ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND RELIGION:

Civic "Model Minorities?"

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Asian Americans Contribute to Diversity

Asian Americans are one of the fastest-growing non-white U.S. racial groups,[2] and they often have a public image as "model minorities," inherently predisposed to achieve educational and economic success.[3] Scholars have largely dispelled the model minority image. Yet, many Asian Americans, *although certainly not all*, do achieve high education and income.[4] For other groups of Americans, civic participation tends to increase as education and income increase.[5] In this context, asking the extent to which Asian Americans participate in American civic life is important for understanding both the future of American civil society and the future of Asian America.

Since religion is one of the main institutions that foster wider American civic life, particularly participation in local communities, we examine the intersection between religion and local community volunteerism for Asian Americans. It is also important to understand the relationship between religion and civic participation for Asian Americans because they are responsible for much of the recent increase in U.S. religious diversity,[6] and religion remains centrally important in the Asian American community.[7] Some scholarship has pointed to a religious version of Asian Americans as the model minority, an image which might promote a more significant link between religion and civic participation for Asian Americans when compared to other groups.[8] We ask to what extent religion culti-

vates civic participation among Asian Americans, and by extension a civic version of the model minority image. We specifically compare the influence of three variables—gender, class, and ethnicity—to that of religion in regard to their impact on civic participation. In addition, we compare civic participation between Asian American Protestants, Catholics, and adherents of traditionally Eastern religions. We find that increases in class resources, such as educational attainment and higher income levels, do not necessarily increase the likelihood that Asian Americans will volunteer in their communities, thus dispelling the potential image that Asian Americans might be a civic model minority. Further, Asian American Filipinos and Chinese Americans, our two comparison groups, are no more likely to volunteer than other Asian Americans, which might indicate that race is a more significant predictor of community volunteerism than ethnicity. And although religious affiliation appears to foster Asian American civic participation in general, Asian American members of traditionally Eastern religions volunteer no more than do the non-affiliated. These findings suggest that future studies should incorporate a more religiously diverse view of Asian America in their examinations of the connections between religion and civic life.

Religion, Civic Participation, and the Model Minority Image

Asian Americans are an ideal population among whom to study civic participation. They are a fast-growing and politically defined U.S. racial group.[9] From 1990 to 2000, Asian America experienced between a 48 and a 72 percent rate of growth and reached a total estimated number of between 10.2 million and 11.9 million.[10] Asian Americans form a diverse population, including both the native-born and immigrants. Yet, census reports tell us that the largest percentage of Asian Americans are first- or second-generation immigrants. According to the 2000 census, from 1990 to 2000 Asian immigrants comprised 31 percent of overall immigration, making them one of the two largest groups of the new immigration.[11]

Asian Americans are also the most religiously diverse group of new immigrants, and have expanded, in particular, the U.S. presence of Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism.[12] The largest groups of Asian American immigrants, however, are members of a Christian religious tradition and

are increasing the ethnic diversity of American Christianity.[13] Scholars have barely begun to examine this group for its significance to the study of religion and civic participation.

Most studies of religion in Asian America focus on the indigenous social benefits that religion provides.[14] For example, religion gives Asian American immigrants opportunities for leadership and a sense of meaning and belonging, resources that help individuals overcome a deficiency in social status as a result of immigration.[15] Religious involvement also provides members of the second generation with opportunities to sustain ethnic identity through maintaining networks with those who share a common national history.[16] This work tells us little, however, about the ability of religion to foster an outward-looking focus among Asian Americans.

American institutions, such as the media and education, often perpetuate the image of Asian Americans as model minorities, those who, because of *inherent* characteristics, are poised to achieve success in American society.[17] Asian Americans, too, sometimes use this image as a source of ethnic identity.[18] Researchers who study religion in Asian America have pointed out as well that individuals use religion to reproduce the model minority image. For example, Rudiger V. Busto, in his work on Asian American evangelical college fellowships, argues that participation in such groups might reinforce a religious version of the model minority, in which Asian Americans are perceived as "religious giants," seen as inherently more committed to their religious communities and as better participants than other racial groups.[19] Elaine Howard Ecklund argues, however, that Asian Americans might also use religion to challenge images of the economic model minority.[20] Still, we have not yet gained an adequate understanding of the comparative extent to which different religious traditions will foster civic participation among Asian Americans.

