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**HERSTORY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN
MIDDLE GRADES U.S. HISTORY TEXTBOOKS**

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EDCI 590 INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

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Signature of Project Advisor

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Abstract

Research has demonstrated state standards, which often marginalize, stereotype, or exclude women, influence textbook content. Stereotypical and superficial representations of women can trivialize their importance to history, undermine student self-esteem and self-image, and diminish student interest in history. This study identified how women are represented in middle grades history textbooks. A qualitative content analysis of two middle grades United States history textbooks was conducted to identify how women have been included and represented within the textbooks. The findings show the women and women's history included in the textbooks are largely derived from state standards. Ultimately, the textbooks used in the analysis fail to provide a nuanced account of women's experiences throughout history and women and women's history continues to be marginalized or excluded entirely. This research can be utilized to encourage content developers and educators to appropriately and effectively incorporate women and their experiences into middle grades social studies textbooks in meaningful ways.

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This study will explore the ways in which the interests, struggles, contributions, and experiences of women have been incorporated into middle grades U.S. history textbooks. As the National Women's History Museum (NWHM) (2017) has concluded, state U.S. history standards fail to adequately include the experiences of women. Since state standards often determine the content of textbooks, this study will determine the extent to which women are being represented in U.S. history textbooks used in middle grades classrooms (Schocker and Woysner, 2013).

Purpose

Incorporating the experiences of women throughout history into middle grades social studies curricula is a goal of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). In their *Revised National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* (2010), the NCSS encourages the learning curriculum to be inclusive of all students, while promoting diversity based on one's gender. Scholars have called for teachers, content developers, and textbook writers to draw upon the standards written by the NCSS as these standards provide a more diverse and inclusive look at the experiences, contributions, and perspectives of women throughout history (Sincero & Woysner, 2003, p. 218). Research demonstrates students derive self-esteem and self-identity from learning content (NWHM, 2017, Dam and Rijkschroeff, 1996). Studies suggest when the experiences of women are absent from textbooks, this may impact student learning (Hahn, Bernard-Powers, Crocco, and Woysner, 2007). Therefore, it is important to determine if U.S. history textbooks are continuing to neglect the experiences of women.

Problem Statement

While the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (2010), educators, and scholars have called for inclusion and diversity in social studies curricula, studies suggest women are not being adequately included in social studies state standards and textbooks (White, 2019, Crocco, 2008, p. 172, Chick, 2006).

Rationale for the Study

Including a more thorough and nuanced representation of the experiences of women in the social studies curriculum can help girls and young women build self-esteem and gain inspiration from the contributions of women (NWAHA, 2019). Such representation is needed in middle school social studies curricula as young learners' identities are being formed. The ways in which women and their stories have been either included or excluded from social studies curricula can help educators, teachers, administrators, and those who contribute to the writing and creation of content to become aware of the importance of including women in history curricula. The National Women's History Alliance (NWAHA) (2019) when explaining why their work matters, argues by including the experiences of women, students can build self-esteem and derive inspiration from women's contributions to history. When the experiences of women are effectively and meaningfully incorporated into the curriculum, students can better understand women's experiences and how women have helped shape history.

Definitions

Curricula/curriculum – The learning content provided to students often comprising state standards, textbooks, and instructional material.

Feminist Phase Theory – A tool used for analyzing the inclusivity of women in content and learning materials developed by Tetreault in 1985.

Gender bias – Discriminatory ideas held against a person based on their gender.

Gender discrimination – The act of discriminating against someone based on their gender (i.e. being paid less, not being hired for a job)

Marginalization of women – to be excluded, treated differently, or trivialized because of gender.

Misogyny – prejudiced speech, ideas, and/or behavior against women.

National Council for the Social Studies - A professional organization devoted to Social Studies. Founded in 1921.

National Women's History Alliance – An organization devoted to Women's history. Originally founded in 1980 as the National Women's History Project.

National Women's History Museum – A leading organization devoted to promoting Women's history.

Self-Esteem – A feeling of confidence in one's self.

Sexism – A form of discrimination against someone because of their sex.

Social Studies – An academic discipline including the fields of U.S. history, world history, geography, economics, and civics and governance.

Standards of Learning/State Standards – Standards of learning dictate what information is taught to students in the curriculum.

Literature Review

Background

Prior to the 1960s and 1970s women and women's history were largely, if not entirely absent from history content as textbooks focused primarily on military and political history. Scholars note how during the 1960s and 1970s the push for a more female inclusive curriculum began. This push, which coincided with the Women's rights movement was a result of the longstanding neglect of women in history textbooks, state standards, and curricula (Cruz and Groendal-Cobb, 1998, p. 271). For decades women, their contributions, and interests were absent from such materials and as a result, national organizations, including the NCSS, have called for a more balanced curricula more inclusive of women (p. 271). Scholars recognize progress has been made within the last 30 years to include women in the social studies curricula. Yet, studies conducted by the NWHM (2017) and Chick (2006), show women and their experiences are not being adequately represented in state standards and social studies textbooks.

Challenges to Including Women

Scholars argue that despite calls for a more inclusive curricula, such changes are not easily implemented. Educator training, funding, state standards, and content material lacking the experiences of women throughout history continue to provide a challenge to adequately incorporating and representing women.

Training, Funding, and Materials. The lack of representation within social studies curricula, according to Cruz and Groendal-Cobb (1998), lies with teachers, school administrators, school funding, and the developers of instructional material including textbooks (pp. 271- 272). They explain that even with momentum building for a more inclusive curriculum, those in charge of creating educational materials and delivering content within the

classroom often fail to produce a nuanced view of the experiences of women. They point out the curriculum is designed by the state or district; however, mandates introduced by the state are not always implemented at the local level (p. 271). Additionally, teachers may not have the necessary background knowledge, administrative support, nor the resources needed to properly implement women's history into the curriculum. Out of date textbooks, instructional materials, and content present a further challenge to including women into middle grades social studies curricula. Textbooks which contain adequate information concerning the experiences of women are often unattainable as schools lack the funding to purchase these textbooks (Crocco, 2008, p. 181). Another challenge to including women in the curriculum lies with the training materials provided to teachers. When looking at the materials presented to educators, Crocco (2008) found the training materials provided to teachers only contained 2.5% of material related to the teaching of women's history (p. 184). The NWA (2019) agreed, arguing only three percent of educational materials contained information relevant to the contributions of women.

State standards. Other scholars blame state standards for the lack of representation of women and their experiences. White (2019) argues state standards which fail to include women present significant challenges to creating an inclusive curriculum. Scholars have reviewed educational standards to identify how women are represented within the standards. A 2017 report by the NWHM analyzed K-12 educational standards in social studies curricula across the United States. The study revealed significant gaps in the inclusion of women within the standards. For example, the study showed women were mentioned only 178 times (as cited in White, 2019). The NWHM (2017) also found the Florida standards often grouped women with other minorities, thereby marginalizing women within the standards. Standards often dictate which historical figures and events will be included in a textbook. Also, in their 2017 study of

state standards, the NWHM critiqued state social studies standards revealing the extent to which women were marginalized within the standards. The study uncovered the majority of the standards included women portrayed them in a stereotypical role (p. 12). In the study, 53% of the standards included the domestic roles of women and 20% comprised suffrage, whereas only two percent of the standards included women in the workforce (p. 12).

