



Asian American Mobilization: The Effect of Candidates and Districts on Asian American Voting Behavior

Sara Sadhwani¹

© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2020

Abstract

While numerous studies have examined the effect of a co-ethnic candidate on the ballot for African Americans and Latinos, Asian Americans remain understudied in this regard. With the growth of Asian American voters nationwide, empirical questions prevail: Does the presence of an Asian American candidate on the ballot spur Asian American turnout or like other minority communities, is the demographic composition of a district the central mobilizing mechanism? Can we expect country of origin subgroups of Asian Americans such as Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Japanese, and Korean Americans voters to mobilize or does such cohesion not exist? Using surname-matched vote returns from the California state assembly across four election years, I examine the constraints and opportunities for pan-ethnic and national origin Asian American turnout in the presence of a co-ethnic candidate. I find that Asian American candidates have a measurable increase on pan-ethnic turnout, but conditional on the percentage of Asian Americans in the district. Across national origin groups, the effect of a co-ethnic candidate varies. The findings suggest Asian American voting behavior is highly nuanced and markedly distinct from other minority voters.

Keywords Voting · Mobilization · Turn out · Asian american · National origin · Political behavior

Electronic supplementary material The online version of this article (<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09612-7>) contains supplementary material, which is available to authorized users.

✉ Sara Sadhwani
sarasadhwani@gmail.com

¹ Pomona College, 333 N. College Way, Carnegie Building, Claremont, CA 91711, USA

Introduction

To assert that a candidate on the ballot would have a mobilizing effect on co-ethnic voters is a long-established maxim in the study of political behavior (Dahl 1961; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Barreto 2010). In his 1965 study of Italian and Irish immigrant communities in New Haven, Wolfinger articulates a mobilization theory of ethnic voting. Despite upward economic mobility within the communities, which might otherwise suggest a level of integration or assimilation, Wolfinger observed strong partisan attachments and support for co-ethnic candidates. Yet recent scholarship has argued that the mechanism driving minority voter turnout is not shared candidate ethnicity, but the size of the minority population within a district (Fraga 2016a, b, 2018). In other words, minority citizens are more likely to be mobilized in general elections as their share of the population increases. This finding has included examinations of the three largest racial groupings in the U.S. including whites, African Americans, Latino/as and Asian Americans.

In the case of Asian Americans voters—a relatively small but rapidly growing community that encompasses vast ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity—studies have observed that while the size of the group impacts turnout (Jang 2009), the presence of a co-ethnic candidate has no significant mobilizing effect (Fraga 2016a). This research, however, has drawn its conclusions based on two assumptions that warrant additional consideration. First, such research has been conducted by aggregating all Asian Americans, and making the assumption of a pan-ethnic Asian American identity. But who is a co-ethnic candidate for an ‘Asian American’ voter? Is an Indian American candidate a co-ethnic for a Chinese American voter? Will a Filipino American candidate stimulate Korean American voters? National surveys of Asian Americans suggest a persistent self-identification with their country of origin (Wong et al 2011; Ramakrishan et al. 2005). While the examination of pan-ethnic Asian American behavior is important for making cross-racial comparisons with Latinos, African Americans, and whites, co-ethnic relationships must also be examined at the level of national-origin subgroup. For example, in a recent study of Vietnamese voter turnout in Orange County California, Vietnamese candidates are found to indeed mobilize co-ethnic voters, contingent on the resonance of their campaign appeals (Uhlener and Le 2017). Departing from prior work that compares Asian Americans solely as a pan-ethnic group (Jang 2009; Fraga 2016a, b), I consider Asian American co-ethnic political behavior both by country of origin and as an aggregated group. In other words, I ask: Does the presence of an Asian American candidate on the ballot stimulate pan-ethnic or national origin co-ethnic Asian American turnout?

Secondly, comprehensive studies of Asian American voter turnout have examined congressional district observations (Fraga 2016a, b, 2018) or nationwide survey samples (Jang 2009), in which the percentage of Asian Americans in a district or sample is relatively small. Only one congressional district in the U.S. (excluding Hawaii) makes up an Asian American majority district, and therefore the range of districts being examined is limited. In this study, I turn to the state

of California to examine the consequences of an Asian American candidate on the ballot for the California State Assembly. California boasts a large and diverse Asian American community. Over the course of four elections, from 2012 to 2018, Asian American candidates appeared on the ballot fifty-eight times in a state in which 13 percent of likely voters are Asian American (Baldassare et al. 2019). Therefore, in addition to probing the distinction between pan-ethnic and national origin voter turnout, this study also asks: To what extent does district context matter for the mobilization of Asian American voters?

I theorize that like other minority communities, size of the population in a district matters for the mobilization of Asian Americans. Examining district geographies with larger numbers of Asian Americans offers an opportunity to understand the role of community size and the resultant resources that voters may benefit from given that larger size. In addition, I theorize that, consistent with prior work, the examination of Asian American turnout by national origin will show variation between differing groups in which some may mobilize for a co-ethnic candidate and others' mobilization may be more nuanced.

I test these theoretical expectations with an original dataset identifying the race or ethnic characteristics of every candidate for the eighty-member California Assembly from 2012 through 2018 (320 candidates in total). Among Asian American candidates, I additionally identify their country of origin. These data were combined with surname matched precinct-level voter registration and vote tallies available from the UC Berkeley Statewide Database. The complete dataset identifies the six largest subgroups of Asian American voters in the United States, in which I examine voting behavior when exposed to a pan-ethnic or national origin co-ethnic candidate on the ballot.¹ I find that Asian American candidates have a measurable increase on pan-ethnic turnout, conditional on the proportion of Asian Americans in the district. Across national origin groups, I find co-ethnic candidates to be particularly effective in stimulating turnout amongst Indian and Japanese Americans, while jurisdictional composition explains turnout amongst Filipino and Korean Americans. The findings challenge recent scholarship that finds no significant impact of a co-ethnic candidate among Asian American voters in congressional elections (Fraga 2016a) and advances our understanding of political behavior in the United States in an era of growing racial and ethnic diversity.

In the next section, I review the theoretical underpinnings for co-ethnic mobilization, including both candidate-centered and jurisdictional-centered explanations. I begin by considering the role of group consciousness, linked fate, and elite cues as mechanisms that stimulate minority turnout, followed by a discussion of why these mechanisms could be applicable to Asian American voter turnout in particular in order to build a case for how and why Asian American behavior might be responsive to the presence of an Asian American on the ballot. I then turn to consider recent scholarship that posits the role of jurisdictional demographics as a central mechanism for minority voter turnout before proceeding to the analysis.

¹ Replication Data is available on Harvard Dataverse at <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/KDGUS6>.

The Co-Ethnic Paradigm: A Candidate-Centric Approach to Mobilization

The bonds of co-ethnicity between voters and candidates have a long history in American politics. Scholarship considering co-ethnicity among African American voters theorized the presence of black elected officials creates a more trusting orientation toward the political process and could stimulate the subsequent political engagement of African Americans (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Whitby and Gilliam 1991). Studies examining differences in political participation outcomes by racial group have found higher participation levels of African Americans compared to whites of similar socioeconomic background (Miller et al. 1981; Shingles 1981; Verba and Nie 1972). Yet scholars have not found a definitive mobilizing effect, given the presence of a co-ethnic African American on the ballot (Brace et al. 1995; Gay 2001; Tate 2003; Griffin and Keane 2006; Keele and White 2018). The scope of this candidate-centered research was widened and refined with the examination of the mobilizing effect of co-ethnic candidates among Latinos (Pantoja et al. 2001; Barreto et al. 2004; Barreto 2007).

Underlying the notion that co-ethnicity ‘empowers’ and stimulates voter turnout are theoretical presumptions about the psychological processes of belonging to a minority group. Group consciousness is a multidimensional construct that considers the structural hierarchy of society, an individual’s view of where their in-group stands within that structure, and the individual’s perception that acting together as a group may improve the group’s standing within the hierarchy (McClain et al. 2009; Jackman and Jackman 1973; Gurin et al. 1980). Group consciousness is operationalized as survey items such as linked fate, which measures the closeness one feels to other in-group members and a belief that one’s fate is linked to that of the group (Verba and Nie 1972; Shingles 1981; Miller et al. 1981). Linked fate and group consciousness within minority communities is a predominant theoretical assumption that undergirds many empirical demonstrations of increased voter turnout often considered the “identity-to-politics” link (Lee 2007).

A complimentary research program considers the effect of elite mobilization. While the presence of a co-ethnic’s name on the ballot may produce a mobilizing effect based on social-psychological processes, a co-ethnic candidate may also have an advantage in influencing co-ethnic voters by providing an information subsidy regarding where to vote or how to become registered (Leighley 2001), or providing linguistically and culturally appropriate and targeted campaign materials (Barreto 2010).²

² While the dataset used in this study does not capture ethnic specific campaign appeals, the influence of elite mobilization on Asian American turnout, has been well documented in the literature (Lien et al. 2004; Trivedi 2005; Wong 2005; Garcia and Michelson 2012) and should not be overlooked as a potential explanation for the findings.