Asian Americans are one of the first immigrant groups to have a large percentage of its members come to the United States having already achieved professional status. This selective migration means that many post-1965 immigrant Asian Americans have significant economic and educational resources[21]—the kinds of resources that tend to increase civic participation among other groups of Americans.[22] This advantage sug-

gests that Asian Americans might soon be known as a sort of "civic model minority," those who because of higher class resources will be more active in their local communities than other groups of Americans. Religion, too, might foster civic participation among Asian Americans. Yet, we should not assume that for a group which is racially and, among many Asian Americans, also religiously different than white Americans, economic success will necessarily generate increased commitment to community participation. In addition, many Asian Americans Protestants are evangelicals, a religious tradition that, under certain conditions, might impede community participation.[23] Nonetheless, studying civic participation for Asian America provides insight into how religion and civic participation intersect for America's most religiously diverse racial group and will help to predict whether or not religion will foster the perception of Asian Americans as civic model minorities.

Hypotheses

The Social Capital Benchmark Survey (SCBS) provides the first opportunity to examine the influence of religious identity and various forms of religious participation on civic participation for a nationally-drawn sample of Asian Americans. Using data from the SCBS we ask, first, how religion compares to ethnicity, class, and gender in its influence on community volunteerism. Second, we ask how various religious traditions compare in their influence on civic participation for Asian Americans.

Dependent Variable

Voluntary Civic Participation: We define civic participation as "community volunteerism." For the purposes of this study, this category includes volunteerism in local communities and neighborhoods. We use this measure because most studies of civic involvement rely on volunteerism as a central indicator of the degree to which an individual is committed to civic life.[24] Thus, it is important to understand whether various forms of religious participation and activity influence this kind of civic participation among Asian Americans.

Independent Variables

Ethnic Group: Racial formation theory asserts that, because of the way race is structured in the United States, prescribed racial differences will override ethnic differences within a given racial classification. Such theories postulate, for example, that the social outcomes of immigrant West Indians and native African Americans will be similar because these groups fit under the common classification of "black."[25] This primacy of race means that classification as "Asian American" might be a more significant predictor of civic participation than identification with a specific Asian ethnic group, such as Chinese American or Filipino American.[26] Thus, we begin with the following hypothesis:

> H1: Because race overrides ethnicity, civic participation will not differ between Asian American ethnic groups.

Class. Similar to other studies, we use income and education as measures of class. Other research shows that higher income and education are both strongly correlated with increased civic participation,[27] which leads us to formulate a subsequent hypothesis:

> H2: Asian Americans with higher income and education will volunteer more than those with lower levels of income and education.

Gender. In other studies of volunteering, women are consistently more likely than men to volunteer, and particularly more likely to engage in "informal" volunteering, such as helping out an elderly neighbor by running an errand.[28] Gender also plays an important role in the Asian American community, revealing gender differences in religious participation between immigrant men and women.[29] Based on these findings, we have constructed our third hypothesis:

> H3: Asian American women will be more likely to volunteer than Asian American men.

Religious Participation and Affiliation. We choose two measures of religiosity: religious volunteerism and religious participation (apart from worship attendance). Both of these measures are approximations of the extent to which different religions might foster a religious image of Asian Americans as model minorities. Beyond just being affiliated with a reli-

gious organization, our two measures of religiosity indicate a high degree of religious integration. If civic participation in the broader American population is enabled through religion, in part via the development of transferable skills such as caring for others and giving to the needy, we would expect religion to promote civic participation for the most religiously integrated Asian Americans, particularly if the stereotypical image of the model minority bears on this area of social life. This expectation is articulated in our fourth and fifth hypotheses:

> H4: Asian Americans who participate in their places of worship will be more likely to participate in civic voluntary organizations.
> H5: Asian Americans who volunteer for a religious organization will be more likely to participate in civic voluntary organizations than those who do not volunteer for a religious organization.

Comparing the influence of different religious traditions on civic participation is important in studies of civic life among Asian Americans. Because a significant number of Asian Americans are Christians, this kind of analysis allows us to see the influence of an established American religion on civic life for Asian Americans. However, since the largest proportion of the "new religious America" is also housed within Asian America, this comparison foreshadows the impact that new religions might have on American civil society,[30] as our sixth hypothesis expects:

> H6: Asian Americans who are religiously affiliated will have greater civic participation than those who are not religiously affiliated.

Asian Americans who are involved in the dominant religious categories of Protestantism or Catholicism, however, may gain more resources from their religions to link with civil society than those who are part of other religions, which leads us to generate our final hypothesis:

> H7: Because the United States is institutionally Christian, Asian American Protestants and Catholics will be more likely to participate in non-religious volunteering than affiliates of Eastern religions and non-religious Asian Americans.