Politicization of state standards. Curricula in the U.S. are politicized. Shocker and Woysner (2013) note the women who are included within history textbooks tend to be conservative leaning figures (p. 23). Additionally, Hahn, Bernard-Powers, Crocco, and Woysner (2007) note how certain, more controversial gender-related events such as Title IX funding and the ERA are excluded from social studies curricula (p. 342).

Standards influence textbook content. As suggested by Schocker and Woysner (2013), state standards often characterize the ways in which women are included in social studies curricula and textbooks. As the NWHM (2017) argues, textbook writers are failing to include women because women are not included in the state standards. Additionally, they argue when state standards do not adequately include women, such exclusion will also be found in the classroom. Williams and Bennett (2016) observe social studies courses rely heavily upon the use of textbooks (p. 124). The NWHM (2017) found state standards champion male leadership, while overly focusing on the domestic roles of women. They concluded when women were included in the standards, this was only because they had achieved national notoriety, which suggests lesser known women are likely excluded from the standards. Additionally, they found elite, white women with access to resources were overrepresented in comparison to other non-elite women and women of color, which gives students an incomplete picture of the experiences of individual women. They also found women were too often marginalized within the standards,

which leads to marginalization in textbooks. As a result, women were often placed in the same standards as minorities and other disenfranchised peoples, instead of having their own set of standards (NWHM, 2017). Lastly, they found when women are included in the standards, the standards prioritize women's stereotypical roles in the domestic sphere, while failing to address the achievements and contributions of women in the fields of science, math, and technology (NWHM, 2017). The NWHM's biggest critique of the standards is the standards do little to contribute to the understanding of women's experiences and perspectives and as a result, students receive an incomplete version of women's history.

Virginia Standards of Learning (VSOLs). The Virginia Standards of Learning dictate what is included in the social studies curriculum. The 2015 History and Social Science Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework, approved by the Virginia Department of Education, includes only 9 individual women; whereas 37 men are included in the frameworks.

Textbooks with inclusion gaps and gender bias. Despite women becoming more involved in the field of social studies within the last few decades in the areas of leadership and politics, education, and organizations such as the NCSS, little has changed when it comes to actually including women in middle grades social studies curricula (Crocco, 2008, p. 172). Crocco (2008) suggests some progress has been made in including the experiences of women; however, she is skeptical regarding such progress as social studies textbooks and materials still continue to marginalize women. In her research, which included a review of a content analysis of civics textbooks, she found the textbooks used in middle grades social studies courses are severely lacking when it comes to including the voices and experiences of women (p. 182). For example, she reviewed a content analysis of civic textbooks conducted by Gonzales et al. (2001), which found 90 percent of the quotations presented to students came from men (as cited in

Crocco, 2008, p. 182). Such studies further reiterate Crocco's argument that while women are being included in social studies curricula, their representation only comprises a very minuscule portion of the curricula, especially in comparison to the representation of men.

A quantitative content analysis reviewed by Crocco, Avery and Simmons (2001), found European men of power were the predominate voices in history and civics textbooks, which largely neglected women and other marginalized peoples (as cited in Crocco 2008). Their data revealed men were mentioned a total of 1,899 times in a civics textbook, whereas women were only mentioned a total of 258 times (as cited in Crocco, 2008, p. 182). Cruz and Groendal-Cobb (1998) argue textbooks and instructional materials are insufficient when it comes to including women's history because such textbooks tend to only focus on military or political history, which emphasize the historical role of men, while failing to include the stories, experiences, and voices of women (pp. 271-272).

Even when women are included in social studies textbooks, the ways in which women are included can be inherently problematic. Chick (2006), when reviewing a quantitative content analysis completed by the K-12 Education Committee of the Western Association of Women Historians, points out women and their experiences were often missing from the main narrative and confined to sidebars within the text. Additionally, even though women were mentioned, their stories were dominated through a male perspective (p. 285). In her own qualitative content analysis of three American History textbooks designed for K-12 students, Chick found all three of the books included more men than women in the text (pp. 286-287). Not only were more men mentioned in relation to women, but Chick (2006) also found more pages of the text were devoted to men than were to women (p. 287). When analyzing illustrations, she also found the textbooks contain more illustrations of men than women. (p. 287). Chick also notes as grade

levels increase, so does the inclusion of women; however, the inclusion and representation of males within the textbooks continues to increase at a much higher rate in comparison to the inclusion of women (p. 288).

Scholars agree that women continue to be underrepresented in textbooks. Hahn, Bernard-Powers, Crocco, and Woysner (2007), when reviewing a content analysis of history and civic textbooks conducted by Avery and Simmons (2000-1), found the textbooks did not include the roles of women in politics or governance, but focused on men in those same roles instead (p. 343).

Representation of Women

Though most of the recent studies conducted on the inclusivity of curricula, standards, and textbooks continues to show fewer women than men are included, and the ways in which women are included and represented in Social Studies curricula continues to be problematic.

In relation to men. A major issue involving the inclusion of women in the social studies curriculum encompasses how women are being represented within the curriculum. When women are mentioned in textbooks, it is often only in relation to men. For example, Crocco (2008) points out Abigail Adams and Eleanor Roosevelt were mentioned in a textbook, but only because of their roles as wives to husbands who were important political leaders at the time (p. 182). According to Crocco (2008), mentioning women solely because of their roles as wives does not provide a nuanced understanding of women's experiences. In fact, this continues to perpetuate the approach of only mentioning women in the context of their husbands or other men. Additionally, Williams and Bennett (2016) argue the women who are typically included in textbooks are often compared through male standards of historical importance (p. 125).

Overemphasis. Another aspect of how women are brought into the social studies

curriculum is certain historical events concerning women are overemphasized, while other events are ignored entirely. Crocco (2008) notes how the women's suffrage movement is largely included in the curriculum, while women involved in other roles or events such as politics and governance are excluded. This practice of overemphasizing certain events, while ignoring the contributions and experiences of women during other major historical events, does not provide for a greater understanding of women and their roles throughout history (p. 182).

Stereotyping. A further problem with the incorporation of women into the curriculum is women are often mentioned in relation to roles which are stereotypical in nature. When looking at state curriculum standards, scholars have found 53% of the standards portray women in a stereotypical domestic role (White, 2019). While standards do include women in roles as activists during the suffragist movement of the 1920s or the civil rights movement of the 1960s, only 12% of the standards include the non-stereotypical roles of women as scientists and entrepreneurs (White, 2019). White (2019) proposes failing to include the experiences and stories of women who held non-traditional roles only perpetuates the inclusion of women in a stereotypical manner.

Images. Scholars have also found textbooks fail to adequately represent women in pictures. Bennett and Williams (2014) argue textbooks continue to stereotype women through the use of images. For instance, they found women are often depicted in domestic roles as wives, mothers, and caregivers, which do not contribute to the understanding of women's unique experiences and contributions to history (p. 15). Additionally, they argue when women are pictured in textbooks, this is often in reference to an achievement or accomplishment unexpected of women. They provide the example of Susan B. Anthony being depicted as a way to represent how women were previously not allowed to vote (p. 15). In their 2016 analysis of textbook

images, Williams and Bennett surmised textbooks continue to represent women in traditional roles, which are often sub-dominant to men (pp. 131-132). They also propose the visual representation of women continues to perpetuate the “patriarchal view of women (p. 124).”

