

# EDUCATION AS SOCIAL CONTROL: EVIDENCE FROM SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS AFTER THE U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

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Non-democratic regimes around the world have often responded to internal conflict and mass protest by turning to education reform as a means of social control. Mass education in these post-conflict settings is used by autocratic rulers not to address the economic or other grievances of the masses, but to teach them to be content with the status quo and obey the state and its laws.<sup>2</sup> How do elected politicians in democratic settings respond to mass protest when they feel threatened by protestors' demands? Do they also respond by turning to education systems to inculcate obedience and respect for the status quo, or are elected politicians more likely to respond to mass protest by reforming education systems in ways that address protestors' demands? I examine this question by looking at how southern politicians in the United States responded to the Civil Rights Movement in the realm of education policy.

Past work by Elizabeth Cascio and Ebonya Washington has shown that Civil Rights Movement, and in particular the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA) which enabled millions of Black citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote, led southern state governments to increase both the level and proportion of education funds they transferred to school districts with a high proportion of Black residents.<sup>3</sup> Cascio and Washington interpret this finding as evidence that southern politicians had electoral incentives to respond to the education demands of newly enfranchised Black voters. However, the history of education reform by non-democratic regimes

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<sup>2</sup> Paglayan, Agustina S. 2022. "Education or Indoctrination? The Violent Origins of Public School Systems in an Era of State-Building." *American Political Science Review*.

<sup>3</sup> Cascio, Elizabeth U., and Ebonya Washington. 2014. "Valuing the Vote: The Redistribution of Voting Rights and State Funds following the Voting Rights Act of 1965." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 129(1): 379-433.

in Europe and Latin America suggests a different possibility: perhaps southern politicians put more money into education in predominantly Black communities not as a means to address Black voters' demands but as a means to enhance the social control function of schools, using schools to instill among Black children messages and behaviors of obedience, docility, and acceptance of the status quo.

Education spending levels alone do not tell us which of these possible logics—a redistributive logic or a social control one—explains why southern states responded to Black activists and the enfranchisement of Black voters by investing in education in predominantly Black communities. To understand the motivation behind these state-level education investments, I examine how the content of state-approved History school textbooks changed after the Civil Rights Movement. History textbooks are especially helpful for understanding the political goals of state-level education policymakers. How a state-approved textbook discusses slavery, the causes of the Civil War, or discrimination during the Jim Crow Era, among other topics typically covered in History textbooks, and how it depicts Black individuals and their lives, tells us a lot about the messages that a state wants children to learn when it comes to the history of racial tensions in the United States. The question is: Did southern states reform History textbooks after the Civil Rights Movement in ways that better acknowledged the history of racial injustice and institutionalized discrimination voiced by the Black community? As I explain below, the answer appears to be no.

## Education desegregation in the U.S. South

Although at the federal level Black activists accomplished major legal victories, including the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Right Act of 1965, at the state level, where education policy is made, southern politicians during the Civil Rights Movement encountered considerable resistance to reform.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the fiercest battles in the Deep South were fought in the domain of education. In 1954, in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education*<sup>5</sup> case, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that state-mandated racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional, marking an end to the legal doctrine of "separate but equal" which had been in place since 1896. However, ten years after the

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<sup>4</sup> The United States Constitution does not mention education. Per the Tenth Amendment, any issues not delegated to the federal government by the Constitution are reserved to the states. The federal government *can* provide funding for education, and it has often used the "power of the purse" to incentivize states to adopt specific types of education policies.

<sup>5</sup> The full name is *Oliver Brown, et.al. v. Board of Education of Topeka, et.al.*

*Brown* ruling, racial segregation in public schools in southern states remained intact because of the countermobilization of white citizens and the action of district- and state-level politicians.<sup>6</sup> “Across the Deep South,” writes Robert Mickey, “the *Brown* ruling and rulers’ responses to it led both to a surge in white supremacist civic and political mobilization and to concomitant setbacks for black protest.” Politicians in Deep South states “pursued strategies of ‘massive resistance,’ by which they sought to decry, deter, and then defer the racial desegregation of their schools.”<sup>7</sup>

It was only in the mid-1960s, a decade after *Brown*, that school desegregation in the South began. Two main factors contributed to desegregation at that time. The first were financial incentives: In 1965, the U.S. Congress approved the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and Title I of that Act provided considerable funds for public school districts serving a large proportion of low-income students. However, the Civil Rights Act (CRA) of 1964 prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in hiring, promotion, and firing decisions, in public accommodations, and crucially, in any program that received federal funds. The inability to receive federal dollars for education unless they desegregated schools incentivized many southern school districts that served a large number of low-income students to desegregate public schools. The second factor that contributed to desegregation was litigation. While about half of southern school districts desegregated without the intervention of federal courts, largely owing to the financial incentives for desegregation that emerged in the mid-1960s, the other half did not desegregate until a court ordered them to do so. Large school districts and relatively wealthier school districts were more likely to be imposed a court-ordered desegregation plan.

Even when federal courts ordered a school district to desegregate, the implementation of desegregation plans in the South encountered considerable obstacles not only because of large-scale protests by white students and parents against these plans,<sup>8</sup> but also because of the direct intervention of governors and other state-level politicians. In Macon County, Alabama, for example, the federal district court ordered the school board to begin desegregation in 1963. However, on the day when desegregation was scheduled to begin, the governor of Alabama, George Wallace, signed an executive order and sent state troops to suspend integration, citing law and order concerns and “the express intention of the governor to preserve the peace, maintain

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<sup>6</sup> Cascio, Elizabeth, Nora Gordon, Ethan Lewis, and Sarah Reber. 2008. “From *Brown* to Busing.” *Journal of Urban Economics* 64: 296-325.

<sup>7</sup> Mickey, Robert. 2015. *Paths Out of Dixie: The Democratization of Authoritarian Enclaves in America’s Deep South, 1944-72*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

<sup>8</sup> “Whites in Mobile Fight School Plan of Full Integration,” *New York Times* (1968).

domestic tranquility and protect the lives and property of all citizens of this state.”<sup>9</sup> This was not an isolated example. Time and again, court orders to desegregate were met with protests by white students and parents and the intervention of state troops which, instead of enforcing the court’s order to desegregate, repressed Black activists and removed Black students from school premises alleging that this was for their own safety.<sup>10</sup> George Wallace’s predecessor, Alabama Governor John Patterson, boasted in front of the legislature about his administration’s deliberate and successful efforts to maintain a desegregated school system:

There was no integration in the schools when I took office and there is none today. This is not because of luck or chance, but due to constant work, diligence and attention. To hold the line, we have fought many legal battles, and we have been able to keep the N.A.A.C.P. out of Alabama since 1956, a fact which has had a distinct bearing on our success in this fight. We have also endeavored to build and improve the school systems for both white and Negro, in the conviction that we owe children of all races the best possible education and that a segregated school system best affords this opportunity.<sup>11</sup>

Despite this resistance, the combination of financial incentives to desegregate since 1965, particularly for school districts serving a large proportion of low-income students, and the N.A.A.C.P.’s persistent legal action to end desegregation, meant that by 1972, school desegregation in southern states had been completed at least in terms of the composition of student enrollment.<sup>12</sup>

While the ability of Black students to attend the same schools as white students was a major victory for the Civil Rights Movement, some school districts embarked on a variety of efforts to limit civil rights activists’ influence over education. One such effort entailed removing Black educators from integrated schools. A study conducted in Alabama, for example, found that between 1966, when large-scale desegregation began in that state, and 1970, when students were extensively integrated under federal court orders, the number of Black principals dropped from 620 to 362 and the percentage of Black principals fell from 35 to 25 percent.<sup>13</sup> Numerous studies

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<sup>9</sup> “Alabama Police Block First School Integration: Wallace Cites Fear of Violence Alabama Schools,” *Los Angeles Times* (1963).

<sup>10</sup> Mickey (2015).

<sup>11</sup> Message of Governor John Patterson to Joint Session of the Alabama Legislature at Organizational Session, 1963.

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed description of the process of desegregation, see: Cascio, Elizabeth, Nora Gordon, Ethan Lewis, and Sarah Reber. 2008. “From Brown to Busing.” *Journal of Urban Economics* 64: 296-325.

<sup>13</sup> “Alabama Schools Scored on Blacks: Study Finds Policy to Drop Negroes as Educators,” *New York Times* (1971).

conducted by the National Education Association's Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities, the Race Relations Information Center, and other organizations also found that Black teachers and civil rights activists across the South were being fired in the wake of desegregation, demoted, or pressured to resign.<sup>14</sup> Inside schools, the practice of grouping children by ability was also used as a mechanism to separate white and Black children into different classrooms.