Data and Methods

We base our analysis on the 2000 Social Capital Benchmark Survey (SCBS), a public-access survey, which consists of a two-tiered sample of adult Americans from thirty communities in the United States that yields a total of about 29,000 respondents. We use the subset of respondents who identify as having an Asian background. A central strength of the SCBS survey is its over-sampling of Asian American respondents, providing us with the ability to study Asian American civic participation. The SCBS also has more precise data than other surveys on civic participation for Asian Americans. For example, if necessary, respondents were interviewed in their native language. Further, that the SCBS contains rich data on non-Western religious groups also allows inter-religious comparisons within the sub-sample of Asian Americans. When weighted to adjust for demographic disparities (variable FWEIGHT) and responses to income and education level questions, this subset produces an overall sample of 711 Asian American respondents.

Our dependent variable measure of civic participation includes affirmative responses to questions about individual volunteerism habits. Survey respondents answered questions regarding their participation in neighborhood projects as well as arts, health, youth, and humanities organizations. Given the variety of ways in which one may volunteer, none of which is especially correlated with religious practice, we use the sum of these responses and create a dichotomized variable, where 1 = "volunteered for any of the following organizations" and 0 = "not volunteering for any of these organizations."[31]

We divide our independent measures into five main areas of comparison: religious participation (apart from worship attendance), religious volunteering, ethnicity, class, and gender. Religious participation is measured by using responses to the following question: "In the past 12 months have you taken part in any sort of activity with people at your church or place of worship other than attending services? This might include teaching Sunday school, serving on a committee, attending choir rehearsal, retreat or other things." Respondents answered either "yes" or "no" and are coded accordingly. Religious volunteerism, likewise, is a dichotomous variable, where 1 = "yes" and 2 = "no," and is based on responses to the

directive, "tell me whether you have done any volunteer work in the past twelve months for your place of worship." Those who were not asked these questions (particularly those who reported no religious affiliation) are coded as zero in the dataset, and are excluded from much of our analyses.

Our approach to religious affiliation follows a modified version of the scheme developed by Brian Steensland, Jerry Park, and their co-authors, which collapses the numerous denominational responses into larger traditions for ease of comparability while maintaining recognition of substantive sociological and theological differences among these faiths.[32] For our particular purposes, and because of numerical limitations of the data, we have merged all Protestant Christian traditions together (evangelical, mainline, and African American), while merging the three major Eastern religious traditions (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam) into two subgroups and creating a residual category for practitioners of other faiths.[33] We have retained the Catholic and nonaffiliated categories from the original schema.

Our three other independent-variable clusters of class, ethnicity, and gender are measured in the following manner. Gender is defined dichotomously (1= "female"). We have determined class according to the respondent's highest level of attained education and current family household income. Education is measured using five dichotomous variables, each representing the highest level of education reported by the respondent: "less than high school," "high school," "some college," "college/university," and "graduate/professional degree." Income is measured similarly, using six self-reported categories to indicate household income: "less than $20K," "20K–30K," "30K–50K," "50K–75K," "75K–100K," and "100K or more."[34] In both of these measures, we have selected the lowest category reflecting those Asian American respondents with the fewest available resources that encourage volunteering as our comparison group.

Ethnicity is somewhat problematic because the sample sizes in the SCBS are very small for most Asian American ethnic groups. Comparing groups with small sample sizes increases the risk of generalizing the particular characteristics of a handful of respondents to an entire group. The SCBS does contain a sufficient number of respondents who claim Chinese or Filipino descent to make possible a comparison between these two groups and other Asian Americans. Therefore, to offset the problem

of small numbers and maximize the strengths of the data, we have collapsed all ethnic groups into three subsets: Chinese, Filipino, and all others. Our discussion of ethnicity is thus limited to these two groups, which we designate as our independent measures of ethnicity. Because our comparison is constrained in this way, caution is necessary when generalizing our findings about ethnicity to all Asian Americans.

Results

In the following tables, we present the results of logistic-regression-odds ratios, which estimate the statistical likelihood that a given independent variable will affect the dependent variable. In the first table, we present the independent bivariate effects, which refer to the strength of the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable, one at a time (Table 1, first column). Table 1 Model 1 incorporates age, gender, class, ethnicity, and religious affiliation measures to demonstrate the strength of effect that each independent variable has on the dependent variable when we account for all of the primary factors mentioned earlier. Models 2 and 3 contain a slight shift; because those without a religious affiliation were not asked any questions regarding religious behaviors, the sample consists only of those who have some religious affiliation. Models 2 and 3 are similar to Model 1, except that the comparison group for religion shifts from the nonaffiliated to the "other religion" respondents. In addition, the last two models display the effect of the two forms of religious behavior: church participation and religious volunteering. Since these religious behaviors have a fairly distinct relationship to the dependent variable, separate analysis of both behaviors is warranted.