The Asian American Electorate: Opportunities and Constraints for Pan-Ethnic Mobilization

Why should we expect pan-ethnic Asian Americans to vote as a group in the presence of an Asian American candidate? In this section, I consider both the opportunities for and constraints on pan-ethnic Asian American group consciousness as a potential explanatory mechanism for co-ethnic mobilization.³

In the landmark National Asian American Survey (NAAS) of 2008, naturalized citizens and native-born, second generation Asian Americans were found to be far more likely to identify with the 'Asian American' racial label (Wong et al. 2011). This comports with prior work that finds voting among Asian Americans increases with each subsequent generation (Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001). Scholars theorize that shared experiences such as social exclusion and expressed fear in response to a threatening political context are correlated with partisan identity (Kuo et al. 2016) and political participation (Phoenix and Arora 2018) among Asian Americans. Similarly socio-political examinations of second generation Asian Americans find both a growing sense of pan-ethnic identity and rising interest in politics (Park 2008; Min 2002, 2006; Kibria 2003; Sears et al. 2003; Ramakrishnan 2005), with one study finding Asian Americans primed with images of co-ethnic representatives to exhibit linked fate measures to be near the same level as African Americans who have not been primed. The authors conclude that Asian American identity is dynamic and malleable and is the product of a "complex interaction between policies of the state, institutions, political economy and the stereotypes that result to create incentives for people categorized by race to either adopt or turn away from a group-based political identity," (Junn and Masuoka 2008; p. 734). More recently, studies have found that the belief in pan-ethnic Asian identity and linked fate have been found to condition the effect of party mobilization in predicting Asian Americans' voter turnout (Kim 2015) as well as their solidarity with other minority groups in America such as African Americans (Merseth 2018).

Yet, Tam (1995) warned that Asian Americans are not a monolith and research that relies on an assumption of homogeneity and aggregates all Asian Americans can obscure important distinctions between subgroups. The 20 million Asian Americans in the United States trace their roots from more than twenty different countries in East Asia, the Indian Subcontinent and Southeast Asia (Aoki and Nakanishi 2001; Nakanishi and Lai 2003). With that diversity comes an array of immigration

³ Because the measurement tools of group consciousness and linked fate were developed to describe the African American experience, scholars have warned about the potential limitations of applying these tools on other minority communities (Chong and Rogers 2005; Lee 2007). The process for acquiring linked fate among Latinos, for example, has been found to be distinct from that of African Americans given the differences in group experiences with systematic oppression and discrimination in the United States (Sanchez 2006; Sanchez and Vargas 2016). The same consideration should be made in asserting group consciousness or linked fate for Asian Americans, who differ greatly from either African Americans or Latinos on dimensions such as language, religion, culture, and history of settlement in the United States.

pathways⁴ (Aoki and Takeda 2008) and differences in experience that may place limitations on the ability of Asian Americans from differing backgrounds to develop a sense of group consciousness or to engage in political life in the United States. Some studies point to competition between various Asian American subgroups (Saito 1998; Kim and Lee 2001), and that Asian Americans who identify primarily with their country of origin are more likely to prefer national origin co-ethnic representation (Schildkraut 2013). Indeed, Asian Americans across generations simultaneously continue to identify with their national-origin identities such as Korean American, Indian American or Japanese American (Ramakrishnan et al. 2017). This comports with recent scholarship from Okamoto (2015) who, in an attempt to re-define our understanding of the social construction of racial identities, has argued that the pan-ethnic label and identity is neither organic nor inevitable, but has instead developed as a result of deliberate negotiations of group members, and that mobilization around co-ethnic identity is not in opposition to the development of a pan-Asian American identity.

The totality of this research suggests that while national-origin considerations are important and salient within the Asian American community, they are not exclusive from the development of pan-ethnic shared group consciousness that is explicitly political in nature. My argument that the presence of an Asian American candidate will be more impactful than what the extant literature suggests rests on the theoretical presumption of this prior work on group consciousness. Thus, the novel contribution of this study is to advance our understanding of Asian American voter behavior by empirically analyzing voter turnout both by country of origin subgroups and as a pan-ethnic group.

Electoral Districts: Does Size Matter?

A final dimension for consideration is the jurisdictional context in which an Asian American candidate might emerge and the conditions under which Asian American voters might cast their ballots. Studies attempting to identify a correlation between a minority candidate on the ballot and increases in co-ethnic voter turnout struggle to disentangle the effects of a candidate from factors associated with the contextual environment. The overlapping nature of majority-minority districts (Barreto et al. 2004), whether the election is a statewide, citywide or district competition (Barreto 2007), the proportion of minority registrants to the percentage of minorities in the general population (Fraga and Ramírez 2004), and community resources that exist in more densely populated minority communities that could foster participation such as churches, ethnic media and community based organizations (Tate 2003; Barreto

⁴ Many communities, particularly those of Southeast Asia arrived in the United States as refugees and may lack the resources of income and high levels of educational attainment (Zhou et al. 2008; J. Lee and Zhou 2015) prescribed by resource models of political participation (Campbell et al. 1960; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Other segments of Asian Americans entered the United States as students pursuing advanced degrees, highly skilled workers in science and technology fields and their family members (Min and Jang 2015).

2010; Ramirez 2013) are all potential mechanisms for minority turnout associated with district context.

Recent work from Fraga (2016a, 2018) has directly examined co-ethnicity and jurisdictional composition as determinants of voter turnout. For African Americans and Latinos, Fraga concludes that turnout is greater when each group comprises a larger portion of the electorate. By identifying jurisdictional context as the key mechanism driving minority turnout, Fraga's work represents a clear advancement to our understanding of minority political behavior. Yet, Fraga's examination of Asian Americans is less certain. He finds the presence of an Asian American congressional candidate has no significant effect on Asian American turnout. He cautions that Asian Americans have only one majority-minority congressional district in the United States (CA-17) and thus the range of jurisdictional contexts in the study are limited. Nationwide assessments, therefore, may not be the best environment in which to observe minority turnout (Hajnal 2010), particularly for Asian Americans. In this study, I employ Fraga's empirical framework to further assess and build an account for Asian American turnout, but do so at the state legislative level where larger concentrations of Asian American voters and candidates offer the opportunity for greater analysis.

Data and Methods

To conduct this analysis, race and ethnicity data were collected for all California Assembly general election candidates from 2012 through 2018.⁵ To assess candidate racial identity, I use a number of methods consistent with prior studies such as membership in racial or ethnic caucuses, place of birth, self-made statements about racial and ethnic background either in biographies or media publications, and endorsements by ethnic organizations. The coding was cross checked with the Demographics in the California Legislature report issued by the California Research Bureau.

The units of analysis in this study are aggregated precincts within each of the eighty assembly districts in the state, across four election years, procured from the Statewide Database (SWDB) at the UC Berkeley School of Law. This dataset aggregates voter registration and returns from all California counties and standardizes the variables for statewide analysis.⁶ Candidate racial and ethnic data were then matched on to this voter data. In total, the dataset includes 81,207 precinct observations.

⁵ 2012 was the inaugural year of three electoral design reforms in California: (1) the switch to the top-two primary; (2) the creation of new district lines following the 2011 redistricting, conducted for the first time by a citizen review board; (3) the adoption of additional term limits for state legislators (Sadhvani and Junn 2018; McGhee 2011; Highton et al. 2016). Given these electoral design changes, I begin the analysis in 2012 when these changes were enacted.

⁶ To create the dataset, three unique data files for each year were merged. These include (1) the *Statement of Vote*, which reports final vote tallies for each candidate from all counties and certified by the Secretary of State; (2) the *Registration* file, which reports the number of Asian American and Latino voters registered in each precinct using surname matching; and (3) the *Voters* file which reports the final vote at the precinct level with surname matching.

The SWDB is California's official redistricting database and conducts a surname matching analysis of voter data. Surname matching is a powerful tool used to predict and identify groups based on race and ethnicity and has been used as a research technique for over fifty years. The SWDB uses two surname dictionaries compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau and researchers using Social Security records to identify Latino and Asian American voters (Lauderdale and Kestenbaum 2000; McKue 2011). SWDB identifies Asian Americans by six national-origins, representing the largest Asian American subgroups. According to the Pew Research Center, these six national origin groups account for 85 percent of all Asians in the U.S.—Chinese (23%), Indian (19%), Filipino (18%), Vietnamese (9%), Korean (9%) and Japanese (7%)—and more than a third of all Asians Americans living in the U.S. reside in California. Omitting other smaller communities, such as Cambodian Americans, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, the Hmong, Thai, or Pacific Islanders thus represents an undercount of Asian American voters in the state. Surname matching is a commonly used approach for identifying Asian American voters (Go 2018; Collet 2005; Uhlaner and Le 2017). The SWDB has been used for statewide redistricting purposes, has been featured in peer-reviewed scholarly research,⁷ and has been used in numerous Voting Rights Act court cases, including one in 2018 that examined vote dilution for Asian Americans in at-large elections for the Santa Clara city council. Given the availability of surname matched voter data, the national-origin of Asian American candidates was also coded based on these six subgroups.⁸

To identify an aggregate measure of Asian American turnout, totals for the six subgroups were summed and analyzed as the proportion of actual voters to total registrants in a precinct. Similarly, for national origin turnout models, turnout was measured using votes cast to total registered for each individual group. Though some examinations of voter turnout use the citizen voting age population (CVAP) as the denominator measure (McDonald and Popkin 2001), CVAP measures are unavailable for Asian American national subgroups both at the state legislative district and precinct level and would not capture the dynamic changes occurring due to evolving citizenship status among Asian Americans from year to year.⁹

⁷ For example, see Henderson, Sekhon and Titiunik (2016) publication entitled "Cause or Effect? Turnout in Hispanic Majority-Minority Districts." in *Political Analysis*.