Methods of Including Women

When women’s history began to be incorporated into social studies curricula, many content developers practiced what was called the “add and stir” approach to including women (Noddings, 2001). This approach led to women being incorporated into textbooks and learning materials; however, it did not provide a greater understanding of women’s experiences (Noddings, 2001). Since “add and stir” scholars, organizations, and educators have argued that women should be included within curricula based on their contributions, interests, experiences, and struggles (Noddings, 2001, Crocco and Davis, 2002, and NWHM, 2019). Scholars have also advocated for women to be included and represented within curricula in ways equal to the inclusion of men (Schocker and Woysner, 2013).

Add and stir. As explained by Noddings (2001) this approach of adding women into the curriculum just for the sake of including women without respect to historical context is inherently problematic (p. 29). She argues randomly including women in the curriculum does nothing to add to a greater understanding of the important roles women have played throughout history (pp. 29-30).

Contribution history. Noddings’s (2001) criticisms of the add and stir approach have led scholars to search for meaningful ways of including women within the curriculum. She is in favor of a curriculum which provides for the integration of women and focuses on the interests and contributions of women. She postulates by focusing on the specific interests of women, students will have a more meaningful understanding of the experiences of women (Noddings,

2001, pp. 29-30).

Crocco and Davis (2002) propose including the contributions of women throughout history can better help students understand how women have shaped history (pp. 13-15). While they point out the so-called contribution approach to including women in learning materials can be problematic, this approach may be needed to fully embed women into the curriculum (p. 12). They note the contribution approach to including women is controversial and can result in women being included without context or relevancy (p. 12). Yet, they believe using the contribution approach to include women will help to challenge long held ideas about women and their contributions to history (p. 13). They also point out women have played a key role in citizenship education through their struggles for the right to vote and gain access to education, and subsequently argue women and their contributions to education deserve to be included in social studies curricula (pp. 18-19).

Women's interests, struggles, and experiences. Like Noddings (2001), Sincero and Woysner (2003) and the National Women's History Museum (NWHM, 2019) has concluded the add and stir approach is an insufficient method of including women in history curricula, especially within textbooks. Scholars have advocated for a balanced or integrated approach to including women in social studies curricula. Noddings (2001) proposes women should be included in the curricula as a way to bring attention to the obstacles they had to overcome throughout history, to bring attention to their contributions to history, and to give meaning to women's interests and experiences (p. 30). She uses the example of caregiving as an effective way of including the experiences and interests of women within the social studies curricula. She explains, while caregiving is a traditional role of women and involves the exploitation of women and their labor, expanding their role to include modern forms of caregiving will allow students to

better understand women's interests without stereotyping women (pp. 30-32).

Gender Equality. Scholars also note the need for a gender-balanced curriculum in which women and men are represented equally. Hahn, Bernard-Powers, Crocco, and Woyshner (2007) believe women should be represented in ways equal to men (p. 336). Additionally, they argue the experiences of women should be present in all fields of social studies including geography, civics, economics, and history. They also argue women should be appropriately included in all learning materials, including standards and textbooks to create a more equal curriculum (p. 336).

Tetreault's Feminist Phase Theory

Scholars have used Tetreault's (1985) Feminist Phase Theory to evaluate the inclusion of women in content materials. Tetreault's theory proposes that there are five ways of including women in content (Tetreault, 1985, p. 364). In the first phase, male scholarship, women are absent from the narrative, but their absence is not explained. Additionally, in this phase, the experiences of men are generalized to all humans (p. 368). In the second phase, compensatory scholarship, the absence of women is noted, and women are typically incorporated because they have achieved "a male norm of greatness" (p. 368). The third phase, bifocal scholarship, pays greater attention to the experiences of women because of their gender. This phase explores issues of misogyny, gender bias, the oppression of women, and women's efforts to overcome these obstacles (p. 368-369). The fourth phase is Feminist Scholarship in which the culture, values, experiences, and interests of women are present. In this phase, intersectionality plays a key role as race, class, and ethnicity also shape women's experiences throughout history (p. 370). The final phase of the theory is multifocal or relational scholarship which explores how men and women work together and complement one another (p. 375). Tetreault applied her theory to an

analysis of high school history textbooks. She found that the majority of the information regarding women was aligned with compensatory scholarship, with some bifocal scholarship (p. 379).

Remedies for Including Women

Scholars have proposed numerous recommendations for meaningfully incorporating women into the curriculum. Cruz and Groendal-Cobb (1998) suggest teachers can be agents of change when including women in middle school social studies curricula. They say teachers can effectively integrate the experiences and contributions of women into the social studies curriculum and across the curriculum. Additionally, they explain this requires teachers to recognize the gaps and inadequacies present in textbooks and learning materials and supplement those gaps in knowledge with the stories, voices, and perspectives of women. Cruz and Groendal-Cobb (1998) also point out administrators and legislators should secure funding, offer training, and work with teachers to ensure women and their stories are included in the curriculum in meaningful ways (p. 272). Hahn, Bernard-Powers, Crocco, and Woyshner (2007) also argue teachers can supplement what textbooks and standards omit. They propose teachers should focus on gender-related topics and events which are too often neglected by textbooks, including the earnings gap between men and women (p. 350).

Benefits to Students

Including women in the learning materials presented to students can help students develop their sense of identity and self-esteem (Dam and Rijkschroeff, 1996, NWA, 2019). Including women and their experiences, interests, struggles, and contributions to history can help inspire, engage, and create student interest (Hahn, Bernard-Powers, Crocco, and Woyshner (2007); whereas excluding women from the curriculum can have negative effects on student self-

esteem and hinder academic performance (Williams and Bennett, 2016).

Identity. Scholars point out the relationship between the inclusion of women in social studies and a student's sense of identity. Dam and Rijkschroeff (1996) argue the ways in which females find themselves represented in history has a direct impact on a student's identity, including gender identity (p. 73). They further argue including the experiences of women in the social studies curricula can help dispel stereotypical accounts of women throughout history (p. 74). In fact, they point out women have overcome obstacles to achieve gender equality, but women also have historical experiences and a culture unique from men (p. 75). The NWA (2019), in their mission statement, believe promoting the inclusion of women in Social Studies curricula will motivate and empower young learners.

Inclusivity. The NWA (2019) further argue education should be inclusive to all students. Incorporating the experiences, struggles, and contributions of women throughout history better enables female and minority female students to feel included and represented in the material they are learning. The NCSS (2010) in their *Revised National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* also argue for the inclusivity of students in learning material and have also called for the experiences of women to be incorporated into state standards.