In all models, an asterisk refers to a statistically significant finding, which indicates that the probability of this finding occurring at random is less than 5 percent (*), less than 1 percent (**), or less than one-tenth of a percent (***). Among the statistically significant findings, a value greater than 1.00 refers to an *increased* likelihood of community volunteering occurring as a result of the given independent variable. A value of less than 1.00 refers to a significantly *decreased* likelihood of the behavior occurring.

Comparing Ethnicity, Class, and Gender with Religion

In this first table, which shows the overall patterns in the full sample of Asian Americans, very few differences appear with respect to ethnicity, education, income, gender, and age. With only a couple of exceptions, these factors do not significantly influence the likelihood of volunteering. One exception is the bivariate effects of income: Asian American respondents who reported an income either between 30–50K or over 100K are less likely to volunteer than those who make less than 20K. The other exception is found in Model 3, where Asian American respondents who have received a post-baccalaureate degree are less likely to volunteer relative to those respondents who have received less than a high school education (Table 1, Model 3). On the whole, the likelihood of Asian American civic participation is not affected by increasing age, by gender, or by being Chinese or Filipino. Class measures rarely have any effect as well, and typically decrease the likelihood of volunteering.

The most influential factors in these models appear with relationship to religion. In the bivariate tests, we find that, relative to the unaffiliated, having a Protestant affiliation increases the likelihood of volunteering by a factor of 2.73 (Table 1, Independent Effects). This finding is stable even when we account for the effects of age, gender, education, income, and the two ethnic-group identities (Table 1, 2.82 times more likely in Model 1). However, in Models 2 and 3 this effect is not significant when we include religious participation and religious volunteering and our comparison group shifts from the nonaffiliated to "religious others" (1.21 and 2.11, not-significant). Instead, we find that Eastern-religion respondents are actually less likely to volunteer when we account for religious participation (Table 1, 0.41 in Model 2). Note too that the influence of religious affiliation disappears completely when we account for religious volunteering (Table 1, Model 3).

Overall, religious participation and religious volunteerism are highly significant in promoting wider community volunteering. Respondents who participate in their centers of worship are 2.85 times more likely to volunteer (Table 1, Independent Effects). This finding is bolstered further when we account for age, gender, class, ethnicity, and religious affiliation, as seen in Model 2. Asian American respondents who participate in

Table 1. Odds Ratios of Asian American Civic Voluntarism: Social Capital Benchmark Survey 2000 (Full Sample)

	Independent Effects	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	1.00	1.00	.96	.97
Age^2	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Gender: Female	1.10	1.20	1.47	1.44
Class:				
Education: [a] H.S.	1.13	1.26	.59	.71
2 years of college	.88	1.13	.59	.57
4 years of college	.87	1.40	.50	.52
Post-B.A.	.86	1.16	.45	.40*
Income:[b] 20–30K	.93	.91	1.75	1.42
30–50K	.61*	.64	.93	.89
50–75K	.82	.80	1.51	1.24
75–100K	.66	.70	.66	.68
100K+	.44**	.53	.79	.62
Ethnicity:[c] Chinese	.79	.73	.75	.70
Filipino	1.15	1.06	.81	1.29
Religious Tradition\[d]				
Protestant	2.73***	2.82***	1.21	2.11
Catholic	1.48	1.31	.92	.88
Eastern Religion	.75	.68	.41*	.66
Other Religion	1.83	1.31		
Religious Resources				
Church Participation	2.85***		3.81***	
Religious Voluntarism	22.39***			25.87***
Constant		1.57	5.32*	3.12
Nagelkerke R^2		.11	.22	.36
N		689	488	488

[a] Excluded comparison group includes those who received less than a high school education.

[b] Excluded comparison group includes those who reported a household income of less than 20K.

[c] Excluded comparison group includes those Asian American respondents who did not identify themselves as Chinese or Filipino.

[d] Excluded comparison group is the nonaffiliated in model 1 only. Subsequent models use "Other religion" as the comparison group.

* = p<.05 ** = p<.01 *** = p<.001

their places of worship are now 3.81 times more likely to volunteer than those who do not (Table 1, Model 2). Finally, respondents who report volunteering for a religious organization are 22.39 times more likely to volunteer for any civic organization when compared to those who do no religious volunteering (Table 1, Independent Effects). Like religious participation, this finding is stable and in fact is strengthened further when we account for other variables (Table 1, 25.87 for "Religious Voluntarism" in Model 3).

Religious Diversity and Civic Participation for Asian Americans

Given the relevance of religion in the lives of many Asian Americans and the effect of religion on volunteering, (demonstrated in Table 1), we have conducted a series of additional regression models, which have allowed us to test for the effect of religion, as well as the other independent measures on community volunteering, for each of the three religious groupings: Protestants, Catholics, and Eastern-religion adherents. On Table 2, in the first model for each tradition, we include only the measures for age, gender, class (education and income), and ethnicity. In the subsequent models, we control for these factors and introduce each of the two measures of religious involvement.