⁸ In one instance a candidate of Indonesian background was coded as Asian-other. He was included in the pan-ethnic Asian turnout model, but is not captured in any of the national-origin specific models. Two mixed race Asian Americans appeared on the ballot. Their race was coded as Asian if their surname appeared in the Asian surname dictionaries.

⁹ Some scholars have warned that the use of registered voters in the denominator of voter file-based analyses can induce post-treatment bias (Nyhan et al. 2017). Pearson's correlation analysis of the data, however, finds that Asian voter registration and the proportion of Asian residents in a district are highly correlated. Registration, therefore, is a reasonable measurement tool in the research design for voter turnout and the results of this project may indeed be underestimates of the true effect. Registration has similarly been used in other studies that measure voter turnout. See for example Barreto et al. 2004; Hersh 2013; Fraga and Merseth 2016.

Table 1 Districts by Percent of Asian Residents

% Asian in district	No. of districts	Description of districts
Majority Asian (> 50%)	2	District 25, 49
30–50%	5	Districts 19, 20, 27, 55, 72
15–30%	18	Districts 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 28, 43, 48, 53, 65, 66, 68, 74, 77, 79
Less than 15%	55	All others
Total districts	80	

Descriptive Statistics

In total, the dataset observes 71.2 million registered California voters over four election cycles. In the 2016 presidential election year, the dataset identifies 19 million registered voters, 14 million of whom cast a ballot. California registrants preference the Democratic party with 44 percent of registered voters in the dataset identified as Democrats, 26 percent as Republican and 24 percent as Independent. Latino voters in 2016 comprise 24 percent of registered voters and Asian Americans account for about 8 percent of registered voters in the database. This percentage of Asian American voters identified by surname matching of six national origin subgroups can be contrasted with figures from the Public Policy Institute of California, which estimates that Asian Americans constitute about 13 percent of likely voters. This discrepancy suggests two possible inferences. First, Asian Americans as a group may have a relatively high turnout rate and second, that the use of the six national origin categories is an undercount of all Asian American voters in the state.

Using data from the American Community Survey for Asian American residents by California state assembly jurisdictions, I identify two Asian majority-minority districts in the state, defined as a district in which 50 percent of the residents are Asian American. Majority Asian districts are comprised of a mix of Asian national origins, as no districts in the state have a national origin majority. Table 1 shows the number of districts in the state for varying bins of Asian American population. Figure 1 shows the percentage of races with an Asian American candidate for these bins of the percent of Asian American voters. Given the dispersion of Asian Americans across districts, Asian American hopeful candidates often must run in non-majority districts (Lai 2011). As evident from the graphs, however, a greater number of Asian American candidates emerge in districts with a larger percentage of Asian American residents.

Variables and Estimation Procedure

I scrutinize Asian American turnout using multiple tests. First, mean turnout is examined in the presence of an Asian American candidate in varying district contexts. Next, using a multivariate regression framework, I report generalized

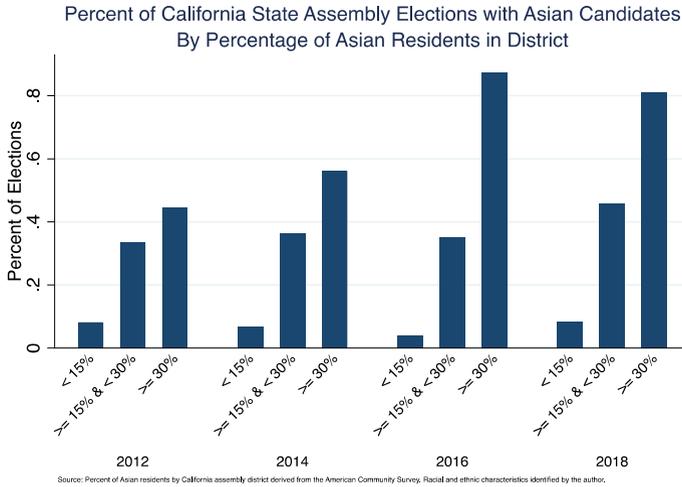


Fig. 1 Percent of California state assembly elections with Asian American candidates by percentage of Asian residents in a district

Table 2 Asian American Candidates by National Origin, California Assembly 2012–2018

Chinese	20
Filipino	10
Taiwanese	9
Japanese	6
Korean	6
Indian	6
Vietnamese	2
Other Asian	2

estimating equation (GEE) estimates with robust standard errors. I analyze six models, examining voter turnout from five national-origin groups (Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Korean, and Japanese) as well as an aggregated measure for all Asian American voters for a candidate of any Asian American background. Unfortunately, only two Vietnamese candidates appear over the four election cycles, and thus a separate Vietnamese model is not presented. Finally, potential role of partisanship in turnout is examined. A difference in difference analysis was also conducted—a quasi-experimental test that considers the presence of an Asian American candidate as a “treatment” on voter turnout—and is presented in Appendix 1.

The independent variable of interest is the presence of an Asian American on the ballot. Table 2 presents the number of times an Asian American candidate ran for state office by national origin. Note that these figures do not necessarily represent unique individuals. These data are collected over four election years and the same incumbent candidate may be counted in all four years. Because the unit of analysis is the precinct level, each candidate within the dataset has between 200 and 400 unique observations, depending upon the number of precincts in a given

district. If the presence of an Asian American or national-origin co-ethnic influences Asian American voters, then I expect coefficients for this variable to be positive and significant.

The second independent variable of interest is the percentage of the Asian population in a district. I rely on five-year estimates from the American Community Survey. In addition, I examine an interaction variable to test the hypothesis that the mobilizing effect of a co-ethnic candidate on the ballot was different in districts with greater proportions of Asian Americans.

The data used in this analysis draw from the same set of districts over four general election cycles. I use generalized estimating equations (GEE) to ensure my estimates are robust for jurisdictions overtime. GEE is a semi-parametric method that estimates population-averaged model parameters and their standard errors. GEEs can account for within-cluster dependence through an iterative approach (Liang and Zeger 1986; Zorn 2006). Use of this estimation procedure is consistent with similar studies such as Fraga (2016a, 2018). I include in the model a variety of electoral control measures: To control for turnout associated with competition levels of a particular race, I include dummy variables for elections that were within five percentage points, between five and ten percentage points, between ten and twenty points and noncompetitive races where a margin of victory for a candidate is greater than 20 percentage points. Dummy variables were also created to control for election year fixed effects, such as the effect of a presidential or senatorial election year, and gender of the candidate. Additional controls account for open seat elections with no incumbent on the ballot and the variable “partisan election” represents those elections in which either two Republicans or two Democrats appear on the general election ballot, as a result of California’s unique top-two primary system. Under these circumstances, voters face constraints that limit their options at the ballot box than in a typical election with candidates from the two major parties, and likely use a different voting calculus in selecting a candidate to support (Alvarez and Nagler 1997).

Results

Pan-Ethnic Asian American Turnout

Do Asian Americans mobilize in the presence of an Asian American candidate of any background? In the first two tests, I operationalize pan-ethnicity by examining aggregated Asian American turnout for a candidate of any Asian American background. Raw turnout data and multi-variate turnout models are examined.

Raw Turnout

Table 3 presents raw turnout data for aggregated Asian Americans in the presence of a pan-ethnic Asian American candidate (any national origin background) across jurisdictions with varying proportions of Asian American residents. Two insights can be gleaned from these data. First, Table 3 demonstrates that Asian American turnout is elevated when an Asian American is on the ballot. Across all

Table 3 Pan-ethnic Asian American turnout by percent Asian in district

	Percent Asian in district		
	Less than 15%	15–30%	> 30%
No Asian candidate	56.3	59.8	54.9
Pan-ethnic Asian candidate	57.9	61.8	58.1
Difference	+ 1.6	+ 2	+ 3.2

Turnout measured as the percentage of those registered who voted over four election cycles 2012–2018

three categories of districts with varying size of the Asian American population, the magnitude of turnout is higher with the presence of an Asian American candidate. As the size of the Asian American population increases in a district, the size of the percent change also increases from a 1.6 percentage point difference in turnout in districts in which Asian Americans comprise 15 percent of the district population or less to a 3.2 percentage point change in turnout in districts with Asian American populations of 30 percent or more. This observation supports candidate-centric claims of minority voter turnout, that an Asian American candidate could stimulate Asian American voters regardless of national origin background and that the effect of shared pan-ethnic identity may be salient.