Self-esteem. The inclusion of women in social studies curricula has profound effects upon students. Women's history organizations have long called for the inclusion of women, their experiences, and their contributions to history into the social studies curricula. The NWA (2019) argue students need role models and women can serve as such. Additionally, they postulate including the achievements and experiences of women in social studies curriculums will help foster respect for women and build self-esteem in students (NWA, 2019). Other scholars propose focusing on gender, particularly the experiences of women, could help

transform societies' attitudes towards women (Hahn, Bernard-Powers, Crocco, and Woysner, 2007, p. 335). Hahn, Bernard-Powers, Crocco, and Woysner believe when women are included in the curriculum, students will better understand the important roles women have played, and continue to play in society (2007, p. 336).

Effects of gender bias. Lastly, as the NWHM (2017) argues when women are marginalized or absent from the social studies curriculum, this can contribute to the idea women's history is not important. This suggests when students do not find themselves represented in instructional materials they may feel as though they are not important, which can have detrimental effects on self-identity, self-esteem, and self-worth. As Williams and Bennett (2016) have argued, students can be negatively impacted by gender bias (p.125).

The NWA (2019) argues the inclusion of the experiences of women throughout history helps to build self-esteem and serves as a source of inspiration for students. Additionally, they propose learning about the experiences and achievements of women can help male students to develop a sense of respect for women thereby reducing violence towards women. Moreover, they contend the representation of women in social studies curricula can improve academic performance and provide young girls and women with new opportunities (NWA, 2019).

Student interest. Including the experiences, struggles, and contributions of women throughout history can also help students become engaged and interested in the subject matter. Dam and Rijkschroeff (1996) presented teaching kits comprising women's history to eleven classes over a four-week period. Students were given a questionnaire to complete after the conclusion of four weeks (p. 77). The questionnaires revealed 65 percent of female students enjoyed learning about women's history (p. 81). The results recorded on the questionnaires demonstrated female students enjoyed learning about the struggles and experiences of women

particularly in regard to women's fight for equality (p. 84). Other scholars such as Hahn, Bernard-Powers, Crocco, and Woyshner (2007) suggest including women in meaningful ways in social studies curricula can help improve academic performance in students (p. 335). They also note how understanding women's history can produce 21st century attributes in students including attitudes of equality and equity for both men and women (p. 336). They believe including women in the social studies will help encourage women to participate in governance and positions of leadership (p. 336).

Equity. Creating a curriculum more inclusive to women can also benefit society as a whole. As Hahn, Bernard-Powers, Crocco, and Woyshner (2007) point out, students should understand the inequities in society due to gender, race, and class. By including the struggles and obstacles faced by women throughout history, students can better grasp the magnitude of women's contributions to history. Furthermore, understanding the effects of inequity can inspire students to create a more equitable society (p. 336).

Summary

Recent studies have suggested state standards and textbooks fail to adequately include the experiences, voices, and stories of women (NWAHA 2019, White, 2019, NWHM, 2017, Crocco, 2008, Chick, 2006, Cruz-Groendal-Cobb, 1998, Sincero and Woyshner, 2003). When women are included in textbooks they are often marginalized based on stereotypical roles or they are only mentioned in relation to their husbands or fathers. Additionally, women-centric events such as the suffrage movement are overemphasized, while the roles and contributions of women in politics, mathematics, and science are neglected. The ways in which women are incorporated into social studies textbooks can be problematic, especially if women are only being added for the sake of inclusion without regard to historical context or a deeper understanding of women's

experiences. Including women in the curriculum in meaningful ways will help students to better connect with the content if they can find themselves represented in the content. While there are numerous challenges to including women in middle grades social studies curricula, including state standards, funding, and training, such inclusion will provide for a greater and deeper understanding of the roles, experiences, and contributions of women.

Methodology

This study considers the following question: How are women represented in middle grades U.S. history textbooks? This study used a qualitative content analysis of two middle grades U.S. History textbooks to identify how women are being represented in the text and to determine if the representation of women continues to perpetuate the stereotypical view of women in history and if women continue to be marginalized. By analyzing each textbook, this study will identify the ways in which women have been included within the textbooks.

This study is not a quantitative content analysis. Recent quantitative content analyses of state standards and social studies textbooks have revealed fewer women are included in comparison to men (NWHM, 2017; Chick, 2006). Therefore, such an analysis is unlikely to offer new findings. Rather, this study seeks to identify the *quality* of the representation of women in the textbooks. By analyzing the content of the textbooks, this study will identify if women are being represented in ways which contribute to our understanding of their struggles and experiences throughout history, if women continue to be neglected or marginalized, and if attention is being paid to the struggles and oppression of women.

This study draws upon the work of Tetreault (1985), Chick (2006), Crocco (2008),

Noddings (2001), NWMH (2017), and the NWA (2019) to identify if women are being represented through stereotypical roles as mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives, or if women are included in ways which best represent their experiences, struggles, contributions, and interests. Analyzing content, specifically textbooks, used with middle grades students, can help educators to better understand if women are being adequately and appropriately included and represented in the social studies curriculum.

Materials

This study involved a qualitative content analysis of two middle grades United States history textbooks. To complete the content analysis, I compared the ways in which women are represented in two middle grades U.S. history textbooks. Both texts are currently approved for use by the state of Virginia. McGraw-Hill's *Discovering Our Past: A History of the United States: Modern Times*, published in 2018, was compared to Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's *United States History: Civil War to the Present*, also published in 2018. These textbooks cover the major historical developments since the period of the Civil War in United States' history, including the suffrage movement and women's rights movement of the 1960s. The texts selected for the analysis cover the same time period, from the 1860s to the present, include the same series of historical developments, and both have been approved for adoption by Virginia's Department of Education.

Since both textbooks are approved for use in Virginia, I will compare how the textbooks align with Virginia's social studies standards. The Virginia Department of Education's (2015) Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework includes women such as Jane Addams, Ida B. Wells, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alice Paul, Lucy Burns, etc., and include women-related events and topics such as the women's suffrage movement, the Triangle

Shirtwaist Factory fire, women's changing roles during WWII, the evolution of women working outside of the home, Civil Rights, the National Organization for Women (NOW), Title IX, and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) (Virginia Department of Education, 2015). These standards will be used as a guide for women and women-related events and topics that should be present in middle school U.S. history textbooks.

Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative content analysis is a method used by researchers to describe the meaning of data and information (Schreier, 2014, p. 173). I used the qualitative content analysis method to create a coding frame. The coding frame, which is a table, was used to organize the findings for this study (2014, p. 173). I created a coding frame consisting of categories based upon the themes found in the literature review and based upon Tetreault's (1985) Feminist Phase Theory. Tetreault (1985) proposed five common ways, or phases, of thinking about women, which determine how women are included in literature, history, and other disciplines (p. 360). These phases include male scholarship, compensatory scholarship, bifocal scholarship, feminist scholarship, and multifocal or relational scholarship (Tetreault, 1985, p. 367). Male scholarship assumes the "male experience is universal and constitutes a basis for generalizing about all human beings" (p. 367). With compensatory scholarship, women are present in literature, but they are only included because they conform "to a male norm of greatness" (p. 367). Bifocal scholarship often involves grouping women together without regard for the "intersectionality of race and class" (p. 374). Feminist scholarship allows for intersectionality to be explored while "women's activities are the measure of significance" (p. 374). This phase also explores how gender issues affect women, which is ignored in the previous phases (p. 374). Multifocal or relational scholarship provides for opportunities to understand how women's and men's

“experiences intersect” (p. 375). Many of these phases are similar to themes found in the literature review, including Nodding’s (2001) add and stir method which is similar to Tetreault’s (1985) compensatory scholarship.

