Rethinking History: Change in the University Curriculum, 1910–90

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On the basis of descriptions in the course catalogs of 24 public universities from 1910 to 1990, this article describes several transformations in the university history curriculum and argues that they reflect the ongoing rationalization and institutionalization of nation-states and citizens. The remarkably consistent trends in the history curriculum are (1) the dramatic long-term expansion of the coverage of geographic areas, (2) the small long-term contraction in the coverage of periods, and (3) the striking and recent expansion in the coverage of subgroups.

In 1909–10, the history department of the Kansas State Agricultural College offered courses in ancient, medieval, modern, constitutional, industrial, English, French, modern European, and American history. A course entitled the American Nation posed the following connection among the topics:

The roots of our American history and institutions are found in the history and institutions of European nations, especially in that of England. In order really to understand American history you must know European history. This is one of the chief reasons... for our study of ancient and modern history. (Annual Catalogue, Kansas State Agricultural College, 1909–10:194)

By 1990, the history curriculum of the same school, renamed Kansas State University, painted quite a different picture. Although the history department still included courses that were analogous to those listed in the 1909–10 catalog, it also offered a variety of new choices. Its exploration of a wider geographic area was illustrated by courses that focused on India, Latin America, Russia, Southeast Asia, and Mexico. Its expansion of attention to the recent past was evidenced in such offerings as U.S.-Soviet Relations since 1917, War in the 20th Century, and the Rise and Fall of Nazi Germany. And its attempt to present a newly variegated picture of American society was manifest in the History of the Indians of North America, Black American History, and Women in American History.

Clearly, as this example illustrates, between 1910 and 1990, the history curriculum of U.S. universities was transformed in broad and embracing ways. But most sociological theories of the curriculum have been ill equipped to identify and make sense of the changes.

The great majority of these theories have been concerned with the ways in which curricula get shaped by elites (Apple 1979; Bernstein 1977; Young 1971), such as capitalists (Goodson 1992), colonialists (Constantino 1980), and state bureaucrats (McKiernan 1993; Stevenson and Baker 1991). Although these theories have been helpful in undermining older visions of curricula as “encyclopedias of facts” (S. L. Wong 1991, p. 13; cf. Tyler 1949) and the stratifying processes they identify are undoubtedly important, the focus on elite influences has left sociologists knowing more about the “hidden” curriculum than about what is putatively apparent.

Indeed, the most basic features of school curricula—what is studied, how much, and by whom—have attracted
little attention. Realizing this failing, a few researchers have begun to fill in the gaps (for a review, see Musgrave 1988). For example, significant efforts are now under way to spur theoretically informed case studies (see Goodson 1987; Price 1986) and to describe the curricular outlines of primary and secondary schools, both cross-nationally and historically (Cha 1991; Kamens, Meyer, and Benavot 1993; S.-Y. Wong 1991). In this article, we join these efforts by presenting an analysis of both the content of the history curriculum in U.S. public universities from 1910 to 1990 and the processes that constituted it.

HISTORY AND SOCIETY

From our perspective, the history curriculum is a meaningful embodiment of the institutional arrangements within which it is borne—especially those institutional arrangements that define what society is, what it can do, and how it relates to other entities. When institutionalized models of society change, so do history and the history curriculum.¹

Many forces foment change in institutionalized models of society. Functional forces (including expanding markets), world and national conflicts (for example, liberation movements), and dynamic institutional processes (such as scientization) all have effects, and these effects are all mediated by political, economic, and academic elites.

Together these forces produce what we believe to be fundamental to history—institutionalized definitions of society, or what Anderson (1983) called “imagined communities.” Over the course of this century, society has been increasingly defined in terms of nation-states and citizens. In line with this trend, history has been continually rewritten, dynamically incorporating the taken-for-granted reality. The institutionalization of nation-state and citizen should affect the history curriculum in overarching patterns: Whole dimensions should change more or less simultaneously across universities.

Mechanisms of Change

The curriculum is influenced by institutionalized models of society insofar as the “reality” thereby defined permeates the broad boundaries of the educational establishment.² Whether the institutionalized models are true is irrelevant; they are taken for granted and therefore constitute the central parameters within which the curriculum appears.

Such institutional processes do not transpire metaphysically; rather, they are played out in conflictual collective struggles, which can be seen operating on the history curriculum at several interrelated levels.