A second observation is that regardless of an Asian American candidate on the ballot, a boost in Asian American turnout can be observed in jurisdictions in which Asian Americans comprise 15–30 percent of the district population, followed by a decline in turnout in districts in which Asian Americans move toward a majority-minority status. Fraga's recent study (2016a) finds variation in voting behavior across racial and ethnic groups. For African Americans, he identifies that increases in Black turnout are associated with the size of the Black population in a district, even when a co-ethnic candidate is not on the ballot. He finds that Latinos also turn out at significantly higher rates when they make up a larger proportion of the district population, and not necessarily due to the presence of a Latino candidate. For Asian Americans he finds not only no impact for Asian American candidates, but a reduction in turnout in heavily Asian districts. He concludes that the relative size of a voter's ethnic group is associated with increased participation in general elections, even without a co-ethnic on the ballot (Fraga 2016a, p. 107). Yet, additional work by Fraga (2016b) which tests whether a shift in congressional representation due to redistricting alters the behavior of minority voters, found that Asian American turnout increased when Asian registrants were redistricted into a district with an Asian American candidate. The results in this study, thus, present an important caveat to Fraga's work. While the magnitude of turnout is clearly elevated in the presence of an Asian American candidate, which departs from Fraga 2016a's findings for Asian Americans, district context and the size of the Asian American community in a jurisdiction are indeed a key mechanism in understanding the turnout of Asian Americans, which is consistent with Fraga's overall argument for minority voter turnout.

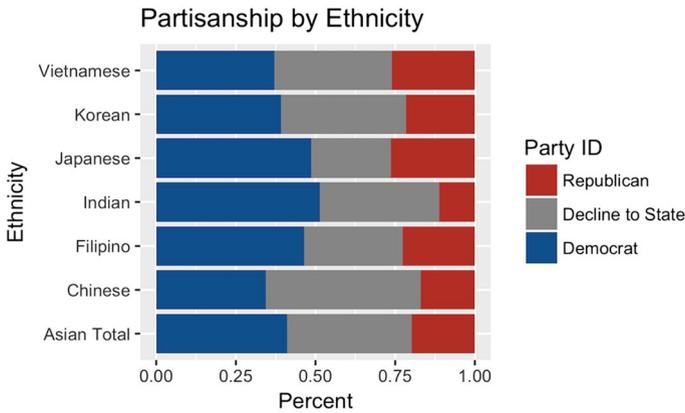


Fig. 2 2016 California Voter Registration by National-Origin

Consideration of Partisanship

One potential counterargument for this study is that the effect of an Asian American candidate on turnout may be driven by or be masking a partisan effect, particularly given that California is an electorate that largely favors the Democratic Party. Hajnal and Lee (2010), however, have argued that nonpartisanship is a rationally adaptive strategy for immigrant voters, particularly if voters feel shut out or ignored by the major parties. This comports with findings from the National Asian American Survey. In 2016, they find that more than 60 percent of Asian Americans report not being contacted by one of the two major political parties. While undeclared voters may have hidden political preferences (Keith et al. 1992; Klar and Krupnikov 2016), their lack of allegiance to one of the major parties may suggest a willingness to support co-ethnic candidates regardless of their party affiliation. Moreover, even if an independent Asian American voter has a preference for a particular party, that voter may support a co-ethnic candidate from an alternate party. Figure 2 displays the party registration of Asian American voters in California for the 2016 election year. As an aggregated group, the largest proportion of Asian Americans identify as Democrats, with Independents or Decline to State voters accounting for the second largest groups of registrants, followed lastly by Republicans.

To further probe the effect of partisanship, I developed a number of additional models of turnout using surname-matched voters identified by their party registration. Using linear regression, I examine turnout among Asian Democrats, Republicans and Independents with the presence of either an Asian Democrat or Republican candidate. Figure 3 shows predicted turnout of Asian American voters by party identification. The left plot provides a visualization of predicted turnout when an Asian Democrat is on the ballot and shows that all three subgroups—Asian Democrats, Republicans and Independents—have an increase in turnout with the presence of an Asian American Democrat on the ballot. The right plot shows a similar effect in the presence of an Asian Republican. Full results of the models are available in Appendix 2.

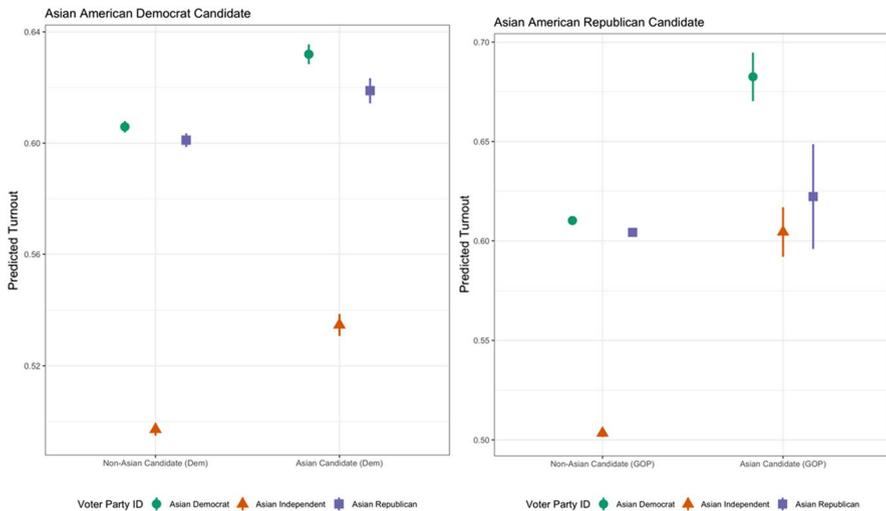


Fig. 3 Predicted Asian American turnout by partisanship

Notably, there is a statistically significant rise in turnout of Asian American Democrats for either an Asian American Democrat or Republican candidate. For Asian American Republican voters there is a statistically significant turnout effect when an Asian candidate from the Democratic party appears on the ballot. Amongst Asian American voters with no party preference, the findings suggest that while turnout is low in comparison to those who register with a party, these independents show the greatest boost in mobilization. Several potential mechanisms may be at play. The extant race and ethnic politics literature suggests that shared ethnicity serves as a heuristic for voters to determine which candidate might be more responsive and ideologically proximate to them (McConnaughy et al 2010; Barreto 2010; Sadhwani and Mendez 2018). Thus, shared pan-ethnic Asian American identity could trump partisanship and voters could be mobilizing to support a candidate they view as a descriptive representative. In the study of Latinos, for example, Casellas and Wallace (2015) find that Latino Democrats report an increased desire to see Latinos being elected to office. If such a finding also held true for Asian Americans, it could explain why Asian American Democrats mobilize in the presence of either an Asian American Democrat or Republican candidate.

Additionally, the findings could lend credence to candidate-centric theories of mobilization that suggest the presence of a pan-ethnic or national origin co-ethnic on the ballot results in outreach efforts—from either the co-ethnic themselves or their competitor—that are more intentional, targeted, and language appropriate. With increased contact, more Asian Americans may head to the polls. Thus, Asian American voters may not be mobilizing in support of an Asian American candidate per se, but the presence of an Asian American candidate nevertheless produces a mobilizing effect that could be broadly felt amongst Asian Americans of varying partisan affiliations.

Multivariate Analysis

The prior tests have all provided evidence that the presence of an Asian American candidate stimulated pan-ethnic Asian American turnout. Multivariate analysis finds the effect of a co-ethnic candidate on turnout is conditional on the size of the Asian American community in the district. The first column of Regression Table (Table 4) reports the results when all six Asian American national origin groups are combined and analyzed given any Asian American candidate appearing on the ballot. The results indicate that as the proportion of Asian Americans rises in a district, the effect of a co-ethnic candidate on turnout becomes greater. Consistent with prior literature, an Asian candidate alone is not correlated with a rise in pan-ethnic Asian American turnout, but the combined effect of an Asian candidate in districts with larger proportions of Asian Americans is. This finding represents both support for Fraga’s theorizing that boosts in turnout are associated with district composition and a departure from his assessment of Asian American turnout which finds co-ethnic candidates have no mobilizing effect. Thus, when studied in the aggregate, but in the state legislative jurisdictions where the variation of the size of the proportion of Asian Americans in a district varies, I find that Asian American political behavior follows a similar pattern of African Americans and Latinos (Table 4).

Asian American Turnout by National Origin

The previous section finds that pan-ethnic Asian American candidates play an important role in mobilizing Asian American voters, conditional on the composition of the district. But do all Asian American national origin communities behave the same or might there be variation between the communities that lead to the findings of the previous section?