Protestant Asian Americans

For Protestant Asian Americans, we find that while no gender differences appear for the overall sample of Asian Americans, Protestant Asian American women are more likely to volunteer than their male counterparts. This effect is significant even when accounting for class, ethnicity, religious participation, and religious volunteerism. Among our class indicators, education has no effect regardless of the measures for which we account. Only middle and lower-middle income levels (20 to 30 thousand and 30 to 50 thousand) tend to decrease the likelihood of volunteering relative to those Protestant Asian Americans who reported a household income of less than 20 thousand dollars (Table 2, .07 and .01 in Models 1, 2, and 3 for Protestants). Chinese and Filipino Protestants are no more or less likely to volunteer than other Protestant Asian Americans. Religious participation among Asian American Protestants has no effect on the likelihood of volunteering; only religious volunteerism has a significant ef-

Table 2: Odds Ratios of Asian American Civic Voluntarism: Social Capital Benchmark Survey 2000 (Religious Group Sub-samples)

	Protestant sub-sample			Catholic sub-sample			Eastern-religion sub-sample		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Age	1.29*	1.26*	1.24*	.79**	.75**	.80	.90	.86	.93
Age^2	1.00*	1.00*	1.00	1.00*	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Gender: Female	3.85*	3.81*	3.61*	1.30	1.80	2.06	2.88**	3.12**	2.69*
Class:									
Education:[a] H.S.	.49	.38	.48	.12**	.03***	.05**	2.50	2.32	2.59
2 years of college	.33	.28	.28	.32	.05***	.18*	1.90	1.88	1.55
4 years of college	.71	.64	.90	.26	.04***	.05**	.84	1.06	.95
Post-B.A.	.07	.05	.05	.36	.27	.22	2.87	3.37	2.82
Income:[b] 20–30K	.07*	.07*	.06*	4.74*	30.20***	7.39	1.05	1.50	1.43
30–50K	.01***	.01***	.01***	3.03*	9.04**	4.16*	.95	.86	.86
50–75K	.19	.19	.16	3.53*	11.70**	4.33	1.26	1.63	1.20
75–100K	.09	.08*	.09	1.78	2.33	4.35	.18*	.12*	.25
100K+	.16	.17	.14	.00	.00	.00	.13	.06	.04
Ethnicity[c]*:* Chinese	.83	.83	.89	2.60	3.59	2.97	.25**	.32	.35
Filipino	1.24	1.07	1.20	1.49	1.16	2.45	.00	.00	.00
Religious Resources									
Church Participation		1.63			35.87***			8.30***	
Religious Voluntarism			7.04**			.00			34.27**
Constant	.26	.33	.31	309.95**	648.16**	221.03*	3.02	4.04	1.68
Nagelkerke R^2	.49	.49	.56	.32	.56	.64	.27	.39	.38
N	137	137	137	165	165	165	154	152	153

[a] Excluded comparison group includes those who received less than a high school education.
[b] Excluded comparison group includes those who reported a household income of less than 20K.
[c] Excluded comparison group includes those Asian American respondents who did not identify themselves as Chinese or Filipino.
* = p<.05 ** = p<.01 *** = p<.001

fect on the likelihood that Protestant Asian Americans will participate in community volunteerism (Table 2, 7.04 times more likely to volunteer in Model 3).

Catholic Asian Americans

Findings for the Catholic Asian American sub-sample include some surprising contrasts to those for the Protestant sub-sample. While we hypothesized that, for all the religious groups, Asian American women would be more likely to volunteer than Asian American men, unlike the Protestant Asian Americans gender is *not* a significant factor affecting the likelihood of civic participation for Catholic Asian Americans. Education and income, however, are fairly robust indicators. Catholic Asian Americans with a high school degree (Table 2, .03 and .05 in Models 2 and 3), two years of college (.05 and .18), or four years of college (.04 and .05) are significantly less likely to participate relative to Catholics who received less than a high school education. This pattern is the most consistent when accounting for other factors such as gender, income, ethnicity, and religious resources. In contrast, Asian American Catholic income levels tend to bolster civic volunteerism, especially for those in the middle categories. Respondents who reported a household income between 20K and 75K are more likely to volunteer than those who reported an income of less than 20K (Table 2, 30.20, 9.04, and 11.70, respectively, in Model 2). This pattern is consistent when we account for gender, education, ethnicity, and religious participation. However, only Catholic Asian American respondents who reported an income of 30–50K are more likely to volunteer civically when we account for religious volunteerism (Table 2, 4.16 times in Model 3). As with Protestant Asian Americans, being Chinese or Filipino did not affect the likelihood of community volunteerism for Catholics. Religious behavior, however, presents a different picture when compared to the results in the Protestant sub-sample. Whereas religious participation seems not to influence the likelihood of community volunteering for Asian American Protestants, religious participation increases the likelihood of Catholic Asian American volunteerism by a factor of 35.87 (Table 2, Model 2). Religious volunteering, conversely, has no effect when accounting for gender, class, and ethnicity measures.