This grim picture of the consequences of school desegregation, particularly in the South, coexists with evidence that desegregation led to increases in Black students' high school graduation rates, suggesting that desegregation implied an improvement in the quality of education available to Black communities. As with education expenditures, the composition of the teaching workforce and high school graduation rates alone tell us little about the intentions of Southern policymakers. Were Black teachers fired as part of deliberate efforts to prevent Black activists' ideas from entering the classroom, or were they fired, as some argued during the 1960s, because they lacked adequate skills to be effective teachers? Was the improvement in Black students' graduation rates a goal of Southern education policymakers, or was it an unintended outcome of desegregation?

Looking at the content of textbooks adopted by states can tell us a lot about the extent to which policymakers responded to the Civil Rights Movement by investing in education to promote the social mobility of Blacks, or whether they invested in education as a tool to teach Black children that the status quo was not as bad as they might think.

## **School textbooks in three states**

If elected politicians in democratic settings respond to mass protest in similar ways as non-democratic regimes, then we should observe greater resistance to reform the curriculum in a direction consistent with the demands of protestors in those states where elected politicians felt more threatened by protestors' demands. In the case of the United States during the Civil Rights Movement, this corresponds to states in the Deep South. First, the practice of racial segregation, which civil rights activists wanted to end, was especially pervasive and persistent in southern states. Second, although the Civil Rights Movement was a nationwide movement, most *violent*

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<sup>14</sup> "16 Black Alabama Teachers Reinstated and Given Back Pay," *Atlanta Daily World* (1972).

protests were concentrated in southern states,<sup>15</sup> which gave both political elites and white citizens in these states ammunition to frame the protests as a threat to social order.<sup>16</sup>

To understand how southern politicians responded to the Civil Rights Movement in the realm of education, and in particular what choices they made with respect to the content of education, I focus on analyzing changes in the content of History textbooks in Alabama between 1955 and 1975. There are two main reasons for focusing on Alabama. First, Alabama was the center of many key events during the Civil Rights Movement; Rosa Park's stance against racial segregation while riding a public bus in Montgomery sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955, a foundational event in the Civil Rights Movement. As such, textbooks in Alabama provide insight into how southern state politicians responded to the demands of civil rights activists in a state where these demands had the potential to upend the balance of power between white and Black Americans and were thus perceived as a major threat by state-level politicians.

Second, school textbooks in Alabama are selected by officials appointed by the governor. This is not true across all states: in some states, school districts have full autonomy to choose textbooks; in others, the state makes a preselection of textbooks but districts then have autonomy to choose a textbook from this state-approved pool. My goal is to understand how *state*-level politicians reform education in response to threatening mass protests because what Cascio and Washington found was that southern *state* governments throughout the 1960s and 1970s responded to the enfranchisement of Black Americans by increasing the level of *state* spending on education in predominantly Black communities. What we need to understand, then, is what drove *state* governments to do this—whether a redistributive or a social control logic. Focusing on Alabama enables us to examine state-level responses in the realm of textbooks because a state-level Textbook Adoption Commission appointed by the governor is in charge of commissioning, reviewing, and determining what textbooks can be used in each grade and subject. Local school districts in Alabama have no autonomy over textbook selection. This allows state-level politicians to influence the content of education in all districts and ensure that the textbooks are aligned with the state curriculum. Understanding how the content of textbooks adopted by Alabama's

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<sup>15</sup> Although most protests associated with the Civil Rights Movement were peaceful, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. on 4 April 1968 sparked a wave of violent protests that included vandalism, violent confrontation between protestors and police forces, and multiple deaths and arrests (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/10/12/critics-claim-blm-was-more-violent-than-1960s-civil-rights-protests-thats-just-not-true/>).

<sup>16</sup> Wasow, Omar. 2020. "Agenda seeding: How 1960s black protests moved elites, public opinion and voting." *American Political Science Review* 114(3): 638-659.

Textbook Adoption Commission changed over time can help us understand the educational goals pursued by state-level policymakers.

To understand how Alabama politicians responded to the activism of Black communities during the Civil Rights Movement, we also need to consider how History textbooks changed in states where the Civil Rights Movement posed less of a threat to state-level politicians. To this end, I compare textbook changes in Alabama between 1955 and 1975 with textbook changes in two non-southern states, Indiana and California, both of which also had state-level textbook adoption commissions. Looking at a state with a predominantly white population like Indiana can help us determine whether or not the observed evolution of textbook content in Alabama reflects a general trend common to all states, even those where the Civil Rights Movement did not pose a major threat. Looking at textbook changes in California, a state with a large Hispanic but small Black population, can help us assess whether the patterns we see in Alabama reflect a common response to non-white voters generally, though not necessarily to Black voters specifically.<sup>17</sup>

For each of these three states—Alabama, Indiana, and California—I obtained and analyzed copies of the main History textbook used in public high schools in 1955 and 1975. Analyzing how History textbooks changed in Alabama between 1955 and 1975 compared to Indiana and California involved several steps. First, with the help of a team of graduate students, I marked every sentence of each textbook that explicitly or implicitly referred to Black individuals, Black lives, or Black history. For example, in 1955, Alabama’s high school History textbook, *Alabama History for Schools*, contained 1,343 sentences that explicitly or implicitly referred to Black individuals; Indiana’s *This is America’s Story* contained 837; and California’s *America, Land of Freedom* contained 819 sentences. The number of sentences referring to Black individuals and Black history remained similar in Alabama and Indiana in 1975, but more than doubled in California.

Second, drawing on the work of social scientists who have studied the role of race in school textbooks, I developed a methodology to classify whether or not a given sentence of a textbook

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<sup>17</sup> Textbook availability also affected the choice of states. To analyze how the content of History education changed after the Civil Rights Movement, I needed states where (i) the textbooks used both before and after the Civil Rights Movement were selected by a state-level Textbook Adoption Commission; (ii) the list of textbooks approved by the Commission could be found; and (iii) copies of the History textbooks used before and after the Civil Rights Movement could be located and obtained. Many states met condition (i), whereas much fewer states met conditions (ii) and (iii).

contained racist content.<sup>18</sup> To determine this, I asked eleven questions about each sentence that explicitly or implicitly referred to Black individuals. Some examples of these questions include:<sup>19</sup>

1. Does the sentence generalize positive experiences in U.S. political, social, or economic life without distinguishing between the experiences of Black and white Americans? For example, does it talk about freedom, liberty, voting rights, access to education, improvements in education, poverty mitigation, democracy, or other positive aspects of life as if these applied to everyone, without distinguishing between Black and white Americans?
2. Does the sentence minimize the hardships endured by Black Americans, or does it exaggerate their positive experiences? For example, does the sentence minimize the cruelty of slavery, or does it equate the experiences of Black slaves with those of poor white individuals?

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<sup>18</sup> The review included: Jimenez, Jeremy. 2020. "Race, Discrimination, and the Passive Voice: Hardship Narratives in U.S. Social Studies Textbooks: 1860 to the Present." *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 11(2): 1-26; Smitherman-Donaldson, G., & van Dijk, T.A. (eds.) 1988. *Discourses and Discrimination*. Wayne State University Press; Garcia and Goebel. 1985. "A comparative study of the portrayal of Black Americans." *The Negro Educational Review*. July-Oct; Turner, Richard, and John Dewar. 1973. "Black History in Selected American History Textbooks." *Educational Leadership* 6(3): 441-444; Stamp, Kenneth L. 1964. *The Negro in American History Textbooks*. Sacramento: California State Department of Education; Sloan, Irving. 1966. "The Negro in Modern American History Textbooks: A Study of the Negro in Selected Junior and Senior High History Textbooks as of September, 1966." *Curricular Viewpoints Series*; Czemiak, J. 2006. "Black slave revolt depiction and minority representation in US History textbooks from 1950-2005." *UW-L Journal of Undergraduate Research* IX; Council on Interracial Books for Children, Inc. 1977. "Stereotypes, Distortions and Omissions in U.S. History Textbooks." New York: Carnegie Corporation; Henry, J. 1970. *Textbooks and the American Indian*. Indian Historian Press; Coats, L. & Wade, A. 2004. "Telling it like it isn't: obscuring perpetrator responsibility for violent crime." *Discourse and Society* 15(5): 1-28; Jimenez, J.D. & Lerch, J. 2019. "Waves of Diversity: Depictions of Marginalized Groups and Their Rights in Social Science Textbooks, 1900-2013." *Comparative Education Review* 63(2), 166-188; Glazer, Nathan, and Reed Ueda. 1983. *Ethnic Groups in History Textbooks*; Krug, Mark. 1970. "Freedom and racial equality: A study of 'revised' high school history textbooks." *School Review* 78: 297-354; Epstein, Terrie L. 1994. "Tales from Two Textbooks: A Comparison of the Civil Rights Movement in Two Secondary History Textbooks." *The Social Studies* 85(3): 121-126; Carpenter, M.E.R. 1941. *The Treatment of the Negro in American History School Textbooks: A Comparison of Changing Textbook Content, 1826 to 1939, with Developing Scholarship in the History of the Negro in the United States*. Banta Books; Moreau, Joseph. 2003. *Schoolbook Nation: Conflicts over American History Textbooks from the Civil War to the Present*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; Marcus, Lloyd. 1961. "The treatment of minorities in secondary school textbooks." *Anti-Defamation League on B'nai B'rith*. Chapter III; Banks, James. 1969. "A Content Analysis of the Black American in Textbooks." *Social Education* 1: 954-963.