Table 4 Asian American turnout with Pan-ethnic candidates, California assembly elections 2012–2018

	Total Asian turnout
Percent Asian × Asian candidate	0.157* (0.079)
Asian candidate	– 0.022 (0.019)
Percent Asian in district	0.048 (0.105)
Open seat	– 0.001 (0.005)
Margin of victory <5%	0.001 (0.010)
Margin of victory 5–10%	0.022 (0.012)
Margin of victory 10–20%	0.0057 (0.008)
2012	– 0.266*** (0.006)
2014	0.052*** (0.005)
Female	0.001 (0.006)
Partisan election	– 0.003 (0.008)
Constant	0.624*** (0.016)
Observations	56,299

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

Models based on national-origin subgroups suggest significant variation between groups. The five panels in Fig. 4 display predicted turnout for Chinese, Indian, Korean, Japanese and Filipino Americans in the presence of a national origin co-ethnic candidate as the proportion of their community rises in a district, while holding all other variables constant at their mean values.

Indian and Japanese American voter turnout

Indian and Japanese American voter turnout exhibits distinctive behavior from the aggregated Asian American analysis: as the size of the communities increase, no statistically significant increase in voter turnout is detected. The results of the regression analysis, however, reveal that a co-ethnic candidate is highly significant for the

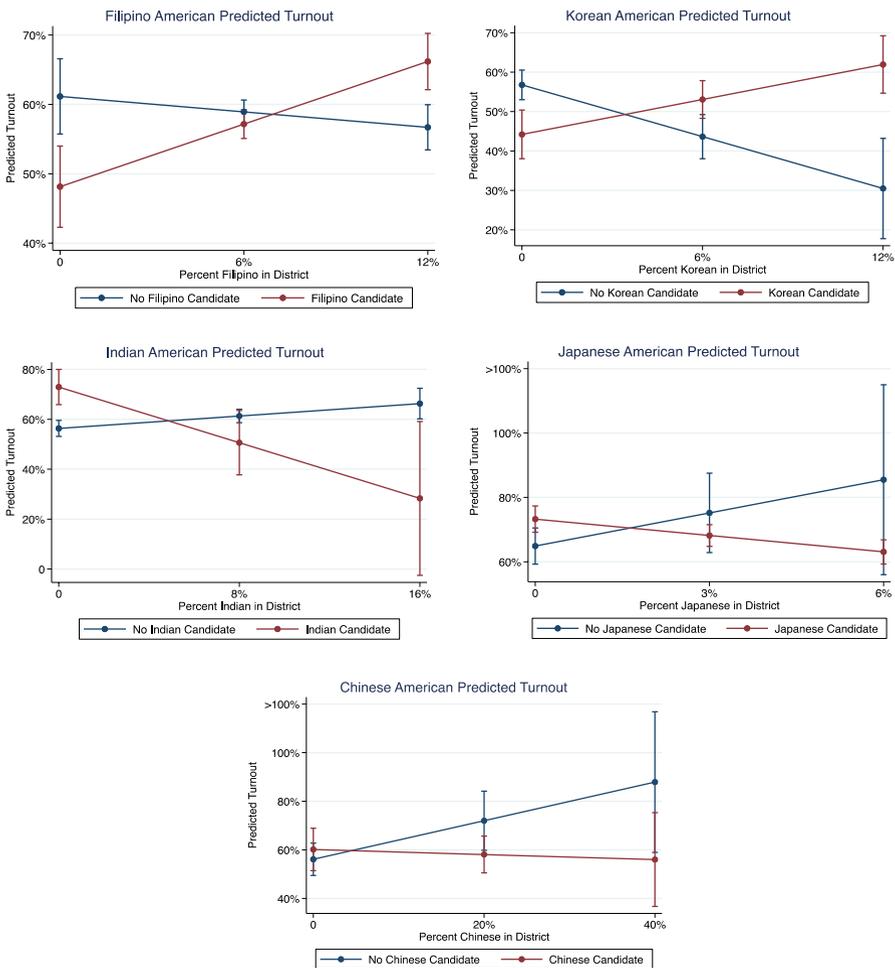


Fig. 4 National origin turnout

communities regardless of district composition, producing a 16.6 percentage point increase in turnout for Indian Americans in the presence of an Indian American candidate and an 8.4 percentage point increase for Japanese Americans for a Japanese candidate. While voter turnout data alone cannot specify a causal mechanism for why Indian and Japanese American voters might exhibit distinctive behavior from African Americans, Latinos, or Asian Americans when measured in the aggregate, a number of possible explanations warrant consideration. First, on average, both Indian and Japanese Americans tend to be highly resourced communities. Studies in American politics have consistently found political participation to be highly correlated with various resources such as income, education and time (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Verba et al. 1995). Drawing upon Current Population Survey (2015) microdata from the U.S. Census Bureau, the US Department of Labor recently reported weekly median earnings by race and ethnicity, including disaggregating Asian Americans by national origin. They found Indian (\$1,346) and Japanese Americans (\$1,153) to be the highest income earners in the nation, outpacing Non-Hispanic whites (\$900), African Americans (\$640) and Latinos/Hispanics (\$600). Thus, the unequal distribution of resources may help explain differences in political behavior.

A second potential mechanism could be related to differences in settlement, acculturation or immigrant cohort. For example, Japanese American voters in the state are often third or fourth generation Californians, with a long history in the state which might translate into Japanese Americans being a relatively more acculturated Asian American group, with a potentially longer history and habit of political participation. Indian Americans to the United States, on the other hand, often arrive as students and highly educated H1B visas holders. Coming from India where one of the national languages is English and many immigrants speak fluent English upon arrival, may ease barriers to political participation for Indian immigrants relative to other communities who may be limited English proficient.

Filipino and Korean American Voter turnout

Results of Filipino and Korean American voter turnout resemble the pan-ethnic Asian American scenario: the effect of a Filipino or Korean co-ethnic candidate on turnout is conditional on the proportion of Filipinos or Koreans in the district. Important to note here—the findings for Filipino and Korean voters reflects a similar pattern of findings that prior research has found for African American and Latino voters. This should be an important nuance to our understanding of Asian American political behavior. Some subgroups of Asian Americans behave in patterns similar to other minorities, while others do not. Unlike Indian and Japanese Americans, Filipino and Korean Americans, on average may be somewhat less resourced and occupy a more middle-income position in the United States and certainly in California where the cost of living is high. According to Pew Social Trends, 62 percent of Koreans in the United States are foreign born and of that group, 53 percent are limited English proficient, which may create barriers to participation unless candidates

expend the time and resources to conduct language appropriate outreach. Thus, differentiation of resources could be an explanatory factor of these results.

Chinese American Turnout

Chinese Americans exhibit no significant rise in turnout for either co-ethnic candidates or as their percentage share of the district increases. Chinese Americans are the largest subgroup of Asian American immigrants in the United States, in California, and in this dataset and therefore the non-finding is not due to a lack of data or statistical power. These null results are informative and future research could further investigate a number of potential avenues. First, 63 percent of Chinese Americans in the U.S. are foreign born (Pew Research Center). A further account of Chinese American rates of naturalization, registration and political participation could identify potential differences in voter behavior between first- and second-generation voters. Second, the 2018 National Asian American Survey reports that Chinese Americans more than any other Asian subgroup report the least contact with other racial groups, which might suggest a particular type of insularity among Chinese Americans that has consequences for political participation. Finally, it is important to note that as the largest Asian subgroup in the nation, Chinese Americans could be driving the Asian American turnout results found by Fraga's (2016a) nationwide study (Tables 5, 6).

