

Exploring Dimensions of Interracial Connections between Asian and Other Nonwhite Elected Officials

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Abstract: The dramatic diversification and continuing expansion of the nation's nonwhite population in the post-1965 era require a reconsideration of the power structure and electoral leadership in governing the American nation as a multicultural democracy. To empirically address the conference's theme of interracial connections, we propose to systematically examine the experiences and views of political elites of Asian descent as compared to those of African, Hispanic, American Indian descents in the United States. Specifically, we analyze the attitudes and opinions of elected officials holding offices at state and local levels of office to identify the potential for coalition and/or conflict between elected officials (and communities) of color. Our main research question is: To what extent and on what basis do Asian, Black, Latino, and American Indian elected leaders converge and diverge in their experiences of political socialization, trajectories to office, political orientation and sense of linked fate, views on constituency and representation, and policy stance regarding important issues to nonwhite communities such as affirmative action, voting rights, and immigration? Our data come from the 2006-7 Gender and Multicultural Leadership (GMCL) Survey, which is the nation's first multiracial and multi-office survey of female and male elected officials of color. We hope the results can contribute to the building of a stronger multicultural democracy and a more racially harmonious society in the United States.

Exploring Dimensions of Interracial Connections between Asian and Other Nonwhite Elected Officials

The year 1965 is mostly remembered as the year that African Americans finally earned their full franchise through the Voting Rights Act, which paved the road for other non-black and language minorities to claim the same protection of ballot access in subsequent amendments to the Act (Lien 2006). For the first time in American history, the boundaries of political participation for African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and American Indians have been substantially liberalized. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that Asian Americans would benefit as much from the Act were it not for the passage of another act in the same year that abolished the discriminatory national origin quota system and finally granted Asian nationals an equal opportunity to immigration. The 1965 Immigration Act, through its allocation of an equal number of annual visas (20,000 per country) and the adoption of admission criteria that gave preferences to family reunification, occupational skills, and political refugees, lifted historic racial barriers for the immigration of non-Anglo Saxon Protestants and transformed the class and ethnic structure of contemporary Asian America (Hing 1993). Coupled with the influences of global economic restructuring and U.S. military, political, economic, and cultural engagements in the Pacific and other third world regions, this Act has the unintended effects of restructuring the racial and ethnic dynamics of the post-1965 U.S. population because of the phenomenal and persistent rise of the foreign-born population that came mainly from Asia and Latin America (Ong, Bonacich, and Cheng 1994; Lopez-Garza and Diaz 2001).

The dramatic transformation and continuing expansion of the nation's nonwhite population in the last four decades or so require a reconsideration of the American power structure and electoral leadership in governing the multicultural democracy in the 21st century. These demographic trends present new challenges to democratic governance because they have altered and will continue to alter the construction of race and ethnicity in the United States and the contours of intergroup relations (Foner and Fredrickson 2004). Major questions in assessing the political participation and empowerment status of racial and ethnic minorities include the extent to which Asians and other nonwhites achieve political incorporation and the degree and sources of interracial coalition or conflicts among these nonwhite political elites over policy areas that affect minority communities. In this paper, we shall focus our attention on answering the second question, after a brief review of the status of political incorporation of the nation's nonwhite elected officials in the present day. To empirically address the conference's theme of interracial connections, we propose to systematically examine the experiences and views of political elites of Asian descent as compared to those of African, Hispanic, American Indian descents in the United States. Specially, using the new 2006-7 Gender and Multicultural Leadership (GMCL) Survey, which is the nation's first multiracial and multi-office survey of female and male elected officials of color, we analyze the attitudes and opinions of elected officials holding offices at state and local levels to identify the potentials and constraints for coalition-building between Asians and other elected officials of color.

The Status of Minority Office-Holding

One indicator of minority political incorporation is the sheer size and proportion of minority elected officials commensurate with their population share. Hardy-Fanta et al. (2007) examine the recent trend and distribution of the nation's nonwhite elected officials of Black, Latino, and Asian descent and find paradoxical patterns of both dramatic growth in the number of people of color serving in elective offices and persistent underrepresentation of these groups at all levels of government. They especially emphasize the critical role of women of color who appear to have contributed significantly to the rate of growth among elected officials of color in recent years. For example, in 1970, African American women numbered 160, accounting for 10.9 percent of the total number of African American elected officials. In 2004, they numbered 2,542 or 34.2 percent of the total. Latinas made up just 12 percent of Latino elected officials in 1984; the percentage rose to 19.7 percent in 1988. In 2004, their number of 1,053 was 28.5 percent of the Latino elected officials. For Asians, Chu (1989) indicates that out of the total of 245 elected positions occupied by Asian American nationally in 1985, only 16 percent were held by Asian American women. In 2004, among the 332 elected officials of Asian descent, 25.3 percent were women.

Still, in each of the racial group examined by Hardy-Fanta and her collaborators, women of color elected officials do not account for more than one-third of the elected officials in that race. Moreover, when representation parity ratio is calculated as the percentage of nonwhite female or male elected officials in US Congress and all state legislatures by the percentage of nonwhite women or men in the national population, they find that nonwhite men and women of any race have parity ratios substantially lower than the 1.0 that would indicate representation that matched their share of the population. Furthermore, with the exception of black women in Congress whose parity ratio is nearly equal to that of non-Hispanic white women in Congress, women of color do not fare as well as their white counterparts in descriptive representation at congressional and state legislative levels. The shared experience of underrepresentation and need for fair representation among people of color and women of all races may provide a fertile ground for collective pursuits for political empowerment.

One tool for empowering the political minorities is provided in the Voting Rights Act where Lien et al. (2007) find that the creation of majority-minority districts figures prominently in the election of people of color. Their research documents a substantial relationship between the VRA and the election of nonwhite officials at the national, state, and local levels as well as significant racial differences in the patterns of the relationship. For example, Black state and local elected officials were found to be much more likely to be elected from jurisdictions under the coverage of Section 5 rather than Section 203; the reverse is true in accounting for the election of Black House members. Nevertheless, Latinos were elected from congressional districts with the highest share of Section 5 coverage. Among state legislators, only Blacks were largely elected from majority-Black districts; the average percent Asian for state legislators of Asian descent is 38 percent. Also, although the average Latino and Asian officials were elected from counties that are at least 50% nonwhite, only a fraction of Black local officials were elected from majority

Black counties. Equally important, Asian local elective officials often represent jurisdictions that have a higher share of Latinos than Asians in the local population. These observations suggest the availability of various opportunity structures in jurisdictional context for inter-minority coalition building among political elites at different levels of office and for different racial groups.