Through students, institutionalized models of society affect the history curriculum by influencing which history courses make sense and appear interesting. For example, when students believe that society fundamentally consists of capitalists and workers (as they have in some periods and places), then history courses that are organized around those groups are the most comprehensible and appealing. If universities fail to offer these courses, students may organize and protest.

Through academic professionals, institutionalized conceptions of society affect the history curriculum by determining what researchers and teachers perceive of as meaningful and historical. Before the emergence of the massive civil rights movement, the histories of distinct racial groups were unlikely to be perceived, let alone told.

Through the general public, institutionalized conceptions of society affect the history curriculum by designating legitimate courses of study (redefinitions of society at this level frequently coincide with social movements; see Thomas 1989). Legitimizing processes appear, for example, in the diffuse coding of courses as useful and useless (a course in Japa-

¹ We use the term institution broadly, to include both organizational arrangements and normatively and cognitively rulelike patterns of meaning and behavior (see Meyer, Boli, and Thomas 1987).

² Similarly Haraway (1989) studied the ways that master narratives, such as gender and race, structure scientific knowledge.
nese history, which is now "useful," might not have been considered so 20 years ago or in the credential demands made by various gatekeepers (such as personnel officers and admissions counselors).

Through such mechanisms, institutionalized models of society fundamentally affect the history curriculum. In the following sections, we review several important shifts in the model of society that have occurred during this century and then propose ways in which they may have played out in the history curriculum.

**SHIFTS IN THE MODEL OF SOCIETY**

Drawing on theories developed during the European Enlightenment, the founding ideologies of the United States asserted a model of society that was organized around the rational-legal sovereignty of the people, each of whom was conceived to be an individual actor with natural rights to equal membership in the polity (Bendix 1964; Jepperson and Meyer 1991; Weber 1946). Such a model—the liberal nation-state—advantages some kinds of histories over others. Thus, the University of Idaho’s 1910 catalog (p. 78), for example, described the history department this way:

> The aim of the department is to give not merely the history of kings and conquests but of peoples. The details of wars and diplomacies and the personal adventures of public men are passed over lightly and briefly in order to dwell at length upon the incidents of the constitutional, intellectual and social advance.

During this century, the liberal nation-state model has undergone continuing institutionalization and rationalization; it is now assumed to apply to a much wider set of entities in a much more standardized way and has become the generic form.

In our analysis, we expected that the rationalization and institutionalization of the nation-state and citizen model of society would affect the configuration of history—the model of society's origins—and thus the history curriculum. We focused on three dimensions of history: its geographic focus, its time frame, and the subgroups it represents.

**Dimensions of History**

*Geographic focus.* Early in the century, societies fell into two categories—central ones, whose histories were considered important, and peripheral ones, whose histories were considered unimportant. Dynasties and empires were still dominant in the world, and the United States retained significant colonial holdings.

In this model of society, history took place at the centers, while the peripheries remained obscured. Thus, we expected that the university history curriculum in the early part of the century would have focused on Western Europe and England—the imagined centers of a hierarchical world and the birthplace of the nation-state—and would have ignored the periphery.³

Since 1910, the worldwide institutionalization and rationalization of the nation-state have entailed the rise of a new cognitive map of society. Following decades of struggle by colonized peoples, virtually every territory on Earth is now organized as a nation-state (Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Strang 1990), and these entities are considered to be equal. The logic of center and periphery has been replaced by the logic of equality; the legitimacy of the nation-state now depends on membership in the nation-state system, rather than on recognition from the center (Meyer 1980).

History, given this model of society, is much more egalitarian: It recognizes the equal status of formerly peripheral territories and includes their stories. Empirically, we expected this shift to be manifested in the expansion of the areas covered by the history curriculum. Thus, our first guiding idea was this:

1. Over the century, the history curriculum

³ In early volumes of the *American History Review*, articles on Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East were relegated to the category "Miscellaneous." Only the United States, Western Europe, and England warranted distinct categories.
was likely to have expanded its areal coverage, from an early focus on the imagined centers—Western Europe and England—to the broad community of nation-states.

*Time frame.* Early in the century, societies were assumed to be particularistic entities with unique pasts (see the discussion of origin myths in Smith 1987). Members of the ruling political class were thought of as blood kin, and the imagined community was posited in a story of sacred conception (as represented, for example, by the Daughters of the American Revolution).

Histories corresponding to such models of society fixed their attention on the distant past, then followed a ribbon of time from birth to present glory. Thus, we expected that the U.S. history curriculum in the early part of the period under consideration would have emphasized an origin story—a story of how things came to be—beginning in Greece and Rome, following through the Renaissance, and culminating in the American Revolution.