<sup>19</sup> The complete methodology and the manual used to train coders can be found in the Appendix.

3. Does the sentence implicitly or explicitly reinforce stereotypes of Black people as inferior human beings? Here, we looked for words like “violent,” “lazy,” or “inferior” and related synonyms or phrases that imply such stereotypes, as well as sentences that de-humanize or commodify Black individuals.
4. Does the sentence discuss racism as an issue stemming from specific prejudiced individuals, or does it discuss racial inequalities as something that resulted from existing policies, laws, and institutions? For example, does it acknowledge the slave codes, the Jim Crow laws, the policies that enabled racial segregation in public service provision, etc.?

Next, I trained a group of students to answer these questions for each sentence in the Alabama, Indiana, and California’s History textbooks of 1955 and 1975. Students worked independently from one another and, because I redacted the textbooks before sharing them with students, did not know the state or year of the textbook they were analyzing. Because some of the questions that students had to answer about each sentence involved a subjective assessment, it comes as no surprise that some students were systematically more likely to identify racist content in sentences than others. However, regardless of the baseline level of racist content that each student identified in the 1955 textbooks, there was remarkable consistency across students in how much *change* in racist content they detected between the 1955 and 1975 textbooks—even though, again, students did not know what textbooks they were coding.

In addition to this sentence-by-sentence content analysis, I also used two other methodologies: (1) a classification of textbooks based on a holistic assessment of how they fared compared to the ideal content as determined by the Council on Interracial Books for Children; and (2) an analysis of textbooks using automated text analysis tools. First, in 1976, the Council on Interracial Books for Children published a list of twenty-one benchmarks that all school textbooks should meet in order to give a fair treatment to the history of racial discrimination. According to the Council, all textbooks should acknowledge the following: (1) African, as well as European, culture forms an integral part of the U.S. heritage; (2) Africans were in the Americas prior to 1619; (3) The North American slave trade created enormous profits, became the most brutal system of slavery known, and disrupted African civilization; (4) The significance of the Revolution, to Blacks, goes beyond participation in combat; (5) The Constitution was a pro-slavery document and remained so for 78 years; (6) Slavery was inherently cruel and inhuman; (7) Rebellion and slavery went hand in hand; (8) While there were differences in the institution between North and South, slavery was never a regional issue; (9) Blacks initiated anti-slavery activity and were central to the abolition leadership; (10) The life of the free African American was often only a slight improvement over the life of a slave; (11) Blacks who participated in the take-over of the West were also oppressed

by white society; (12) The lack of land redistribution was the fundamental failure of Reconstruction; (13) When freed people had land, they displayed incentive and skill, establishing productive lives; (14) Sharecropping resulted in the economic re-enslavement of Black people; (15) The Reconstruction governments were more progressive and democratic than later southern governments; (16) Post-reconstruction brought a rigidly segregated society, with full Federal support; (17) The racism of organized labor has harmed Black people and disrupted the potential for working-class unity; (18) Wilson's "progressive" policies were meant "for whites only;" (19) Discrimination faced by European immigrants was different from the racism faced by Blacks; (20) Institutional racism, not merely individual prejudice, causes and perpetuates racial inequality; (21) The myth of "progress" obscures the existing reality of the majority of Black people. Coding every textbook based on whether or not they met these benchmarks reveals similar results as the analysis reported in the main text. However, the analysis of benchmarks does not provide the kind of nuanced understanding of textbooks that the in-depth content analysis of sentences does.

Second, I used automated text analysis methods to analyze the content of History textbooks. Specifically, following Lucy, Demszky, Bromley, and Jurafsky's (2020) Natural Language Processing (NLP) analysis of the History textbooks used in Texas today, I applied their methodology to the 1950s and 1970s History textbooks of Alabama, California, and Indiana. The analysis classifies what the verbs used to describe Black individuals convey about their power (strong vs. weak), valence (positive vs. negative), and agency (active vs. passive). For example, in the phrase "X affects Y and Y applauds X," X has power while Y does not; in the phrase "X suffered," the verb suffered implies the writer may have positive sentiment toward X because it suggests sympathy; and in the phrase "X obeys," X has low agency.

The results using these two alternative methodologies are consistent with the main results stemming from the sentence-by-sentence content analysis reported below.<sup>20</sup>

## **The persistence of racist content in southern textbooks after the Civil Rights Movement**

The analysis of textbook sentences reveals that while History textbooks in Indiana and California became considerably less racist after the Civil Rights Movement, textbooks in Alabama remained

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<sup>20</sup> See the Appendix. The NLP analysis shows that: (1) in Alabama, the valence and power associated with Black individuals remained unchanged between 1955 and 1975, but the agency associated with them became more passive over time; (2) in Indiana, there was no temporal change in the valence, power, or agency associated with Black individuals; and (3) in California, there was no change in valence, a worsening in power, and an improvement in agency.

as racist in 1975 as they were in 1955. These results are summarized in figure 1. The first key thing to note in this figure is that at the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement the level of racist content was high and extremely similar across all three states: around sixty percent of the sentences in History textbooks that referred to Black individuals were antithetical to the demands of Civil Rights Movement activists, who wanted governments to acknowledge and correct the history of racial discrimination in policies and institutions. Among other things, the 1950s textbooks of Alabama, California and Indiana talked about the political and economic rights that existed during the Early Republic as if they applied equally to everyone, described the life of a slave in rosy terms, and downplayed the hostility and discrimination faced by Black Americans during the Jim Crow Era. By 1975, however, the proportion of racist content had declined by 26 percentage points in Indiana and by 27 percentage points in California. In Alabama, by contrast, there was no such decline. Textbooks remained as unlikely in 1975 as in 1955 to acknowledge the history of racial inequality in the state and the country.

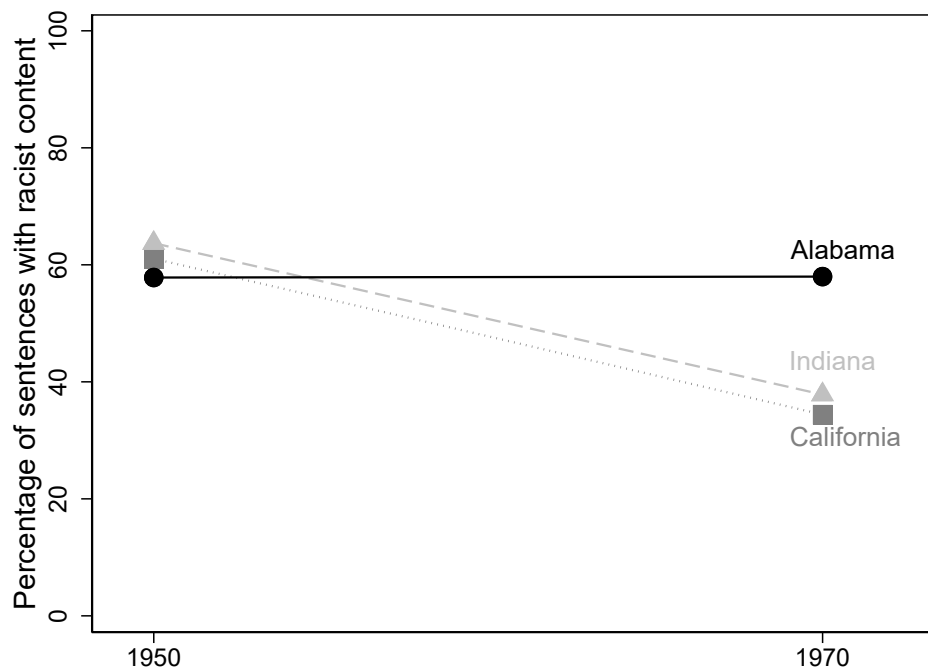


Figure 1. Change in the percentage of sentences with racist content in the History textbooks of Alabama, California, and Indiana before and after the Civil Rights Movement