The coding frame was used to create conceptual subcategories as described by Schreier (2014). The main categories served as themes derived from the literature review, which include women’s roles and contributions as well as Tetreault’s (1985) phases, which were used as a guide for how women and women’s history was being described in the textbooks. While focusing on the roles and contributions presented within the texts, the subcategories of traditional roles and non-traditional roles and contributions were created under the thematic categories to identify if women are being stereotyped within the texts. Traditional roles include mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, first ladies, nurses, educators, and caregivers, while non-traditional roles include, but are not limited to activists, doctors, scientists, entrepreneurs, leaders, and politicians. Tetreault’s phases were used to analyze how women are represented in the textbooks. When women or women’s history was described in the textbooks it was coded based on the phase it best aligns with, which helped identify if women are being included as individuals or only in relation to men, if male scholarship is dominating the narrative, if women are only included because their roles and contributions reach a male standard, if women are being included as a monolithic group, or if women and women’s history is being incorporated using feminist scholarship, where women play the leading role (Tetreault, 1985). An Excel spreadsheet was used to code, organize, and analyze the information from the textbooks into the content frame as appropriate. This frame was used for both textbooks throughout the analysis to identify information from each textbook as it relates to each category and subcategory.

To begin the study, I used the indexes of each textbook to locate the presence of

individual women in the texts. If the gender of the person listed in the index was unknown, I inferred gender from the pronouns used in the textbooks. The name of each woman mentioned in the text was entered into the coding frame based on the role or the contribution of the woman as described in the textbook. The page number(s) on which the woman was mentioned were recorded in the frame along with a description of where the information was located (i.e. main narrative, heading, caption, etc.). For example, Jane Addams is described in one of the texts as founding Hull House (McGraw Hill, p. 134). This information was coded under the role of founder because Addams is described as such. Her role as a founder is then subcategorized as non-traditional.

The coding process required several revisions to help organize, broaden, and redefine themes, while omitting repetitious information (Schreier, 2013, pp. 173-174). As such, I followed the same process of utilizing the indexes in each textbook to locate women's history, including women-related topics and events (i.e. suffrage). This information was entered into the frame as it appeared in each chapter of each textbook.

The finalized frame allowed me to identify if women are being adequately included in meaningful ways within the textbooks and to analyze the information to determine if the women are presented in traditional or non-traditional ways. The information in the frame helped determine where women and female-related events were located in the textbooks. The representation and characterizations of women and women's history in the textbooks determined if women are being included in ways that best reflect their contributions, struggles, and experiences throughout history as proposed by Noddings (2001), or if women's history is still being defined by male scholarship (Tetreault, 1985).

Lastly, I compared the two textbooks, focusing on information found in both textbooks

and the information unique to just one textbook to determine if the state standards influence the content of the textbooks.

Limitations

Social studies textbooks, particularly history textbooks tend to cover a vast amount of material. Additionally, historical accounts tend to either be written by men or they fail to include women. Yet, since these textbooks were written in 2018 and contain chapters dedicated to the modern era, there are plenty of opportunities to include women because historical accounts including women are now widely available.

Findings and Conclusions

The qualitative analysis of the middle grades U.S. history textbooks demonstrates the women and women-centric topics and events presented in the textbooks are generalized and often lack context and specificity. Some of the women and women-centric events and topics included in the textbooks continue to stereotype women as women are often mentioned in relation to men or children. Fewer women than men appear in the text and when women's history does appear, it is marginalized to a subsection of the chapter. The women's history featured within the text is incorporated based on women's responses to events dominated by men. Additionally, women are incorporated in the text based on their roles and contributions, rather than by their interests, struggles, and experiences. The information about women lacks continuity and fails to provide a meaningful account of what women have experienced throughout history because of their gender, as a result the textbook provides a generalized and monolithic account of women and women's history. The textbooks exclude and ignore other notable women and women centric events entirely. Lastly, the analysis confirms that textbook

content is largely influenced by state standards.

Few Women Are Present

Though this study does not include a quantitative content analysis, it is important to note how few women and women-centric events and topics actually appear in the textbooks. As Chick (2006) and NWHM (2017) have discovered through their quantitative analyses, state standards include fewer women than men and since state standards influence textbook content, it is not entirely surprising to find that few women appear within the textbooks. While women do appear in the main narrative, images, and special features of each textbook, there are entire chapters of the text which do not mention any women or women's history. For example, McGraw Hill's *Discovering our Past* (2018) does not include any women or women related topics in the first two chapters. In fact, women are not mentioned until page 69 of the text in chapter three. Additionally, no women or women's history is included in chapter 14, which covers the Vietnam era. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's *United States History* (2018) mentions its first woman, Sojourner Truth, in its prologue on page 26 of the text. *United States History* also includes a biography on Maya Ying Lin, who designed the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in the chapter on Vietnam (p. 423). Both texts only include one woman in chapter four which covers the period of WWI. Neither textbook features at least one individual woman in each of its 16 chapters. Typical chapters feature around 30 plus pages of information, yet very few of those pages feature information about women or women's history. For example, both textbooks mention only one woman in chapter seven, Queen Liliuokalani of Hawaii, while failing to include any women's history (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p.228, McGraw Hill, p.187).

Additionally, when women and women's history are mentioned it is largely in response to reform, specifically social reform. The greatest number of women featured in each of the

textbooks appear within chapters describing the Progressive era. For example, *Discovering our Past's* (2018) chapter on the Progressive era features 11 different individual women and *United States History* (2018) features 14 individual women. The Progressive Era includes labor reform, women's suffrage, and the temperance movement. Jane Addams and Eleanor Roosevelt were the two most frequently mentioned women.

Discovering our Past (2018) features roughly 36 pages of information devoted to women's history; however, the textbook contains 491 pages of material. *United States History* (2018) features roughly 23 pages of women's history although it contains 506 pages of material. While both textbooks provide a great deal of historical information, less than 10 percent of this information includes women.

Women and women's history should be integrated into every chapter of the textbook as proposed by Noddings (2001) and the NWHM (2017). Instead, women are sparsely included within the chapters or are entirely absent. This means students who utilize these textbooks are being exposed to very few women and very little women's history.

Women's History is Generalized

One of the more surprising finds in the analysis is when women's history is mentioned in the textbooks it is severely lacking in specificity, context, and nuance. While scholars have focused on quantitative analyses, little attention has been paid to the quality of the information students are receiving about women. Such generalization of women and women's history diminishes their importance and provides students with a superficial view of women's struggles throughout history. For example, in *United States History* women who worked outside of the home during the Reconstruction era are described in the following way, "mills employed large numbers of women and children. Women did most of the spinning and were valued workers.