Table 5 Chinese, Indian and Filipino turnout with co-ethnic candidates, California assembly elections 2012–2018

	Chinese turnout	Indian turnout	Filipino turnout
Co-ethnic candidate ^a	0.040 (0.059)	0.166*** (0.032)	− 0.130*** (0.017)
Percent national origin in district	0.794 (0.437)	0.622* (0.262)	− 0.372 (0.351)
Coethnic candidate × percent national origin	− 0.899 (0.575)	− 3.410** (1.112)	1.876*** (0.243)
Open seat	0.005 (0.014)	− 0.013 (0.019)	0.002 (0.013)
Margin of victory <5%	0.055* (0.023)	0.013 (0.027)	− 0.026 (0.023)
Margin of victory 5–10%	0.124*** (0.029)	0.047* (0.021)	0.016 (0.021)
Margin of victory 10–20%	− 0.016 (0.013)	0.014 (0.018)	− 0.007 (0.011)
2014	− 0.225*** (0.013)	− 0.324*** (0.014)	− 0.312*** (0.009)
2016	0.081*** (0.012)	0.043* (0.018)	0.050*** (0.010)
Female	− 0.047*** (0.013)	− 0.032* (0.014)	− 0.042*** (0.007)
Partisan election	− 0.022 (0.015)	0.003 (0.031)	0.038* (0.015)
Constant	0.604*** (0.034)	0.662*** (0.022)	0.708*** (0.031)
Observations	9776	9372	9896

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

^aIn each model, the national origin of the co-ethnic candidate, percent national origin in district and turnout are the same. In other words, the Chinese American Turnout model measures Chinese American candidates and the percent of Chinese residents in a district

Table 6 Korean and Japanese turnout, California assembly elections 2012–18

	Korean turnout	Japanese turnout
Co-ethnic candidate ^a	– 0.126*** (0.038)	0.084* (0.033)
Percent national origin in district	– 2.189*** (0.640)	3.432 (2.936)
Coethnic candidate × percent national origin	3.667*** (0.679)	– 5.126 (2.881)
Open Seat	0.001 (0.014)	0.022 (0.012)
Margin of victory <5%	0.025 (0.017)	0.001 (0.025)
Margin of victory 5–10%	0.013 (0.028)	0.036 (0.022)
Margin of victory 10–20%	– 0.014 (0.015)	– 0.008 (0.012)
2012	– 0.067*** (0.014)	– 0.062*** (0.013)
2014	– 0.335*** (0.015)	– 0.293*** (0.008)
Female	– 0.019 (0.017)	– 0.044*** (0.009)
Partisan election	– 0.026 (0.017)	– 0.015 (0.025)
Constant	0.710*** (0.022)	0.771*** (0.030)
Observations	8485	8952

Robust standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

^aIn each model, the national origin of the co-ethnic candidate, percent national origin in district and turnout are the same. In other words, the Korean American Turnout model measures Korean American candidates and the percent of Korean residents in a district

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to analyze the impact of co-ethnic candidacy for Asian American voters for the first time. The race and voter behavior literature has largely concluded that the size and context of the minority population is a key factor in understanding minority mobilization. The logic of these prior studies suggests that being of a minority community alone is not enough to stimulate turnout for a co-ethnic candidate, but instead living amongst a large proportion of others of your own racial or ethnic group alters the calculus of minority voting behavior with or without a co-ethnic candidate.

Consistent with the expectations of the race and ethnic politics voting behavior literature, I find that co-ethnic candidates stimulate a measurable increase in turnout conditional on the proportion of Asian Americans residing in the jurisdiction, when examined as a pan-ethnic group. This finding suggests that living amongst other Asian Americans may create an environment characterized by increased political participation. Ramirez (2013), for example, has argued that Latino voters in majority-minority districts may benefit from additional on-the-ground resources that help stimulate voter turnout such as Spanish language media and local non-profit advocacy groups. Amongst African Americans, scholars have suggested that linked fate may be advanced and crystallized by interaction with informal and formal sociopolitical networks such as black media, the black family and black religious and community organizations (Dawson 2003; Calhoun-Brown 1996). When geographically concentrated, such material and psychological benefits may also

be available to Asian Americans. This is an area of research ripe for additional inquiry.

The findings suggest an opportunity for minority voter turnout theories to be newly applied to the case of Asian Americans. While the “empowerment” thesis as proposed by Bobo and Gilliam (1990) has not borne out in data from the African American community for whom the thesis was proposed, the linkage between co-ethnicity and political behavior does bear fruit among Asian American voters. The evolving nature of Asian Americans as fully participating voting members of the United States must be reconsidered, as the data presented here supports an adapted application of the theory to this case of minority voters. While the evidence suggests empowerment is at play, the findings do not preclude the possibility that elite-level mobilizations could explain increases in Asian American voting. While Asian Americans generally report a low level of communication being received from political campaigns (Wong et al. 2011; Ramakrishnan et al. 2017), Asian American candidates may make significant linguistically and culturally appropriate appeals (Lai and Geron 2006; Lai et al. 2001; Wong 2008).

Finally, this study presents a novel contribution to the study of Asian Americans in their national origin subgroups. The findings suggest distinctive behavior between groups. Particularly notable is the effect of a co-ethnic candidate for Indian Americans and Japanese Americans. What drives this difference in turnout might rely on the immigration pathways, unique history, socioeconomic resources, and hierarchical racial and class position of Japanese and Indian Americans in California. One possible explanation for this variation may come from the classic resource theory of voter turnout and political participation. Given the immigration history of the majority of Asian Americans as highly skilled workers and their families, Asian Americans, on average, occupy a middle to upper income status, are highly educated, and pay close attention to the news media, all of which are associated with increased participation, particularly amongst whites. In addition, the findings of co-ethnic mobilization align with studies that find high rates of co-ethnic giving among Asian American political donors (Tam Cho 2003; Shah 2019). Moreover, while our existing theories of mobilization may not fully explain the picture of Asian American voter behavior presented here, a combination of these theories might shed light on the mechanisms that undergird Asian American political participation.

Asian American communities are growing far beyond the Golden State. Nevada, Texas, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Georgia, New Jersey and many other states all have growing communities of Asian Americans. With that growth, legislators and candidates are adjusting their campaign and representative tactics to reach communities that are growing as a proportion of their electorate (Lai 2011). In Henderson, Nevada a suburb of Las Vegas, Asian Americans now account for eleven percent of Clark county residents (ACS 2015). A recent opening of an Asian American organization drew attendance from two members of Congress and representatives

from both of the state's senators looking to court Asian American voters.¹⁰ Similarly, Indian American congressional candidate Sri Kulkarni, running in a district in the suburbs of Houston, Texas told *The Texas Observer*, "When I first started, I was told not to bother with the Asian American community because they don't turn out." He ran a campaign challenging this assertion by engaging potential Asian American voters in their own languages, at their places of worship and community centers.¹¹

The demographic profile of California today reflects Census projections for the United States in the coming decades (Baretto and Segura 2014). No other state has the current mix of races and ethnicities as found in California. While California may be a unique case, it is important to view trends in Asian American voter behavior here to better understand the growing communities of Asian Americans across the country. This study represents a step forward in our theorizing and empirical analysis of minority voting behavior and should open the door to additional studies that can further uncover the mechanisms driving voter behavior such as accounts of group consciousness and intragroup ties, perceptions of trust and responsiveness to co-ethnic candidates, and contextual-resources and elite driven efforts that stimulate turnout. The findings presented here identify discrete differences across Asian subgroups and offers a comparison of pan-ethnic Asian American political behavior in comparison to other minority communities, and the findings suggest Asian Americans provide an important nuance to the study of minority political behavior.

Acknowledgements This research was supported by the Haynes Lindley Doctoral Fellowship from the John Randolph and Dora Haynes Foundation. Special thanks to Jane Junn, Christian Grose, Bernard Fraga, Matt Barreto, Bryan Wilcox-Archuleta, Joey Huddleston and Dave Ebner. Additional thanks to the organizers and participants of the Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration Consortium (PRIEC) meetings at Michigan State University in April 2018, and UC Riverside in November 2018, and several anonymous reviewers for their helpful feedback. Earlier versions of this paper were also presented at the American Political Science Association and Western Political Science Association.

Appendix 1: Difference in Difference Analysis

To further probe the effect of a pan-ethnic Asian American candidate on aggregated Asian American voter mobilization, a difference in difference analysis was conducted. This is a quasi-experimental design used to estimate the effect of a specific intervention or treatment using observational data (Card and Krueger 1993). The test isolates the presence of an Asian American candidate as a "treatment" on voter turnout whereas districts with no Asian candidate serve as a control (See Table 7).

¹⁰ See Kudialis, Chris. "Political group catering to Asian, Pacific Islander populations opens in Las Vegas." *The Las Vegas Sun*. November 4, 2017. Available online.

¹¹ See Miller, Justin. "Sri Kulkarni is Changing the Way Democrats Talk to Asian Americans." *The Texas Observer*. September 5, 2018. Available online.

Table 7 Difference in difference research design

Year	Control	Treatment
2012	No Asian candidate	No Asian candidate
2014	No Asian candidate	No Asian candidate
2016	No Asian candidate	Yes Asian candidate
	N = 38 Districts	N = 3 Districts

I analyzed pan-ethnic Asian American turnout in districts that had no Asian American candidate from 2012 to 2016 election cycles, and compared that to Asian American turnout in districts with no Asian candidate in 2012 or 2014, but did have an Asian candidate present in 2016. This occurred in three instances—districts 27, 34 and 68. Using linear regression and the same electoral control variables, I again find evidence that aggregated Asian American turnout is elevated in those districts with Asian candidates in 2016, in comparison to those without an Asian candidate over the three election cycles. Figure 5 presents a visualization of the difference in difference analysis.