A good illustration of how little change there was in the content of Alabama textbooks from the 1950s to the 1970s comes from the chapters devoted to describing life under slavery in each edition. Both the pre- and post-Civil Rights Movement textbooks depict slaves as cheerful

individuals with no deprivations. When telling readers about the food that slaves ate, both textbooks suggest that slaves suffered no want or need. They describe plantation owners as caring individuals who liked to provide a balanced diet to slaves, highlight the “extra delicacies” that slaves ate during hog killing time without acknowledging that these were in fact the leftovers rejected by white plantation owners, talk about the watermelons that slaves ate during “the good old summertime,” tell readers that many slaves “loved to fish” and “had their own gardens,” “raised their own chickens” and sold them to buy “luxuries,” and talk about the “special feast” that plantation owners provided to slaves during Christmas and other holidays. When talking about where slaves lived, both the 1955 and 1975 textbooks tell readers that “like the white people in the slavery country, the blacks liked to live near each other to keep from getting lonesome.” Both textbooks also tell readers that “white playmates” taught young slaves to read (without acknowledging that slaves were prohibited from attending school) and suggest that there were opportunities for upward mobility for slaves by becoming domestic servants or drivers. One especially bold paragraph in the 1955 textbook which argued that “slavery was the earliest form of social security in the United States” because “the slave received the best medical care that the times could offer” was removed from the 1975 textbook. However, even in 1975, Alabama’s History textbook continues to minimize the hardships and cruelty endured by slaves, writing that, when it came to health care, the slave was “better off than free laborers, white or black.” Finally, while both the 1955 and 1975 textbooks mention the slave codes, they explain that slaves were prohibited from selling property without the plantation owner’s permission in order “to limit stealing;” they minimize the role of the slave codes by stressing that many provisions were not enforced; and they tell readers that “the execution of a slave was considered to be more of a punishment for the master than for the slave.”

The evolution of History textbooks in Indiana and California is considerably different from that in Alabama. In Indiana, for example, the 1950s textbook gives children a similar rosy picture of how slaves lived similar to that in the Alabama textbook of the same period. As the following excerpt shows, the 1950s Indiana textbook minimizes the grievances endured by slaves, and while it acknowledges that some were treated cruelly, it teaches children that in general slaves were treated well:

Life in the slave quarters on many a plantation was not too unhappy. During the day the small children played merrily, often with the younger white children from the “great house.” In the twilight young and old gathered to sing and dance. . . Of course there were some harsh masters who treated their slaves cruelly. In general, however, slaves were too valuable to be mistreated.

By contrast, Indiana's 1970s textbook does not describe the slaves as cheerful or happy, and while it acknowledges that some of them were treated better by plantation owners, it highlights that in general life as a slave was very difficult and subject to cruel treatment:

The slaves lived a hard and cheerless life. They were owned by their master and were completely under his control. Life in the slave quarters was not always unhappy. The small children sometimes played with the younger white children from the "great house". . . Yet despite instances of individual kindness on the part of some masters, life in bondage was very difficult. Harsh masters or their overseers treated slaves cruelly, whipping them if they misbehaved or ran away.

The differential evolution of Alabama textbooks compared to Indiana and California textbooks extends well beyond the discussion of slavery. In their discussion of the Early Republic, Reconstruction, and Post-Reconstruction, Indiana and California's History textbooks of the 1970s, unlike the 1950s editions, tend to acknowledge that the political and economic rights of white and Black individuals differed, and they invite 1970s students to think critically about whether they still observe racial discrimination. By contrast, the Alabama History textbook of the 1970s, like its 1950s predecessor, talks about the political and economic rights that "all Americans" enjoyed during the Early Republic, exaggerates the improvements in Black individuals' lives during Reconstruction, and minimizes or legitimizes many of the discriminatory policies of the Jim Crow era. This is reflected in figure 2, which shows separately for sentences related to slavery and for sentences related to the Reconstruction and Post-Reconstruction period how the proportion of sentences with racist content evolved over time in each of the three states.

The failure of Alabama's 1970s textbooks to address the demands of civil rights activists is reflected, for example, in their treatment of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), a white supremacist hate group which emerged during Reconstruction, used violent tactics to suppress Black voting, and killed thousands of Black Americans. In the 1955 edition of *Alabama History for Schools*, there is a one-page section dedicated to the KKK, whose members are described as "masked night riders who flogged people and otherwise took justice into their own hands." The textbook does not mention that the KKK targeted Black individuals; the only mention of Black people in the section devoted to the KKK is a sentence that says they supported the one-party system of conservative Democrats, which according to the book replaced the KKK as "a better method of combatting Radicals." In the 1975 edition, the entire section on the KKK no longer appears. The only mention of the KKK in this edition is the following sentence about Alabama's anti-masking law of 1949: "Because of the Ku Klux Klan, the state government made it illegal to mask in public." In other

words, like the 1955 textbook, the 1975 edition remains silent about the violence that the Ku Klux Klan inflicted on Black individuals.

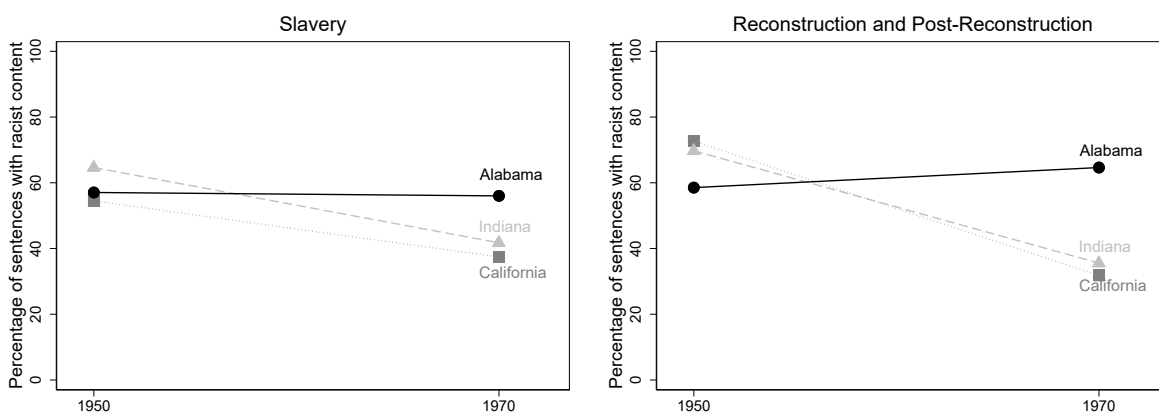


Figure 2. Change in the percentage of sentences about slavery, Reconstruction, or Post-Reconstruction, that contain racist content in the History textbooks of Alabama, California, and Indiana before and after the Civil Rights Movement

The persistence of racist content in Alabama's History textbooks after the Civil Rights Movement is reflective of a broader pattern of resistance among state politicians to alter the status quo. One of the domains where this resistance was most visible was in the roll-out of desegregation plans. In Alabama, as in other states, governors responded to court-ordered desegregation by pushing for legislation that openly defied the courts' decisions and by pouring money into education to *prevent* the racial desegregation of schools. In 1966, when George Wallace was governor of Alabama and ex-officio chairman of the State Board of Education, Wallace told school district Superintendents that if any of them signed desegregation compliance forms, he would hold mass meetings in their communities, present his position and have them explain to local citizens why they "wanted to have Negro students and teachers in schools with Whites." Around that time, the State Superintendent of Education, Austin E. Meadows, sent telegrams to school districts warning that state funds would be cut off if they did not disclose their desegregation plans to state officials. On the other hand, Meadows and the state school building authority, controlled by the governor, offered to construct two extra classrooms or provide mobile classrooms for white students to avoid attending the classrooms of racially integrated schools.<sup>21</sup> In 1969, with Albert Brewer as governor, Alabama's state legislature passed a law urging parents to insist that their children be registered in schools of their choice—including their old, racially segregated

<sup>21</sup> "Alabama Defiance Told on School Segregation; Superintendent Informs Jurists How He and Gov. Wallace Put Pressure," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 1, 1966.

schools—regardless of federal court decisions.<sup>22</sup> Years later, with George Wallace back in the governor’s seat, he again attempted to block desegregation. Speaking to the press, he said that court-ordered desegregation plans had “sounded the death knell to education on a quality level in this country.” If the majority of voters in a county “are proud of their school and want it preserved as it was,” he argued, then they should be allowed to do so.<sup>23</sup>

The multiple tactics employed by Alabama state officials to maintain racial segregation—including intimidation of school district officers, state legislation, appeals to white parents to “raise their fists” in defiance of integration,<sup>24</sup> and state funding to construct separate classrooms for white children—are not consistent with the view that state politicians in the south responded to the Civil Rights Movement by acknowledging the demands of Black activists. The striking similarity of 1955 and 1975 History textbooks is also indicative of state officials’ resistance to change. While states like Indiana and California reformed school textbooks in a direction consistent with the demands of the Civil Rights Movement, in the southern state of Alabama, where civil rights demands constituted a larger threat to the status quo of racial segregation and discrimination, the textbooks remained virtually intact. If southern states devoted more money to schools in communities with a large proportion of Black residents following the Civil Rights Movement, the history of Alabama suggests that they did so as part of a broader state effort to maintain the status quo by teaching children that the grievances suffered by the Black community were not as bad as they might have been told.

