Tools and Strategies for Community Power Building and Electoral Politics

Session Description: The right to vote has been contested throughout much of American history. The struggles through civil rights litigation, legislation, and activism have been fought to ensure minority groups and women have the same voting rights and opportunities as all other citizens. During the past two decades, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) have gained increasing visibility with thousands of AAPI elected and major appointed officials across the nation. The reality is that we have a long way to go in transforming the extraordinary population growth of AAPIs from 1.5 million in 1970 to over 22 million in 2020 into an effective voting constituency. The speakers will share best practices for advancing the political and civic empowerment of AAPIs through nonpartisan voter outreach, training, and education as well as leadership development. As well as training future AAPI leaders for public service including elected and appointed public office. This session will explore tools and strategies on what we learned from the recent elections and where we go from here.

Moderator: Dr. Nathan Chan
        Assistant Professor of Political Science (Loyola Marymount University)
Researcher: Dr. Natalie Masuoka
        Associate Professor of Political Science and Asian American Studies
Researchers: Joyce Nguy (Ph.D. Student), Tessa Fier (Undergraduate Student, Cartography), Edward Berdan (Ph.D. Student), Albert Kochaphum (Technology Lead), Lindsey Mardona (Web Development)
        MAAPP Development Team
Community Reactor: David Ryu (NOT PRESENT)
        President and CEO of Asian Pacific American Leadership Foundation
Community Reactor: Nancy Yap
        Executive Director of the Center for Asian Americans United for Self-Empowerment (CAUSE)
        President of Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council (Little Tokyo)
        * Involvement in Curriculum Design

Please visit https://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aapipolicy/default.aspx to view the researchers' policy briefs.

Introductions
- Nancy
    - Value of data to demonstrate proof that community work and policy is strategic and methodical
    - Contrast of taking time to build relationship and taking action quickly

Demonstration of UCLA MAAPP (Mapping Asian American Political Potential) Website
- Developed with intent to offer easily accessible data that is intuitively mapping to community and political leaders to aid in the systematic approach to voter outreach + mobilization
- Map #1: Asian Registration (Choropleth)
    - Percentage of Registered Asians v. Total Number of Asians (Census)
        - Higher Percentage of Asian Voters Registered in Communities with Low Concentration of Asians
        - Feature to Focus on Communities with 40%+ Asian Population
    - Can Display Boundaries for Different Political Contexts (City Council, State Senate, State Assembly, Congressional, Board of Supervisors)
    - Can Zoom into Specific Areas (Google Maps Functionality)
- Map #2: Turnout Map
    - Share of Registered Asian Voters Who Cast a Ballot in the 2020 Election
    - Can Identify Areas of Low Voter Turnout (Visualize Where Asian Voters Are + Analyze Relationship Between Voter Registration and Turnout)
- Map #3: Asian American Political Party Registration (Dot)
    - Privacy: Randomize Dots
    - Can Filter Based On Republican, Democrat, Independent (No Party Preference) Registration
- Map #4: New Voter Map (One Dot Per New AA Voter Registered in 2020)
- Map Development Process

- - - Guiding Questions: Who Do We See Using These Maps? What Will They Use These Maps for? What Is the Best Way to Present Data to Meet These Purposes?
      - Goal: Create Intuitive + Aesthetically Pleasing Maps
      - Received Feedback from Community Organizers and Community Members
    - Design Elements
      - Drew Inspiration for The Logo from "I Voted" Stickers
      - Built Website from Scrap (HTML, CSS, Javascript, Leaflet)
      - Highlight Color Coded Toggle Buttons, Search Feature
      - Reduce Number of Interactions Needed to Perform Tasks; Eases Potential User Frustration; Limit Length of User Learning
    - Open Source: Goal Is to Expand Project Beyond LA County
- Partnership Between Researchers and Community Organizers
  - visualization of voter pattern aids in redistricting Efforts
  - Forthcoming Policy Paper (Sponsored by UCLA AAS, East West Bank)
  - Maps allows general public to better understand AA community and communicates the importance and potential of AA voters

Question #1: What do you believe is responsible for the recent uptick in voter engagement in the AA community? How do we continue to mobilize AA votes, particularly in California and Los Angeles county?
- Nancy:
  - Product of Extended Community Efforts
    - Mail-In Ballots: Removes Pressure of Timed, English-Only Voting Experience
    - Need to Grow Number of In-Language Resources
  - Getting Information Out
    - Saying Information Is Available Is Different Than Believing It
      - Inform Community Members That They Won't Be Singled Out at Voting Centers
  - Creating Welcoming Voting Centers
  - Community Dialogue
    - Continued Need for Voter Education: How Policies Impact the Community, The Power of Community Voices (Tied to Redistricting)
      - Ex. Redistricting Risk in San Gabriel Valley (Divide Six Majority AAPI Communities), Organized to Keep Communities in One Congressional District
  - Non-Partisan Doesn't Mean We Can't Look at Data + Consider Where We Are Missing Information About Issues
- Joyce:
  - AA Electorate Becoming Bigger and More Influential
    - 2nd Generation of AA Coming into Political Power; Immigrants Are Learning About the Political Process as Time Progresses
    - Typically, People Are Socialized into Participating in American Politics: This Is Not Always the Case for Immigrant and AAPI Communities
      - Voter Education Especially Important
- Arnold: Chronological Data Is Necessary to Observe Whether Outreach Has Had Community Impact

Audience Question: How Did The MAAPP Team Choose A 40% Threshold for Their Map Filter
- Joyce:
  - Team Originally Chose 50% (Majority); However, This Cut-Off Yielded Small Amount of Census Tracts
  - 40% Cut-Off: Chose as High a Cutoff as Possible While Still Showing Significant Number of Communities
- Arnold: Would Like to Create Sliding Bar for Cut-Off
- Natalie: AA Community Is Widely Dispersed - Challenge for More Systematic Data-Centric Studies

Audience Question: Did the Data Review The AA Population as A Whole or Just Eligible Voters?