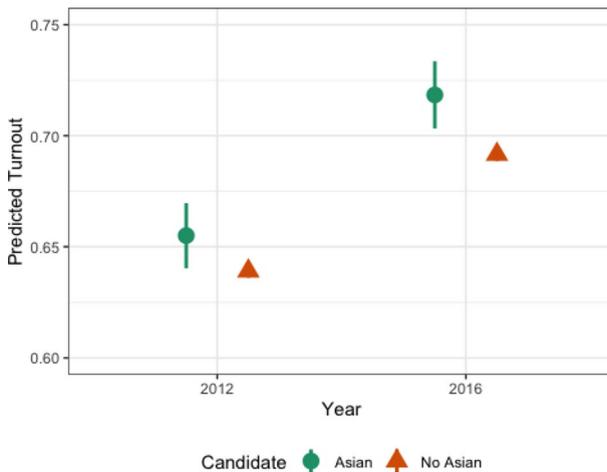


Fig. 5 Results from difference in difference analysis—observation of Asian American turnout in districts with and without Asian American candidate

Appendix 2: Asian American Turnout by Partisanship

See Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8 Asian Partisan Turnout for Asian Democrat Candidates, California Assembly Elections 2012–2018

	Asian Democrat turnout	Asian Republican turnout	Asian Independent turnout
Asian candidate—Democrat	0.026*** (0.002)	0.016*** (0.003)	0.038*** (0.003)
Incumbent	– 0.037*** (0.005)	– 0.0312*** (0.006)	– 0.059*** (0.005)
Open seat	– 0.03*** (0.005)	– 0.020*** (0.006)	– 0.054*** (0.005)
Margin of victory < 5%	– 0.015*** (0.004)	– 0.0158*** (0.004)	– 0.016*** (0.004)
Margin of victory 5–10%	– 0.009** (0.003)	– 0.008 (0.004)	– 0.012** (0.004)
Margin of victory 10–20%	– 0.012*** (0.002)	– 0.007* (0.003)	– 0.012*** (0.003)
2014	– 0.276*** (0.002)	– 0.240*** (0.003)	– 0.266*** (0.003)
2016	0.068*** (0.002)	0.046*** (0.003)	0.065*** (0.003)
Female	– 0.008*** (0.002)	– 0.007** (0.002)	– 0.004* (0.002)
Partisan election	0.010*** (0.003)	– 0.011*** (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)
Constant	0.712*** (0.005)	0.700*** (0.007)	0.625*** (0.006)
Observations	53,624	51,730	52,478

OLS regression. Standard errors in parentheses

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

Table 9 Asian Partisan turnout for Asian Republican Candidates, California assembly elections 2012–2018

	Asian Democrat turnout	Asian Republican turnout	Asian Independent turnout
Asian candidate—Republican	0.018*** (0.003)	0.007* (0.003)	0.025*** (0.003)
Incumbent	– 0.038*** (0.003)	– 0.033*** (0.006)	– 0.062*** (0.006)
Open seat	– 0.030*** (0.005)	– 0.021*** (0.006)	– 0.055*** (0.005)
Margin of victory < 5%	– 0.011** (0.004)	– 0.014** (0.004)	– 0.011** (0.004)
Margin of victory 5–10%	– 0.008* (0.004)	– 0.006 (0.004)	– 0.01** (0.004)
Margin of victory 10–20%	– 0.012*** (0.003)	– 0.006* (0.003)	– 0.011*** (0.003)
2014	– 0.276*** (0.002)	– 0.240*** (0.003)	– 0.266*** (0.003)
2016	0.068*** (0.002)	0.046*** (0.003)	0.065*** (0.003)
Female	– 0.010*** (0.002)	– 0.008*** (0.002)	– 0.006** (0.002)
Partisan election	0.011*** (0.003)	– 0.012*** (0.003)	0.006* (0.003)
Constant	0.716*** (0.005)	0.704*** (0.006)	0.629*** (0.006)
Observations	53,624	51,730	52,478

OLS regression. Standard errors in parentheses

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

References

- Alvarez, R. M., & Nagler, J. (1997). *Analysis of Crossover and Strategic Voting*. Social Science Working Paper, 1019. California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA. Retrieved from <https://authors.lib.ry.caltech.edu/80362/1/sswp1019.pdf>
- Aoki, A., & Nakanishi, D. (2001). Asian Pacific Americans and the New Minority Politics. *PS Political Science and Politics*, 34(3), 605–610.
- Aoki, A., & Takeda, O. (2008). *Asian American Politics*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Baldassare, M., & Bonner, D., Dykman, A., & Ward, R. (2019). Just the Facts: California's Likely voters. Public Policy Institute of California. Retrieved from https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/JTF_LikelyVotersJTF.pdf.
- Barreto, M. (2007). Sí Se Puede! Latino candidates and the mobilization of Latino voters. *American Political Science Review*, 101(3), 425–441.
- Barreto, M. (2010). *Ethnic cues: The role of shared ethnicity in latino political participation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Barreto, M., Segura, G., & Woods, N. (2004). The mobilizing effect of majority-minority districts on latino turnout. *American Political Science Review*, 98(1), 65–75.
- Barreto, M., & Segura, G. (2014). *Latino American: How America's most dynamic population is poised to transform the politics of the nation*. Californai: Public Affairs.
- Bobo, L., & Gilliam, F. (1990). Race, sociopolitical participation, and black empower. *American Political Science Review*, 84(02), 377–393.
- Brace, K., Handley, L., Niemi, R., & Stanley, H. (1995). Minority turnout and the creation of majority-minority districts. *American Politics Quarterly*, 23(2), 190–203.
- Campbell, A., Converse, P., Miller, W. and Stokes, D. (1960). *The American Voter*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Casellas, J., & Wallace, S. (2015). The role of race, ethnicity, and party on attitudes toward descriptive representation. *American Politics Research*, 43(1), 144–169.
- Calhoun-Brown, A. (1996). African American churches and political mobilization: The psychological impact of organizational resources. *The Journal of Politics*, 58(4), 935–953.
- Card, D., & Krueger, A. B. (1993). *Minimum wages and employment: A case study of the fast food industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania*. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Chong, D., & Rogers, R. (2005). Racial solidarity and political participation. *Political Behavior*, 27(4), 347–374.
- Collet, C. (2005). Bloc voting, polarization, and the Panethnic hypothesis: The case of Little Saigon. *Journal of Politics*, 67(3), 907–933.
- Dahl, R. (1961). *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Dawson, M. (2003). *Black visions: The roots of contemporary African American political ideologies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Espiritu, Y. L. (1992). *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Fraga, B. (2016a). Candidates or districts? Reevaluating the role of race on voter turnout. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(1), 97–122.
- Fraga, B. (2016b). Redistricting and the causal impact of race on voter turnout. *Journal of Politics*, 78(1), 19–34.
- Fraga, B. (2018). *The Turnout Gap: Race, Ethnicity, and the Political Inequality in a Diversifying America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fraga, B., & Merseth, J. (2016). Examining the Causal Impact of the Voting Rights Act Language Minority Provisions. *The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*, 1(1), 31–59. <https://doi.org/10.1017/rep.2015.1>.
- Fraga, L., & Ramirez, R. (2004). Demography and political influence: Disentangling the Latino vote. *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy*, 116, 69–96.
- Garcia, L. B., & Michelson, M. (2012). *Mobilizing inclusion: Transforming the electorate through get-out-the-vote campaigns*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Gay, C. (2001). The effect of black congressional representation on political participation. *American Political Science Review*, 95(3), 589–602.