## Conclusion

The education policy responses seen in the United States after the Civil Rights Movement are similar to the responses to internal conflict of nineteenth-century autocracies in Europe and Latin America: in those places where mass violence posed a larger threat to the status quo, politicians responded by investing in education to teach (Black) children that there was little reason to rebel against the status quo. Because the Civil Rights Movement was a threat to those in power in southern states more so than outside the south, textbooks in southern states like Alabama remained tools for indoctrination, whereas elsewhere, where the Civil Rights Movement did not pose such a major threat, textbooks changed to reflect the demands of civil rights activists.

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<sup>22</sup> “Alabama Legislature Endorses Wallace Plan: Adopts Proposals Urging Parents to Defy Federal Courts on School Integration,” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 5, 1969.

<sup>23</sup> “Wallace Blocks School Integration in 2 Cities,” *Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 19, 1971.

<sup>24</sup> “Alabama Legislature Endorses Wallace Plan: Adopts Proposals Urging Parents to Defy Federal Courts on School Integration,” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 5, 1969.

It might be easy to disregard the evidence presented above as indicative of an odd or anomalous period in U.S. history. However, recent education reforms following the Black Lives Matters protests of 2020 suggest a common pattern: Democratically-elected politicians who feel threatened by mass protests and mass demands for a deep change in the status quo—e.g., a change in the institutions and policies that produce racial inequality—are likely to turn to education reform to ensure that schools contribute to maintain the status quo. This is precisely the goal behind the wave of so-called Anti-Critical Race Theory bills introduced by conservative politicians in thirty-six state legislatures since the Black Lives Matters protests. These state-level bills ban public schools from teaching “divisive concepts” such as institutionalized racism<sup>25</sup> and build on the recommendations of the 1776 Commission, created in the summer of 2020 by former Republican President Donald Trump to promote “patriotic education” and “correct the distorted perspective” and “radicalized view of American history”<sup>26</sup> that holds that racial inequalities are the product of laws and public policies. Like southern states after the Civil Rights Movement, these recent bills seek to teach children that racial inequalities are not as bad as some might think, and that existing inequalities are the product of a few prejudiced individuals and do not require institutional reforms.

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/22525983/map-critical-race-theory-legislation-teaching-racism>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/11/02/trump-1776-commission-education-433885>

# **ONLINE APPENDIX**

# Contents

Methodology used to analyze the content of History textbooks in Alabama, California, and Indiana | **3-16**

Application to History textbooks of Alabama, California, and Indiana of the Natural Language Processing methodology used by Lucy, Demszky, Bromley, and Jurafsky (2020) | **17-20**

# 1 General Instructions to Textbook Coders

This document lays out the procedures you will use to code school textbooks. The ultimate goal is to assess the degree to which each textbook presents racist and anti-racist content. In order to determine that, you will follow a series of steps detailed in this document. Specifically, for each textbook, you will code individual sentences according to different dimensions of content analysis detailed below. Every week, we will analyze the coding decisions you made to determine inter-rater reliability. **To maintain the integrity of the analysis, it is absolutely essential, that you do not consult or talk about your work with any other students at any point during the quarter except during the weekly meetings.**

If at any point you have questions about the work, email Alison Boehmer: [apboehme@ucsd.edu](mailto:apboehme@ucsd.edu) and copy Prof. Paglayan: [apaglayan@ucsd.edu](mailto:apaglayan@ucsd.edu).

Every week, you will be working with a different textbook(s). For each textbook, you will be given 1) an Excel document containing two worksheets and 2) a PDF document, corresponding to the original textbook. You will complete the two Excel worksheets and submit your work by the end of the week: **every Friday by the end of the day**. The PDF is provided so you can consult it as necessary, but you do not need to submit it.

Below are important additional details pertaining to each material and how they fit into your workflow.

## 1) Excel document:

Worksheet 1, “Content Analysis”: Every row in the first spreadsheet corresponds to a sentence in the original textbook. For each row (sentence), you will “answer” 13 questions detailed below. For each question, **select from the dropdown-menu the correct answer** (see the Coding Scheme section below for details about the meaning of these values).

- *What if I am unsure about how to code a sentence?* In column W, labeled “Comments,” write a few words detailing your confusion/hesitation *and* highlight the “Comments” cell in **RED**. Be clear to specify in the “Comments” cell which coding question you are unsure about.
- *What if I can’t decipher the sentence’s coding because it seems out of context?* To ensure you can understand the context in which a sentence appears, we are also giving you the original textbook in PDF format. You should reference the PDF for each sentence, especially those that are isolated/not surrounded by sentences on the same page.
- *Should we consider uses of “Negro” and “ghetto” racist and derogatory, coding them as such?* Given the historical context of these texts, we must view words such as these differently than we do today.

*The **Coding Scheme** you will apply to each sentence of worksheet 1 is provided under the section “Coding Scheme” below.*

Worksheet 2, “Ideal Benchmarks”: You will also assess the degree to which each textbook meets a set of ideal benchmarks determined by the Council on Interracial Books for Children. There are 21 ideal benchmarks. For each textbook, you need to determine the degree to which each ideal benchmark is present in the textbook.

*The **21 ideal benchmarks** and additional instructions on how to fill in worksheet 2 are provided under the section “Ideal Benchmarks” below.*

The best way to proceed is to (1) become familiar with the 21 ideal benchmarks in worksheet 2, but (2) begin coding worksheet 1 and, as you come along sentences that refer to the 21 ideal benchmarks, enter the relevant information in worksheet 2.

**2) PDF document:** Every line in worksheet 1 of the Excel document corresponds to a highlighted sentence in the PDF document (in chronological order). To ensure each sentence is contextualized, a best practice is to follow along in the PDF as you process the Excel document.

**The rest of this document is organized as follows:**

**Coding Scheme for Content Analysis of Individual Sentences:** Pages 5-14

**21 Ideal Benchmarks:** Pages 15-16

## 2 Coding Scheme for Content Analysis of Individual Sentences

For each sentence in worksheet 1, answer each question below **select the correct answer from the dropdown-menu**, which corresponds to answer options detailed below.

**Q1.** Generalizing Benefits/Improvements/Positives: **Does the sentence generalize positive experiences in US political, social, or economic life without distinguishing between the experiences of Black and white Americans?**

**Look out for** sentences that discuss democratic norms of “freedom” and “liberty,” voting rights, access to education and improvements in education, poverty mitigation, etc., and determine whether the sentence implicitly or explicitly assumes that these benefits, improvements, or positive aspects of life apply to everyone without distinguishing between Black and white Americans. Note also that sentences that talk exclusively about Black or exclusively about white Americans should be coded as “NO, ON THE CONTRARY...” because they implicitly distinguish.

Possible answers:

<b>1</b>	YES, it generalizes
<b>-1</b>	NO, ON THE CONTRARY, it distinguishes between Black and white Americans in talking about positive experiences
<b>Leave blank</b>	NOT APPLICABLE, as the sentence does not discuss positive experiences

Examples from the textbooks:

YES, it generalizes:

“The freedom of the people was further safeguarded by the Bill of Rights, passed in 1791.”

NO, ON THE CONTRARY, it distinguishes between Black and white Americans in talking about positive experiences:

“‘The signers of the Declaration of Independence,’ he said, ‘never dreamed of the Negro when they were writing the Declaration of Independence...’”

NOT APPLICABLE, as the sentence does not discuss positive experiences: (Leave blank)

“Within ten years there were about twenty thousand Americans living in Texas.”

its fertile soil and mild climate. Plantation owners from different parts of the South went there with their slaves, as the land was good for raising cotton. Within ten years there were about twenty thousand Americans living in Texas.

**Q2. Generalizing Costs/Worsenings/Negatives: Does the sentence generalize negative experiences in US political, social, or economic life without distinguishing between the experiences of Black and white Americans (i.e., without acknowledging the ways in which such negatives are compounded for Black Americans)?**

**Look out for** sentences that discuss the effects of wars, poverty, problems in education, etc. without acknowledging that Black Americans' experiences with these topics were different (and worse) than white Americans. Look out for also sentences that talk about "poor people" or those in "lower classes" without distinguishing between the experiences of white and Black Americans. Again, if the sentence exclusively talks about Black or white Americans, it counts as distinguishing (and should be coded "NO, ON THE CONTRARY...")