Few women had the opportunity to advance within the company” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018, p.102). This account of women working in mills suggests women were facing difficulties advancing in their careers, yet it gives the reader no context of why women could not advance. Gender bias, misogyny, and gender discrimination prevented women from achieving their goals, but the textbook does not explain how these practices effected women. In its chapter on industrialism, *Discovering our Past* describes women entering the workforce stating, "by 1900 more than one million [women] had joined the industrial workforce. Women generally earned about half of what men did for the same work” (McGraw Hill, p. 113). Students need context in order to fully understand the obstacles faced by women entering the workforce. A simple sentence stating women were paid less than men does not provide the context necessary for students to understand why women were paid less and how this effected women. In its chapter on urbanization, *Discovering our Past* describes how “in the U.S., women generally had more freedom than women in European and Asian countries” (McGraw Hill, p. 128). This statement about women and freedom does not further our understanding of women’s experiences throughout history because it lacks specificity, context, and nuance. While the textbooks insinuate that women faced obstacles, no attention is given as to how gender shaped the experiences of women.

The textbooks also generalize the experiences of African American women and minorities. For example, *United States History*, in its chapter on Reconstruction describes African American women in the following way, “many freed women began to work at home instead of in the fields” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018, p. 86). While *Discovering our Past*, in its chapter on Reconstruction does not include any women or women’s history. Both textbooks fail to provide a detailed account of the experiences of African American women

during Reconstruction and instead generalize that freedwomen simply stopped working in the fields and started working at home. Lastly, the textbooks generalize women in such a way which positions the reader to believe all women had the same experiences regardless of their race, class, religion, or ethnicity. This shows women and women's history is not aligned with feminist scholarship because intersectionality is ignored (Tetreault, 1985). We know not all women shared the same experiences and the textbooks fail to draw this contrast for students.

The Textbooks largely feature Military and Political History

When analyzing each chapter of the textbooks, it was evident most of the information included in the textbooks is related to military or political history, which reiterates the findings of Cruz and Groendal-Cobb (1998). Military history, specifically the Civil War, WWI, WWII, the Cold War, and the Vietnam War, dominate the narrative and comprise the majority of information received by students. The information regarding military history fails to adequately include women. *Discovering our Past* describes how “Mercedes Cubria of Cuba became the first Latina woman officer in the Women’s Army Corps (McGraw Hill, p. 308). In the biography section, Ruby Bradley is described as “being a colonel and the nation’s most decorated military woman. During WWII, she was a prisoner of war for 37 months” (McGraw Hill, p. 312). Whereas *United States History* includes no information about women in military history.

When the textbooks are not discussing military history, the dialogue is replaced with political history. The political history featured in the textbook largely features men, while ignoring women. When women are mentioned in relation to politics or governance, it is almost always because they are achieving a historical first for women. On its section covering the 2016 election, which for the first time in history saw a woman heading the Democratic ticket for the

presidency of the United States, *Discovering Our Past* glosses over the experiences, struggles, and magnitude of the moment by stating, “He [Trump] competed against former first lady, New York Senator, and Obama’s Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton” (McGraw Hill, p. 482). The textbook goes on to add, “The differences between Clinton and Trump were very clear. Clinton was the first female presidential nominee by either the Democratic or Republican parties. She had decades of experience in government” (McGraw Hill, p. 482). The textbook also notes how Clinton “won the popular vote” but again fails to adequately include her experiences during such as divisive and tumultuous campaign in which sexism played a role (McGraw Hill, p. 483).

Women are incorporated based on their Roles and Contributions.

When analyzing individual women featured in each textbook, women are represented as having fulfilled a role in history or they are included in the text based on their contributions to history, which aligns with Tetreault’s (1985) compensatory phase theory. Some of the most commonly found roles in *United States History* describe women as founders, reformers, women who have achieved historical firsts, and authors. One such example found in the textbook states, “Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the National American Woman Suffrage Association to promote the cause of women's suffrage” which characterizes the two women as founders (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 210). Florence Kelly is categorized as a reformer. The textbook states, “Florence Kelly was one important reformer at Hull House. She visited sweatshops and wrote about the problems there. Her work helped convince lawmakers to take action” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 185). Women are also included if they achieved a historical first for women. Jeanette Rankin is mentioned because she was the first woman elected to Congress (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 263). The text describes that “Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p.

299). It also mentions how Frances Perkins became the first female secretary of labor (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 319). While important to point out how women have broken barriers, it would better serve students to understand the struggles and obstacles these women had to overcome while breaking such barriers.

Women are also represented as organizers as the textbook states, "Clara Barton organized the collection of medicine and supplies for delivery to the battlefield...the angel of the battlefield soothed the wounded and dying and assisted doctors as bullets flew around her. Her work formed the basis for the future American Red Cross" (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 67). While this passage doesn't explicitly categorize Barton as a founder, it certainly alludes her work led directly to the founding of the Red Cross.

Some of the other women are described as activists. The text describes how "fellow activist [to Elizabeth Cady Stanton] Lucretia Mott organized the nation's first women's rights conventions, at Seneca Falls in 1848" (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 27).

Discovering Our Past characterizes women based on their roles as a first woman, writer, founder, or activist. For example, the text mentions Mary Church Tyrell and describes her by stating, "its founder [National Association of Colored Women] and first president was an active leader for women's rights" (McGraw Hill, p. 159). Women are also included as activists. The text describes how Ida B. Wells was an activist who spoke out against lynching (McGraw Hill, p. 174). The majority of individual women who are included are only included because they comprise the role of having achieved a historical first for women. For instance, the textbook describes Geraldine Ferraro being the first female Vice-Presidential candidate (McGraw Hill, p. 446). Nellie Tayloe Ross and Miriam Ferguson are mentioned as the first female governors (McGraw Hill, p. 244). Lastly, Nancy Pelosi is described as being the first female speaker of the

house (McGraw Hill, p. 473). Both textbooks point out women have accomplished incredible feats throughout history, but there is no context explaining the obstacles faced by these women. Additionally, in both textbooks, minority women are also characterized as having achieved historical firsts. *Discovering Our Past* describes how Barbara Jordan became the first African American female elected to Congress (McGraw Hill, p. 434). The text also mentions Sonia Sotomayor's appointment to the Supreme Court and describes how she is both the "third female justice and first justice of Latin American descent" (McGraw Hill, pp. 478-9). In *United States History*, Shirley Chisholm is described as being the first African American female to serve in Congress (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p.448). The textbook also includes Condoleezza Rice and describes her as becoming the first African American female Secretary of State (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 497).

Stereotypical roles. While the roles of women as organizers, activists, founders, and writers are not inherently stereotypical, the textbooks do continue to perpetuate stereotypical and patriarchal views of women. For example, some of the women mentioned in the textbooks are categorized solely by their role as a wife. For example, the text when referring to Mary Todd Lincoln states, "The president's own wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, had four brothers from Kentucky who fought for the Confederacy" (*United States History*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 42). Mentioning Mary Todd Lincoln solely by her role as a wife limits our understanding of her experiences. Women are also categorized as wives within *Discovering Our Past*. The textbook, when mentioning Ronald Reagan's presidential election states, "His wife, Nancy Reagan, stands beside him." (McGraw Hill, p. 441). Jacqueline Kennedy is described as a solely as wife in the text. The text states, "On November 22, 1963, Kennedy visited Dallas with his wife Jacqueline..." (McGraw Hill, p. 372). At the bare minimum, Jacqueline Kennedy and Nancy

Reagan were first ladies in addition to their roles as wives, yet neither are described as such.

