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Research Article

Ethnic Variation in Environmental Attitudes and Opinion among Asian American Voters

Paul M. Ong, Loan Le, and Paula Daniels

Abstract

Asian Americans are increasingly recognized as an important constituency in electoral politics and yet there is a glaring gap in information about ethnic differences in public opinion.¹ Using a unique survey of Asian American voters conducted by the California League of Conservation Voters, we add to the nascent literature on environmental attitudes and public opinion among Asian Americans. We find systematic ethnic differences in the distribution of responses related to self-reported “environmentalist” identity, support for environmental policies, and environmental concerns such as climate change. Asian Americans are strongly proenvironment overall; nevertheless, the findings suggest that any mobilization related to environmental politics should be sensitive to ethnic differences, as well as commonalities that transcend subgroups.

Introduction

The nexus between Asian Americans and the environment is multidimensional. It includes issues related to environmental justice, which is the topic of most of the other articles in this special issue. For example, many Asian American communities are disproportionately exposed to pollution and suffer the health consequences. There is a dire need for activism to redress these injustices, but environmental engagement is not limited to this particular arena. There are cross-cutting issues vis-à-vis human environmental impacts that tie this population to broader societal challenges that do not adhere to jurisdictional boundaries and socially constructed differences, such as race and ethnicity. Matters such as global warming are not uniquely Asian American concerns. However, they certainly touch this group and will have profound

impacts for future Asian American generations. Environmental externalities intrinsically and inevitably bind Asian Americans to a fundamental political question: what should society do collectively and through the apparatus of the state to address environmental problems? In democracies such as the United States, the opinions of citizens matter in shaping governmental action through the exercise of voice at the ballot box, among other places. Despite what many ardent activists see as an obvious need for immediate and dramatic actions to curtail human degradation of the environment, there are diverse opinions on its relative importance and appropriate public policy. There are still, for example, those who continue to deny global warming or attribute climate change to only natural causes, a political position that translates into opposition to any governmental intervention.

Asian Americans should be active participants in the civic and political debate about the future of the environment. An important segment of the population is comprised of registered voters in California, a state that has been at the forefront of efforts to attenuate the impacts on air, water, and land resources. The state has aggressively gone beyond national standards in regulating automobile emissions and promoting alternative energy sources. Continuing debate, nonetheless, ensues with opponents battling over opposition to existing state policy versus support for more regulation. Asian American voters, an “awakening sleeping giant” in politics (Ong, De La Cruz-Viesca, and Nakanishi, 2008), can play a pivotal role in key elections.

This resource paper adds to the nascent literature on environmental attitudes and public opinion among Asian Americans. The rest of the paper is divided into four sections. Section 1 provides a background based on the existing literature, which indicates the growing importance of Asian Americans in electoral politics and highlights strong proenvironmental attitudes. One glaring gap is information about ethnic differences on the latter topic. A unique survey of Asian American voters conducted by the California League of Conservation Voters (CLCV) bridges this lacuna in knowledge. Section 2 presents ethnic-specific statistics on personal attitudes and opinions related to environmentalism and environmental concerns. The findings show statistically significant differences in responses to two of three questions across groups. Section 3 presents ethnic-specific statistics on attitudes and opinions

related to environmental policy and a possible ballot initiative. Again, we see statistically significant differences across groups in responses to two of the three items. Section 4 discusses the implications in terms of future research and political action. This resource paper does not examine factors beyond ethnicity (e.g., ideological, demographic, and socioeconomic influences) that might also shape attitudes and opinions, an investigation that we recommend as worthy of attention in future research. Despite this limitation, the findings suggest that any mobilization related to environmental politics should be sensitive to ethnic differences, as well as commonalities that transcend subgroups.

Section 1: Asian American Politics and Environmental Position

Over the last decade, Asian Americans voters have emerged as a potentially important force at the ballot box. They turned out in record numbers to vote in the 2008 general election. According to California Congressman and Democratic National Committee Vice Chairman Mike Honda, “Asian-Americans have, in the minds of the Democratic Party and Democratic candidates, gone from a marginalized community to the margin of victory” (*Salon*, 28 July 2012). Recent political commentaries indicated that the 2012 presidential election might have been “the year of the Asian voter.”² Thomas Schaller (*Salon*, 28 July 2012), professor of political science at the University of Maryland, provided this recent characterization:

They have been called the “forgotten minority” and a “sleeping political giant.” Just four years after being politically ignored, however, it now appears they are finally attracting attention. They are Asian Americans, and these once “overlooked” voters are being discussed as potentially “decisive” “gamechangers” in the 2012 presidential election.

These prognoses are driven by a rapid growth in the Asian American population, which now comprises about 5.6 percent of the total. A recent report from the Pew Research Center found that Asian Americans are the “highest income, best educated, and fastest growing racial group in the United States,” surpassing Hispanics as the fastest-growing group of new immigrants.³ Recent estimates also provide that Asian Americans make up 36 percent of the legal immigrant population compared with 31 percent for Hispanics.

Nowhere on the U.S. mainland is the emergence of Asian American political influence more felt than in California. In 2010, 5.3 million Asian Americans made up more than 14 percent of the state's total. There are more Asian Americans in California than any other state. Despite its heavy foreign-born composition, Asian Americans as a group contribute large numbers to the available American electorate, making up about one in eight of registered voters. One indication of their growing influence is the discernible ability to elect Asian American candidates running for state offices and Congress (Ong and Lee, 2010).

One of the key characteristics of the Asian American population is its extreme ethnic diversity, which is matched more or less by apparent diversity in Asian American opinions on political issues. The most extensive national study to date finds significant ethnic differences in ideology, party affiliation, levels of civic and political engagement, and voting (Wong et al., 2011). There are similar differences in California. While 63 percent of Asian Americans voted for the Democrat Barack Obama in the 2008 presidential election, an ethnic breakdown reveals that 86 percent of Asian Indians did, as did 69 percent of Chinese Americans, 75 percent of Filipino, 60 percent of Korean, and 51 percent of Vietnamese (Asian Pacific American Legal Center, 2010). The same report also found noticeable ethnic differences in voting on Proposition 8, which was a ballot initiative to eliminate the rights of same sex couples to marry. Asian Americans on average supported the ban at 54 percent, but Korean Americans were in the high range at 73 percent and Chinese Americans in the lowest range at 48 percent.

Less is known about Asian American attitudes on environmental issues. The previously mentioned surveys and publications examine patterns of attitudes on immigration policy, affirmative action, politics (e.g., voter registration, voting, and partisan identification), social characteristics (including religious differences), the economy and employment, and experiences with discrimination. However, even the 2008 National Survey of Asian Americans—the single largest of its kind—does not provide insight into how Asian Americans think about environmental issues. Environmentally oriented surveys that include Asian Americans generally find that this group is as environmentally oriented as the general public or whites. For example, Johnson, Bowker, and Cordell (2004) found few differences between Asian Americans and whites in terms of environ-

mental beliefs and behavior. In California, the proportion of Asian Americans with proenvironmental attitudes fell between that for whites and for other minorities (Baldassare et al., 2011). One of the major limitations of these analyses is that there is no differentiation among the views of the various Asian ethnic nationalities within the category of Asian. The singular racial categorization obscures potential diversity and precludes a possible deeper understanding of the characteristics of the Asian American voter. This is due largely to the problem of small sample sizes, where too few observations provide for inadequate statistical power in hypothesis testing. Hence, many analyses of Asian Americans based on standard surveys avoid conditional analyses of ethnic subgroups because the small number of cases in each national origin ethnic group would not produce statistically meaningful results. Because of this, most surveys do not even ask Asian Americans for information on ethnicity.

The major exception to this is a survey conducted by the CLVC, a nonpartisan, nonprofit group whose mission is to “protect California’s natural resources and improve . . . the health of our communities,” by these methods: “Increase the impact of organizations in the conservation, public health and environmental justice communities; Conduct public education campaigns that connect voters’ environmental values to the democratic process; and Facilitate civic engagement efforts that increase the strength of the voice and depth of the participation of pro-environment voters, especially in underrepresented communities.”⁴ The CLCV Education Fund (CLCVEF) is the 501(c)(3) affiliate of California’s only environmental political action group, the CLCV.

From the standpoint of a political campaign seeking to engage voters in a state with an increasingly racially and ethnic diverse population, understanding minority voters is critical. The CLCVEF had conducted a survey of Latino voters’ views on the environment in May 2000. That survey, which showed that Latinos supported environmental laws and their enforcement, solidified the emerging view that the Latino vote was influential in electing environmental candidates and in supporting environmental ballot measures. Publication of the results of that survey had influence throughout the array of environmental organizations in California, including an increased effort to target Latino voters in outreach and education efforts, recruit Latinos to board positions, and support their election to office.⁵ The CLCV notes on its website that

prior to its poll: “Latino legislators with poor environmental scores often justified their antipathy by arguing that environmental bills were not a priority for their largely Latino constituencies,” but that after the poll results showed strong concern about the environment on the part of California Latino voters, there was “a sudden and dramatic change in the way legislators, especially Latino legislators, prioritized the environment.”⁶

With the emergence of Asian American voters as a political force, the CLCVEF subsequently conducted a survey of that population in 2008–9, resulting in the 2009 report “Asian American Environmentalists: An Untapped Power for Change in California.”⁷ A key finding was that Asian Americans were more likely to consider themselves as environmentalists than other groups (the latter based on previous surveys). For the purpose of this resource paper, the survey is unique because it collected information by ethnicity beyond a standard measure of Asian American racial identity.⁸

The CLCV survey was guided by an advisory committee that included representatives from the Asian Pacific American Legal Center’s demographic unit and the University of California, Los Angeles. The survey was fielded by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research. Nine multilanguage focus groups were conducted in August and September 2008 to test possible questions and appropriate wording for the survey instrument. The results indicate that the survey should use and test alternative wording for similar questions across national origin ethnic groups. The sample was drawn from voter registration rolls, where ethnicity of the potential respondents was determined using (1) information on place of birth for immigrants if that information was available and (2) for naturalized immigrants with no information on place of birth and U.S.-born Asian Americans, ethnicity is based on an imputation procedure based on ethnic specific surnames, including for U.S.-born Asian Americans. Filipinos are the most difficult group to identify because most have Spanish-sounding surnames. Because of the possibility of errors in categorization, ethnicity was verified through additional screening questions. Multilanguage telephone surveys lasting about twenty to twenty-five minutes were conducted in February and March 2009 with the goal of collecting a sufficient number of responses for the five largest Asian American groups. In total, 1,003 surveys were completed. The ethnic breakdown is as follow: 105 Asian Indians, 295 Chinese, 272 Filipinos,

99 Japanese, 101 Korean voters, and 131 Vietnamese.⁹ Basic demographic characteristics of the respondents are as follow: 72 percent are foreign born, 53 percent female, 21 percent are thirty-four years old or younger, and 24 percent are sixty or older.

The next two sections focus on six key dimensions of environmental attitudes and opinions. Three are used in the following section: self-identification as an environmentalist or conservationist;¹⁰ the importance of environmental issues; and seriousness of global warming and climate change. The remaining three dimensions provide insights into public policy and political position: the tradeoff between jobs and environmental protection; belief in the impact of individual versus collective action; and support of environmental issues. Although the CLCV report also presents some ethnic breakdowns of the responses, this resource paper differs from that publication in three ways. One, it examines some questions that were not included in the CLCV report, such as the one related to being a conservationist. The selection of variables is based on examining conceptual dimensions that are of primary concern to applied scholarly research. Two, this paper uses a more restrictive definition of proenvironmental positions. For example, it uses only strongly held attitudes rather than both strongly and “somewhat” held attitudes.¹¹ And three, it conducts a statistical test of ethnic difference. This is important because observed variations in the responses may be due merely to sampling error.

Section 2: Personal Preceptions

Political position on public policy is shaped by personal identity, beliefs, and attitudes. This section examines ethnic patterns in the responses to several related questions and uses chi-square tests to determine whether substantive differences across groups pass thresholds for statistical significance. Self-identification is based on responses to the following questions:

Do you consider yourself an environmentalist?

Do you consider yourself a conservationist?

Half of the respondents were asked the first question, and the other half were asked the second. We combined those answering “yes, strongly” as indicating being an environmentalist. The results are presented in Table 1. Over a quarter (29 percent) self-reported identity as “environmentalist” or “conservationist”. The greatest

proportions of identifiers were found among Vietnamese, Filipino, and Asian Indian national origin ethnic groups (51%, 33%, and 30%, respectively). A substantial portion of Chinese Americans also reported as “environmentalist” (approximately one-fourth of the Chinese American sample). Japanese (17%) and Korean (12%) Americans were the least likely to have reported an “environmentalist” identity. Chi-square tests with five degrees of freedom show that these differences are statistically significant ($p < .001$) and that interpretation of patterns in cell frequencies merit further attention (statistically, they are unlikely to have occurred by chance).

Table 1: Self-Described “Environmentalist”
by National Origin Ethnic Group

| Self-Described “Environmentalist” or “Conservationist” | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------|--------|-------------------|
| | Sample Size | No ID | Yes ID | Percentage Yes ID |
| Asian Indian | 105 | 70 | 35 | 33% |
| Chinese | 295 | 219 | 76 | 26% |
| Filipino | 272 | 189 | 83 | 31% |
| Japanese | 99 | 82 | 17 | 17% |
| Korean | 101 | 89 | 12 | 12% |
| Vietnamese | 131 | 64 | 67 | 51% |
| Total | 1,003 | 713 | 290 | 29% |
| Chi-square = 55.16; $p < .0001$; $df = 5$ | | | | |

Level of environmental concerns is measured by the following question:

How important are environmental issues to you personally . . . ?

We use the response “extremely important” to indicate a high level of concern for the environment. As reported in Table 2, substantial portions of the overall sample (29%) and for each ethnic group also indicate feeling very concerned about the environment. One-quarter or more of almost all national origin ethnic groups report these types of concerns: Chinese, 33 percent; Korean, 32 percent; Asian Indian, 31 percent; Filipino, 29 percent; and Vietnamese, 25

percent. For the remaining group of Japanese Americans in the sample, a similarly substantial percentage (19%) reported that they were concerned about the environment. Chi-square tests ($df = 5$) show that we should not interpret meaningful differences in reports of concerns about the environment among Asian American national origin ethnic groups in the sample ($p = .16$).

Table 2: Concern about Environment
by National Origin Ethnic Group

| Very Concerned about Environment | | | | |
|--|-------------|-----|-----|----------------|
| | Sample Size | No | Yes | Percentage Yes |
| Asian Indian | 105 | 73 | 32 | 30% |
| Chinese | 295 | 198 | 97 | 33% |
| Filipino | 272 | 194 | 78 | 29% |
| Japanese | 99 | 80 | 19 | 19% |
| Korean | 101 | 70 | 31 | 31% |
| Vietnamese | 131 | 98 | 33 | 25% |
| Total | 1,003 | 713 | 290 | 29% |
| Chi-square = 7.98; $p < 0.1572$; $df = 5$ | | | | |

We first classify those who said they believe that global warming or climate change is an extremely serious problem as “yes, very concerned about environment.” (“For each issue, please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem.”) We observe differences in public opinion across ethnic groups, as reported in Table 3. Well more than one-third of three national origin ethnic groups report global warming or climate change as “an extremely serious problem”: Japanese Americans (36%), Korean Americans (38%), and Vietnamese Americans (39%). Lower but still substantial percentages of Filipino Americans (27%), Chinese Americans (23%), and Asian Indians (25%) also report these concerns. These group differences in opinion are statistically significant (chi-square = 19.7, $df = 5$, $p < .001$). About 29

percent of the overall sample reported global warming and climate change issues as extremely serious.

Table 3: Concern about Global Environment

| Global Warming/Climate Change Extremely Serious | | | | |
|---|-------------|-----|-----|----------------|
| | Sample Size | No | Yes | Percentage Yes |
| Asian Indian | 105 | 79 | 26 | 25% |
| Chinese | 295 | 228 | 67 | 23% |
| Filipino | 272 | 199 | 73 | 27% |
| Japanese | 99 | 63 | 36 | 36% |
| Korean | 101 | 63 | 38 | 38% |
| Vietnamese | 131 | 80 | 51 | 39% |
| Total | 1,003 | 712 | 291 | 29% |
| Chi-square = 19.72; p < 0.0014; df = 5 | | | | |

Section 3: Policy And Political Opinions

This section examines opinions on environmental policies and possible ballot initiatives. Respondents were asked about the job-environmental tradeoff by identifying which of the following two statements reflects their opinion:

With the economy in dire shape, we need to encourage business growth and job creation. The government needs to invest in our economy through public works and transportation projects, immediately, and bypass environmental regulations that will slow down economic activity.

OR

We can create jobs and protect our air, land and water. By investing in green technology jobs, such as building and installing solar panels and windmills, we can create jobs and strengthen the economy, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and address global warming.

Those who selected the second option are classified as supporting economic growth while protecting the environment. We see the highest reported support for the domain of environmental

growth and jobs, with 38 percent of the overall sample selecting the second option. However, we also note in Table 4 striking differences in the joint distribution of public opinion on this issue and national origin ethnic group (chi-square = 78.9, $df = 5$, $p < .001$). For example, there is a 43 percent difference between the group with the highest percentage of supporters on this issue (Vietnamese American, 65%) and the group with lowest percentage (Chinese American, 22%). Note, however, that the striking difference is due to a sizeable jump in support for Vietnamese Americans along this dimension rather than a drop across the other national origin ethnic groups. Large percentages of Asian Indians (49%), Filipino Americans (40%), Japanese Americans (30%), and Korean Americans (37%) were supportive of promoting the environment while protecting jobs.

Table 4: Economic Growth and Environmental Protection Tradeoff by National Origin Ethnic Group

| Balancing Economic Growth and Environmental Protection | | | | |
|--|-------------|---|--|--|
| | Sample Size | Bypass Environmental Regulations That Slow Down Economy | Support Economic Growth While Protecting Environment | Percentage Economic Growth and Protect Environment |
| Asian Indian | 105 | 54 | 51 | 49% |
| Chinese | 295 | 229 | 66 | 22% |
| Filipino | 272 | 164 | 108 | 40% |
| Japanese | 99 | 69 | 30 | 30% |
| Korean | 101 | 64 | 37 | 37% |
| Vietnamese | 131 | 46 | 85 | 65% |
| Total | 1,003 | 626 | 377 | 38% |
| Chi-square = 78.92; $p < .0001$; $df = 5$ | | | | |

A key element of responding to environmental concerns is whether action should be taken at the individual or collective lev-

eI. Those who believe in the relative importance of political action selected the first of the following two options:

Taking action to influence environmental policies and regulations, such as voting for an environmental ballot measure or voting for a candidate with a strong environmental record.

OR

Taking individual action, such as recycling more, conserving energy, carpooling, or using public transportation.

Large segments of each national origin ethnic group are also likely to report a willingness to take political action in order to protect the environment. That is, a sizeable portion of each ethnic group was willing to influence environmental policies and regulations through voting. The joint distribution for “willingness to take political action” and national origin ethnic group, in order from greatest to least reported willingness, is 47 percent for Vietnamese, 46 percent for Chinese, 44 percent for Korean, 34 percent for Japanese, 32 percent for Filipino, and 31 percent for Asian Indians. All groups have large member segments willing to take political action but strikingly, almost one-half of the Vietnamese national origin respondents stated that they were agreeable to political engagement geared toward protection of the environment. (See Table 5.)

Table 5: Willingness to Take Political Action by National Origin Ethnic Group

| Support Taking Political Action | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-----|-----|----------------|
| | Sample Size | No | Yes | Percentage Yes |
| Asian Indian | 105 | 73 | 32 | 31% |
| Chinese | 295 | 159 | 136 | 46% |
| Filipino | 272 | 184 | 88 | 32% |
| Japanese | 99 | 65 | 34 | 34% |
| Korean | 101 | 57 | 44 | 44% |
| Vietnamese | 131 | 70 | 61 | 47% |
| Total | 1,003 | 608 | 395 | 39% |
| Chi-square = 7.98; p < 0.1572; df = 5 | | | | |

Finally, we examine possible voting behavior on environmental issues. We classify the respondents as voters who would support environmental initiatives if they answered yes to either of the following two statements:

Vote for a ballot measure to protect the environment.

OR

Vote for a ballot measure to protect the environment, even if it raises taxes slightly.

Table 5 presented results for a broader domain of willingness to take political action. However, political activity could consist of any number of participatory acts. When we shift to the specific option of whether to “vote for a ballot measure to protect the environment” as elaborated upon here, the percentage reporting that they agree remains steady or increases for all groups except for Chinese Americans. Nonetheless, a sizeable portion of all ethnic groups were willing to vote for a ballot measure to protect the environment (Asian Indian, 49%; Korean, 44%; Filipino, 43%; Japanese, 42%; and Chinese, 32%). Strikingly, Vietnamese Americans exhibit a large-scale willingness to support environmental protection at the ballot box, with 60 percent reporting that they would vote for such an initiative. The dominant finding is that Asian Americans report a willingness to participate in politics based on their pro-environmental protection attitudes. (See Table 6.)

Table 6: Voting on Environmental Initiative

| Would Vote for Initiative to Protect the Environment | | | | |
|--|-------------|-----|-----|----------------|
| | Sample Size | No | Yes | Percentage Yes |
| Asian Indian | 105 | 54 | 51 | 49% |
| Chinese | 295 | 202 | 93 | 32% |
| Filipino | 272 | 156 | 116 | 43% |
| Japanese | 99 | 57 | 42 | 42% |
| Korean | 101 | 57 | 44 | 44% |
| Vietnamese | 131 | 53 | 78 | 60% |
| Total | 1,003 | 579 | 424 | 42% |
| Chi-square = 31.77; p < .0001; df = 5 | | | | |

Section 4: Conclusion

This paper contributes key findings to our understandings of the contours of Asian American public opinion on the environment, an area that has heretofore been largely neglected by researchers in the social sciences. By delineating how Asian Americans might share similarities and dissimilarities in support for environmental protection (and highlighting differences in the distribution of support across national origin ethnic groups), we record a number of notable findings.¹²

First, Vietnamese Americans, who comprise the Asian national origin ethnic group most likely to identify with the Republican Party (Wong et al., 2011), appear to be the most environmentally oriented. We suggest that the normally observed link between Democratic partisan identification and environmentalism may not hold uniformly for Asian American voters. Second, there is some observed intergroup variation in ethnic ordering (i.e., which group reports the most or least support) across different measures. This reveals additional complexity in environmental attitudes and opinions among Asian Americans, for example, different ways in which ethnic groups might perceive and value dimensions of environmental protection. Third, we discern some within-group variation across measures in the same domain. For example, Chinese Americans support drops from 46 percent in the general domain of “willingness” to take action “to influence environmental policies and regulations” to 32 percent with the more specific measure “for a ballot measure to protect the environment.” Any number of explanations could account for this within group shift: for example, Chinese Americans might support civic participation through organizational outreach to the community, as opposed to taking action at the ballot box.

Each of these findings reveals nuances in Asian American attitudes and environmentalism, highlighting the need for further investigation into public opinion in this domain. Hence, one recommendation is to support more research and analysis. Along these lines, social scientists might be interested in conducting surveys of nonvoters and of Asian Americans outside of California for the sake of comparison. Beyond an interest in further substantive exploration, the simple bivariate testing provided in this paper (examining group differences in environmentalism across ethnic

groups) does not account for other causal factors that might explain variation in attitudes. Many outstanding potential explanatory variables may be correlated with ethnicity. The observed ethnic variations in this paper may be capturing other factors, such as class, nativity, and ideology among other explanatory variables.¹³ Even so, we have explored key relationships between national origin ethnic groups, attitudes toward the environment, and potential implications for political behavior. These findings should draw the attention of scholars and practitioners in the areas of environmental politics and immigrant identity, attitudes, and politics.

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Notes

1. We are indebted to Silvia Jimenez for her review and edits.
2. <http://www.npr.org/2012/08/05/158168493/could-2012-be-the-year-of-the-asian-voter> (accessed September 1, 2012)
3. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans/> (accessed September 1, 2012)
4. <http://www.clcvedfund.org/who-we-are/our-mission/> (accessed October 29, 2013)
5. This is the personal recollection of Paula Daniels, co-author to this paper, who at the time was a board member at the environmental organization Heal the Bay; had served as an appointed commissioner on the California Coastal Commission, a state agency charged with environmental protection of development in the coastal zone; and was a board member of CLCV from 2001 to 2003. She has also been a board member of CLCVEF from 2004, to the present.
6. <http://www.clcvedfund.org/what-we-do/research-and-polls/latinos/> (accessed October 29, 2013)
7. It is worth noting that the board of CLCVEF had two Asian American members and an Asian American executive director during the time the survey was developed, conducted, and released. The board members were Paula Daniels (mixed race Asian Pacific Islander and Caucasian) and Anne Shen Smith (Chinese American); the executive director was James Lau (Chinese American). These individuals provided critical direction and support for the survey and its publication. While thus far there has not been a noticeable change in approach to this target audience by environmental organizations throughout the state, opportunities are presented in every election cycle. The CLCVEF report on the survey recommended, among other things, targeting Asian ethnic voters through language-specific ethnic media; this can be an expensive undertaking by a campaign and may prove a deterrent. Further, the generational assimilation of Asian Americans and their relatively high educational attainment have contributed to the prevailing perception of Asian Americans as a “model minority” with similar characteristics in achievement to the Caucasian population of the United States. This perception often leads to a discounting of the presence—or absence—of Asian Americans in the political action realm, except on Asian specific issues (e.g., the controversial ban on shark fin soup in California, enacted through AB 376, introduced by Assembly Member Paul Fong of Sunnyvale, CA).
8. It should be noted that surveys have a number of limitations, relative to other research methods. A survey reduces complexity into simplified questions and is thus unable to provide insights into lived experiences and the formation of individual subjectivity. A well-executed survey, however, produces findings that are

representative of the target population (e.g., attitudes, opinions, and behavior). This requires drawing an appropriate sample; minimizing nonresponse; ensuring complete and valid answers; and correcting for any known sampling and response biases. Surveying Asian Americans is particularly challenging and expensive, even when the target population is limited to registered voters. Ethnic identification through surname matching, one of the methods used for the CLCV survey, is problematic, particularly for Filipinos with Spanish surnames. There is also the problem of translating terms and concepts into Asian languages, which can be minimized through a process of dual-directional translations. To maximize its quality, the CLCV survey was conducted by an organization with extensive experience and guided by an advisory committee with considerable knowledge of Asian Americans.

9. These differ from the weighted numbers, which are based on estimates of the ethnic groups as reported in the American Community Survey. The weighted ethnic breakdown is as follows: 96 Asian Indians, 298 Chinese, 279 Filipinos, 88 Japanese, 105 Korean voters, and 136 Vietnamese. The purpose of this paper is to examine ethnic variation rather than estimate the attitudes and opinions of all Asian American voters.
10. There are profound historical and contemporary differences between the two terms, each embodying different normative and political positions. The survey does not contain information about what is implied in using the two terms in the survey. Instead, the inclusion of the questions mirrors those frequently used in other environmentally oriented surveys rather than any deep philosophical rationale. Incorporating terms, wording, and questions from previous surveys is a widely accepted practice because this approach enables researchers to compare results across data sets.
11. One of the consequences of using a more restrictive definition is that this paper reports lower percentages of respondents as being proenvironment than the CLCV report (2009). This, however, does not alter or contradict the findings of the CLCV that Asian Americans tend to be more environmentally oriented than other groups. The primary purpose of the resource paper is to examine ethnic variation in more detail, not to compare their responses to other registered voters.
12. The broad support by Asian American voters could have implications for the efforts of environmental justice organizations, which have long been key to both policy making and implementation process through participation, advocacy, and litigation. California's landmark climate change legislation (AB 32) highlighted complex tensions among legislators and advocacy groups in drafting and implementation (Sze et al., 2009). As the number of proenvironmental Asian American voters grow, their concerns and priorities will

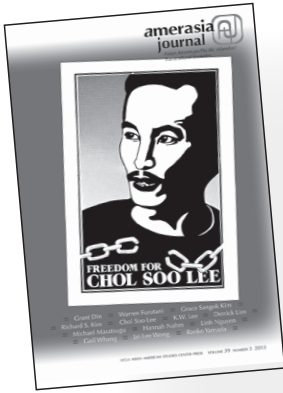
influence policy debates and political decisions through the ballot box, as well as among elected representatives (both Asian American and non-Asian American elected officials), and exert additional pressure on and support for ethnic and environmental advocacy groups.

13. Intergenerational differences are likely to be important, but how is an empirical question. Acculturation may lead to a convergence with the mainstream, but it is possible that ethnically based norms and values persist over generations. A preliminary review of the existing literature indicates both are at play; i.e., acculturation moves immigrants to mainstream environmental norms, but the second generation reflects some environmental values of their parents.

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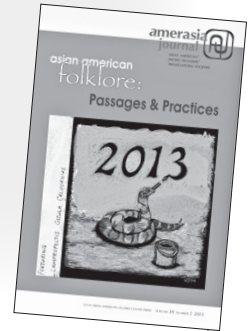


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