Possible answers:

<b>1</b>	YES, it generalizes
<b>-1</b>	NO, ON THE CONTRARY, it distinguishes between Black and white Americans in talking about negative experiences
<b>Leave blank</b>	NOT APPLICABLE, as the sentence does not discuss negative experiences

Examples from the textbooks:

YES, it generalizes:

"The crowding of poor people in certain sections of the rapidly growing cities of the nineteenth century brought misery and widespread suffering."

NO, ON THE CONTRARY, it distinguishes between Black and white Americans in talking about negative experiences:

"*New Left* movements such as the Students for a Democratic Society and the Black Panthers, charged that the American economic and political system was run by industrial and military interests and that the individual, especially if he was nonwhite or poor, was exploited by the vast, corrupt system."

NOT APPLICABLE, as the sentence does not discuss negative experiences:

"It happened that Maine also applied for admission as a state at that time."

It happened that Maine also applied for admission as a state at that time. The House of Representatives was ready to vote Maine in, but the Senate would not admit Maine as a free state unless the House would admit Missouri as a slave state. There were heated debates in Congress. Finally, in 1820, it was decided that Missouri should be admitted as a slave state and Maine as a

*If you answered “NO, ON THE CONTRARY” for Q1 and/or Q2, answer Q3. Otherwise, leave Q3 blank and move on to Q4.*

**Q3.** Distinguish with Caveat: **If the sentence does distinguish between Black and white Americans’ experiences (i.e. if you answered “NO, ON THE CONTRARY” to Q1 and/or Q2), does it minimize the hardships endured by Black Americans or exaggerate their positive experiences?**

**Look out for** sentences that that minimize the cruelty of slavery, or that equate the experiences of Black Americans with those of poor whites.

Possible answers:

<b>1</b>	YES, it minimizes hardships or exaggerates positive experiences of Black Americans
<b>-1</b>	NO, ON THE CONTRARY, it does not minimize hardships or exaggerate positive experiences of Black Americans
<b>Leave blank</b>	NOT APPLICABLE (if neither of your responses to Q1 or Q2 was “NO”)

Examples from the textbooks:

YES, it minimizes hardships or exaggerates positive experiences of Black Americans:

“In one respect the slave was supposedly better off than free laborers, white or black, of the same period.”

NO, ON THE CONTRARY, it does not minimize hardships or exaggerate positive experiences of Black Americans:

“Everyone would rather be free than to live in slavery even under “good” conditions.”

NOT APPLICABLE (if neither of your responses to Q1 or Q2 was “YES”):

“The state of Texas was paid \$10,000,000 for part of its western land, which was added to New Mexico.”

a part of the land obtained from Mexico. The people of these territories were to decide for themselves later whether they would come into the Union as free or slave states. The state of Texas was paid \$10,000,000 for part of its western land, which was added

**Q4.** Stereotypes: **Does the sentence implicitly or explicitly reinforce stereotypes of Black people being inferior human beings?**

**Look out for** uses of “violent,” “lazy,” or “inferior” and related synonyms/words/phrases that imply such stereotypes, as well as sentences that de-humanize or commodify Black people by referring to them as “labor,” “commodities,” “owned” or other words that fail to acknowledge the humanity of Black people, particularly in the context of slavery. Use of “master,” “owner,”

and “slavetrader” also reinforces the inhumanity and inferiority of Black Americans and falls under this criterion as well.

Possible answers:

<b>1</b>	YES, it reinforces stereotypes
<b>-1</b>	NO, ON THE CONTRARY, it talks about Black People without conveying stereotypes
<b>Leave blank</b>	NOT APPLICABLE, it does not talk about Black people

Examples from the textbooks:

YES, it reinforces stereotypes:

“The principal reasons given by slaves for running away were these: to avoid threatened punishment, to avoid hard work, to be free to go up North, to work on a steamboat, to follow the ideas of a slave stealer or an abolitionist.”

YES, it reinforces stereotypes:

“Tobacco, rice, and indigo were the chief money crops, and more labor was spent on corn, tobacco, rice, and indigo than on garden vegetables.”

NO, ON THE CONTRARY, it talks about Black People without conveying stereotypes: (Code as “-1”)

“Conditions for both black and white passengers crossing the North Atlantic were very poor according to our present-day health standards.”

NOT APPLICABLE, it does not talk about Black people:

“At the Philadelphia Convention, the great men of America were trying to build a firm government based on consent of the governed.”

*This sentence requires “NOT APPLICABLE” for this question because it does not talk about Black Americans.*

**Q5. Black Resistance: Does the sentence describe Black Americans’ resistance to the status quo of oppression, discrimination, racism, white supremacy, etc.?**

**Look out for** discussions of slave revolts, race riots, protests, signed petitions, public speeches by Black individuals, books, op-eds, or other published written work authored by Black individuals, Black individuals’ participation in the abolitionist movement, Black individuals’ participation in the Civil Rights Movement, efforts to organize the Black community to fight racism, etc.

Possible answers:

<b>1</b>	YES, it describes Black Americans' resistance
<b>Leave blank</b>	NO, it does not describe Black Americans' resistance

Examples from the textbooks:

YES, it describes Black Americans' resistance:

"Southern writers built up a romantic image of the system, in which slaves loved their masters as children did their parents. Of course, these accounts are denied by the existence of the harsh slave codes, the number of runaways, and the numerous slave revolts."

NO, it does not describe Black Americans' resistance:

"With all the drawbacks of slavery, it should be noted that slavery was the earliest form of social security in the United States."

*If you answered "YES" for Q5, answer Q6. Otherwise, leave Q6 blank and move on to Q7.*

**Q6. Caveating Black Resistance: Does the sentence describing Black Americans' resistance include the words "violent", "non-violent", "peaceful", or derivatives or synonyms of these words?**

**Look out for** emphasis on "non-violence," "violence," "militaristic," "peaceful" or inappropriate forms of protest/resistance.

Possible answers:

<b>1</b>	YES, it uses at least one of these words
<b>-1</b>	NO, it describes Black resistance without using these words
<b>Leave blank</b>	NOT APPLICABLE (if you did <i>not</i> answer YES to Q5)

Examples from the textbooks:

YES, it uses at least one of these words:

"But many Americans do not support the right to violence, even if they agree with the point of view of the demonstrators."

NO, it describes Black resistance without using these words: (Code as "-1")

“Most participants had turned to rioting because of resentment of the lack of opportunity, poverty, and despair that were everywhere in the ghettos.”

NOT APPLICABLE (if you did *not* answer YES to Q5): (Leave blank)

“Only a handful of Negroes had been set free before 1790.”

Probably the most violent rebellion in the history of American slavery was the one led by Nat Turner in 1831. Turner believed he had been chosen by God to lead the slaves against their white masters. He and his followers killed his master and the master's family. The revolt spread rapidly, until the South feared a full-scale revolution. The main group of slaves was finally overwhelmed by 3,000 troops. In all, 57 whites and 116 blacks were killed. Two months later, Turner was captured and executed.

Southern slaveowners again faced rebellion at the time of John Brown's raid in 1859. The rebellions showed that many Negroes were willing to kill and be killed in attempts to achieve freedom.

**Q7. Acknowledge Discriminatory Policies/Institutions: Does the sentence acknowledge that policies and/or institutions promote and/or perpetuate the disadvantage of Black Americans? Does it recognize that policies/ institutions disfavor Black Americans specifically?**

**Look out for** discussions of policies/ institutions related to voting barriers, education barriers, poverty, migration patterns, etc. Note that slavery and the slave trade should also be considered discriminatory institutions.

Possible answers:

<b>1</b>	YES, it acknowledges that discriminatory policies and/or institutions disfavor Black Americans
<b>-1</b>	NO, it discusses discriminatory policies and/or institutions without acknowledging that they disfavor Black Americans
<b>Leave blank</b>	NOT APPLICABLE, as it does not talk about discriminatory policies and/or institutions

Examples from the textbooks:

YES, it acknowledges that discriminatory policies and/or institutions disfavor Black Americans:

“They have had difficulty in getting the education necessary to prepare them for more desirable jobs.”

NO, it discusses discriminatory policies and/or institutions without acknowledging that they disfavor Black Americans:

“Counties and school districts could levy special taxes to improve their schools.”

NOT APPLICABLE, as it does not talk about discriminatory policies and/or institutions:

“Free Negroes and white abolitionists in the North furnished hiding places and transportation for the runaways.”

**Q8. Acknowledge Racial Justice Policies/Institutions: Does the sentence acknowledge policies and/or institutions that seek to promote greater social, political, or economic equality by addressing problems specifically experienced by Black Americans?** Does it describe policies/institutions that seek to promote greater equality by mitigating or compensating for the historical disadvantages experienced by Black Americans?

**Look out for** discussions of elimination of suffrage restrictions, policies to reduce poverty, education reform, prison reform, etc.

Possible answers:

<b>1</b>	YES, it acknowledges policies and/or institutions that seek to promote greater equality by addressing problems specifically experienced by Black Americans
<b>-1</b>	NO, it discusses policies and/or institutions that seek to promote greater equality without saying anything about their goal to specifically help Black Americans
<b>Leave blank</b>	NOT APPLICABLE, as it does not talk about policies/institutions that seek to promote greater equality

Examples from the textbooks:

YES, it acknowledges racial justice policies and/or institutions that seek to solve problems specifically experienced by Black Americans:

“Since this had long been a device used to bar blacks from voting, the Twenty-Fourth Amendment was a great help in the cause of Negro voting rights.”

NO, it discusses policies and/or institutions that seek to solve problems without saying anything about their goal to specifically help Black Americans:

“Although the work done by individuals and organizations in the nineteenth century immensely improved the condition and eased the burdens of many poor people, it did not solve the problem of poverty. That problem could be solved only when people were able to earn enough money to improve their condition and take care of their needs.”

NOT APPLICABLE, as it does not talk about policies and/or institutions that seek to solve problems:

“The deep sectional division could not be healed.”

The hopes for peace raised by the Compromise of 1850 were soon shattered. The deep sectional division could not be healed.

**Q9. Racism as an Individual Problem: Does the sentence discuss racism as an issue of prejudiced individuals?**

**Look out for** depictions of “masters” during slavery times and depictions of segregation/discrimination during the Jim Crow era.

Possible answers:

<b>1</b>	YES, it describes racism as stemming from prejudiced individuals
<b>-1</b>	NO, it describes racism as stemming from systems/ structures/ policies/ institutions
<b>Leave blank</b>	NOT APPLICABLE, as it does not talk about the causes of racism

Examples from the textbooks:

YES, it describes racism as stemming from prejudiced individuals:

“While the Negro was badly treated as a rule in the foreign slave trade, he was generally well treated by Alabama farmers.”

NO, it describes racism as stemming from systems/ structures/ policies/ institutions:

“Do these laws [slave codes] support the image of slavery as a kindly, protective institutions?”

“He regarded slaveowners as well as slaves as victims of a terribly sick institution.”

NOT APPLICABLE, as it does not talk about the causes of racism:

“Shortly after 1800, Southern planters with their slaves moved to the land along the Gulf of Mexico, where the soil was rich, the climate warm, and the rainfall plentiful.”

*This sentence demonstrates that, while it does discuss “Southern planters with their slaves,” perhaps indicating a code of “YES,” it does not provide enough information to evaluate whether it conveys racism (as in slavery) is an individual or structural problem.*

**Q10. Passive/Active voice: Does the sentence use passive voice to describe an act of violence committed against Black people?** Does it shift blame away from perpetrators by using passive grammar? For a review of Passive/Active voice, see [here](#).

Note: While we consider slavery a form of violence, not all sentences that refer to slaves or slavery will be coded as active/ passive voice. For a sentence on slavery to be coded as such, slaves/ Black people must be the object/ subject of the sentence.

Possible answers:

<b>1</b>	YES, it uses passive voice to describe acts of violence against Black people
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<b>-1</b>	NO, ON THE CONTRARY, it uses active voice to describe acts of violence against Black people
<b>Leave blank</b>	NOT APPLICABLE, as it does not describe acts of violence against Black people

Examples from the textbooks:

YES, it uses passive voice to describe acts of violence against Black people:

“Cruel things were done by the Ku-Klux Klan during its reign of terror.”

NO, ON THE CONTRARY, it uses active voice to describe acts of violence against Black people:

“Some, like the Ku Klux Klan, resort to violence.”

NOT APPLICABLE, as it does not describe acts of violence against Black people:

“Finally, in 1820, it was decided that Missouri should be admitted as a slave state and Maine as a free state, thus keeping the free states and the slave states equal in number.” CA56, 407

“Many New England fortunes were made from this triangular trade”

*Although the triangular trade refers to the slave trade, which we consider a form of violence against Black people, this sentence must be coded as “NOT APPLICABLE” because Black people are not the subject/object of the sentence.*

*Note: Answer Q11 only for the subset of sentences highlighted in worksheet 1 in GREEN. For these highlighted sentences, you should also answer the previous questions.*

**Q11.** Reflection Question: **Is this sentence a question that invites students to think critically about the causes/history/consequences of racism in the U.S. and/or about issues of race in American history and/or present-day society?**

**Look out for** sentences discussing slavery, oppression, violence, etc., against Black Americans followed by a question that reflects on such structures and behaviors.

Possible answers:

<b>1</b>	YES
<b>-1</b>	NO

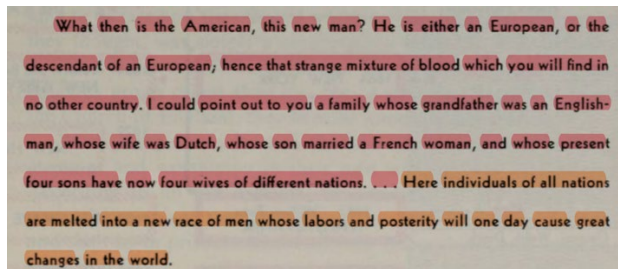
Examples from the textbooks:

YES:

“One part, blaming the king for promoting the slave trade, was omitted because of objections from slave-holders as well as New England delegates. Why would the latter group have objected?”

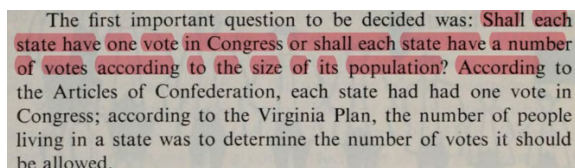
NO:

“What then is the American, this new man?”



What then is the American, this new man? He is either an European, or the descendant of an European, hence that strange mixture of blood which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an English-man, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world.

“Shall each state have one vote in Congress or shall each state have a number of votes according to the size of its population?”



The first important question to be decided was: Shall each state have one vote in Congress or shall each state have a number of votes according to the size of its population? According to the Articles of Confederation, each state had had one vote in Congress; according to the Virginia Plan, the number of people living in a state was to determine the number of votes it should be allowed.

### 3 Ideal Benchmarks

Below is a list of 21 benchmarks that, according to the Council on Interracial Books for Children, should be included in all history textbooks. In worksheet 2, "Ideal Benchmarks," you will code the degree to which each benchmark is met by a given textbook. In order to do this, as you code individual sentences in worksheet 1, "Content Analysis", look also for "evidence" to justify whether the textbook provides "Incorrect Information," "No Information," "Omits This Period," "Limited Information," or "Full Information" for each of the following 21 ideal benchmarks:

1. African, as well as European, culture forms an integral part of the U.S. heritage.
2. Africans were in the Americas prior to 1619.
3. The North American slave trade created enormous profits, became the most brutal system of slavery known, and disrupted African civilization.
4. The significance of the Revolution, to Blacks, goes beyond participation in combat.
5. The Constitution was a pro-slavery document and remained so for 78 years.
6. Slavery was inherently cruel and inhuman.
7. Rebellion and slavery went hand in hand.
8. While there were differences in the institution between North and South, slavery was never a regional issue.
9. Blacks initiated anti-slavery activity and were central to the abolition leadership.
10. The life of the free African American was often only a slight improvement over the life of a slave.
11. Blacks who participated in the take-over of the West were also oppressed by white society.
12. The lack of land redistribution was the fundamental failure of Reconstruction.
13. When freed people had land, they displayed incentive and skill, establishing productive lives.
14. Sharecropping resulted in the economic re-enslavement of Black people.
15. The Reconstruction governments were more progressive and democratic than later southern governments.
16. Post-reconstruction brought a rigidly segregated society, with full Federal support.
17. The racism of organized labor has harmed Black people and disrupted the potential for working-class unity.
18. Wilson's "progressive" policies were meant "for whites only."
19. Discrimination faced by European immigrants was different from the racism faced by Blacks.
20. Institutional racism, not merely individual prejudice, causes and perpetuates racial inequality.
21. The myth of "progress" obscures the existing reality of the majority of Black people.

You should think of these ideal benchmarks not as verbatim sentences that should be included in a textbook but as ideal content that a textbook should include. You should code whether this ideal content is present in a textbook by looking at the whole set of sentences provided in worksheet 1. You should select only one metric ("Incorrect Information," "No Information," "Omits This Period," "Limited Information," or "Full Information") per benchmark, and provide "Evidence" to justify your choice. If you are undecided between different answers, provide details of why you are undecided in the "COMMENTS" column of worksheet 2.