Eastern-religion Asian Americans

When we look at the Asian American adherents of Eastern religions, we find that they resemble their Protestant counterparts in several ways. Women in this sub-sample are more likely than men to participate in organizations devoted to community volunteerism. And as with the Protestants, this effect remains stable when accounting for class, ethnicity, and religious behavior (Table 2, 22.88 in Model 1, 3.12 in Model 2, 2.69 in Model 3). Much like the Protestant sub-sample, education does not predict their likelihood of participation. Unlike both Protestant and Catholic Asian Americans, however, Eastern-religion respondents do not vary in the likelihood of volunteering based on income levels, with one minor exception: respondents who reported an income of 75K to 100K are less likely to volunteer than those who make less than 20K (.18 and .12, respectively, in Table 2, Models 1 and 2).

Surprisingly, while ethnicity plays no role in civic participation relative to the other two religions, it does matter to a small extent for Eastern-religion respondents. When controlling for gender, education, and income, Chinese Eastern-religion respondents are less likely to volunteer relative to other Eastern-religion Asian respondents. However, when we account for religious participation and volunteering this effect disappears. And while only one of the two resource advantages affects the likelihood of volunteering for Protestant and Catholic respondents, both resources increase the likelihood for Eastern-religion respondents, even when controlling for gender, class, and ethnicity (8.30 and 34.27 times more likely in Table 2, Models 2 and 3).

Discussion and Conclusions

Because Asian Americans are the most ethnically and religiously diverse American racial group, they will necessarily play an important role in post-1965 American civil society. Here, we have tested hypotheses about religion and community volunteerism among Asian Americans, a group previously ignored in studies of civic participation. What do these results suggest with respect to our understanding of religion and civic participation among Asian Americans? We find some support for our hypothesis

regarding race and ethnicity. With the exception of the Chinese Eastern-religion adherents in this sample (and only under very specific conditions), the ethnic differences we were able to analyze, being either Chinese or Filipino when compared to other Asian Americans, do not play a significant role in predicting community volunteerism. Our research suggests instead that racial-group categories may be a more significant factor than ethnic-group categories in predicting the likelihood of group-based civic practices for Asian Americans. Although ethnic-group categories are relevant with respect to identity construction, under certain political and economic conditions racial categories may suppress ethnic differences.[35] Further research with larger ethnic sub-samples will help us to understand this pattern better for Asian America as a whole.

With respect to class measures, our results are somewhat surprising when compared to other studies, since they generally predict that civic participation will increase as education and income increase. We find little support for the argument that additional levels of education increase the likelihood of civic participation for Asian Americans. On the contrary, whenever education is statistically significant, it actually inhibits participation. In terms of income, important differences between religious groups are at work. Lower-middle class Asian American Protestants are less likely to volunteer, while lower-middle class Asian American Catholics are more likely to volunteer. These findings about education and income may call into question some of the ideologies bundled with the stereotype of Asian Americans as the model minority. The model minority stereotype would predict that Asian Americans with more education and income might also be "model minority citizens," more active participants in their communities. Challenging these assumptions, we find that increases in education and income do not necessarily increase civic participation for Asian Americans. Furthermore, religious affiliation seems to shape the direction in which income affects the likelihood of civic participation.

Gender, overall, has no differential effect on civic participation. However, Protestant and Eastern-religion Asian American women are different from their male counterparts and are more likely to participate in community volunteer organizations. Previous research offers two dominant explanations for this finding. One possibility is that traditional gen-

der roles may be strongest within these religions, which may in turn encourage women to fulfill the role of caretaker, thus making them more likely than men to participate in the traditionally "feminine" task of community service.[36] Another possibility is that the American environment shifts the grounds on which gender roles operate within traditionally Eastern religions. Since many Asian Americans are immigrants, differences between home and host country also may play a role. When immigrants come from a place where men often fulfill the public and civic roles in the home country, immigrant women in the U.S. may have more opportunities to participate in non-religious civic life because of the relatively "liberal" standards of American public life. That Asian American Protestant women participate in more voluntary activities indicates that the forces of religious traditionalism may be at work. Although more Protestant women are part of the paid workforce than ever before, the service and care-taking societal role is still often the purview of women.[37] To the extent that Asian American Protestant congregations are institutionally linked with other American Protestant congregations, it should come as no surprise that Asian American Protestant women will behave in ways that are similar to other Protestant women.

