of 9066 in 1942 elsewhere in the text and index (110, 461, 498).

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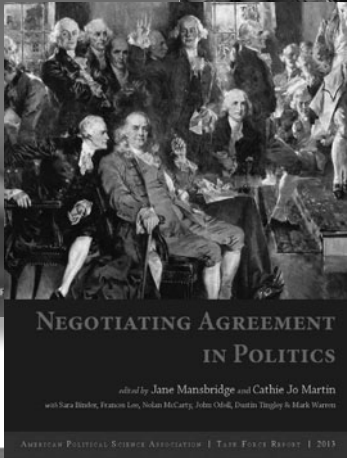
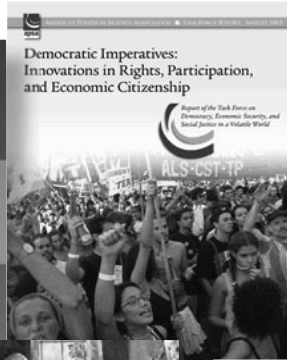
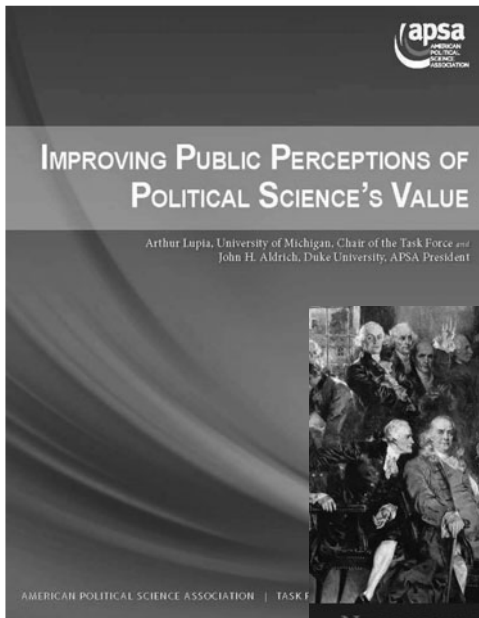
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## APPENDIX: Introductory American Government/Politics Textbooks Used in the Analysis

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