The best way to proceed is to (1) become familiar with the 21 ideal benchmarks in worksheet 2, but (2) begin coding worksheet 1 and, as you come along sentences that refer to the 21 ideal benchmarks, enter the relevant information in worksheet 2. To help, below is a list of "Themes" you should keep in the front of your mind, so when you come across potentially relevant sentences, you remember to document their lines accordingly in the worksheet 2. It may be fruitful to approach these themes chronologically; that is, once you move out of the chapters on "Sharecropping," review the relevant sentences and code worksheet 2 accordingly.

Africa/ans (culture, in America prior to 1619, slave trade)	Sharecropping
Revolutionary War (Black participation)	Reconstruction (and segregation)
Constitution	Organized labor
Slavery (and rebellion, in the North and South)	Wilson's progressive policies
Anti-slavery (and Black abolition leadership)	Discrimination (and European immigrants)
Free Black Americans (compared to slaves, and Western take-over, and leading productive lives)	Institutional racism versus individual prejudice
	"Progress" (and existing reality for Black people)

Example for ideal statement 1, *"African, as well as European, culture forms an integral part of the U.S. heritage."*:

Suppose you come across two sentences in spreadsheet 1: (1) *"Also, today's music, dance, art, literature, theater, and religion show that African cultures have contributed much to Western civilization,"* and (2) *"African culture is very much a part of the United States' heritage."* The first sentence provides evidence of "Limited Information" on Ideal Benchmark #1 (it discusses the importance of African culture for Western civilization but not specifically for the U.S.). The second sentence provides evidence of "Full Information" on Ideal Benchmark #1.

Your job is to review sentences related to each ideal benchmark throughout the textbook and, to the best of your ability, choose one metric and provide evidence to justify your choice.

## Application to History textbooks of Alabama, California, and Indiana of the Natural Language Processing methodology used by Lucy, Demszky, Bromley, and Jurafsky (2020)

Lucy et.al. (2020) use computational methods to analyze the content of History textbooks used in Texas between 2015 and 2017. I apply their same methodology to the study of History textbooks in Alabama, California, and Indiana in 1955 and 1975. Lucy et.al. (2020) describe the methods as follows:

“Lexicon-based approaches illuminate the affective and social connotations of words, an area of great importance for the social sciences ([Nguyen et al., 2019](#)). This method counts the number of words occurring in a text that are defined in a lexicon as denoting a particular meaning, such as words of positive sentiment. Lexicons have been used since early work in computational content analysis ([Stone et al., 1966](#)), and usually have human-generated ratings or labels. Lexicon-based methods are interpretable and computationally inexpensive, but they also have several limitations. They operate under the assumption that the context for which a lexicon is created is similar to the one in which it is applied, which may not hold when a word’s meaning varies across contexts ([Grimmer & Stewart, 2013](#)). In addition, lexicons contain a fixed number of words and may not always provide good coverage of all relevant words in the corpus ([Field et al., 2019](#)).

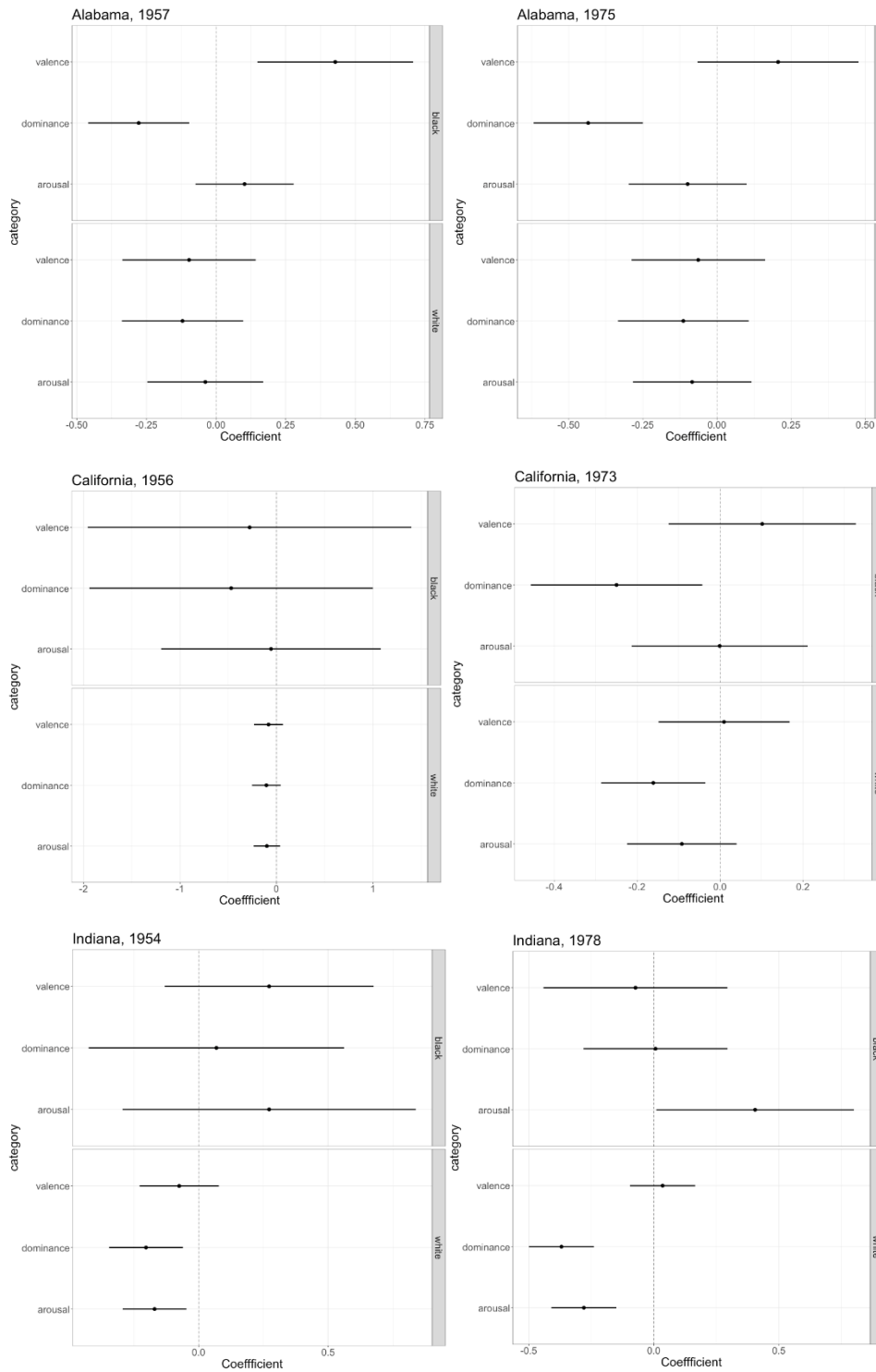
We apply two families of lexicons: for adjectives, National Research Council (NRC)’s Valence, Arousal, and Dominance (VAD) lexicon ([Mohammad, 2018](#)), and for lemmatized verbs (that is, all forms of a verb), the Connotation Frames lexicons of sentiment, power, and agency ([Rashkin et al., 2016](#); [Sap et al., 2017](#)). These six metrics we chose to highlight are related to three primary affective dimensions identified in social psychology: power/dominance (strong vs. weak), sentiment/valence (positive vs. negative), and agency/arousal (active vs. passive; [Field et al. 2019](#); [Osgood et al., 1957](#); [Russell, 1980](#)). As examples of labeled words in the NRC VAD lexicon, a high valence adjective is *amazing*, a low arousal one is *asleep*, and a dominant one is *competitive*. In the lexicons for connotation frames, X has low agency in the phrase *X obeys*, and for the phrases *X affects Y* and *Y applauds X*, X has power while Y does not. In the phrase *X suffered*, the verb *suffered* implies the writer may have positive sentiment toward X because it suggests sympathy.

We calculate lexicon scores for social groups following [Field et al. \(2019\)](#), who applied these two lexicon families on online media articles to study portrayals of people in the

#MeToo movement ([Appendix D](#)). The score for a group of people-related nouns is determined by the average rating of adjectives or verbs describing nouns in that group. We calculate these scores for non-named terms related to different social groups ([Appendix Table A1](#)), as well as the top 100 named individuals. We only consider words that have labels in each lexicon, and we use the z-score of the calculated values for each lexicon.”

SOURCE: Lucy, Li, Dorottya Demszky, Patricia Bromley, and Dan Jurafsky. 2020. “Content Analysis of Textbooks via Natural Language Processing: Findings on Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in Texas U.S. History Textbooks.” *AERA Open*.

**Valence, Arousal, and Dominance connotations of the adjectives associated with Black and white individuals – There is a worsening of the connotations of adjectives associated with Black individuals in Alabama and California textbooks, and no change in Indiana**



**Sentiment, Power, and Agency connotations of the verbs associated with Black and white individuals** – There is a worsening of the connotations of verbs associated with Black individuals in Alabama textbooks, and no change in California or Indiana