- Natalie: data identifies AA voters by surname using public records (conservative reading)

Audience Question (Angelica Cortes): How do you manage complications that arise when identifying AA voters based on surname (ex. Filipino surnames)? Does MAAPP plan to track the midterm election data? How can we support future movements to replicate these maps?
- Natalie: can't do future projection as they obtained data files in 2020
  - Have 20 years of historical data
- Joyce: Identify AA voters based off surname and zip code (location in LA county)
  - Determine probability that you are AAPI based on name + location
- Arnold: plans to keep the map open source
  - The plan is to make the mapping code copyable

Audience Question: Is the team interested in expanding their maps beyond CA? With the 2024 election coming up, how is the team managing outreach?
- Natalie: unveiling the maps today; the team wants to talk with community groups + obtain feedback
- Nancy: data from 2022 will allows organizers to strategize for 2024 + make the case to political platforms about the need to reach out to AA voters

Audience Question: Has the team considered analyzing the impact of the Monterey Park Shooting on voter turnout + AA political engagement? Does the AA community vote as a block?
- Nancy: CAUSE has been conducting multiethnic, statewide polls looking at race relationships
- Anti-Asian hate: post-COVID, they've observed a shift; increased concern surrounding public safety + bullying/verbal assault
- The diversity of the AA community makes it complicated to obtained clear, disaggregated data; that said, we see trends in types of issues important to us
- During the LA mayoral election, there was little outreach to the AA community
  - As a community, AA voters need to hold officials accountable to us as community

Audience Question: Could the MAAPP team elaborate on the process of securing funding for their project? What does their strategy for seeking funding for future expansions look like?
- Natalie: the team received UCLA AASC (AAPI Legislative Caucus) funding for a seed project; MAAPP is designed to show the community what is possible so we can start envisioning action plan
  - There are two big costs for MAAPP: maintenance (cost structure to host free website, memory) and development

Audience Question: Are there any similar projects being developed among other ethnic/racial communities? Does the team plan to collaborate with other racial communities?
- Natalie: the method of identifying voters based on surname means the MAAPP system is most easily expanded to Latinx communications
  - The team has voting history data for all racial communities
- Tessa: the project has maps ready to go to show Latinx voting data
  - The goal of the project was to create a series of maps that are easy to be expanded to other communities/locations
- Joyce: the team came into project knowing that the AA community needs to build interracial coalitions
- Natalie: the team does not have NHPI data yet; waiting for consult (don't want to put data up that is inaccurate)

Audience Question (OCAPICA): They envision a number of ways the data can come to life "on the ground," including using the data to empower young people to look at maps + see story of communities (histories of resistance)
- OCAPICA: meeting with the City of Irvine for a community-based redistricting process

Audience Question: What is the timeline for the project grant? How long can the website be up for?
- Natalie: UCLA AAS is committed to keeping the site up for a while
- Arnold: the project is out of funding
- Nancy: funding for AAPI communities is a small percentage of philanthropy

- Excitement about MAAPP is an indication of how much AAPI research isn't funded or being conducted
- The key question: How do we as a community work to get funding for projects we are excited for? How do we advocate for resources we need to do "the work" well?
- Often AAPI organizers are asked to change what we do in order to fit into funding opportunities that aren't meant to include us
- What many AAPI researchers and organizers do is a labor of love: there is a need for us to draw lines surrounding what we will do with the funding provided

Audience Question: Does the MAAPP team have any development plans that are grounded in the UCLA and LA communities?
- Natalie: the team is in conversation with LAPI; their goal is to bring many ideas for the applications of MAAPPs together and determine which are most useful for as many people as possible
- Arnold: UCLA instructional grants could make MAAPP a part of class content
  - Interdisciplinary nature of map creation: in the university, the MAAPP team can intermix skills to develop the project

Question #2 (Joyce): Does the audience have feedback on how MAAPP could be useful to their work?
- Visualization of the distribution of English language proficiency and generational distribution would be helpful (disaggregate data)
- Would like the map to show movement over time (where AA communities are moving towards/away)
  - This will allow organizers to prematurely invest research into areas communities are moving into (ready for communities when they arrive)
- Recommend filter to show age distribution
  - Joyce: data that targets specific age groups is relevant, especially with the increased focus on increasing youth civic engagement
- A journalist's dream to access a portal with lots of data (data tells good stories)
  - AA community so vast: more granular information makes a big difference (show how different ethnic communities are voting)
- MAAPP should consider creating a list of trusted community partners/organizations across regions
  - Arnold: it would be great to have asset map

Audience Question: How do you approach disaggregating AA community data?
- Joyce: only have 6-8 national origin groups considered Asian in data
  - There does not exist a developed surname list that encapsulates all Asian national origin groups, but the team hopes to create one

Audience Question: Which communities are included in the six Asian groups represented in the data?
- Natalie: Korean, Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Vietnamese(?)

Audience Question: A request that, as campaigns for 2024 gets started, the team focus on collecting/displaying data for districts within swing states with significant AA populations

Audience Question: Are there other strategies for identifying AA voters outside of using surnames?
- Joyce: surname is primary means of identifying AA voters
  - Multi-ethnic voters: only way to identify multi-ethnic voters is if they have 2 last names and one is flagged as Asian surname
- Natalie: for the public record, registered voters in CA are not required to report race
  - Challenge of data collection (do people want to share detailed information about themselves?)
  - Some states do collect race data

Audience Question: Has the team considered creating a map of successes (display elected AAPI officials)?