- Go, M. H. (2018). Does Christopher Chen Vote More than Shu-Wei Chen? The cost of ethnic retention among Asian American Voters. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 6(4), 553–575.
- Green, D., & Gerber, A. (2015). *Get out the vote: How to increase voter turnout*. Washington DC: Brookings Institute.
- Griffin, J., & Keane, M. (2006). Descriptive representation and the composition of African American turnout. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(4), 998–1012.
- Gurin, P., Miller, A., & Gurin, G. (1980). Stratum identification and consciousness. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 43, 30–47.
- Hajnal, Z. (2010). *America's uneven democracy: Race, turnout, and representation in city politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hajnal, Z., & Lee, T. (2011). *Why Americans don't join the party: Race, immigration, and the failure of political parties to engage the electorate*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Henderson, J., Sekhon, J., & Titunik, R. (2016). Cause or effect? Turnout in Hispanic majority-minority districts. *Political Analysis*, 24(3), 404–412.
- Highton, B., Huckfeldt, R., & Hale, I. (2016). Come general consequences of California's top-two primary system. *California Journal of Politics and Policy*, 8(2), 1–12.
- Huddy, L., Sears, D. O., & Levy, J. S. (2013). *The Oxford handbook of political psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jackman, M., & Jackman, R. (1973). An interpretation of the relation between objective and subjective social status. *American Sociological Review*, 38(5), 569–582.
- Jang, S.-J. (2009). Get out on behalf of your group: Electoral participation of Latinos and Asia Americans. *Political Behavior*, 31(4), 511–535.
- Junn, J., & Masuoka, N. (2008). Asian American identity: Shared racial status and political context. *Perspectives on Politics*, 6(4), 729–740.
- Keele, L., & While, I. (2018). African American Turnout and African American Candidates. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 7(3), 431–449.
- Keith, B., Magleby, D., Nelson, C., Orr, E., & Westley, M. (1992). *The myth of the independent voter*. Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press.
- Kibria, N. (2003). *Becoming Asian American: Second-generation Chinese and Korean American identities*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Kim, C. J., & Lee, T. (2001). Interracial politics: Asian Americans and other communities of color. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 34(3), 631–637.
- Kim, D. (2015). The effect of party mobilization, group identity, and racial context on Asian Americans' turnout. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 3(4), 592–614.
- Klar, S., & Krupnikov, Y. (2016). *Independent Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kuo, A., Malhotra, N., & Mo, C. H. (2016). Social Exclusion And Political Identity: The Case of Asian American partisanship. *Journal of Politics*, 79(1), 17–32.
- Lai, J. (2011). *Asian American political action: Suburban transformations*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Lai, J., & Geron, K. (2006). *When Asian Americans run: The Suburban And Urban Dimensions of Asian American candidates in California local politics*. Berkely, CA: California Politics and Policy.
- Lai, J., Kim, T. P., & Takeda, O. (2001). Asian Pacific-American campaigns, elections and elected officials. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 34(3), 611–617.
- Lauderdale, D., & Kestenbaum, B. (2000). Asian American ethnic identification by surname. *Population Research and Policy Review*, 19(3), 283–300.
- Lee, J., & Zhou, M. (2015). *The Asian American Achievement Paradox*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Lee, T. (2007). From shared demographic categories to common political destinies: Immigration and the link from racial identity to group politics. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 4(2), 433–456.
- Leighley, J. (2001). *Strength in numbers: The political mobilization of racial and ethnic minorities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Liang, K.-Y., & Zeger, S. (1986). Longitudinal data analysis using generalized linear models. *Biometrika*, 73(1), 13–22.
- Lien, P. T., Conway, M. M., & Wong, J. (2004). *The politics of Asian Americans: Diversity and community*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Masuoka, N. (2006). Together they become one: Examining the predictors of Panethnic group consciousness among Asian Americans and Latinos. *Social Science Quarterly*, 87(5), 993–1011.

- Masuoka, N., & Junn, J. (2013). *The Politics of Belonging: Race, public opinion and immigration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McConaughy, C., White, I., Leal, D., & Casellas, J. (2010). A Latino on. The Ballot: Explaining coethnic voting among Latinos and the response of White Americans. *Journal of Politics*, 72(4), 1199–1211.
- McClain, P., Carew, J. J., Walton, E., & Watts, C. (2009). Group membership, group identity, and group consciousness: Measures of racial identity in American politics??. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12, 471–485.
- McDonald, M., & Popkin, S. (2001). The myth of the vanishing voter. *The American Political Science Review*, 95(4), 963–974.
- McGhee, E. (2011). *California's 2011 redistricting: The preliminary plan*. San Francisco, CA: Public Policy Institute of California.
- McKue, K. (2011). Creating California's Official Redistricting Database. California Institute of Technology. Available online: <http://statewidetatabase.org/info/metadata/Creating%20CA%20Official%20Redistricting%20Database.pdf>
- Merseth, J. L. (2018). Race-ing solidarity: Asian Americans and support for black lives matter. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 6(3), 337–356.
- Miller, A., Gruin, P., Gurin, G., & Malanchuk, O. (1981). Group consciousness and political participation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 25(3), 494–511.
- Min, P. G. (2002). *The Second generation: Ethnic identity among Asian Americans*. Lanham, MD: Rowman Altamira.
- Min, P. G. (2006). *Asian Americans: Contemporary trends and issues* (Vol. 174). Newbury Park, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Min, P. G., & Jang, S. H. (2015). The concentration of Asian Americans in STEM and health-care occupation: An intergenerational comparison. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(6), 841–859.
- Nakanishi, D. (1991). The Next Swing Vote? Asian Pacific Americans and California Politics. In B. O. Jackson & M. B. Preston (Eds.), *Racial and Ethnic Politics in California* (pp. 25–54). Bekeley, CA: IGS Press.
- Nakanishi, D., & Lai, J. (2003). *Asian American politics: Law, participation, and policy* (Vol. 3). Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Nyhan, B., Skovron, C., & Titunik, R. (2017). Differential registration bias in voter file data: A sensitivity analysis approach. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(3), 744–760.
- Pantoja, A., Ramirez, R., & Segura, G. (2001). Citizens by choice, voters by necessity: Patterns in political mobilization by naturalized Latinos. *Political Research Quarterly*, 54(4), 729–750.
- Park, J. (2008). Second-generation Asian American Pan-Ethnic identity: Pluralized meanings of a racial label. *Sociological Perspectives*, 51(3), 541–561.
- Phoenix, D., & Arora, M. (2018). From emotion to action among Asian Americans: Assessing the roles of threat and identity in the age of trump. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 6(3), 357–372.
- Okamoto, D. (2015). *Redefining race: Asian American panethnicity and shifting ethnic boundaries*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Ramakrishnan, S. K., Wong, J., Lee, J., & Lee, T. (2017). *2016 Post-election National Asian American Survey*. Retrieved from <https://naasurvey.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/NAAS16-post-election-report.pdf>.
- Ramakrishnan, S. K. (2005). *Democracy in Immigrant America: Changing Demographics and Political Participation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Ramakrishnan, S. K., & Espenshade, T. J. (2001). Immigrant Incorporation and Political Participation in the United States. *International Migration Review*, 35(3), 870–909. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2001.tb00044.x>.
- Ramírez, R. (2013). *Mobilizing opportunities: The evolving latino electorate and the future of American politics*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press.
- Sanchez, G. (2006). The role of group consciousness in Latino public opinion. *Political Research Quarterly*, 59(3), 435–446.
- Sanchez, G., & Masuoka, N. (2008). Brown-utility Heuristic? The presence and contributing factors of Latino linked fate. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 32(4), 519–531.
- Sanchez, G., & Vargas, E. (2016). Taking a closer look at group identity: The link between theory and measurement of group consciousness and linked fate. *Political Research Quarterly*, 69(1), 160–174.

- Sadhvani, S., & Junn, J. (2018). Structuring good representation: Institutional design and election in California. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 51(2), 318–322.
- Sadhvani, S., & Mendez, M. (2018). Candidate ethnicity and Latino Voting in Co-Partisan elections. *California Journal of Politics and Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.5070/P2cjpg10241253>.
- Schildkraut, D. (2013). Which birds of a feather flock together? Assessing attitudes about descriptive representation among LATINOS and Asian Americans. *American Politics Research*, 41(4), 699–729.
- Sears, D., Fu, M., Henry, P. J., & Kerra, B. (2003). The origins and persistence of ethnic identity among the ‘new immigrant’ groups”. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 66, 419–437.
- Seito, L. (1998). *Race and politics: Asian Americans, Latinos, and Whites in a Los Angeles Suburb*. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Shah, S. (2019). *Donor preferences for coethnic representation: Breaking the mold or more the same?* Unpublished Manuscript.
- Shingles, R. (1981). Black consciousness and political participation: The missing link. *American Political Science Review*, 75(1), 76–91.
- Simien, E. (2005). Race, Gender and Linked Fate. *Journal of Black Studies*, 35(5), 529–550.
- Tam, W. (1995). Asians: A monolithic voting bloc? *Political Behavior*, 17(2), 223–249.
- Tam Cho, W. (2003). Contagion effects and ethnic contribution networks. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(2), 368–387.
- Tate, K. (2003). Black opinion on the legitimacy of racial redistrict and minority-majority districts. *American Political Science Review*, 97(01), 45–56.
- Trivedi, N. (2005). The effects of identity-based GOTV direct mail appeals on the turnout of Indian Americans. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 601(1), 115–122.
- Uhlener, C., & Le, D. (2017). The role of coethnic political mobilization in electoral incorporation: Evidence from Orange County, California. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 5(2), 263–297.
- Verba, S., & Nie, N. (1972). *Participation in America*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Verba, S., Scholzman, K. L., & Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Whitby, K., & Gilliam, F. (1991). A longitudinal analysis of competing explanations for the transformation of southern congressional politics. *The Journal of Politics*, 53(2), 504–518.
- Wolfinger, R., & Rosenstone, S. (1980). *Who votes?* Princeton, NJ: Yale University Press.
- Wong, J. (2008). *Democracy’s promise: Immigrant and American civic institutions*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Wong, J., Karthick Ramakrisnan, S., Lee, T., & Junn, J. (2011). *Asian American Political participation: Emerging constituents and their political identities*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Wong, J. (2005). Mobilizing Asian American voters: A field experiment. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 601, 102–114.
- Zhou, M., Lee, J., Vallejo, J. A., Tafoya-Estrada, R., & Xiong, Y. S. (2008). Success attained, deterred, and denied: Divergent pathways to social mobility in los angeles’s new second generation. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 620(1), 37–61.
- Zorn, C. (2006). Comparing GEE and robust standard errors for conditionally dependent data. *Political Research Quarterly*, 59(3), 329–341.

Publisher’s Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.