Non-traditional roles. Very little attention is given to women who contributed to history via non-traditional roles. *Discovering Our Past* mentions only one female doctor, one female riveter, one female military colonel, and one female presidential candidate. Women are completely excluded from their roles as scientists, entrepreneurs, engineers, and business leaders.

United States History features only one female doctor, one female military captain, one businesswoman, one female biologist, and one female riveter. This textbook also minimizes the roles and contributions women have made in the fields of math, science, technology, entrepreneurship, space, governance, and even athletics.

Women's History is Contribution History

Aside from women's history being generalized, women and women's history are often included based on what these women contributed to history; however, most of these contributions are in response to male centric events or are a result of problems created by men. For example, *United States History* mentions Queen Liliuokalani of Hawaii, but only in reference to U.S. annexation of the island (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 228). Jeanette Rankin is described as "having voted against U.S. entry into WWI (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 263). In *Discovering Our Past*, Gertrude Stein is mentioned but only to express the sentiment that expatriates were the 'lost generation' (McGraw Hill, p. 250). Women are also mentioned in response to WWI and are characterized by their war mobilization and patriotism in response to the war. The significance of women's war efforts is also highlighted during the second world war, but very little attention is given to women's experiences, interests, or struggles.

Alignment with Feminist Phase Theory

When comparing the textbooks to Tetreault's Feminist Phase Theory, it is evident women

are included and represented based on compensatory scholarship, although some attention is paid to how women overcame obstacles, which lends itself to Bifocal Scholarship. There is evidence that male scholarship dominates a few chapters of the textbooks. There is no evidence to support that any of the information in the textbooks aligns with feminist scholarship.

Male Scholarship. In the first two chapters of *Discovering our Past* (2018) no individual women nor women's history is provided. The absence of women in these chapters is not explained to the reader and therefore the experience of men becomes the experience of all.

Compensatory Scholarship. The overwhelming majority of information presented in the textbooks regarding women can be classified as compensatory scholarship. Women are included in the textbooks based on their contributions to history and their achievements in areas previously dominated by men (i.e. gaining the right to vote, being elected to a political office).

Bifocal Scholarship. The textbooks do offer some bifocal scholarship concerning women particularly in the sections concerning suffrage and gender equality. The textbooks point out women faced obstacles to employment and equal pay, but very little detail is provided to the reader to help understand why women were historically oppressed.

Feminist Scholarship. Neither textbook pays attention to the intersectionality of women's experiences. Instead, the textbooks generalize all women had the same experience regardless of their race, gender, or socio-economic status. Additionally, the textbooks fail to include women's struggles because of their race, class, and gender. Lastly, the textbooks do not provide accounts of women's values, interests, and there is no focus on women's culture.

Women's Struggles, Interests, and Experiences are Missing

Since most of the information concerning women is generalized, women's experiences, struggles, and interests are often missing. The textbooks describe how women achieved

historical firsts such as the right to vote or winning a political election but do not provide context or nuance to help students understand women's experiences. This creates a superficial and incomplete view of women and women's history.

In relation to Men and Children.

When men are described in textbooks, it is often in relation to their accomplishments and very little attention is paid to whom they married or if they had children. Yet, when women are described in the textbooks, their marital status along with whether or not they had children are mentioned. For example, in *United State History*, Elizabeth Cady Stanton is featured in the biography section of the textbook. The text states, "Elizabeth Cady Stanton was born in Johnstown, New York, where she had seven children. Later in life she traveled widely..." (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 28). The text then describes her accomplishments and contributions to history. Andrew Jackson is described within the biography section, which focuses heavily on his accomplishments and does not mention his marital status nor if he had children (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p.21). *Discovering Our Past* features side by side biographies of Samuel Gompers and Mary Harris Jones. Gompers is described in the following passage: "Born in London, England, Samuel Gompers went to work making cigars at the age of 10. After moving to the United States with his family, he became involved in the labor movement..." (McGraw Hill, p. 115). Whereas Jones is described in the following manner: "Mary Harris 'Mother' Jones was born in Ireland and trained to be a teacher. She married a union organizer, and after her husband and four children died in a yellow fever epidemic, she got involved in the movement herself" (McGraw Hill, p. 115). Characterizing women primarily as wives and mothers, while giving little attention to the achievements of women outside of the home contributes to the stereotyping of women.

When women and women's history is mentioned within the textbooks, it is commonly in relation to men or events dominated by men. Male-dominated events include events which overwhelmingly involve men, while excluding or providing very little agency to women. For example, In *United States History* Sacagawea is mentioned only in relation to Lewis and Clark's expedition (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p.115). This begs the question that if Lewis and Clark were not mentioned in the text, would Sacagawea still be included? While *Discovering Our Past* does not mention Sacagawea at all. When discussing the Civil War, *United States History* states, "Mary Boykin Chestnut, whose husband became a Confederate Congressman, wrote in her diary...I did not know that one could live in such days of excitement..." (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 42). The text mentions Chestnut, but only in relation to her husband who was a Confederate Congressman at the time. Ida B. Tarbell is only mentioned in response to her exposure of John D. Rockefeller's corrupt business practices (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 198). *Discovering Our Past* mentions Eleanor Roosevelt, describing her as "Teddy's niece" and "wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt" (McGraw Hill, p. 268). While the text does recognize Eleanor's accomplishments as a first lady and social reformer, describing her as a wife and niece to two powerful men distracts from these accomplishments. Margaret Chase Smith is included because she "took the place of her husband who died in office" (McGraw Hill, p. 341). Lastly, Jacqueline Kennedy is only mentioned as being present when the assassination of her husband, President John F. Kennedy, occurred (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 372). Including women solely because they were married to a president does nothing to provide a meaningful account of women's experiences and struggles.

Women's history is also represented in response to male-centric events including the Civil War, westward expansion, WWI, and WWII. When describing boomtowns, *Discovering*

Our Past states, “Women often did the same work [in the fields], but they also cared for the children, made clothing and candles, and cooked and preserved food.” (McGraw Hill, p. 78). This passage describes how women, in response to westward expansion which created boomtowns, took on more responsibilities. In reference to the Civil War and women, *United States History* states, “Some 3,000 women served as nurses in the Union Army” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 45). The text describes women taking roles as nurses in response to war, which is a male event. When identifying women’s roles during WWI, the textbook explains, “labor shortage created new opportunities for many workers. American women took on new roles to help the war effort. One million women joined the workforce” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 263). When describing women’s history during the period of WWII, *Discovering our Past* states, “Women play major roles in the success of WWII. Women take their [men's] places in the workforce...women make many of the weapons, and equipment, the men need to fight...It is women who fill the shipyards, assembly lines...making planes, tanks, and ammunition. Their contributions make possible the efforts of those on the front lines. In fact, the war helps everyone see that a woman can do a job just as well as a man” (McGraw Hill, p. 291). While this passage praises the incredible efforts made by women during WWII, these women are only mentioned in response to the male-dominated event of war. Additionally, this passage generalizes that all women had the same experience during the war, while also failing to provide individual experiences of women. *United States History* describes women and WWII stating, “factories badly needed new workers. The government urged women to fill these positions. Women found themselves doing work that had traditionally been considered 'unladylike' (HMH, p. 346). This information does not contribute to women’s experiences during WWII, instead it suggests that women joined the workforce because it was needed, and

not because they wanted to.