Theorizing the Possibilities and Constraints of Interracial Coalition-Building

In analyzing the possibilities and constraints of interracial coalition-building between Asians and others, Lien (2001) argues the formation of long-lasting intergroup coalitions between Asians and others may be assessed at three separate but interconnected levels: 1) the between-group level or factors related to racial interactions, 2) the within-group level or factors dealing with the formation and maintenance of a multiethnic community, and 3) the beyond-group level or factors related not to group characteristics but to the very nature of U.S. racial system. Based on Blalock's (1982) theory of inter-minority coalition-building, she hypothesizes that "cross-racial coalition is more likely to occur between groups that have high levels of friendly contacts, low incidence or sense of intense economic competition, are similar in language, religion, beliefs, and values, and are not too far apart in social and political rankings" (p. 126). Given the distinct social status, cultural origin, and residential patterns of Asian Americans compared to other nonwhite groups in the post-1965 era, it seems difficult to anticipate the natural formation of long-lasting, harmonious interracial relationships between Asian and other communities of color.

Although Asians have historically been able to form cooperative relationships with American Indians, Blacks, Latinos, and White liberals at the individual and group levels out of common interests and needs as well as shared concerns of racial grievances and aspirations for liberty and equality (Lien 2001), the preponderance of the Asian (and other nonwhite) American experiences in historical and contemporary times have been marked by racial conflicts and competition because of the perpetuation of the white supremacist system, which not only relegated all nonwhite groups to subordinate positions but enticed each nonwhite group to seek a separate accommodation with whites for respective group advancement (p. 127). The paradoxical racial positions of Asian Americans in the post-1965 era as simultaneously the socio-economically successful "model minority" and the culturally and politically unassimilable "perpetual foreigners" (Okimoto 1994; Kim 2001; Wu 2002) may preclude Asians from being considered viable partners in the traditionally Black-based liberal coalition of nonwhite groups.

Because the issues and interests of Latinos and Asians are different from Blacks, because there are significant internal divisions within each race, and because each group is being affected differently by global economic forces, scholars have observed competition and conflicts in governance in multiracial cities such as Los Angeles and other major U.S. cities. On top of the continuing racial segregation and discrimination in housing and public education, Blacks, Latinos, and to an increasing extent Asians, have been in direct competition with each other for housing, jobs, access to educational and health institutions, and political office-holding (Chang and Diaz-Veizades 1999). Black-

Korean conflicts have been the subject of several studies (Abelman and Lie 1995; C. Kim 2000; K. Kim 2001) where economic and political competition are heightened by differences in cultural orientations and practices. Latino-Korean relations are observed to be equally multidimensional (Chang and Diaz-Veizades, p. 9). Besides socioeconomic issues, a basic source of tension is the different concept of race and racial positions across the three nonwhite groups (Robinson and Robinson 2006).

Short of a significant transformation in race relations and opportunity structure in U.S. society and societies across the Pacific, Lien believes “the long-term prospects of coalition-building will need to be assessed at multiple levels and interpreted in situational, relative terms within the larger racial context where whites remain the privileged race and Asians are expediently positioned either as the racial middlemen, foreigner within, or model minority” (Lien, p. 168). Reviewing the political incorporation of people of color in American cities—defined as the extent of their role in dominant coalitions that controlled city government, Browning, Marshall, and Tabb (2003) come to the same conclusion. They note that, because of the significant entry of Latinos and Asians in local politics, the ground for political coalitions has been transformed by immigration. According to them, in many cities the future of political incorporation will be very different from the enduring bi-racial coalitions between blacks and whites that explain the strong incorporation of blacks in some American cities at the end of the last century. Instead, “[r]acial politics will be increasingly multiracial, multiethnic politics in many cities” (p. 366) and characterized by concrete and fluid formations of crosscutting and shifting, issue-oriented coalitions (p. 373).

On the optimistic side, Lien (2001) maintains that monumental changes in the social, economic, and political orders on both the domestic and international fronts in the post-1965 era may have significantly improved the opportunity structure for Asians to make interracial connections. She notes that new grounds for interracial coalition-building between Asians and others at the mass level have emerged because of increased opportunities and means for personal and organizational contacts, improved economic and political status for the disadvantaged compared to the pre-1965 era, greater tolerance of and appreciation for cultural diversity in U.S. society and politics, as well as the nation’s continued commitment to the founding principles of liberty, equality, and prosperity and the need to address issues of social justice and empowerment for all. Her analysis of public opinion data suggests that “[c]oalitions between Asians and Latinos and Blacks can be established based on their shared concerns over race-related social redistributive issues at the local level, even though Latinos and Blacks have distinct issue concerns and different social distance to Asians” (p. 168). She also finds that racial bridges are easier to build between Asians and Whites based on interpersonal relationships and shared ideology. Moreover, participation in group- or organization-based activities may reduce racial tensions between Asians and others by increasing the opportunity to forge a sense of common identity or linked fate with each other.

Lien’s (2001) previous analysis, however, is based on analyzing the mass data. The research reported here uses a new and one-of-a-kind large-scale survey of nonwhite elected political elites to assess the attitudes and opinions of those who are directly

involved in representing constituency opinion in the making and negotiation of public policy. Specifically, we ask: To what extent and on what basis do Asian, Black, Latino, and American Indian elected leaders converge and diverge in their experiences of political socialization, trajectories to office, political orientation and sense of linked fate, views on constituency and representation, and policy stance regarding important issues to nonwhite communities? Our data come from the 2006 Gender and Multicultural Leadership (GMCL) Survey, which is the nation's first multiracial and multi-office survey of female and male elected officials of color. Following a description of the GMCL survey in the next section, we analyze item by item five dimensions of interracial connections related to socialization and social context, trajectories to office, group linked fate and political orientation, perceived constituency makeup and concept of representation, and views on policy proposals related to minority communities such as affirmative action, voting rights, and immigration. Through cross-tabulation analysis by race, we hope to provide good social science data in empirically answering the research question.

Description of the GMCL Survey

Data used in this paper come from the Gender and Multicultural Leadership (GMCL) survey which is a systematic telephone survey of the nation's nonwhite elected officials holding state and local offices across the 50 states of America. It was conducted by the Institute for Public Policy (IPP) at the University of New Mexico whose interviewers telephone interviewed a sample of randomly selected individuals from a population of nonwhite elected officials grouped by race, gender, and level of office.

The IPP Survey Research Center, equipped with a computer assisted telephone interviewing system and a nineteen-station survey laboratory, trained interviewers to conduct the survey under full-time supervision, using a protocol that included at least ten attempts per number, respondent appointment tracking and follow-up, and reluctant respondent persuasion where necessary. In the event the eligible respondent from the list-based component was not at a particular number, interviewers tried to acquire a valid number for the designated point of contact. The protocol utilized to track calls and respondents was designed to maximize both the survey response rate and the consistency with which the survey was applied to assure maximum data validity and reliability. Upon request, the IPP survey research staff faxed and/or emailed a general study description to potential participants in an attempt to validate the study and the IPP as the survey implementers for this project.

Multiple lists of elected officials in the population grouped by their office levels and complete with their first and last names, official titles, phone numbers, and their reported race and gender identification were prepared by the GMCL project team and handed to IPP for field work, which lasted from June 5 to November 9, 2006.¹ A follow-up phase aiming to enhance the participation of American Indian and Asian American elected officials was conducted by the Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy at

¹ Information on the content and construction of the database which served as the sampling universe of the telephone survey can be found in Hardy-Fanta et al. (2006) and Lien et al. (2007).

the University of Massachusetts Boston and took place between December 15 and January 31, 2007.

Overall, 1,310 interviews were completed between June 5 and November 9, 2006. An additional 31 interviews were completed in the follow-up phase. The survey response rate as a percentage of the total successful contacts is 72%. The average length of interviews is 44 minutes. There are no statistically significant differences in the interview length by race, gender, level of office, or implementation stage.

Differential quota or unequal selection probability rates are assigned for each of the population groups to permit analysis by race, gender, and office. For example, the quota rate for Asian male municipal officials is .5, but that for their female counterparts is 1.0; the quota rate for Black female state legislators is .5, but that for their male counterparts is .33; and the quota rate for Latino male county officials is .33, but that for their female counterparts is 1.0. The overall quota rate is .24.

Limitations. Although the survey is designed to be a probability study of the population, our ability to generalize the findings is limited by the scarcity of the population in some offices and for some racial and gender groups as well as the idiosyncratic nature of the elite population that facilitates the participation of those who have more time in hand (fewer responsibilities, less campaign need) and are more accessible for the survey interviewers (have valid contact information on record, have no or friendly gatekeepers). To the extent that the survey approximates a probability sample of the nation's nonwhite elected officials at sub-national levels of office, we estimate the margin of error or the measure of the variation one would see in reported percentages if the same survey were taken multiple times for the total N at the 95% level of confidence to be $\pm 3\%$. That is, the "true" percentage for the entire population would be within the margin of error around the survey's reported percentage 95% of the time. Note that the margin of error only takes into account random sampling error. It does not take into account other potential sources of error such as bias in the questions, bias due to excluding groups who could not be contacted, people refusing to respond or lying, or miscounts and miscalculations, as well as other limitations mentioned above.

Coverage. The final N of 1341 interviews represents 14% of the nation's total number of 9,568 nonwhite elected officials (NEOs) serving at the sub-national levels in early 2006. Participants in this telephone survey include 94 Asians or 27% of the universe of 345 Asian American elected officials (AEOs), 18 American Indian and Alaskan Natives (AIANs) or 38% of the universe of 47 AIAN state legislators, 739 Blacks or 12% of the universe of 5,961 Black elected officials (BEOs), and 490 Latinos or 15% of the universe of 3,215 Latino elected officials (LEOs). Among the universe of 3,245 women of color elected officials, 16% or 516 of them participated in the survey; among men of color, 13% or 825 of the 6,323 officials participated.

Who are in the Sample?—Basic Demographics. Among the total valid N of 1,328 respondents, 736 or 55% are Black, 480 or 36% are Latino, 94 or 7% are Asian, and 18 or 1% are AIAN elected officials (Table 1a). About half (49%) hold positions at the

municipal level, 24% at the school board level, 16% at the county level, and 11% hold positions at the state legislative level of governance.

About every 4 in 10 respondents are women of color (38%). The share of women of color elected officials is highest among Blacks at 42%, followed by AIANs at 39%, Latinos at 33%, and Asians at 32% (Table 1b). A far greater proportion of women of color hold positions at the school board level (54%) than at state legislative (38%) and municipal (36%) levels. Among nonwhite elected officials, women are least represented at the county level.

Among Blacks in the survey, the largest share of the elected officials (52%) is at the municipal level. This is true with Latinos and Asians, with the respective share of municipal office holding being at 47% and 46%. About 3 in 10 Asians and Latinos are school board members, but they are only one in five (19%) among Blacks. A higher share of Blacks (19%) hold positions at the county level than Latinos (14%) or Asians (4%). Except for American Indians, who are all state legislators, a higher share of Asians (18%) than Blacks (10%) or Latinos (9%) hold positions at the state legislative level.

Among Asians in the survey, women find their best representation at the school board level (40%), followed by the municipal level (33%) and state legislative level (24%). There are no Asian women county elected officials in the survey. Among Blacks, most women are also found at the school board level (56%), followed by the state legislative level (47%), the municipal level (43%), and the county level (28%). Among Latina elected officials, they too are best represented at the school board level (55%), followed by the state legislative level (29%), the municipal level (24%), and the county level (16%).

Ancestry. Of AEOs, about 1 in 3 are of Chinese descent, 17% of Japanese descent, 15% of Filipino descent, 9% of mixed background, and 16% just mention they are Asian. Among BEOs, 4 in 10 are of African descent, 21% call themselves Black, and 19% are of mixed background. Among LEOs, 37% mention they are of Mexican descent, 35% use the panethnic term of Latino or Hispanic to describe their ancestry, and 15% report of mixed ancestral background. Among AIANs, 8 in 10 mention “American Indian” and 13% mention some mixed background.

Geographic Distribution. Just over half of the AEOs (56%) are found in the state of California, followed by the 19% in the state of Hawaii; the rest are found in 14 other states. Exactly one-fourth of LEOs are found in California, one-fifth are found in New Mexico; the highest percentage is found in Texas (29%), and the rest are found in 20 other states. The geographic distribution of BEOs is most dispersed, with the highest concentration found in the deep south states such as Mississippi (10%), Louisiana (9%), and North Carolina (9%); they are only absent in 11 states. AIANs are found in 10 states, with states like South Dakota, Oklahoma, and Alaska having a higher percentage share of AIANs than in other states.

Socialization and Social Network

Immigration Generation. Table 1c shows that only 6% of the respondents were born outside of the United States. The percentage of foreign-born is highest among Asians (42%), followed by Latinos (8%). Only 1% or 7 BEOs in the survey were foreign-born. And all of the AIANs were born in the US. Twelve percent of the respondents were U.S.-born but with foreign-born parents. These second generation Americans are 26% among Asians and 28% among Latinos in the survey. Eleven percent of the respondents have U.S.-born parents but non-U.S.-born grandparents. These third generation Americans are 24% among Asians, 22% among Latinos, 17% among AIANs, and 3% among Blacks in the survey. Seventy percent of the respondents are of the fourth generation or more. They constitute 96% among Blacks, 83% among AIANs, 42% among Latinos, and 8% among Asians.

Speaking Other Than English. Although only a tiny percentage of the NEOs are foreign-born, this does not mean that they are not familiar to or can speak a language other than English. In fact, about four in ten respondents report speaking another language in addition to English. That rate is highest among Latinos (94%), followed by 60% among AIANs, 55% among Asians, but only 17% among Blacks. Of all those reporting speaking another language, 84% speak Spanish. Practically all of the Latinos who report speaking another language use Spanish. But Spanish is also spoken by 68% of Blacks, 22% among AIANs, and 13% among Asians who speak a language other than English. Among AEOs who report speaking another language than English, 54% speak Chinese (which includes Mandarin, Taiwanese, and Cantonese) and 17% speak Tagalog. Speaker of Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Asian Indian languages are few in number.

Education and Paying for Education. NEOs' own educational background and the ways their education got paid may shape their opinions on the educational opportunity issues for the disadvantaged. There are sharp racial differences in educational achievement and means to pay for education among NEOs. Only 6% among Asians are not college graduates, compared to 29% among Blacks, 33% among AIANs, and 50 among Latinos. About 4 in 10 among Asians, Blacks, and Latinos indicated paying out of their own pocket, but only 2 in 10 AIANs indicate so. Close to 1 in 3 of Asians indicate having parental or family support; only 17% of Blacks, 8% among Latinos, and 7% among AIANs indicate so. A higher percentage of Latinos (19%) and Blacks (17%) than Asians and AIANs (7%) indicate having received grants. A much higher percentage of AIANs (43%) report having received scholarships than Blacks (19%) or Asians (12%) and Latinos (11%). About 2 in 10 in each race indicate having borrowed student loans or performed work study.

Raised in a Political Family. Being raised in a political family is another useful measure of one's political socialization. We find that females generally report a higher percentage of being raised in a political family than their male counterparts. The percentage breakdown by gender is 25% vs. 17% among Asians, 40% vs. 32% among Blacks, 42% vs. 31% among Latinos. Among AIANs, female and male elected officials report the same proportion (33%) of having been raised in a political family.

Married to a Public Official. In the survey, women tend to report lower marriage rates except for AIANs, and all women report higher divorce rates than their male counterparts within each race. Being married to public or elected officials may have provided networking advantages for those who are interested in seeking public office, especially women. We find that all groups of females report a higher percentage of being married to someone who has held public or elective office than their male counterparts in each race. The percentage breakdown by gender is 12% vs. 9% among Asians, 13% vs. 7% among Blacks, 16% vs. 3% among Latinos.

Race of Spouse. The race of spouse for elected officials of color, especially regarding the marriage of women of color to non-Hispanic White males, has been an issue of interest in the studying of political trajectories of minorities. In this survey, we find that among the married, a higher percentage of Asians (24%) than Latinos (20%) or AIANs (17%) or Blacks (3%) are married to non-Hispanic whites. Females in each race report higher percentages of marrying non-Hispanic whites than males, with Asian women report the highest percentage of 37% compared to 22% among Latinas, 20% among AIANs, and 4% among Blacks. About 2 in 5 Asian and Latino males report having married non-Hispanic Whites, compared to 14% among AIAN males and 2% Black males.

Trajectories to Elective Office

First Time in Elective Office. Two thirds of the NEOs are serving for the first time in elective office. A higher percentage of women (70%) than men (64%) are first time in elected office. Among Asians, 80% of female and 62% of male respondents are first time in elected office. The percentage breakdown among Latinos is 76% for women and 61% for men; that for both Black women and men is 66%. However, among AIANs, the percentage of first time in office is higher for men (55%) than for women (43%).

Prior Appointed Office Holding. Close to half have held appointed office(s) prior to his or her election to the first office. Among Asians, a higher percentage of women (55%) than men (38%) have not held an appointed office, while a lower percentage of women (17%) than men (25%) have held three or more appointed offices, prior to her election to the first office. Similarly, among Blacks, a higher percentage of women (53%) than men (45%) have not held an appointed office, while a slightly lower percentage of women (24%) than men (29%) have held three or more appointed offices, prior to her election to the first office. Among AIANs, a lower percentage of women (43%) than men (55%) have held no appointed office but also a lower percentage of women (29%) than men (36%) have held three or more appointed offices prior to her election to the first office. Among Latinos, women and men report the same percentages of having holding no appointed offices (48%) and holding more than three offices (21%).

Prior Service as Staff. About one in seven NEOs served on the staff of an elected public official prior to the first bid for office. That percentage is highest among state legislators where 28% of both Blacks and AIANs report having been on the staff of an

elected official; that percentage is 24% among Latino and 18% among Asian American state legislators. Among municipal elected officials, Asians report the highest percentage of 18%, followed by the 14% among Blacks, and 8% among Latinos. Among county elected officials, 13% among Blacks, 11% among Latinos, and none among Asians served on the staff of an elected official before. Among elected school board members, 11% among Blacks and 8% among Latinos but none among Asians served as a staff of an elected official before.

Prior Involvement in Civic Institutions. The NEOs report various degrees of involvement with political parties, organizations, and groups before they first ran for office (Tables 2a and 2b). On the low end, exactly half do not report any involvement in labor unions and 2 in 5 do not report involvement in women's organizations; only 1 in 10 report extremely strong involvement in either type of organization. Conversely, less than 1 in 10 do not report having any prior involvement in community based or neighborhood organizations, while 1 in 3 indicate that they were extremely involved. Only 13% do not have any prior involvement with political parties; about 1 in 5 indicates heavy involvement with parties. On average, NEOs report a higher level of prior involvement with community/neighborhood organizations, PTA/Os, election campaigns, and political parties than with civil rights and faith-based organizations and business groups. The civic institutions that respondents report the lowest level of prior involvement are women's organizations and labor unions.

For female NEOs, their prior involvement follows the same pattern except that they generally report higher levels of prior involvement than their male counterparts, especially regarding participation in women's organizations, PTA/Os, and community/neighborhood organizations. However, they report a significantly lower level of prior involvement with labor unions than their male counterparts.

There are significant racial differences in terms of NEOs prior involvement in civic organizations. All groups except AIANs list community/neighborhood organizations as the institution that they were most involved with before their first campaign for a public office. For BEOs, the civic institutions they are second most involved are civil rights organizations, followed in the descending order by PTA/Os, political parties, election campaigns, and faith-based organizations. For LEOs, their second most involved organizations are PTA/Os, followed by election campaigns, political parties, and business groups. For AEOs, their second most involved organizations are election campaigns, followed by PTA/Os, business groups, and political parties. For AIAN eos, the civic institutions they are most involved with prior to their first campaign for office are community/neighborhood organizations, followed by PTA/Os, political parties, election campaigns, and civil rights organizations. All NEOs list labor unions as the organization they are least involved with prior to their first run for office except for LEOs, who report even lower level of prior involvement in women's organizations.

Sense of Linked Fate and Political Orientation

Linked Fate. When asked whether what happens generally to other minority groups, or people of their own racial and ethnic background (co-ethnics), or women in the United States would affect what happens in their life and how they view politics, at least two-thirds in each group report a sense of linked fate, with the highest level being found in their sense of linked fate with co-ethnics (Table 3). Specifically, Blacks and AIANs report a higher level of linked fate with co-ethnics than with other minority groups or women. Latinos report as high a level of linked fate with co-ethnics as with other minority groups and women. Asians report a higher level of linked fate with co-ethnics and U.S. women than with other minority groups. Moreover, a significantly higher percentage of AIANs than Blacks or Latinos believe that their fate is impacted a lot by what happens to other members in their ethnic or racial groups. However, among Asians and AIANs the percentages of those who believe that their fate is impacted a lot by what happens to other minorities or women are much smaller than Blacks or Latinos.

There are no gender differences in the perceived sense of linked fate except among BEOs. A higher percentage of Black males (85%) than Black females (73%) report having a sense of linked fate with other minorities. Similarly, a higher percentage of Black males (86%) than Black females (80%) report having a sense of linked fate with co-ethnics. However, a smaller percentage of Black males (77%) than Black females (85%) report having a sense of linked fate with women.

Political Partisanship. As shown in Table 4, about eight in 10 NEOs are Democrats by political party affiliation and, among the rest, there is a greater proportion of Independents (10%) than Republicans (8%). The incidence of Democratic partisanship is higher among Blacks (85%) than Latinos (75%), AIANs (73%), and Asians (57%).

Political Ideology. Despite the highly Democratic skew in partisanship, Table 5 shows that about an equal share of these elected officials indicate that their view on most matters having to do with politics would fall under the liberal, conservative, and middle-of-the-road banners. Asians report the highest level of being middle-of-the-road (44%). Blacks report the highest level of liberalism at 38%. AIANs report the highest level of conservatism (40%), which is followed closely by Latinos at 38%.

Perceptions of Constituency and Concepts of Political Representation

Perceived Majority Racial Makeup. Table 6 shows that there are substantial racial gaps in the perceived racial and ethnic makeup of their constituents. About two-thirds of AIANs (63%) believe that they represent jurisdictions that are majority American Indian. Six in ten of Latinos (60%) perceive their constituents as mostly Latino. About the same proportion of Blacks (59%) also believe that they represent jurisdictions that are majority Black. A higher percentage of Asians than other groups believe that their constituents are mostly non-Hispanic White (45%) or mixed (30%); only 14% of Asians perceive their constituents as mostly Asian.

Perceived Class Makeup. There are substantial racial gaps in the perceived class background of constituents. As high as 56% of AIANs, but only 1% of Asians, 15% of Blacks, and 14% of Latinos believe their voters to be living in poverty. Most Blacks (36%) and Latinos (41%) believe their voters are working class. Over half of Asians believe their voters are either in the middle or upper middle class.

Perceived % Immigrants. When asked to indicate the percentage of immigrants living in the respondent's jurisdiction, on average Asians give the highest figure of 28%. Latinos give the figure of 25%. Both Blacks and AIANs report single digit figures (of 8% and 9%, respectively).

Perceived Partisanship. When asked to assess the partisanship breakdown of the people living in the respondents' jurisdictions or districts, all the nonwhite groups indicate a Democratic majority in their voter base. However, a much higher percentage of Blacks (74%) than Asians (55%) indicate that more voters in their jurisdictions are Democrats. About two in three AIANs and Latinos also report a Democratic majority in their constituents' partisan orientation. Asians report the highest perceived Republican partisanship among voters (20%), followed by the 16% among Latinos. About one in four AIANs and Asians and one in five Blacks and Latinos think that most of their voters are divided equally between the two major parties.

The degree of congruency between personal and perceived constituent political partisanship of NEOs varies by race but is generally much higher among Democrats than Republicans. Among AEOs, two thirds of the Democrats perceive their constituents as mostly Democrats; about one third of the Republicans also perceive their constituents as mostly Democrats, but over four in ten perceive their constituents as mostly evenly divided between the two major parties, and only a quarter believe their constituents are mostly Republican. Among AIANs, nine in ten Democrats perceive their constituents as mostly Democrats and two in three Republicans perceive their constituents as evenly divided. Among both BEOs and LEOs, three in four Democrats perceive their constituents as Democrats; while 60% of Black Republicans also perceive their constituents to be Democrats and 10% of them perceive their constituents as evenly divided. Latino Republicans report the highest perceived constituency Republican partisanship of 38%, even if 30% perceive their constituents to be mostly evenly divided and 32% perceive their constituents to be mostly Democrats.

Perceived Political Ideology. When asked to assess the political ideology of their constituents, 44% among Latinos, 40% among AIANs, 36% among Asians, and 27% among Blacks think that most of their voters are very or somewhat conservative. About one-third of Blacks and AIANs, but only 20% of Latinos and 26% of Asians, believe their constituents to be very or somewhat liberal.

The degree of congruency between personal and perceived constituent political ideology of NEOs varies by race but is generally much lower than that regarding political partisanship and slightly lower among non liberals than liberals. Among NEOs who are very or somewhat liberal, about four in ten Asians believe their constituents to be either

mostly liberal or middle-of-the-road. The percentage of perceived liberalism is 44% among Latinos, 52% among Blacks, and 100% among AIANs. Among NEOs who are non liberal in political ideology, 42% among Asians, 34% among Blacks, 40% among Latinos, and 55% among AIANs perceive their constituents as either very or somewhat conservative.

Concepts of Political Representation. When given a scenario where the elected official's personal view is in conflict with his or her own constituents, 63% of NEOs believe that it is more important to reflect his or her own informed judgment and trust that his/her constituents will support the decision; only 35% believe that it is more important that his or her vote reflects the views of his/her constituents. By a 15 percentage-point margin (36% to 21%), Blacks and Latinos are more likely than Asians and AIANs to indicate that their votes are to reflect constituent views. Conversely, a higher proportion of Asians (76%) and AIANs (71%) than Blacks or Latinos (61%) would base their votes on personal informed judgment and trust of the constituents.

Policy Views related to Affirmative Action, Voting Rights, and Immigration

Importance of Affirmative Action Programs. NEOs were asked to assess using a 0-10 scale the importance of affirmative action programs in terms of helping women or own racial and ethnic minorities achieve equity, they show an extremely high overall support with the average score being 8.6 out of 10 and about half of them giving a 10 (extremely important) score for both questions (Table 7a). There are statistically significant gender differences with women indicating a slightly higher level of perceived importance for both policy areas than men, even if they gave equal amount of high support for both policy areas. There are substantial racial differences with Asians giving the lowest overall scores in both questions than Latinos who, in turn, indicating a lower amount of overall perceived importance of affirmative action programs than AIANs (Table 7b). NEOs give the highest amount of overall support to both policy areas, but their level of perceived importance for programs helping other nonwhites is slightly lower than for those programs helping women. Conversely, AEOs indicate a higher level of perceived importance helping women than other nonwhites achieving equity. This result among Asians appears to echo the findings on their attitude towards group linked fate.

Personally Benefit from Affirmative Action. When NEOs were asked if they have personally benefited from affirmative action policies in higher education or in hiring or promotion, a higher percentage of them in each race indicate being beneficiaries in higher education than hiring or promotion opportunities (Table 7c). Asians report the lowest and Blacks report the highest percentage in each situation. A lower percentage of Latinos than AIANs report having been beneficiaries in each question.

Importance of Voting Rights. When asked to assess the importance of the current voting rights act in protecting equal political access for people of the same racial or ethnic background as each of the NEOs in the survey, they show an extremely high overall support with the average score being 9.2 out of a possible 10 and about two in

three giving a 10 (extremely important) score for the question (Table 8a). There are statistically significant gender differences with women indicating a slightly higher level of perceived importance than men. Impressively, the average score of Blacks in a zero-to-ten scale is 9.7, followed closely by AIANs at 9.6, and by Latinos at 8.6 and Asians at 8.0 (Table 8b). Although there are significant racial gaps in this attitude, the finding of overall high support for the Act reaffirms the continuing centrality of the voting rights issue to all the nonwhite communities—but especially for Blacks and AIANs.

Renewing Voting Rights Provisions. When asked to indicate support for renewing specific voting rights provisions, all NEOs give an extremely high level of support ranging from 81% for Asians to 87% for AIANs (Table 8c). NEOs give a similarly high level of support for renewing the Section 5 provision that requires federal approval of proposed changes of voting laws or procedures in the covered jurisdictions. The percentage distribution ranges from 80% among Latinos to 86% among AIANs. On renewing the provision of sending federal observers to polling places where electoral discrimination based on race or color is suspected, the level of support is even higher, ranging from 87% for Latinos to 95% among Blacks. Importantly, there are no racial gaps in supporting the renewal of Section 203 or provision of bilingual ballots to language minorities and on the preclearance provision of Section 5.

Support for Proposals on Immigrant Incorporation. Overall, 41% of respondents strongly agree or agree to the proposal to issue drivers' licenses to all immigrants, regardless of their legal status (Table 9). Less than half of the respondents (46%) agree or strongly agree to the proposal to allow parents who are legal noncitizens to vote in local school board elections. Support is higher on the proposal to mandate bilingual instruction for students with limited English abilities in public schools where 68% either strongly favor or favor the proposed idea. Support is highest on the proposal for government agencies to provide multilingual services to clients in need where 78% strongly agree or agree to the proposed policy.

A NEO's race has no relationship to his or her view on government's role in providing services in a variety of languages to help non-English speaking clients and on allowing noncitizen parents to vote in school board elections. Race does make a difference in understanding a NEO's views on issuing drivers' licenses and mandating bilingual education. The level of support for issuing drivers' licenses to all immigrants legal or not is highest among LEOs, followed by AEOs. BEOs express the lowest level of support for this. Perhaps reflecting their desire for cultural assimilation, AEOs are significantly less likely than other NEOs to support the teaching in other languages for public school students not proficient in English. As is in the case of supporting the provision of bilingual services, AIANs are the group that shows the highest level of support for mandating bilingual education.

Discussion and Conclusion

To what extent and on what basis do Asian American elected leaders converge and diverge in their experiences, perspectives, and policy stances on issues important to

nonwhite communities with other groups of nonwhite elected officials? Our data on the geographic distribution of the NEOs identifies few shared spaces among the four racial groups, but with Latinos more likely to have residential interactions with Asians than other nonwhite groups. We also find that Asians are more likely to have interactions with non-Hispanic whites in terms of marital relationships and the perceived constituency makeup than BEOs, LEOs, or AIANs. Compared to nonwhite elected officials interviewed for the survey, AEOs are distinct in the low percentage of perceived Asian and near absence of perceived poverty in their jurisdictions.

Asians are also distinct in their personal educational achievement and in receiving higher parental or family support in paying for their education. They are distinct as well in their high percentage of the foreign-born and the perceived percentage of immigrants in their jurisdictions. Compared to other NEOs, Asians may be disadvantaged in their socialization, social network, and trajectories to office because they report the highest rates of being first time in elective office and the lowest rates of being raised in a political family, married to a public official, prior appointed office holding, prior service as staff persons of an elected public official (among state legislators), and have the lowest overall scores of prior involvement in civic institutions. Their relatively recent personal or family immigration history may depress their opportunities for political experience, working with other NEOs, appointed office holding, and any involvement in civic institutions. Even being involved in a political family may have some connection here – since so many are immigrants themselves, or their families certainly were. This does not mean their immigrant forbears wouldn't have been politically involved, but that the socialization experience would have been distinctive from US based political socialization.

Compared to what AIAN elected officials indicated, Blacks, and Latinos, Asians also report the lowest sense of linked fate with other minority groups. Besides, few Asians believe their personal life and view of politics are to be impacted a lot by what happens to other minority groups, co-ethnics, or women. Nevertheless, Asians have at least as high a sense of linked fate with co-ethnics or women in the United States as Latinos and they report a higher sense of linked fate with women than with other minority groups. Although Asians report the lowest percentage of Democratic partisanship and the highest percentages of Republican and Independent partisanship, they report a lower level of conservative ideology than AIANs and Latinos and about the same level of liberalism as AIANs and Latinos.

Not surprisingly, Asians report the highest level of perceived Republican partisanship and lowest level of Democratic partisanship in their jurisdictions. However, it is Latinos who report the highest level of constituent conservatism and lowest level of constituent liberalism. Compared to other NEOs, Asians exert the lowest level of congruence between personal and perceived constituent partisanship among Democrats. Conversely, they exert the highest level of independence in the concept of political representation with three in four prefer to base their votes on personal informed judgment and trust of the constituents than merely reflecting views of the constituents.

When it comes to policy views on affirmative action programs, Asians report lower levels of support for helping women and other nonwhites achieve equity than other NEOs. Reflecting their views on group linked fate, Asians also show lower support for helping other nonwhites than for helping women. Their relative lack of perceived personal benefits from affirmative programs especially regarding hiring and promotion may explain their lower level of support than other nonwhites. Nevertheless, given the clearly above average scores, it would be very wrong to suggest that AEOs do not support affirmative action programs for women and minorities.

The case of Asians supporting minority rights is even stronger regarding the perceived importance of protecting equal political access for people of their race or ethnicity. Although Asians score a lower average than other NEOs, they still score 8 out of a possible 10 in favor of protecting minority voting rights. Importantly, Asians give as high a support for the renewal of the Section 203 bilingual ballot provision and Section 5 Preclearance provision as other NEOs. With close to 9 out of 10 also in favor of renewing the Federal Observers provision, their support is as high as Latinos but lower than Blacks and AIANs.

Finally, on Asians' attitude toward proposals on immigrant incorporation, there are no racial gaps in two of the four proposals reviewed--on government's providing multilingual services to non-English speaking clients and on allowing noncitizen parents to vote in school board elections. Asians are second to Latinos in their support for issuing drivers' licenses to immigrants. As if to show their desire for greater cultural assimilation, Asians show the lowest level of support for bilingual education.

In the end, our comparative analysis of the five dimensions of experiences, perceptions, and perspectives held by Asian American elected officials finds more divergence than convergence on social network, socialization experiences, and trajectories to office. Their separate socialization, social network, and social status affect their views on constituency makeup, concepts of political representation, as well as their perceptions of minority group linked fate and minority rights. Although Asians tend to report lower levels of support for these, they still exert a high overall support for advancing the status of women and minorities. Moreover, on voting rights and immigrant rights issues, racial gaps are either insignificant or small. In this sense, there is plenty of room for building interracial connections based on the liberal agenda for social justice and political empowerment. It would be an open question whether Asians are able to find common ground for crossracial coalition-building on issues that are more on bread and butter or controversial social values such as abortion and gay and lesbian rights.

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Table 1a. GMCL Survey Respondents by Race and Level of Office

	AIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	LATINO	ALL
STATE LEGIS	18	17	73	41	149
	100.0%	18.1%	9.9%	8.5%	11.2%
MUNICIPAL	0	43	384	225	652
	.0%	45.7%	52.2%	46.9%	49.1%
COUNTY	0	4	142	67	213
	.0%	4.3%	19.3%	14.0%	16.0%
SCH BOARD	0	30	137	147	314
	.0%	31.9%	18.6%	30.6%	23.6%
Total N	18	94	736	480	1328

Source: Gender and Multicultural Leadership (GMCL) Survey, 2006-7. This is a nationwide telephone survey of nonwhite elected officials in state and local elective offices. The project PIs are Christine M. Sierra of U of New Mexico, Carol Hardy-Fanta of UM-Boston, Dianne M. Pinderhughes of U of Notre Dame, and Pei-te Lien of U of Utah. Data reported were collected between June 5, 2006 and Jan. 31, 2007.

Table 1b. Percent Female by Race and Level of Office

	AIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	LATINO	ALL
STATE LEGIS	39	24	47	29	38
MUNICIPAL		33	43	24	36
COUNTY		0	28	16	24
SCHOOL BOARD		40	56	55	54

Table 1c. Percentage Distribution of Immigration Generation by Race

	AIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	LATINO	ALL
FBORN	0	42	1	8	6
SECOND GENERATION	0	26	1	28	12
THIRD GENERATION	17	24	3	22	11
FOURTH OR MORE	83	8	96	42	70

Table 1d. Percentage Distribution of Race of Spouse by Race

Race of Spouse	AIAN		ASIAN		BLACK		LATINO	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
American Indian	80	71	6	2	1	1	0	1
Asian	0	0	50	77	0	1	0	1
Black	0	0	0	0	83	81	1	1
Latino	0	14	0	2	0	1	72	71
N-H White	20	14	39	19	4	3	22	19
Mixed	0	0	6	0	8	6	3	5
Count	5	7	18	52	130	272	96	232

Table 2a NEOs' Prior Involvement in Civic Institutions by Gender

Q: "On a scale from zero to ten, where zero means not at all involved and ten means extremely involved, how involved were you in activities with each of the following groups before you first ran for elected office?"

	% Extremely Involved	% Not at all Involved	Avg. score on a 0-10 scale	--- among women	--- among men
Community/Neighborhood Organizations	34%	6%	7.3	7.5*	7.1
PTA/Os	26	16	6.1	6.9*	5.6
Election Campaigns	21	16	5.7	5.6	5.8
Political Parties	19	13	5.7	5.7	5.8
Civil Rights Organizations	22	23	5.3	5.4	5.2
Faith-based Organizations	22	25	5.1	5.3	5.0
Business Groups	12	18	5.0	4.9	5.0
Women's Organizations	10	39	3.5	5.6*	2.2
Labor Unions	11	50	3.0	2.7*	3.1

Source: (see Table 1a)

Note: *denotes significant gender difference at the .5 level of significance.

Table 2b. NEOs' Prior Involvement in Civic Institutions by Race

	Avg. Score among Blacks	--- among Latinos	--- Among Asians	--- among AIANs
Community/Neighborhood Organizations	7.8	6.6	7.1	5.2
PTA/Os	6.7	5.4	5.0	5.8
Election Campaigns	6.2	5.2	5.2	4.7
Political Parties	6.3	5.1	4.0	5.0
Civil Rights Organizations	6.9	3.3	3.1	4.4
Faith-based Organizations	6.2	3.9	3.0	3.1
Business Groups	5.3	4.5	4.3	3.8
Women's Organizations	4.2	2.6	3.0	2.1
Labor Unions	3.3	2.7	2.0	1.5

Source: see Table 1a.

Note: All racial differences are significant at .5 level or better.

Table 3. NEOs' Sense of Linked Fate by Race

	Blacks	Latinos	Asians	AIANs
<i>Do you think what happens generally to other minority groups in this country affects what happens in your life and how you view politics?</i>				
% Having a sense of linked fate with other minority groups	80	73	67	87
% Affect a Lot	51	47	36	31
<i>Do you think what happens to people of your own racial or ethnic background in this country affects what happens in your life and how you view politics?</i>				
% Having a sense of linked fate with co-ethnics	84	73	75	100
% Affect a Lot	55	48	35	63
<i>Do you think what happens to women in this country affects what happens in your life and how you view politics?</i>				
% Having a sense of linked fate with U.S. women	80	74	74	88
% Affect a Lot	49	48	30	29

Note: All racial differences are significant at .5 level or better.

Table 4. Percentage Distribution of Personal Political Partisanship by Race

Q: *Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Republican, Democrat, Independent, or of another political affiliation?*

	AIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	LATINO	ALL
NONE	0	.0	1	1	1
REPUBLICAN	20	25	1	13	8
DEMOCRAT	73	57	85	75	79
INDEPENDENT	7	16	11	9	10
OTHER	0	2	2	2	2

Table 5. Percentage Distribution of Personal Political Ideology by Race

Q: *How would you describe your views on most matters having to do with politics? Do you generally think of yourself as very liberal, somewhat liberal, middle-of-the road, somewhat conservative, or very conservative?*

	AIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	LATINO	ALL
VERY LIBERAL	7	7	11	9	10
SOMEWHAT LIBERAL	20	21	27	18	23
MIDDLE OF THE ROAD	33	44	36	34	36
SOMEWHAT CONSERVATIVE	27	25	21	29	24
VERY CONSERVATIVE	13	3	5	9	6

Table 6. Perceived Constituency Makeup by Race

<i>Would you say that the racial or ethnic makeup of your jurisdiction is mostly:</i>	AIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	LATINO	ALL
AMERICAN INDIAN	63	1	.1	.0	1
ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER	.0	14	.0	1	1
BLACK	.0	.0	59	1	33
LATINO	.0	10	2	60	24
NHWHITE	31	45	18	17	20
MIXED	6	30	21	21	22

Table 7a. NEOs' Attitude Toward Affirmative Action Programs by Gender

Q: *Using a scale from zero to ten, where zero is not at all important and ten is extremely important, in your opinion, how important are affirmative action programs in terms of helping women achieve equity?*

	% Extremely Important	% Not at all Important	Avg. score on a 0-10 scale	--- among women	--- among men
Help Women Achieve Equity	49	1	8.6	8.8*	8.5
Help Other Nonwhites Achieve Equity	51	1	8.6	8.8*	8.5

Table 7b. NEOs' Attitude Toward Affirmative Action Programs by Race

Q: *Using a scale from zero to ten, where zero is not at all important and ten is extremely important, in your opinion, how important are affirmative action programs in terms of helping persons of your racial or ethnic background achieve equity?*

	Avg. Score among Blacks	--- among Latinos	--- Among Asians	--- among AIANs
Help Women Achieve Equity*	9.1	8.0	7.5	8.5
Help Other Nonwhites Achieve Equity*	9.3	8.0	6.5	8.6

Note: *Racial differences are significant at .5 level or better.

Table 7c. Percentage Distribution of NEOs' Reported Personal Gain from Affirmative Action

	AIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	LATINO	Total
<i>Q152. Have you personally benefited from affirmative action policies in higher education?</i>					
YES*	40	13	44	27	35
<i>Q153. Have you personally benefited from affirmative action policies in hiring or promotion?</i>					
YES*	29	7	36	17	27

Note: * Racial differences are significant at .5 level or better.

Table 8a. NEOs' Attitude Toward Minority Voting Rights by Gender

	% Extremely Important	% Not at all Important	Avg. score on a 0-10 scale	--- among women	--- among men
Protect Minority Voting Rights	62	1	9.2	9.3*	9.1

Table 8b. NEOs' Attitude Toward Minority Voting Rights by Race

	Avg. Score among Blacks	--- among Latinos	--- Among Asians	--- among AIANs
Protect Minority Voting Rights*	9.7	8.6	8.0	9.6

Note: *Racial differences are significant at .5 level or better.

Q 156. Which of the following voting rights protections would you like to see renewed? ...Bilingual ballots for speakers of Spanish, Native American, Native Alaskan, and Asian languages.

Q157. The Section 5 (Preclearance) provision that requires federal approval of proposed changes of voting laws or procedures in the covered jurisdictions.

Q158. Federal observers sent to polling places where electoral discrimination based on race or color is suspected.

Table 8c. Percentage Distribution of Support for Renewing Voting Rights

	AIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	LATINO	ALL
Renew Bilingual Ballots	87	81	82	85	83
Renew Section 5	86	82	85	80	83
Sending Federal Observers*	93	88	95	87	91

Note: *Racial differences are significant at .5 level or better.

Table 9. Percentage Distribution of NEO’s Policy Support on Immigration Issues by Race

Now we're going to ask your opinion on a range of policy proposals currently being debated. Please tell me whether you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree with each of the following policy proposals.	% strongly agree or agree	--- among Blacks	--- among Latinos	--- among Asians	--- among AIAN
As a matter of public safety, drivers’ licenses should be made available to immigrants, regardless of their legal status in the U.S.*	41	28	57	46	33
Government agencies should provide services in a variety of languages to help non-English speaking clients.	78	76	81	83	93
Non-citizen legal immigrants should be allowed to vote in school board elections if they have children in the public schools.	46	46	47	47	40
A law mandating public schools to provide instruction in other languages for students not proficient in English.*	68	69	71	51	73

* Racial differences are significant at .5 level or better.