With respect to religious-tradition affiliation among Asian Americans, it appears that affiliation matters most when compared to lack of affiliation. Indeed, because we see specific gender, income, education, and religious-resource effects, we argue that these identities heavily influence and structure the ways in which Asian Americans participate in the broader society. These identities should complicate our understanding of what "model minority" citizenship might mean. Our findings suggest that Protestant affiliation may promote greater civic involvement; but, certain aspects of this subculture (e.g. sermons, administrative practices) might extend a constraining effect, especially for the lower-middle class. A better understanding of these inter-religious differences would come from having a larger data set with more religious diversity, one with enough respondents to permit inter-group comparisons between, for example, different categories of Protestants, such as Chinese American Pentecostals and Chinese American Presbyterians. The small numbers of respondents in these categories do not allow for such inter-group comparisons.

Catholic affiliation apparently encourages its Asian American members in different income groups to think "pro-civically" but in ways not influenced by increased education, which is somewhat surprising given the long history of American Catholic education. Finally, Eastern-religion adherence provides more "pro-civic" religious resources, even though these religions are arguably still marginalized in the United States. Research that obtains larger and more representative sub-samples will help us to see the differential effects among these various religious traditions. Specifically, better measures, that target the particular ways in which religion is practiced among Asian Americans, are needed to capture this complexity and determine how religious groups function in a pluralized America.

These results have larger implications. Researchers should not assume that emerging diverse communities will simply fit the models of other groups. For example, Asian American members of non-Christian religions might have different kinds of volunteer habits than Asian American Protestants. Other work has shown that instead of religious diversity leading to more secularization and privatization, such diversity is actually revitalizing American religion and is an important part of preserving ethnic identities.[38] As the American population continues to undergo further religious and racial diversification, understanding the increasingly complex intersection of religion, race, and civic participation within Asian America is a centrally important topic.

NOTES

1. The authors express our thanks to the editor and an anonymous JAAS reviewer for their helpful comments on this article.
2. See Harry H. L. Kitano and Roger Daniels, *Asian Americans: Emerging Minorities.* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2000).
3. See Timothy P. Fong, *The Contemporary Asian American Experience: Beyond the Model Minority.* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1998).
4. See Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, "The 'Success' Image of Asian Americans: Its Validity, and Its Practical and Theoretical Implications," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 12:4 (1989): 512–538.
5. See Penny Edgell Becker and Pawan H. Dhingra, "Religious Involvement and Volunteering: Implications for Civil Society," *Sociology of Religion* 62:3 (2001): 315–335 (see, in particular, 325); John Wilson and Marc Musick, "Who Cares?

Toward an Integrated Theory of Volunteer Work," *American Sociological Review* 62:5 (1997): 694–713.

6. See Pyong Gap Min and Jung Ha Kim, eds., *Religions in Asian America: Building Faith Communities* (New York: Alta Mira Press, 2002)., especially pp. 1–10.
7. See Fenggang Yang, "The Growing Literature of Asian American Religions: A Review of the Field," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 3:2 (2000): 251–256.
8. See Rudy V. Busto, "The Gospel According to the Model Minority?: Hazarding an Interpretation of Asian American Evangelical College Students," *Amerasia Journal* 22:1 (1996): 133–147.
9. See Pei-Te Lien, "Public Resistance to Electing Asian Americans in Southern California," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 5:1 (2002): 51–72.
10. In addition, Min Zhou points out that the Asian and Pacific Islander population increased seven-fold between 1970 and 2000 (i.e. from 1.4 million to 11.9 million); see Min Zhou, "Are Asian Americans Becoming 'White'?," *Contexts: Understanding People in Their Social Worlds* 3:(2004): 29–37.
11. The Hart-Celler reforms of 1965 ended national-origin quotas and established family-reunification priorities for U.S. immigration law. An unintended consequence of these reforms was to pave the way for a new influx of immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean Basin. See Charles Hirschman, Philip Kasinitz, and Josh DeWind, eds., *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999), p. 267.
12. See Min and Kim, *Religions in Asian America*; Diana Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001).
13. See R. Stephen Warner, "Coming to America: Immigrants and the Faith They Bring," *Christian Century* (2004): 20–23.
14. See, for example, Victoria Hyonchu Kwon, Helen Rose Ebaugh, and Jacqueline Hagan, "The Structure and Functions of Cell Group Ministry in a Korean Christian Church," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36:2 (1997): 247–256. In her comparison of the relationship that a Taiwanese immigrant Buddhist Temple and a Chinese evangelical church have to their local community, Carolyn Chen conducted one of the first ethnographic studies to examine the connections between religion and civic life for a group of first-generation immigrants; see Carolyn Chen, "The Religious Varieties of Ethnic Presence," *Sociology of Religion* 63:2 (2002): 215–238.
15. See Pyong Gap Min, "The Structure and Social Functions of Korean Immigrant Churches in the United States," *International Migration Review* 26:4 (1992): 1370–94.
16. See, for example, Kelly Chong, "What It Means to Be Christian: The Role of Religion in the Construction of Ethnic Identity and Boundary among Second-Generation Koreans," *Sociology of Religion* 59:3 (1998): 259–286.