Rationalized and institutionalized nation-state society, by contrast, depends on conformity to externally legitimated characteristics, not to the charisma of a mythical genesis. It is organized around contiguity, rather than consanguinity (Lowie 1927). Hence, the story of the bloodline gives way to the story of the territorial boundary, and the purview of history shifts from the ancient past to the contemporary world of nation-states.

History, given this model of society, begins to screen out the distant past and focus more exclusively on recent events and the present. Origin stories are rooted not in primordial mists, but in the current, competitive world. Empirically, these shifts should show up in the contraction of periods covered by the history curriculum. Thus, our second guiding idea was as follows:

2. Over the century, it is likely that the history curriculum contracted its coverage of periods, from an early focus on the distant past to the current focus on the contemporary nation-state system.

*Subgroups represented.* In 1910, the United States retained a partial legacy from the world of empires and dynasties, in which a ruling elite was seen to be a unified dominant social actor. Accordingly, the citizenry, making up the “people” and the nation, was depicted as homogeneous in class, race, and sex.

History, correspondingly, was univocal, telling the story of the imagined community in the clarion voice of a unified nation, presumably made up of white men of “American” nationality. Therefore, we expected that few national subgroups would have appeared in the history curriculum early in the century.

In contrast, nation-state society is now seen to encompass diverse subgroups. This view results from a historical process, in which citizenship became an increasingly abstract, increasingly universal property of individual persons. Groups who were previously excluded have gained citizenship—often following massive social movements (Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1994; Soysal 1991). The extension of citizenship has not occurred individual by individual but, rather, group by group, and the relevant demarcations of groups have retained political and social salience.

Consequently, we expected to see a shift from uni- to multivocal histories, with subgroups bringing to bear multiplicitous perspectives and experiences within the national whole. Empirically this shift should have shown up as a recent expansion of group histories, as in the following guiding idea:

3. Over the century, it is likely that the history curriculum included an increasing number of courses on subgroups.

Ideas along these lines informed our approach to the descriptive analyses of data from the university history curriculum.

**EVIDENCE**

There are many plausible approaches to studying the relationship between institutionalized models of reality and the curriculum. Ideally, one would compare different curricular subjects and levels of schooling across both time and space. As a starting point, we looked at
the history curriculum in U.S. public universities from 1910 to 1990. Although we believe that institutionalized models of reality affect curricula across disciplines, we focused on history because it draws from institutionalized cultural conceptions in more obvious ways than do some other disciplines, such as mathematics (see Haraway 1989 for evidence of cultural conceptions in primatology).

We focused on the university level for two reasons. First, the least work—empirical or theoretical—has been done on the curriculum at this level. Second, since the university offers the broadest curriculum and thus the widest range of material, this level allowed us a full view of the social elements from which history is constituted. Our time frame, 1910–90, began before World Wars I and II, which contributed critically to the institutionalization of nation-states and citizens throughout the world, and continues to the present.

Our population comprised the land-grant state universities for two reasons. First, this population is definite and fixed. Alternatives, such as four-year colleges or elite universities, are more variable over time, both in terms of which ones exist and of which ones fall into the category. Second, land-grant universities have long published and distributed course catalogs, from which we drew our data. Although many private colleges and universities published course catalogs early in the century, their distributional networks were limited. Thus, course-catalog collections, such as the one we used at Stanford University, tend to have the most complete representation of state university catalogs.  

From the 48 land-grant state universities that existed in 1910 (Alaska and Hawaii came later), we selected a random sample of 24 schools for which we gathered data at 20-year intervals, from 1910 to 1990. We drew our specific data on the history curriculum from the yearly course catalogs, which are available beginning in about 1890 and provide detailed subject-by-subject and course-by-course information on the intended curriculum.

For each of our 24 cases, we compiled a complete list of the history courses they offered, with the titles and description of the content, at each interval (1910, 1930, and so on). We coded each of the approximately 6,000 history courses along three standardized dimensions: (1) the broad geographic area (for example, the Far East, in a History of Japan), (2) the period (for instance, the Classical period, in a History of Ancient Greece), and (3) the type of subgroup.

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4 In response to one reviewer's suggestion that we compare a sample of elite universities with the land-grant universities, we collected data from Harvard, Yale, and the University of Chicago (results available on request). Although the results must be interpreted with caution because there were only three cases, we did find that along every dimension, the history curricula at these elite universities changed in ways that were analogous to those at the land-grant state universities. The synchronicity is strong and indicates that the history curricula of land-grant and elite universities are constituted of similar social processes.

