

Research Overview of

“Contributions of East-Asian Scholars to American Public Administration”

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The value of diversity is recognized in the literature in terms of improving representative democracy, social equity and government performance. Because public administration/affairs (PA) programs, especially the master’s degree programs, play important roles in training current and future public managers, scholars have advocated for the inclusion of diversity in the PA curricula. They suggest that addressing issues of diversity in PA classrooms, as well as in the published literature, will enhance awareness and appreciation of social equity and inclusion among students, and ultimately change the culture of public organizations as current and future employers. In return, social equity and inclusion will ultimately be promoted in the process of public service delivery and in the broad public society. The literature has implied a critical role for PA educators and researchers in the processes of diversification, inclusion, and anti-discrimination.

While existing research has advanced understanding of diversity issues, however, some deficits in such studies can be discerned. Little research has actually examined issues of diversity, defined broadly, among PA scholars. Previous studies primarily referred to diversity in terms of racial or ethnic minorities, largely focusing on representation of Black and Hispanic communities in public organizations; that focus is certainly necessary in the American context of a long history of limiting opportunities for Black and Hispanic scholars. Few studies, however,

have paid attention to the Asian community in terms of its contributions to scholarly discourse in public affairs and administration.

The Asian community is a missing piece in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) discourse in public affairs and administration. Our research attempts to document the contributions of East Asian PA scholars (EAPSs) to the American PA field. We define EAPSs as those who are East Asian Americans and those with East Asian nationality participating in teaching, research, or service in the American PA academic community. Three questions will be addressed in a forthcoming article: First, what is the approximate population of EAPSs in American PA programs and professional networks? Second, what are their contributions to scholarly research and professional services? Third, what does the empirical evidence imply about diversity management in American PA programs?

We identify EAPS from multiple sources by their last names, including faculty listed in the top 100 NASPAA accredited programs (US News Ranking); publications in the top 10 PA journals (Social Science Citation Index Ranking); participation in conferences hosted by professional networks such as the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), Public Management Research Association (PMRA), Network of Schools of Public Policy Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), and Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM); awards presented by these professional networks; and the leadership teams of the networks.

Our findings underscore the size and scope of the contributions of EAPS to American PA. First, among the faculty of the top 100 public affairs schools and programs in 2020, there were 243

EAPSSs, representing about 5% of the total 4,552 faculty members. Around half (127) of them are tenured.

Second, in terms of publications, a steadily increasing percentage of publications were authored or co-authored by EAPS in the top 10 PA journals from 2014 to 2019. Overall, EAPS publication percentages increased from around 10% in 2015 to 23% in 2019. However, the EAPSSs' contributions to publications are not fully represented in the journals' leadership positions. Most of the journal editorial boards have less than 10% of EAPS members. Two of the journals' editorial committees have no EAPS members.

Third, in the professional networks, EAPSSs have contributed greatly to APPAM, ASPA, and NASPAA annual conferences, and have won a substantial proportion of awards from these associations and from PMRA. EAPSSs made 17.13% of presentations at the most recent APPAM, ASPA, and NASPAA conferences. More than 25% of ASPA's annual conference presentations have been made by EAPSSs in the past five years.

EAPS are recognized for their excellence in research, teaching, and service. Many of the awards are research oriented. For example, many of the annual best paper awards are presented to EAPS. The young professional and doctoral student awardees suggest the emerging scholarship and growth of EAPS, and EAPS doctoral students have produced many award-winning dissertations. East Asian graduate students have attained many scholarships and fellowships from the professional associations. For example, there have been 12 East-Asian ASPA Founder's Fellows since 2017, accounting for 15% of the total awardees.

The under representation of EAPSs is also common in professional associations' leadership. ASPA has the highest percent (13.64%) of EAPS leaders by a wide margin, followed by NASPAA (3.75%). APPAM and PMRA have no EAPS leaders.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to document the quantity and quality of EAPSs' contributions to the American PA field, and to provide evidence of the efforts and achievements of EAPS as an overlooked minority group. Through this study, we hope to call for awareness of the important contributions they are increasingly making to scholarly research, teaching and leadership in the American PA community, and the problem of the under-representation of this quiet minority group in leadership roles of PA schools, editorial boards, and professional associations.