17. Hurh and Kim, "The 'Success' Image of Asian Americans: Its Validity, and Its Practical and Theoretical Implications."
18. See Pensri Ho, "Performing the "Oriental," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 6:2 (2003): 149–175.
19. See Busto, "The Gospel According to the Model Minority?: Hazarding an Interpretation of Asian American Evangelical College Students."
20. See Elaine Howard Ecklund, "'Us' and 'Them:' the Role of Religion in Mediating and Challenging the 'Model Minority' and Other Civic Boundaries," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28:1 (2005): 132–150.
21. See Kitano and Daniels, *Asian Americans: Emerging Minorities.*
22. See Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Volunteerism in American Politics.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), especially pp. 291–295.
23. See Jerry Park and Christian Smith, "'To Whom Much Has Been Given...' Religious Capital and Community Voluntarism among Churchgoing Protestants," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 39:3 (2000): 272–286.; Robert Wuthnow, "Mobilizing Civic Engagement: The Changing Impact of Religious Involvement," in *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*, eds. Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 1999), 331–363.
24. See Wilson and Musick, "Who Cares? Toward an Integrated Theory of Volunteer Work."
25. See Mary C. Waters, *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).
26. See Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s.* (New York: Routledge, 1994).; Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities.* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).
27. See Wilson and Musick, "Who Cares? Toward an Integrated Theory of Volunteer Work."
28. See Virginia Hodgkinson and Murray Weitzman, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector, 1992).
29. See Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, "Agents for Cultural Reproduction and Structural Change: The Ironic Role of Women in Immigrant Religious Institutions," *Social Forces* 78:2 (1999): 585–613.
30. See Guillermina Jasso, Douglas S. Massey, Mark R. Rosenzweig, and James P. Smith, "Exploring the Religious Preferences of Recent Immigrants to the United States: Evidence from the New Immigrant Survey Pilot," in *Religion and Immigration: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Experiences in the United States*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Jane I. Smith, and John L. Esposito, (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Alta Mira Press, 2003), 217–253.
31. In an earlier analysis of the sum total of these measures, we have noted that responses are skewed to the left such that a large spike occurs for "volunteering for one organization" and drops precipitously afterward. This result creates

a non-normal curve which violates OLS assumptions that the dependent variable be normally distributed. We have concluded for the sake of parsimony to reduce these responses to a simply dichotomous measure which we use throughout the analyses presented here.

32. See Brian Steensland, Jerry Z. Park, Mark D. Regnerus, Lynn D. Robinson, W. Bradford Wilcox, and Robert D. Woodberry, "The Measure of American Religion: Toward Improving the State of the Art," *Social Forces* 79:1 (2000): 291–318.
33. Given the variability of religious affiliations within this residual category, lacking any theoretical or substantive lens through which to interpret their responses, and low sample size (N = 33), we have not reported any of the descriptive findings for the "other religion" Asian Americans in this sample.
34. Due to problematic coding, we have edited the complete seven-point scale of income since two of the categories lack sufficient specificity (i.e. "less than 30K" and "30K or more"). These two sets of responses account for five percent of the full SCBS sample and were removed from later analysis to maintain the use of this scaled measure.
35. See Pawan H. Dhingra, "Being American between Black and White," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 6:2 (2003): 117–147.
36. See Ebaugh and Chafetz, "Agents for Cultural Reproduction and Structural Change: The Ironic Role of Women in Immigrant Religious Institutions"
37. See Penny Long Marler, "Lost in the Fifties: The Changing Family and the Nostalgic Church," in *Work, Family, and Religion in Contemporary Society*, eds. Nancy Tatom Ammerman and Wade Clark Roof (New York: Routledge, 1995), 23–60.
38. See Fenggang Yang and Helen Rose Ebaugh, "Transformations in New Immigrant Religions and Their Global Implications," *American Sociological Review* 66 April (2001): 269–288.