5 The 24 land-grant universities were the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa; University of Arizona, Tucson; University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; University of Colorado, Boulder; University of Delaware, Newark; University of Florida, Gainesville; University of Idaho, Moscow; Kansas State University, Manhattan; University of Maine, Orono; University of Massachusetts, Amherst; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; University of Nevada, Reno; University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; University of North Dakota, Grand Forks; University of Oregon, Eugene; University of Rhode Island, Kingston; University of South Carolina, Columbia; University of South Dakota, Vermillion; Utah State University, Logan; University of Vermont, Burlington; Washington State University, Pullman; and University of Wisconsin, Madison.

6 It is remarkable that so rich a source of longitudinal data has been so rarely tapped. In addition to information on course offerings, the catalogs contain many other kinds of data, such as requirements for admission and, early on, surprisingly elaborate histories of the universities and information on students.
(such as race and ethnicity, in a History of Hispanic Americans). Each dimension was coded separately; thus, a course on Women in Ancient Rome would be coded as (1) Western Europe, (2) Classical period, and (3) women.

Our geographic typology specified 10 standard areas: England, Western Europe (which may include some material on England), North America, Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, and the World. We classified period along a conventional four-category scheme: Classical (prehistory to A.D. 303), Medieval (303 to 1603), Early Modern (1603 to 1789), and Modern (1789 to 1990). We counted five types of subgroups: racial and ethnic, sex, class, religious, and other. In the “other” category, we placed courses structured around newly emergent groups, such as histories of children or lesbians and gays. Obviously, most courses chronicled no specific subgroups, and we coded these courses as none. We consulted historians and history journals in developing our categorical schemes, and their utility grew obvious when we began coding.

The nature of our data limit our study to the intended curriculum and do not account for the curriculum that was actually taught in classrooms (cf. Goodson and Dowbiggin 1990). However, we believe that the benefits gained from a long-term historical perspective compensate for any deficiencies that follow from this limitation.

Although the number of our cases (24) is small, the results show great order and uniformity, which leads us to believe that even a much larger sample would yield similar findings. The average percentages and standard deviations reveal that most universities have offered a remarkably similar menu of courses.

From the coded data, we determined the percentage of courses, by year and university, that were devoted to each geographic area, period, and subgroup. We then averaged those percentages across the 24 universities, so large departments could not bias the outcome. We also determined the number of universities, out of 24, that had at least one course covering each geographic area, period, and subgroup.

**RESULTS**

As background, it is important to note that the absolute number of history courses increased dramatically over the 70-year period and that this growth was roughly commensurate with the growth of all other arts and sciences courses. Thus, in our sample, history as a component of arts and sciences increased from about 6 percent in 1910 to 7.5 percent in 1990. If history was cannibalizing other disciplines, it might be possible to explain some of our results as being driven by a straightforward expansion of history’s domain.

Of course, even given such an expansion, we would still need to explain why history moves in some directions and not in others. Toward that end, we begin by looking at the geographic focus of the history curriculum in Figure 1 and Tables 1 and 2.

**Geographic Focus**

Dramatic changes are immediately apparent in Figure 1. The most prominent change between 1910 and 1990 was the huge decrease in the percentage of the average curricular time devoted to the history of Western Europe and England—from 61.1 percent to 33.6 percent (many histories of Western Europe include or

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7 Some courses were uncodable along one or more dimensions, either because the relevant information was not specified or because the course was not constrained along that dimension. For example, the description of A History of the Military may or may not have specified the geographic areas on which it focused.

8 The results for Oceania are not reported because no courses singled out this—by far the smallest—area.

9 Clearly, the Modern period grew substantially during our time frame, and its expansion as a proportion of the curriculum must be considered accordingly.

10 Primary and secondary schools also offer similar courses, even compared cross-nationally (Meyer, Kamens, and Benavot 1992).
even focus on England; our category England refers only to those courses with an exclusive focus.

Equally striking is the explosion of history courses that concentrated on areas outside Europe and North America. Virtually absent from the curriculum in 1910, courses on Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa together accounted for more than a quarter of the courses by 1990.

Table 1 summarizes the changes and breaks out these smaller categories, revealing that the percentages of history courses on Asia and Latin America grew from less than 1 percent in 1910 to 8.5 and 6.6 percent, respectively, in 1990. Likewise, history courses on Eastern Europe, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa also increased from less than 1 percent (or none, in the case of sub-Saharan Africa) to 5.1 percent, 3.9 percent, and 2.2 percent, respectively, in that period.

Whereas some areas of the world, such as sub-Saharan Africa, were still given little attention in 1990, the overall pattern was orderly and consistent across categories, and it lends strong support to our first guiding idea. Further support is gained from the observed increase in world history, from 0.4 percent in 1910 to 2.2 percent in 1990. Thus, over the century, the history curriculum dramatically expanded its areal coverage, from an early focus on the centers—Western Europe and England—to the broad community of nation-states.

Table 2 takes the data on geographic coverage one step further, revealing that the changes were consistent across universities from 1910 to 1990. In 1910, every history department offered courses on North America and Western Europe, all but two history departments offered courses specifically on England, and few departments offered courses on any other area of the world. By 1990, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia had

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Table 1. Average Percentage of History Courses, by Geographic Area and Year (standard deviations in parentheses)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1990</th>
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<tr>
<td>North America</td>
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<td>35.2</td>
<td>32.0</td>
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<td>(11.0)</td>
<td>(10.2)</td>
<td>(4.1)</td>
<td>(5.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
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<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8.6)</td>
<td>(6.7)</td>
<td>(3.2)</td>
<td>(3.9)</td>
<td>(2.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
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<td>0.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(1.4)</td>
<td>(3.2)</td>
<td>(1.8)</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6.1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.9)</td>
<td>(4.6)</td>
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<td>(3.2)</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.4)</td>
<td>(3.6)</td>
<td>(4.3)</td>
<td>(3.7)</td>
<td>(4.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* N = 24 university history departments except in 1910, when one university had no history department.
joined the list of areas covered by every history department, and the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa were represented in most departments.

### Time Frame

Table 3 presents the average percentage of history courses devoted to each period. Again, significant changes occurred from 1910 to 1990. The amount of history-course time devoted to the Modern period increased from 44.8 in 1910 to 60.0 percent in 1990, some of which was driven by the expansion of the period. New courses on modern Japan, the Soviet Union, and postcolonial Africa, for example, were offered and became common. Also as expected, courses devoted to all three earlier periods decreased steadily: Courses on the Medieval period dropped from 22.9 to 14.3 percent, those on the Early Modern period decreased from 23.8 to 18.3 percent, and those on the Classical period fell from 8.5 to 7.5 percent.

Although percentage of history courses devoted to the Classical period declined only slightly, if our data included history courses taught in classics departments, a stronger decline would undoubtedly be apparent. The expected decline was further slowed by increases in courses covering classical periods in places other than Greece and Rome (such as Ancient China and the early Mayan civilization).

These results indicate support for our second guiding idea, namely, that over the course of the century, the history curriculum contracted its coverage of periods, from the early focus on the distant past to the recent focus on the contemporary nation-state system.\(^{11}\)

### Subgroups

Figure 2 and Tables 4 and 5 present our data on the inclusion of courses on the five national subgroups from 1910 to 1990. The changes were striking. Figure 2 depicts the average percentage of courses devoted to each of the five subgroups. It shows that courses in all the subgroups, which were still virtually nonexistent in 1950, had increased rapidly and steadily by 1990. Whereas there were virtually no courses (0.4 percent) on racial and ethnic histories in 1950, 3.3 percent of the courses were on this subgroup in 1990. Similarly, gendered histories, invisible even in 1970, grew to 2.2 percent by 1990. Also noteworthy were increases in history courses on class and religious groups, neither of which were obviously fueled by ongoing social movements.

Table 4 summarizes these findings and further reveals that the sum of subgroup histories accounted for 9.3 percent of the history curriculum in 1990. This finding is strong support for our third guiding idea that over the course of the century, the history curric-
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Figure 2. Average Percentage of History Courses, by Subgroups and Year (N = 24)

The curriculum has included an increasing number of courses on subgroups.

Table 5 emphasizes the uniformity of the changes across university history departments from 1910 to 1990. Particularly dramatic was the jump in the courses in the sex subgroup—from no departments in 1970 to every department in 1990. Slower, but still remarkable, were the increases in the courses in the race and ethnic, class, and religious subgroups, all of which were offered by the majority of history departments by 1990.

Additional Factors

In addition to institutional redefinitions of society, several other factors spurred changes in the university history curriculum. We believe that these factors interacted with the institutional forces emphasized here.

First, there were a variety of dimension-specific forces that we did not include in our analysis because doing so would have required taking each finding singly, rather than as a component of a broader pattern. But surely, for example, the onset of the Cold War generated more courses on Eastern Europe, the civil rights movement stimulated additional courses on race and ethnicity, and the growing number of female professors was a catalyst for the increase in history courses on women.

Explanations at this level are especially useful in accounting for different rates of change within the broader patterns on which we have focused. For example, whereas the institutionalization of the nation-state society helps explain the general offering of courses on areas other than North America, Western Europe, and England in the history curriculum, it does not explain why courses on Asia were more prominent than those on sub-Saharan Africa. To account for this trend—rather than for the overall pattern—an additional, more specific explanation is required, such as the great disparity in U.S. economic and military interests in the two regions. The relative levels of these interests discouraged the telling of sub-Saharan African histories and encouraged the telling of Asian histories. Still the institutional effect is evident: The focus on both regions increased.

Although dimension-specific factors are enlightening vis-à-vis single elements, none can explain the patterns we find so compelling during this period: Whole continents beyond the West came into view, groups that were once without form took shape, and the distant past

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<td>Classical (prehistory to A.D. 303)</td>
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<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medieval (formative)</td>
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<td>20.1</td>
<td>17.8</td>
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<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(303–1603)</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Modern (nation-state)</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1603–1789)</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>54.7</td>
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<td>Modern</td>
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<td>(1789–1990)</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* N = 24 university history departments except in 1910, when one university had no history department.
began to dissipate. Nevertheless, two broad forces must also be considered.

First, consumer demand (that is, the demand from students, parents, and employers) interacted with institutional factors to promote change in the universities' history departments. Over time, consumers of history changed both in makeup (for example, diversifying in race) and in taste (for instance, losing interest in reform of the medieval church). History departments must meet consumer demand or face declining enrollments and university support. The important point here is that consumer demand is formed within the institutional environment: It draws from and builds on taken-for-granted definitions of society just as does history. Therefore, although demand may be a proximate cause of curricular change, it cannot be meaningfully separated from the other institutional mechanisms we have discussed.

Second, the increase in the size of the university faculties interacted with institutional factors to encourage change in the university history curriculum. Most history departments had fewer than 10 members in 1910, whereas in 1990, some had more than 50. Clearly, as their number grew, history professors had greater incentives to specialize, and these incentives fueled change. Collins (1985:115) argued that the "pressure of intellectual demography squeezes the more enterprising historians off to the frontier lands." Here we attempted to theorize which lands came to be defined as the frontier. After all, the differentiation could have occurred within the traditional areas or randomly. However, it did not. Rather, the differentiation occurred in clear, broad patterns, as our institutional argument predicted.

To explore this point further, we compared two groups from our sample: the four fastest-growing departments with the four slowest-growing departments, measured by the number of courses offered from 1970 to 1990, the period of the greatest curricular change. The curricula of the two groups were similar. For example, among regions represented in Table 1, the slow-growing schools had *faster* growth rates for the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa and *higher* absolute representation of Latin America. Thus, institutional forces work even when demographic catalysts are weak.

Table 5. Number of History Departments with at Least One Course per Subgroup

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Racial and ethnic</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* N = 24 university history departments except in 1910, when one university had no history department.
CONCLUSION

The patterns of change we observed in the history curriculum of U.S. universities resulted from major institutional redefinitions, away from models depicting societies as born of sacred traditions and ruled by hallowed elites and toward models depicting societies as born of internationally legitimated management and ruled by internationally recognized citizens. And although in this article, we emphasized the ways in which models of society shape the history curriculum, we also believe that the history curriculum is a component of the models of society. Representations of history afford insights into changing worldviews. In the future, we plan to pursue the implications of these arguments with analyses both of other disciplines and of the curricula of other countries.

We argued here that the history curriculum is socially constructed around and within institutionalized models of society. With the institutionalization and rationalization of nation-states and citizens, history is rewritten to tell newly sensible narrative tales.

Along the geographic dimension, a Western focus has given way to a view of the whole nation-state system. Along the period dimension, a long-term view has given way to a more presentist orientation. Along the subgroups dimension, the perception of a homogeneous citizenry has given way to that of a heterogeneous one.

In 1910, historians told the tale of the United States as a sweeping narrative, born in the pools of classical Greece and Rome and predestined for America, with great men dominating every turn (Tuveson 1968). In 1990, this vision was largely gone—replaced by one in which the United States was seen as having been born in a world of competitive nation-states, its equal citizens and citizen groups scientifically progressing toward a rationalized future.

REFERENCES


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