Notable Women and Events are Excluded

Both textbooks miss multiple opportunities to adequately include women. Since women are largely included based on their roles as founders, reformers, writers, activists, and having achieved a historical first, women who have contributed to history in the areas of science, math, space and engineering, technology, politics and governance, and business and entrepreneurship are excluded.

Controversial and highly politicized events and topics concerning women are mostly absent from the text. Only one textbook, *United States History*, refers to the controversial issue of abortion. The textbook states, “In 1973 the Supreme Court legalized abortion in the case *Roe v. Wade*. Opponents of abortion began to form groups seeking to overturn the decision. Today, the issue of abortion remains highly controversial” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 465). The textbook mentions the landmark Supreme Court case and explains opposition to the ruling but does not supply the reader with a proponent’s view. *Discovering Our Past* does not mention abortion, nor does it reference the *Roe v. Wade* decision. *United States History* mentions Title IX funding stating, “A 1972 federal law known as Title IX banned discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs that receive federal funds” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 465). The text describes how Title IX allowed women to attend medical or law school and women could receive athletic scholarships (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 465). Whereas *Discovering our Past* does not mention Title IX funding. Both textbooks mention the ERA and its failure to be ratified. Neither textbook addresses the problems that women continue to experience including sexual harassment, sexism, misogyny, access to affordable child-care, or the wage gap.

Women of Color and Minorities comprise a small portion of text. The majority of

the women included in the textbooks are white women. Of the individual women included in *United States History* only 19 are minority women. Of the women included in *Discovering Our Past*, only 20 are minority women. This means women of color, indigenous women, Asian women, Latina women, as well as Middle Eastern women are severely underrepresented.

Muslim women and Jewish women are also absent from the text.

Women are Marginalized Within Textbooks

Discovering Our Past incorporates women's history into the narrative under specific headings related to women. In its chapter on industrialization, women are featured near the end of the chapter under a heading titled "the rights of working women." (McGraw Hill, p. 115). This passage describes Mary Harris Jones, women and unions, and the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (p. 115). Its chapter on the Progressive era features a section titled "Women and Progressives" (p. 158-9). This section features topics including professional women, the 'new' woman, women's clubs, and activists for women's rights. Women and voting rights are also featured, which discusses Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, women's suffrage, and the women's march (1913) on Washington. The same chapter also conflates women and social reform, which discusses how women worked for labor, food, and societal reforms (p. 162). The textbook also describes women's involvement with the temperance movement as a part of social reform (p. 163).

Conflated with Minorities. Women and women's history are often conflated with minorities and other marginalized peoples (NWHM, 2017). This is evident in the textbooks. Just as women in general are confined to the women's section, so are women of color and indigenous women. For example, under a heading titled "African American women take action" *Discovering Our Past* describes Ida B. Wells' anti-lynching campaign (McGraw Hill, p. 174). In

a section titled “other groups face discrimination, the textbook includes no information on women; however, it does include a picture of Zitkala-Sa (Red Bird) and describes her involvement with Native American rights (p. 175). In *United States History*’s chapter on Reconstruction, the text mentions women and northern African Americans together (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 103). In its chapter on Progressivism, women are included under a heading titled “the rights of women and minorities.” The women in this section of the text are further confined to a section titled “women fight for temperance and voting rights” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 209). Such marginalization confines women to the realms of suffrage and temperance, while ignoring the experiences, contributions, and roles of other women. In its chapter on WWI, women are limited to a section titled “women’s war efforts” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 363). Lastly, in its chapter covering WWII, women are mentioned in a small paragraph with the heading “new roles for women” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, p. 346).

Comparison to Virginia State Standards

When comparing the individual women featured within both textbooks to the nine individual women mentioned in the Virginia Standard of Learning frameworks, nearly all of the women mentioned in the standards are included in the text. There are a few exceptions. For example, neither textbook mentions Lucy Burns who is referenced in the frameworks. Georgia O’Keeffe, who is listed in the standards is only mentioned in *United States History*. “Rosie the Riveter,” who is in the standards, is also only mentioned in this textbook.

The state standards include patriotism and women during WWII, the evolving role of women outside of the home and into the workforce, civil rights for women, workplace disadvantages in hiring and pay, improved working conditions, NOW, Title IX, and the ERA. *Discovering Our Past* does not mention Title IX.

Summary of Findings

While women and women's history are present in both textbooks, the textbooks continue to marginalize women to a subsection of a chapter while focusing the majority of attention on military and political history. Women are included in the textbooks because of their achievements and contributions, while little attention is given to how women overcame tremendous obstacles throughout history. Women continue to be conflated with other minority groups and although women are not a monolithic group, they are treated as such. Women are confined to the realms of reform, while their interests and contributions in other areas remain neglected. Women of color, indigenous, and minority women are vastly underrepresented in both textbooks. Lastly, although women have become more involved in the areas of politics, governance, leadership, entrepreneurship, mathematics, science, and technological innovation within the last few decades, this information is missing from both textbooks.

Recommendations for Further Study

Since textbooks continue to marginalize, trivialize, or exclude women's history, further studies should be conducted to determine how this effects student self-esteem, student interest, and academic performance. As the majority of the content of the textbooks includes military and political history, attention should be paid for how the textbook relates to theories of multiculturalism and culturally relevant content. Today's students may have trouble relating to Shirley Temple or Mary Pickford, who are featured in *United States History*, and thus the content becomes disinteresting. Greater attention should be paid to minorities and the LGBTQIA+ community, the latter of which are completely absent from both textbooks.

Conclusion

The textbooks, although influenced by state standards, include more women and women's history in comparison to state standards. Yet, women are still missing from entire chapters of the textbooks. How can young female students feel included if they do not see themselves represented in the content they are learning? How can students feel inspired by the achievements of women if those achievements are missing from the textbooks? How can students understand the obstacles and the struggles women had to overcome if the textbooks do not highlight these issues? Lastly, how will students understand women were systematically prevented from reaching their goals, if the textbooks do not mention sexism, misogyny, gender bias, or discrimination? Students deserve to see themselves represented in the content they are learning, but these textbooks fall short of including the experiences of all women.

The textbooks highlight the many historical firsts achieved by women and women of color; however, women's history doesn't end once the glass ceiling has been shattered. Women have and will always continue to shape history. Yet, these textbooks fail to meaningfully capture the diverse roles, contributions, experiences, and struggles of women throughout U.S. history. Future editions of these textbooks should be more reflective of the growing number of women involved in governance, politics, science, technology, business, and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, content developers should follow the recommendations laid forth by the NWHM, the NWA, the NCSS, and educational scholars to provide a more meaningful account of women and women's history to better foster the self-esteem, inspiration, and interest of young learners.

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I pledge on my honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment.