ABSTRACT
HMONG POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN
THE UNITED STATES

Literature on political participation has traditionally lacked an Asian American presence but as the Asian American population has grown, so has the literature on its political participation. This literature, however, has often targeted only the most populous ethnic groups, thereby overshadowing others. Hmong Americans, despite their increasing political presence, is one such group.

This study focuses on the political participation of the Hmong population in the United States, providing an overview of the political landscape of the community and an analysis of factors that contribute to their participation. A total of 152 responses were gathered through an online survey that was disseminated on social networking websites, organization email lists, and discussion boards.

The study utilizes variables from various models of political participation including the socioeconomic status model and the group conscious model. Bivariate analysis is used to identify factors that are associated with Hmong political participation in the United States. Findings from the study show that a wide range of variables contribute to an understanding of what factors influence Hmong political participation in the United States.

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THE UNITED STATES

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Kau Vue

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Ethnicity and race have always had an impact on American politics. History has shown us that ethnicity and race were traditionally barriers to electoral participation (Aoki & Takeda, 2008). Race and ethnicity will certainly become more prominent as the population of the United States begins to transform largely into a minority-majority population. It was reported by the U.S. Census that for the first time in U.S. history, minority births accounted for more than half of all births in 2011 (Trounson, 2012). Additionally, in a recent report from the United States Census Bureau, Asian Americans became the fastest growing minority group (Hoeffel, Rastogi, Kim, & Shahid, 2012). An increase in the Asian American population has led to inquiries about its potential future impact on the American political system (Aoki & Takeda, 2008).

Just as Asian Americans have often been overshadowed by African Americans and Latinos as a share of the minority electorate, hidden underneath this all-encompassing racial category are those national populations that often go unnoticed. One of these little-noticed ethnic groups among Asian Americans in particular is the Hmong. Despite being overshadowed by their more populous Asian peers, the Hmong are an ethnic group that deserves study. Although making up only a small percentage of the entire Asian American population, this group has made strides in its political participation, especially in the area of candidate emergence in elections (Doherty, 2007; Lor, 2009). This study will focus on the political participation of the Hmong population in the United States, providing an overview of the political landscape of the community and an analysis of factors that contribute to its participation in American politics.
A Brief Introduction to the Hmong

The Hmong are a people from Southeast Asia. The majority of those who have settled in the United States are refugees from Southeast Asia. The first Hmong refugees—3,466 Hmong—arrived in the United States in 1975, just shortly after the United States’ withdrawal from the Vietnam War in 1973. The Hmong, led by General Vang Pao, had previously been recruited by the United States to assist the country’s efforts in escalating conflict that stemmed from the Vietnam War in Southeast Asia. In particular, the Hmong had been recruited to assist with the United States’ efforts to contain communism in Laos (Doherty, 2007; Leary, 1995). Initially, the U.S. hoped that “a neutral Laos would serve as a buffer between pro-Western Thailand and the aggressive intentions of North Vietnam and China,” but by 1970 U.S. troops were “down to 280,000” as the United States withdrew from the war (Leary, 1995, p. 512).

With the withdrawal of the United States and Vietnamese invasion of Laos in the 1970s, the Hmong became victims of persecution (Doherty, 2007). Because of the fear of persecution, many Hmong refugees fled Laos and resettled in refugee camps in Thailand. From the refugee camps, many of the Hmong then immigrated to the U.S., “where they were granted a special immigrant status as past allies of the United States government” (Doherty, 2007, p. 3). In the 1990s, many of the refugee resettlement camps in Thailand closed, prompting another large influx of Hmong refugees. The most recent wave of Hmong refugees arrived in 2004 after the closure of Wat Tham Krabok, an unofficial refugee camp in Thailand (Grigoleit, 2006). According to one scholar, “approximately 15,000 Hmong were finally going to be reunited with their families...under the auspices of the Family Reunification Program” (Grigoleit, 2006, p. 2). Many settled in
California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, states that boast some of the largest Hmong populations in the United States.

Statistics from the 2010 U.S. Census show that the Hmong population in the United States has greatly increased in the last decade. In a span of 10 years, the total Hmong population in the United States increased by 39.6% from 186,310 in 2000 to 260,073 in 2010 (Hoeffel et al., 2012). California has the largest Hmong population in the United States, with 91,224 residing within its state borders. Minnesota comes in second with 66,181. Rounding the top 5 most Hmong-populated states are Wisconsin (49,240), North Carolina (10,864), and Michigan (5,924) (United States Census Bureau, 2012). Despite this increase, the Hmong population remains a relatively small ethnic group, with just 1.5% of the entire Asian American population in the United States. While this may be the case, “among the 20 metro areas with the largest Asian alone-or-in-combination populations” the Hmong were among one of the three groups with the highest population in any given metro area represented (Hoeffel et al., 2012, p. 19). With 64,000 individuals, the Hmong were “the largest detailed Asian group in Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI” and were represented in the Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA area with a population of 27,000 (Hoeffel et al., 2012, p. 19). The Hmong in Minnesota are relatively more concentrated than those in California.

Despite making up less than 1% of the population in the United States, the Hmong have made strides in candidate emergence and electoral success. In the 1990s, Hmong-Americans “exhibited an unexpected tendency to run for elected office,” and the trend has continued to present day (Doherty, 2007, p. 2). In the past 10 years, there has been extensive media coverage of the Hmong community, particularly in Fresno, California and St. Paul, Minnesota, regarding Hmong
political involvement (Lor, 2009). Mee Moua, the first Hmong state official, was elected in 2002 to the Minnesota State Senate. During the same year, “Cy Thao was elected to the Minnesota State Legislature” and Tony Vang became the first Hmong elected official in Fresno, California, after winning a seat on the Fresno School Board (Lor, 2009, p. 1). These victories occurred in cities that had large concentrations of Hmong populations. Most recently—during the California primary in 2012—City of Fresno Councilmember Blong Xiong and Fresno resident Vong Mouanoutoua made unsuccessful bids for the U.S. House of Representatives and the California Assembly, respectively. This apparent inclination to participate in the U.S. political system makes the Hmong a population worthy of further study by political science.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to develop a picture of the current state of Hmong political participation in the United States. Additionally, the study will discuss two theories of political participation: the socioeconomic model (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995; Verba, Schlozman, Brady, & Nie, 1993) and the group consciousness model (Miller, Gurin, Gurin, & Malanchuk, 1981). It will then examine how these models illuminate the political participation of the Hmong in American politics. The study employs a quantitative method approach in the form of an online survey. In particular, the study will seek to answer two questions:

1. Are Hmong Americans politically active?
2. What variables influence their political participation?
Significance of Study

The Hmong is still considered one of the more recent Asian immigrant groups to the United States despite having had a presence in the country since 1975. While literature on the Hmong has grown, literature on Hmong American political participation is practically nonexistent (Doherty, 2007; Lor, 2009; Vang, 2011). The lack of literature does not mean that Hmong political participation does not exist; it has only been left somewhat unexplored. Again, the Hmong community has seen an increase in candidate emergence—particularly in local elections for seats on school boards and city councils since the early late 1990s (Doherty, 2007; Lor, 2009). Mee Moua’s historic election as Minnesota State Senator in 2002 brought attention to the potential strength of the Hmong vote and what it would mean to harness the Hmong vote. The significance of Moua’s election was obvious especially in cities and states with a large concentration of Hmong Americans—e.g., the Twin Cities.

Because of a lack of literature on Hmong American political participation, insight into this ethnic group’s political participation has required interested parties to look to other groups for explanations as to Hmong American political behavior (Doherty, 2007; Lor, 2009). Most notably, researchers have turned to the growing literature on Asian American political participation (Aoki & Takeda, 2008; Lien, 2001; Wong, Lien, & Conway 2005; Wong, Ramakrishnan, Lee, & Junn, 2011). Gaining an understanding of Asian American political participation can provide clues to the possible state of Hmong political participation, as well as factors that may potentially affect their participation.

First, a review of the scholarly literature will focus on political participation and its underlying theories about what determines political participation in order to provide a framework for the study. After providing an explanation of the literature
on political participation, the focus will then shift to studies of Asian American political participation. Studies of Asian American political participation will provide direction and a sense of what Hmong political participation could resemble, as well as an indication of factors that affect their participation. Although research specifically on Hmong political participation is scarce, the few available analyses of Hmong political participation will also be examined.

**Political Participation Defined**

Political participation can sometimes be misidentified as solely electoral participation. For many people, voting may be the only political activity they will take part in; however, participating at the polls is just one activity within the multitude of activities that constitute political participation (Brady et al., 1995; Conge, 1988; Leighley, 1995). Political participation can range from the simple act of voting to protesting for a cause. Even illegal acts—such as the bombing of abortion clinics—can be identified as forms of political participation (Conge, 1988). As a result, scholars have defined political participation in a variety of ways.

In a review article, for instance, Patrick J. Conge remarked that there is no agreed upon definition of political participation (1988). He analyzed approximately five different definitions from different authors as a way of formulating his own meaning of the term. The first was Verba and Nie’s definition of political participation as “behavior designed to affect the choice of government personnel and/or policies” (Conge, 1988, p. 242). Because of its exclusion of unorthodox behavior, such as “passive forms, civil disobedience, and political violence,” some scholars found the definition of political participation to be too narrow (Conge, 1988, p. 242). Later experts made efforts to broaden the
definition to include “all voluntary activities by individual citizens intended to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political system” (Conge, 1988, p. 242). This definition—expounded by Samuel H. Barnes, Max Kasse, and other scholars—extended political participation to include violent acts (Conge, 1988). Another formulation by Joan M. Nelson contended that actions deemed as political participation were those “by private citizens intended to influence the actions or the composition of national or local governments,” while action not directed at the government were not political participation (Conge, 1988, p. 243). This variety of definitions allows more recent authors to choose from among the different definitions. Wong et al. (2011), for example, utilized Verba and Nie’s definition in their study on Asian American political participation. Wong et al. (2005) defined political participation to be “a function of resources, engagement, and recruitment or mobilization,” a definition that is derived substantially from the formulation delineated by Brady et al. (1995).

According to Conge, a definition should fulfill the two requirements: generality and precision. This study will utilize Conge’s definition of political participation. Through his analysis of the multiple definitions of political participation, Conge (1988) characterized political participation “as individual or collective action at the national or local level that supports or opposes state structures, authorities, and/or decisions regarding allocation of public goods” (Conge, 1988, p. 247).

**Explaining Political Participation**

Like the problem of defining political participation, theories explaining it are just as varied. The most basic model of political participation is the
socioeconomic status (SES) model (Brady et al., 1995; Verba et al., 1993). The SES model is the prevailing theoretical framework used by empirical studies to explain political participation (Leighley, 1995). On the other hand, the group consciousness model posits ethnic and racial group identity and group awareness are factors that influence political participation. Political participation has also been attributed to psychological factors as well as contextual factors (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999).

Income, education and time are all factors that contribute to political participation (Brady et al., 1995; Verba et al., 1993). The many empirical studies that use the SES model as a framework have been able to provide an abundance of evidence about the effect of socioeconomic factors on participation. Individuals with higher incomes are more likely to be politically active, whereas those with lower incomes are less likely to be politically active (Leighley, 1995; Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999). Education also has a similar effect; individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to have higher political participation rates (Leighley, 1995). Of the many different variables, education and income have time and again been proven to be two of the strongest factors that affect political participation. Leighley (1995) pointed out that “the SES model is broadly accepted since few empirical studies find that socioeconomic status is unrelated to political participation” (p. 186).

The SES model also has produced conflicting research, particularly on “the effects of gender, race, and ethnicity on participation” (Leighley, 1995, p. 184). The effect of gender on participation has been rewritten as the “relative turnout rate of men and women have changed significantly over the past several decades” (Leighley, 1995, p. 184). Women are no longer less likely than men to vote; on
average, they are about “equally likely to vote in presidential elections as men are” (Leighley, 1995, p. 184).

Race and ethnicity is another analytical category that has problematized the SES model. As one recent scholar noted, “institutional factors are often cited as structuring these differences,” but when controlled, minorities may still vote equally or less often than their White counterparts (Leighley, 1995, p. 184). Additionally, studies that confirm the model have usually analyzed populations that are neither Hispanic nor Asian American. Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) found that only education was a significant SES variable for Asian Americans but despite this fact, they still assumed “socioeconomic status works similarly across ethnic groups” (p. 1094).

Cho (1999) challenged the generalizability of the socioeconomic model, insisting that political participation was a more complicated process, assuming that higher socioeconomic status translated to higher voter turnout was far too simplistic. Cho (1999) believed that political realities demonstrated this notion to be false. The socioeconomic model could not explain the trend of “increasing income but declining voter turnout” (Cho, 1999, p. 1141). The population of the United States was more diverse than it once was, and the prevailing theories were developed before the most recent influx of immigrants into the United States. In particular, Cho (1999) argued for greater consideration of the role of socialization because “immigrant groups are socialized through different channels and thus bring unique experiences to bear upon the political perspective in America” (p. 1142).

Cho (1999) raised a valid criticism because Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) asserted the SES model’s generalizability to Asian Americans, although only education and income were tested as socioeconomic status model variables. She
further argued that education does not “increase one’s likelihood of voting but rather the socialization process that is provided through education” (Cho, 1999, p. 1144). Cho tested socialization in the form of foreign-born status and English proficiency. When controlled for these variables, “ethnicity effects disappear completely,” showing that socioeconomic variables “serve as only partial explanations for the minority population” (Cho, 1999, p. 1144).

Critics of the SES approach thus claim the theory does not adequately explain political participation among minority groups (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999; Miller et al., 1981). This gave rise to an alternative theoretical approach known as the group consciousness model (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999; Miller et al., 1981). The theory first gained prominence after the observation that African Americans were more likely to participate politically as compared to White Americans who were of similar socioeconomic status (Chong & Rogers, 2005; Miller et al., 1981). Where the emphasis is on resources in the SES model, the group consciousness approach postulates that group awareness is the primary factor that compels individuals to partake in political activities. Group consciousness is defined to be “a self-conscious awareness among group members of their status as a deprived group” (Miller et al., 1981, pp. 494-495). Furthermore, it “incorporates the notion of shared interests and the recognition that the individual’s welfare is inseparable from that of the group” (Miller et al., 1981, p. 508). Miller et al. (1981) found that heightened sense of group consciousness contributed to higher political participation, especially those deemed non-electoral activities. The study also found that group consciousness could be generalized to include electoral activities as well (Miller et al., 1981).

While the group consciousness model has been deemed more relevant to minority groups, it has been less consistent when minority groups are further
divided ethnically (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999). Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) argued that the group consciousness model was not generalizable because its measure of group closeness—how close respondents feel to members of their ethnic group—was insignificant when analyzed across races. In fact, when measuring for the effect of closeness to other groups, Asian Americans, “who feel more distant from other [minority] groups,” were found to be “less likely to participate” (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999, p. 1104).

Wong et al.’s (2005) focus on group resources tells a similar story. In measuring group consciousness, the authors used opinions on linked fate to the Asian Americans as a whole and to the respondent’s specific ethnicity. On a bivariate level, feeling that one’s fate was linked to what happened to other Asian Americans was significantly related to political participation; but it was not statistically significant enough to be linked to a specific ethnic group (Wong et al., 2005, p. 558). When controlling for other variables, the relationship was weakened, as was the case for other group-based resources in the study. Wong et al.’s (2005) assessment of group consciousness and group-based resources was that it was specific to the type of political participation activity. Group consciousness was “negatively associated with registration among citizens but positively associated with participation beyond voting” (Wong et al., 2005, p. 567). Similar to Leighley and Vedlitz (1999), specific variables used to operationalize the different models had different effects on the type of participation.

Chong and Rogers (2005) disagreed with the assessment that the group consciousness model was losing its significance. They argued that group consciousness was not the problem. Rather, “variations in the conceptualization and operationalization of group solidarity” used by researchers diminished the
effect of group solidarity in political participation (Chong & Rogers, 2005, p. 350). Furthermore, they argued, “identification refers to an individual’s sense of belonging or attachment to a social group,” whereas “consciousness combines basic in-group identification with a set of ideas about the group’s status and strategies for improving it” (Chong & Rogers, 2005, p. 350). Identification is just a first step toward group consciousness, but it has often been used interchangeably in reference to consciousness. Additionally, group consciousness has often been limited to items of (1) racial/ethnic self-identification, (2) linked fate with racial/ethnic group, and (3) closeness to their racial/ethnic group (Chong & Rogers, 2005). Specifically, Chong and Rogers (2005) argued that Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) were guilty of restricting group consciousness measures to two items: closeness to one’s group and inter-group distance. It was their assessment that the study—as well as other studies that are restrictive in their operationalization of group consciousness—was unable to fully capture “the more complex political or ideological elements of group consciousness” (Chong & Rogers, 2005, p. 351).

According to Chong and Rogers’s (2005) study, the effect of group consciousness “on political participation depends on which components of identification and consciousness are measured and tested, as well as on which acts of participation are examined” (p. 351). With a more thorough operationalization of group solidarity, they believed group consciousness could still be highly pertinent to the study of political participation with its greatest influences on nonconventional political activities such as protesting and demonstrations. Because the study used data from the 1984 National Black Election Studies, Chong and Rogers (2005) warned against generalizing measures of consciousness across ethnic lines.
Scholars utilizing SES and group consciousness theories have not applied their theories to a wide variety of racial and ethnic groups. In Leighley and Vedlitz’s (1999) comparison of political participation models, five different political participation theories were tested, including the SES model and the group consciousness model. In general, Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) concluded that the SES model could be generalized to all African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and Whites. The same conclusion was made for psychological resources and social connectedness as predictors for all four groups. Ultimately, Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) found group consciousness to be one of the models not generalizable to all racial groups. Despite this conclusion, it is important to recognize that within their study, they found specific variables were significant rather than entire models (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999).

The National Asian American Survey

Beyond the general literature on political participation, there is a more specific and growing scholarly interest focused on Asian American political participation (Lien, 2001; Wong et al., 2005). The 2008 National Asian American Survey (NAAS) in Asian American Political Participation: Emerging Constituents and Their Political Identities (2011) exemplifies this trend. The study tried “to answer long-standing questions about the relationship between individual-level resources, political partisanship, ethnic and racial identity, immigrant assimilation, social capital, and structural context and political engagement” (Wong et al., 2011, p. 15). It also likely serves as the most comprehensive study on political participation among Asian Americans to date, using data collected from over 5,000 individuals identifying themselves as Asian American (Wong et al., 2011). The focus was on five acts of participation: voting,
political donations, contacting government officials, community activism, and protest activities. Rather than employing a specific model, the study utilized variables from different models including group consciousness and the SES model. The explanatory variables were grouped as follows: immigrant socialization, residential contexts and political geography, party identification, racial identity formation, and involvement in secular and religious organizations.

While political geography was found lacking in its association to political participation, the study found immigrant socialization played a role in Asian American political participation (Wong et al., 2011). Findings for those who were foreign born showed that they generally participated at lower rates than their counterparts. Similar generalizations were drawn about those who maintained connections to their native countries or culture. These included “those who are more recent residents, are educated abroad, or more closely follow ethnic news tend to participate less than their more acculturated counterparts” (Wong et al., 2011, p. 212). There were also variations as regards to the type of political participation, especially for acts of political protest; those less acculturated were more likely to participate in protest actions (Wong et al., 2011, p. 212). These results also confirmed those of Cho (1999), who emphasized socialization as a factor in participation.

Party identification was found to be significantly related to political participation. Compared to other racial groups, a larger number of Asian Americans defined themselves as independents—even when “leaners” are distributed. Unwillingness to be defined as Democrat or Republican was negatively associated with political participation (Wong et al., 2011).

Racial identity formation was found to be generally not significant. In general, racial and ethnic formation was found to be insignificant, which falls in
line with the previous studies on group consciousness and solidarity as it pertained to Asian Americans (Wong et al., 2005). Instead, the opposite was true. With regards to voting and working in the community to solve a problem, affinity with outgroups, or non-Asian groups, was positively correlated to these two activities (Wong et al., 2011, p. 212). Discrimination was also a significant determinant in political participation as opposed to group consciousness (Wong et al., 2011, p. 212).

**Hmong Political Participation**

While most previous studies have focused on the Asian American community at large, there is very little research on Hmong political involvement. Although few in number, these studies provide some provisional insight into Hmong political participation. In 2009, for example, an article was written by Yang Lor (2009) examining “factors that affect the electoral participation of Hmong communities in St. Paul and Fresno” (p. 2). The article was a comparison of the political activeness of Hmong populations in Fresno, California, and St. Paul, Minnesota. Lor’s study shed some light onto what may prompt political activity in the Hmong community. Data for Lor’s research were derived from observations and interviews, as well as examinations of newspaper articles and data from the Census Bureau.

Lor (2009) noted that while both cities were able to produce successful electoral candidates, the Hmong in St. Paul were more successful at engaging the government and acquiring electoral successes. Lor argued the disparity between the two cases stemmed from differences of “social, economic, and political contexts]…favorable to fostering Hmong political environment” (Lor, 2009, p. 19). While both cities contain large Hmong populations, the Hmong population of
Fresno is strongly centered on agriculture, as well as heavily reliant on social services (Lor, 2009). The Hmong in St. Paul, on the other hand, “[have] made tremendous progress with respect to the number and variety of businesses and community organizations” (Lor, 2009, p. 9). As an example of this trend, revenue from “Hmong businesses,” Lor estimated, “exceed[ed] $100 million” (Lor, 2009, p. 9). The Hmong in St. Paul were also more likely to own homes and had higher incomes than those in Fresno (Lor, 2009).

Because the goal of Lor’s (2009) study was to shed light on differences between the two communities rather than a focus on political participation, there was not much in the way of information on political participation. Lor (2009) did find the Hmong of both cities to be electorally active, especially when a Hmong candidate was running for office. Non-English speaking Hmong elders were receptive to Hmong candidates and—although in small amounts—contributed monetarily to campaigns. Hmong youth also volunteered to work on campaigns and canvass neighborhoods (Lor, 2009). Lor’s (2009) study is able to affirm that Hmong Americans participate in politics, but unfortunately it does not provide any detailed idea of what political participation among Hmong Americans looks like.

Doherty’s (2007) study into candidate emergence within the Hmong community reiterated Lor’s (2009) findings of the importance of contextual factors and Hmong political behavior. Doherty took his study one step further by examining electoral turnout and partisanship within the community, but ultimately focusing on the phenomenon of candidate emergence. Hmong voter turnout was found to be generally low. Surprisingly, there was a higher level of Republican support than was expected (Doherty, 2007). Because Doherty’s (2007) main focus was on candidate emergence, he lacked greater analysis of and details about Hmong political behavior. Doherty’s (2007) study also focused on the Upper
Midwest, so generalizability among the Hmong in the United States more generally is also an issue. As Lor (2009) noted, the Hmong in Fresno and St. Paul differed greatly in political involvement and socioeconomic status.

Where both Doherty (2007) and Lor (2009) focused their efforts on electoral politics within the borders of the United States, Vang (2011) examined Hmong political activism through the lens of transnational politics. His examination of Hmong politics found that the Hmong have always been a politically active people. In the 1920s, the Hmong revolted against the French, and, most notably, in the 1960s and early 1970s the Hmong took up arms to help contain communism for the United States in the Secret War (Vang, 2011). Upon entering the United States, the Hmong continued their engagement with transnational politics. In the 1980s, Vang Pao was an advocate for his fellow Hmong in his testimony before Congress and the United Nations regarding the use of Yellow Rain against the Hmong still in Laos (Vang, 2011). The 1990s saw “Thailand’s repatriation of Hmong refugees to communist Laos” and the United States’ shift in trade relations with Laos (Vang, 2011, p. 19).

Political participation shifted forms. Rather than solely testifying and letter writing, participation included more organized collective action from demonstrations in front of the White House and “the Long walk for Freedom from St. Paul to Washington, D.C. in 2001” (Vang, 2011, p. 26). In 2007, Vang Pao and several other men were arrested for the alleged “plot to purchase weapons…in order to supply them to insurgents in Laos to conduct military operations against the government of Laos” (Vang, 2011, p. 1). In protest, the Hmong community actively demonstrated in Sacramento, California (Thousands of Hmong protest criminal case, 2010).
Each of these studies brings to light an aspect of Hmong political participation without really focusing heavy on the subject. While Lor’s (2009) study focused on political activity and factors that contributed to behavior, Doherty (2007) was more specific in his approach to Hmong political participation in the form of candidate emergence. Vang (2011) was able to bring to light political participation beyond electoral participation. While literature on the Hmong is few, these few articles bring to light the active participation of the Hmong despite their small numbers in the United States. Overall, research on Hmong political participation still has many gaps.

**Limitations of Current Literature on Hmong Participation**

Wong et al. (2011) as well as other prominent authors on Asian American political participation like Pei-te Lien, highlight that Asian American identity, being panethnic, contains within it a multitude of ethnicities ranging from East Asia to the Indian subcontinent. According to Wong et al. (2011), “Asian Americans are remarkably diverse in terms of ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, cultural orientation, socioeconomic status, and immigration histories” (pp. 9-10). In their book, they attempted to disaggregate the data but the focus was narrowed on the top five most populous Asian American groups: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese. These results were then used to generalize across the entire ethnicities within the group; however, the authors noted, “differences between ethnic-national origin groups in their partiality for particular modes of participation are numerous,” with the Japanese more likely to register to vote, Asian Indians to report community engagement to solve problems, and Koreans to follow politics on the Internet (Wong et al., 2010, p. 18).
In terms of likeness, the Hmong are perhaps most like the more recent wave of Vietnamese immigrants. While the first wave of Vietnamese immigrants were mostly from urban areas and were professionals, the second wave arrived in the United States as refugees along with many other Southeast Asians and among these were the Hmong (Wong et al., 2010). Along with professionals, the second wave consisted of fisherman, shopkeepers and farmers (Wong et al., 2010). While similar in terms of low-level occupational skills and refugee status, the Hmong greatly lacked professionals coming beforehand as well during their arrival to the United States. Furthermore, the Hmong did not have the same ethnic resources they could tap into when arriving as refugees in 1975. Because the first wave of Vietnamese immigrants was more likely professionals, the potential to draw from already existing Vietnamese communities was present. This was not the case for Hmong Americans. There may be a possibility that Hmong American political participation is similar to Vietnamese American participation, but already existing differences within most populous Asian American groups leads to the question of what might be different between those that have been mostly ignored by this and other studies. While the NAAS does give the most up-to-date information on Asian American political participation, few respondents identified themselves as Hmong. There were, in fact, only four Hmong respondents.

The literature on Hmong political participation has thus been very limited in scope. Lor’s (2009) study gives some insight into the factors that may affect Hmong political behavior. But the study is limited in that it is solely a comparison of the population in two cities and only touches on political participation generally. Likewise, Doherty’s (2007) study is of limited use because it centers on candidate emergence rather than other political participation activities. Finally, Vang’s (2011) focus was on transnational politics rather than U.S. politics. With
the limited focus of the existing studies, this study will focus on Hmong political participation at the national level. Additionally, it will provide a more expanded explanation of political participation within the Hmong community.
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY AND DATA

With the lack of existing literature regarding the Hmong community and their political activity, it is necessary that some quantitative study of Hmong political participation be conducted in order to clarify where the Hmong fit into the larger literature about Asian American political participation in the United States. The literature review created a foundation for the study, and now the purpose of this chapter is to give detail about the methodology and data used to measure and analyze Hmong political participation. First, the methods used to gather the data—including a detailed discussion of the survey and how it was disseminated—will be covered. There will also be an extended examination of the study’s limitations. Following this will be a discussion of the variable of interest for this study.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of Hmong political participation. In order to gather information on the current state of Hmong political participation in the United States, a quantitative research approach is utilized. The survey is adapted from the 2008 National Asian American Survey (NAAS) employed by Wong et al. (2011), which was made available through both their book *Asian American Political Participation:Emerging Constituents and Their Political Identities* (2011) and the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. The original phone survey consisted of 173 items and was divided into different modules: Ethnicity and Nativity, Issue Salience, Political Participation, Racial Identity, and Civic Engagement (Wong et al., 2011).
There are two important changes to the survey design. First, it is important that individuals identify as Hmong or Hmong American in order to take the survey, so respondents are asked early on in the survey about their ethnic/racial identification: “Did the individual identify as Hmong or Hmong American?” This particular question was included at the beginning in order to ensure only those individuals who identified as Hmong or Hmong American completed the survey. In addition to being asked if issues affecting Asian Americans would affect them, participants were also asked about issues regarding Hmong/Hmong Americans affecting them. It is worth mentioning that an addition was made in the form of a follow-up question for individuals that identified their religion to be “shamanism.” For the “traditional” Hmong religions, there is no place of worship equivalent to that of churches. Although shamans have altars in their homes, it is not necessarily a place for worship. Shamans are usually called on to perform rituals and rites (Tapp, 1989). The follow-up question inquires about the frequency a shaman was called upon during events like illnesses and births.

Adapting the survey also required making it shorter. With 173 items, what may seem shorter on the phone actually appears much longer when taken online. Even the print page of a paper survey can take up more than the same amount of space on a computer screen, therefore appearing to be longer than it really is. This “can in turn negatively influence the response rate” (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006, p. 441). Additionally, it is recommended that a participant’s time be taken into consideration. With a longer survey, it is likely that fewer responses will be collected (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). One benefit of an online survey is the ability to implement question logic, which allows users to see certain questions depending on their answers to previous questions. Question logic was implemented so participants would not have to read or answer questions that did
not apply to them. For instance, if an individual responded that they did not vote in 2008 or were not eligible to vote, they skipped the question about whom they voted for in 2008. Overall, the survey was shortened to 47 questions and averaged approximately 7 to 10 minutes for respondents to complete.

Although shorter, the adapted survey still retains much of what the survey set out to do, measure political participation. The survey touches on ethnicity and self-identification, issues of importance, and civic engagement with the bulk of questions centered on political participation. Ethnicity and self-identification range from an individual’s self-identification as well as how the individual identifies with other groups such as Asian Americans, Latinos, African Americans and Whites. In regards to politically significant concerns for the Hmong, only two questions inquire about what the participant feels is the most important issue facing the United States. Civic engagement is also a smaller portion of the survey, with only a few questions that ask about a participant’s religion and other community-related activities. Questions relating to political participation make up the majority of the survey. Political participation is covered in the form of questions regarding political orientation, ideology, and participation in different areas such as voting and protesting (see Appendix).

The survey was employed online through email, social networking sites, and organizations that serve the Hmong community, such as Hmong Empowerment Resource Outreach (H.E.R.O.) and Southeast Asian Resource Action Center (SEARAC). There were only three general criteria used to determine eligibility for the survey: individuals had to be at least 18 years of age, identify as Hmong or Hmong American, and reside in the United States. One focus of the survey is to account for electoral participation, which is one larger aspect of political participation measured in the survey. Because of this, 18 years
old, or the minimum voting age, was set as a requirement for responding to the survey. With a focus on the political participation of the Hmong community in the U.S., it was necessary that individuals not only identify as Hmong or Hmong American but also as residing in the United States. Citizenship, however, was not a requirement because political participation is not operationalized as solely electoral participation.

The survey was distributed online using a snowball sampling method through emails with a hyperlink to the survey as well as postings on social networking sites. For this study, snowball sampling simply means a nonprobability method where individuals who responded to the survey were asked to send the link to any other individuals they believed met the criteria established by the survey (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). A snowball sample, although not a probabilistic one, can still lead to the discovery of important information about minority groups, but unfortunately it may not be generalized to the total Hmong population (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). Because this study serves as an exploratory study, a snowball sample is sufficient for the purposes of this research.

An online survey was ideal to collect political participation information for this study. Since the 1930s, surveys have been an efficient method to collect data, although primarily in the form of face-to-face interviews and mailed questionnaires (Groves, 2011). Surveys have historically been used as a way to ensure policy makers and bureaucrats do not lose touch with their constituents (Groves, 2011). As technology has changed, so has the mode in which surveys are taken. Surveys are often given over the phone through random digit dialing, and—with the rise of the Internet—surveys are also commonly disseminated online (Groves, 2011). In comparison to other modes, “the Internet offers very low per-respondent costs” and “offers very, very fast turnaround of data records
(Groves, 2011, p. 867). In addition to the economic advantage online surveys provide, there is also the benefit of “reach” (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006, p. 437). As is the case with this particular study, an online survey is ideal when participants are spread out rather than concentrated in a geographic location (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006). With the goal to provide a snapshot of the Hmong in the United States rather than just one particular area of the country, an online survey is ideal for reaching a wider Hmong audience. Like any other survey method, online surveys also have their drawbacks.

**Limitations of the Methodology**

Issues regarding coverage, sampling, and response serve as limitations to the study. A shortcoming of online surveys is the issue of coverage, or the fact that the Internet is not used by everyone; not everyone has an equal chance of being selected to participate (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002). While it may be true that a Web survey may access only a specific demographic, internet usage has increased. As predicted by Fricker and Schonlau (2002), “the coverage differential is rapidly closing” (p. 357). In 1997, only 18% of households had access to the Internet at home; however, as the Internet has become nearly an everyday household tool, the percentage of households with Internet access at home has increased. In 2009, nearly 70% of households reported they had Internet access at home (United States Census Bureau, 2010). In addition, coverage error is not limited to just online surveys because there is always a subpopulation that cannot be easily reached even through conventional methods (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002). With the growing number of Internet users, the concern about coverage has decreased (Stephenson & Crête, 2011).
In addition to coverage, there is also the problem of sampling. Internet users are far more likely to be younger and higher educated. But this trend is also changing as more than half of those aged 55 years and older are using the Internet, along with nearly half of those who have less than a high school education (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Because the study concerns a specific ethnic population where the older generations do not speak English, obtaining a representative online sample still remains an issue. When using a Web survey, this specific Hmong population will not have a likely chance of being in the sample collected so the sample population will not be representative of the entire population. Because it is argued that online surveys are voluntary, moreover, with those who have more interest taking the surveys, online surveys may not be representative of the entire population (Stephenson & Crête, 2011).

Aside from the sampling problem with online surveys, the study also uses a non-probabilistic sampling method. “Snowballing” has come to mean different things. While it may have first been used to identify leaders and followers, it is now widely used as convenience sampling where researchers identify participants and have those individuals identify other potential participants (Handcock & Gile, 2011). The hope is that eventually “something like a probability sample” will be created (Handcock & Gile, 2011, p. 370). When dealing with non-probability surveys, making generalizations to the larger population is more difficult. In fact, it is difficult to know whether it is possible (Alvarez, Sherman, & VanBeselaere, 2003). Using a non-probabilistic method makes the online survey less representative of the larger Hmong population, as opposed to one that employs a probabilistic method. In an area of study where there is little research regarding the ethnic group, the study can still assist in further “developing research
hypothesis,” “identifying issues” and “defining ranges of alternatives” (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002, p. 354).

In using a snowballing method as well as an online survey, there is an “impossibility of calculating the response rate” because there is no telling how many people “have seen the survey or its links but declined to participate” (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006, p. 447). In terms of nonresponse error, some studies have shown online surveys to have lower response rates than others (Stephenson & Crête, 2011). Random digit dial, as well as other traditional methods of survey dissemination, are becoming problematic because of nonresponse. For random digit dial, the nonresponse rate has increased since the 1980s and has reached as high as 25% (Alvarez et al., 2003). According to Alvarez et al. (2003), “the difficulties of recruiting subjects for traditional telephone surveys implies that many RDD telephone surveys might be more error laden than is assumed by practitioners” (p. 28). Nonresponse is not uncommon to the more conventional methods as well.

Taking these various issues into consideration, the following research still provides insight into a population that has been rarely studied within political science. As with any survey being administered, there will be errors which may limit how much the research can be generalized to the total population. The online survey may give a more skewed picture of the state of Hmong political participation in the United States because it is more likely to cover only a certain demographic segment of the Hmong population. Serving as an exploratory study, it is sufficient as a starting point for further investigation into Hmong participation in U.S. politics.
Defining and Explaining Political Participation

Dependent Variable: Political Participation

As defined by Conge, political participation is “individual or collective action at the national or local level that supports or opposes state structures, authorities, and/or decisions regarding allocation of public goods” (1988, p. 247). For the purposes of this study, political participation is an operationalized scale that consists of eight different items from the survey: discussing politics with family and friends; visiting an Internet site or forum to discuss politics; voting in the 2008 election; working for a candidate, political party or some other campaign organization; political contributions; contacting government officials; community engagement; and, lastly, protesting. Discussion of politics with family friends and discussion of politics in online sites or forums are passive forms of political participation and may often be the minimal amount of an individual’s participation (Wong et al., 2011, p. 21). Voting is included because “it embodies the minimal expectations of citizenship and is necessary to the legitimacy and proper functioning of a representative democracy” (Wong et al., 2011, p. 21). Working on political campaigns is a more active form of political participation that, like contacting government officials, requires “familiarity with the political system” (Wong et al., 2011, p. 23). Political contributions can serve as “a way of gaining political access,” being more effective than voting if one has the socioeconomic resources (Wong et al., 2011, p. 23). In general, the rate of contribution of Asian Americans “remain[s] on par with the contribution activity of Whites” (Wong et al., 2011, p. 23). Contacting government officials is “a direct attempt to influence political representatives and policy outcomes” (Wong et al., 2011, p. 23). Working in the community “to solve a community problem is one of the
most popular non-voting activities among Asian Americans” and is contributed to building “civic skills…crucial to longer-term political engagement” (Wong et al., 2011, p. 24). **Protesting** is a form of political participation “outside of the traditional boundaries of the political system” and one of the forms of visible participation available for non-citizen immigrants (Wong et al., 2011, p. 25).

The eight items individually satisfy Conge’s definition; however, action such as speaking with family and friends regarding political issues may not be as visible as attending a march or rally. For this study, action is defined much more broadly to include passive forms of participation, including discussing politics with family and friends as well as online. Voting in the 2008 election—as opposed to chances of voting in the 2012 election—is used as the voting activity in operationalizing political participation because the former is an action rather than a potential action. By including passive activities and items beyond voting, political participation becomes more comprehensive in the parameters of this study.

While some may be seen as more passive or requiring more effort than others, there is no differentiation between which activities are pursued. In measuring political activeness, the number of activities the individual takes part in is the primary consideration. For each of these eight questions, respondents were asked to answer yes or no to participating in the activity.

The next step for creating the political participation scale was to see if the items were related. Cronbach’s alpha is a “coefficient of reliability” that measures the inter-correlation of items. Typically, Cronbach’s alpha is used when variables contain Likert scales (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). Scales constructed out of dichotomous items can be assessed using this measure. According to Percy (1976), dichotomous items can reasonably be “a 2-point Likert scale” which
“realizes largely the same information as multi-point Likert scale” (p. 147). Percy’s (1976) findings reinforce the idea that reliability “is found to be independent of the number of scale points contained in a Likert-type rating scale” (p. 147). The minimal accepted threshold for consistency between items is an alpha of 0.60 (DeVellis, 2003). The scale created for political participation has an alpha of 0.703, meeting the minimum threshold.

Political participation runs from no participation at all to participating in all eight activities. The variable is divided into three categories and measures how active an individual is. Not active or “low level” participation consists of no activity at all or participating at most in only one activity. Being somewhat active—or the “some level” of activity—denotes participation in as little as two activities and up to four activities. Being politically active—or at the “high level” of participation—requires that a respondent participated in a minimum of five activities, the highest being all the eight activities.

**Independent Variables:**
**Socioeconomic Variables**

As previously discussed, the socioeconomic status model has long been the accepted explanation for political participation (Brady et al., 1995; Leighley, 1995; Verba et al., 1993; Wong et al., 2011). Theorists contend that variables such as education, income, and occupation are predictors of political participation. However, the studies confirming the model are mostly those with non-ethnic respondents and many researchers have questioned the findings of SES as regards specific ethnic or racial categories. For instance, within the Asian American community, higher income does not translate to greater political participation (Wong et al., 2011). Variables used to measure socioeconomic status are level of education, income, religion, and employment status. Drawing from the
conclusions of previous studies, it is expected that political participation and education level will have a positive association; however, a greater income will not be associated with a higher level of political participation (Wong et al., 2011). Additionally, political participation will not be positively associated with either religion or employment status (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999).

**Independent Variables: Group Consciousness**

Because “race and ethnic identity is complex” as well as “dynamic and contextually dependent,” racial and ethnic identity is measured with more than one item (Wong et al., 2011, p. 159). Race and ethnic identity are measured by self-identification, voting for a candidate who is Hmong, and perceived commonalities among Hmong and Asian Americans. Both measure how respondents identify within the group. All three are hypothesized to be positively associated with political participation. Identity is also measured by out-group differentiation where “experiences with discrimination and hate crimes” is a measure (Wong et al., 2011, p. 160). The perception that one has been discriminated against will have a positive association with political participation.

Group consciousness and group identification are not one in the same. Where group identity is simply how people identify themselves, “group consciousness implies an awareness of shared status as an unjustly deprived and oppressed group” (Wong et al., 2005, p. 546). While individuals can define themselves as part of an ethnic group, in this case as Hmong or Hmong American, that person may be unaware of “the deprived group position in society” (Wong et al., 2005, p. 547). For this survey, group consciousness is measured using two items of “linked fate” (Wong et al., 2005, p. 552). The questions are an indication
of the respondents’ “sense of linked fate with coethnics” and “a sense of linked fate with [a] panethnic group” (Wong et al., 2005, p. 552; see Appendix).

Group consciousness has been found to be linked to political participation for other minority groups, such as Latinos and African Americans (Wong et al., 2005, 2011). The National Asian American Survey of 2008 found that on a bivariate level, this sense of linked fate had a greater impact on political participation than racial identification; however, in a multivariate analysis, it seemed to have less an effect on political participation than on other groups (Wong et al., 2011). For this study, it is expected that both panethnic and coethnic linked fate will be positively associated with political participation. The greater one feels that what happens to other Asian Americans and Hmong Americans affects them, the more likely it will be that one is politically active.

**Independent Variables: Beyond SES and Group Consciousness**

Identification is multi-dimensional and defined by how an individual identifies themselves not only in terms of their ethnic grouping but also how an individual identifies politically (Wong et al., 2011). In this study, political ideology and party affiliation are also taken into account. This measure is of particular importance because the “psychological attachment individuals have to one of the two major political parties is a ubiquitous and pivotal factor in defining a person’s politics” (Wong et al. 2011, p. 29). Political participation and self-identified affiliation with a political party will have a statistically significant relationship as will political participation and political ideology. It is hypothesized that level of political participation will be associated with both ideology and party affiliation. Conservatives are more likely to be politically active as opposed to
liberals and moderates. Republicans are more likely to be politically active than Democrats and Independents (Wong et al., 2005).

In addition to political affiliation, there is an additional variable that is more psychological in nature. According to Wong et al. (2011), “political interest is not a direct measure of how informed one is,” but rather “surely also measures other factors, such as the desire to be politically involved” (p. 148). This is not captured in any of the other variables being tested. It is hypothesized that with greater political interest there will be associated a higher level of political participation.
CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings from the survey. After a brief overview of the participants, the chapter is separated into two parts: descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis. The descriptive statistics section provides an overview of the Hmong community political landscape, which ranges from interest in politics to actual political participation. The last part investigates the different factors that could possibly affect Hmong political participation using bivariate analysis.

Participant Overview

The sample collected is comprised of individuals who identified themselves as Hmong or Hmong American and are a minimum age of 18 years old. In total 155 surveys were collected: 131 completed surveys, 2 from individuals who did not identify as Hmong, 1 respondent who did not meet the minimum age requirements, and 21 surveys that were incomplete.

The average individual in this study was 29 years old and a natural-born United States citizen living in California. Respondents were overwhelmingly female (65.6%). They were also a rather young group. The age gap between the oldest and the youngest respondent was 16 years with 18 years being the youngest and 44 years the oldest. Of the total respondents, nearly 61% were under the age of 30 years, with a mean average of 28.35 years and a slightly higher median at 29 years.

With the exception of 48 respondents, all of the respondents were born in the United States. Of the 48 individuals who were born in a different country, the majority (88.1%) arrived before the 1990s; the most recent respondents arrived in
1993. As is the case with the Hmong population at large, the respondents were largely divided between two states, California (39.7%) and Minnesota (32.1%) (Figure 1).

![Figure 1. Respondents by state of residence.
Note: Respondents are separated by state of residence to see how the sample varies across the nation. California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin are three of the most Hmong-populated states and do indeed have the most representation in the survey. Further demographic information shows that the vast majority of respondents was either married/living as married (40%), or had never been married (53.1%). On average, the participants had some college education, with the largest number having obtained at least a bachelor’s degree. In terms of income, most participants were making less than $20,000 (25.9%) but the median income was $20,000 to $34,999 (22.2%).]
In terms of religion, most respondents still practiced the “traditional” Hmong religion. “Traditional” refers to ancestral worship, shamanism, and animism; 53.4% of respondents fall in this group. A few, 3.0%, identified as being raised in homes that practiced both the traditional religions as well as attended either Catholic or Protestant churches.

**Descriptive Statistics: Overview of the Hmong/Hmong American Community**

The overall goal of the research is to be able to understand what political participation currently looks like within the Hmong community. Providing a description of Hmong political participation builds a foundation for this understanding. The results of the survey showed that politics is not a particular topic of interest, with nearly 50% of respondents only “somewhat interested” in politics. More individuals were interested in politics (21.3%) than those who were very interested (9.2%) and not at all interested (18.4%).

It is important to note that when paying attention to political news, the majority pay attention to it only in English (58%) rather than in Hmong (1.4%). The remaining (40.6%) pay attention to political news in both Hmong and English. However, should election materials be available in Hmong, only 40.2% would utilize them. Not surprisingly, the majority, 59.8%, would not utilize the materials in Hmong (Figure 2).

Political information is obtained mostly through the Internet (84.2%) and watching television (75.3%). As the study utilized an online survey, it was not surprising to find that the Internet was the number 1 source for political information. More traditional media sources such as newspapers, radio, and magazines are not utilized nearly as much as television and the Internet. Newspapers as a source of information were still utilized at slightly more than
Figure 2. Information source by language.
Note: There are almost as many individuals who pay attention to both Hmong and English media as those who only pay attention to English-only. Hmong media is still relevant to many as a source of political news.

a majority (53.4%), whereas only 42.5% listen for political news over the radio. The smallest percentage (17.1%) of respondents obtained political news by reading magazines. When asked about other sources, another 11.6% reported there are “other” sources of political news. Interestingly, the majority of these individuals cited “friends and family” or “peers” and “community groups,” with one respondent referring to the “human network”—rather than social network so as not to be confused with the growing number of social media websites—as sources of political information as well.

Despite most being only somewhat interested in politics, the majority of respondents (71.1%) were registered to vote. Nearly an equal amount vote every election (27.5%) or just sometimes (26.8%). Similarly, an equal number vote only
during general elections (19.6%) and not at all (19.6%). A small percentage (6.5%) was not eligible to vote. When asked about the 2008 U.S. presidential election, 60.3% said they voted. The majority voted for Barack Obama (53.4%), while most of the remaining few did not vote at all (39.5%). This presidential voting year, 56.3% said they are absolutely certain to vote, 22.2% probably will vote, 14.3% said their chances of voting is 50/50, and the remaining 7.1% estimated their likelihood of voting at less than half. Those who voted in 2008 are more likely to vote in 2012 (Figure 3).

Figure 3. 2008 voters and likelihood to vote in 2012.
Note: Those who voted in 2008 are more likely to vote again in 2012.

In terms of party affiliation and ideology, the participants were rather left-leaning. Of those individuals who registered to vote, the majority (60.8%) registered as Democrat. Many more registered as Independent (34.2%), as
compared to those registered as Republican (5.1%). This is consistent with self-identified affiliation with the two major parties. While 61.8% identified with Democrats, 6.6% identified as Republican. The remaining 24.5% were Independent and the other 4.9% were affiliated with “some other party.” Of the 25 individuals who remained Independent, 8 respondents considered themselves to be closer to Republicans, 6 closer to Democrats, while most were unclear about whether they were closer to one or the other.

Political ideology also runs along the same lines. Respondents were split mostly among two categories: liberals (30.5%) and moderates (30.5%). A greater number of those who identified as moderates believed themselves to be closer to being liberal (43.8%), as opposed to being conservative (25%). Again, only a small number (11.7%) identified as conservative. Unlike with political party affiliation, more individuals had not thought much about their political ideology (27.3%).

This trend of being more liberal than conservative, as well as more Democrat than Republican, was also reflected in views about controversial issues such as universal health care, immigration, and gay marriage. More individuals (82.7%) agreed with the government providing universal health care versus only a small minority (6.8%) who disagreed with the government doing so. Unlike universal health care, the latter two issues were not as greatly divided. A larger percentage of individuals (27%) did not agree with providing a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, but a majority (53.4%) agreed there should be a pathway. In much the same way, the issue of same-sex marriage had a similar demarcation with 28.6% agreeing that this should be legal and 53.4% believing it should not be defined as a relationship only between a man and a woman.
Forms of Political Participation

There are eight different activities that are used to operationalize the concept of political participation: voting in the 2008 election; discussing politics with family and friends; working for a candidate, political party, or some other campaign organization; monetary contributions; contacting government officials or representatives; working in the community to solve problems; visiting an Internet site or forum to discuss politics; and protesting. Again, a majority (60.3%) responded they did vote in the 2008 presidential election. Even more (80.0%) responded that they discussed politics with family and friends. These are the only two activities in which a majority of all the respondents participated. Besides speaking with family and friends, just over one-third (36.3%) utilized the Internet for political discussions. More than one-quarter (28.9%) of respondents worked with their community to solve problems. As involvement became more direct, fewer respondents responded affirmatively. People still participated in rallies and protests (22.2%) and contributed money to campaigns (20%), but contacting government officials (14.8%) and participating directly on campaigns (13.3%) were activities much fewer respondents engaged in (Figure 4).

The level of political participation is a scale that incorporates all these items. The scale is used to determine the level of political participation. There were 30.4% of individuals who were not politically active, either participating in only one activity or not participating at all. The majority of individuals (53.3%) were somewhat active, participating in two to four activities. For the politically active or “high” level category, where individuals participate in anywhere from five to eight activities, there was a rather small minority. Only 16.3% fell into this category.
Figure 4. Descriptive statistics of the items in political participation.
Note: The majority of participants only participate in three activities. Discussions Online and Discussions with Family and Friends more passive compared to the rest and Voting is often the minimal participatory activity in a democracy.

Bivariate Analysis: Variables that Influence Political Participation

Drawing from theories on political participation, different factors were used to test what influences political participation within the community. The variables used in this study are nominal and ordinal in nature. Because of this, nonparametric statistics was used for analysis. Chi-squared ($\chi^2$) was used to test for statistical significance using an alpha of .05 ($p<.05$) as the minimum threshold (Stapleton, 1982). Additionally, the measure of association used when working with nominal level data is lambda, a PRE measure which estimates the proportional reduction in error when predicting the dependent variable if an independent variable is known (Buchanan, 1974; Liebetrau, 1983). One problem
does arise with using lambda. It “has the defect of occasionally giving a value of 0 when the variables are not entirely independent,” but it does not necessarily mean there is no association or reduction in error (Buchanan, 1974, p. 644; Lutz, 1983). When both dependent and independent variables were ordinal, the measure of association used was gamma, which is also a PRE measure (Buchanan, 1974; Costner, 1965; Gans & Robertson, 1981; Kang, 1973).

First, socioeconomic status variables were tested. This group included education, income, job status, religion and civic engagement. To measure group consciousness, there were six variables: racial/ethnic self-identification; commonalities between Asian Americans and Hmong Americans; opinion on how much Asian American issues affect the respondents; opinion on much Hmong issues affect the respondents; voting for Hmong candidates; and discrimination. Other variables were tested for relationships including political interest, political ideology and political party.

**Socioeconomic Variables**

The prevailing theory within political participation is still the socioeconomic status model in which socioeconomic status such as education and income serve as explanatory factors of an individual’s political participation. The findings reaffirm that political participation is significantly related to education and to civic engagement; however, it is not significantly related to job status nor is it related to income and religion.

Political participation was significantly related to education level ($\chi^2=13.139; p=.011$). The higher one’s level of education, the more likely one is to participate in political activities. Many individuals in each educational group participated in a low-level number of activities, but those who only had a high-
school education were more likely to participate at this level as compared to those with college experience. Seventy percent of individuals with only a high school education participated in one or no political participation activities, as compared to 37.3% of individuals with some college experience and 22.4% of those with a bachelor’s degree or higher. The opposite was true regarding greater levels of political participation. Those with their bachelor’s or beyond were more politically active than those who only had their high school degree (0%) or those with only had some college experience (9.8%). The data confirmed the hypothesis that political participation and education level are positively associated. Gamma, a measure of association for ordinal by ordinal variables, is .462. Because it is a PRE statistic, by knowing an individual’s education, the proportion of error in predicting political participation can be reduced by 46.2%.

Another significant relationship was that of political participation and civic engagement ($\chi^2=10.215; p=.006$). Confirming the hypothesis, there was an association between political participation and civic engagement. While 30.8% of those who participate in the community also had higher levels of political participation, only 11.8% of those who did not participate in the community participate at the same level. The opposite was also true for those who did not engage in the community participating in fewer than two activities (38.8%), as compared to those who are engaged in their community (15.4%). Despite being statistically significant, the strength of the relationship could not be determined because lambda underestimated the relationship between political participation and civic engagement (Buchanan, 1974; Liebetrau, 1983).

The remaining variables—employment status, income, and religion—were not associated with political participation. In terms of employment status, there was no particular pattern discerned from the data. Most respondents were only
somewhat active. The relationship between political participation and employment was not a statistically significant one ($\chi=2.297; p=.681$), reaffirming the hypothesis that political participation and employment would not be associated with one another. Findings for income were also similar to those of employment status. The hypothesis that political participation and income are not associated was supported; the relationship between political participation and income was not statistically significant ($\chi=3.844; p=.427$). Additionally, the association between political participation and religion was not a significant one ($\chi=1.295; p=.862$). There were only slight differences at each level of participation with the exception of those who identified as atheist or agnostic. The tests confirm the association hypothesized earlier (Table 1).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Participation by Individual SES Variables</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>Measure of Association</td>
<td>Chi-squared ($\chi$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.462</td>
<td>13.139*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>10.215*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>3.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>2.297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Denotes minimum significance level of p<.05

Group Consciousness

Group consciousness was measured using several variables. Similar to the socioeconomic variables, some were significant while others were not. The variables that proved to be statistically significant were the belief that one had been discriminated against and a perceived linked fate to Hmong or Hmong Americans. The remaining variables that were not statistically significant are as follows: commonalities between Hmong and Asian Americans, perceived linked
fate to Asians or Asian Americans, and ethnic and racial self-identification, voting for a Hmong candidate.

Perceptions of discrimination are related to higher levels of political participation, which confirms the earlier hypothesized relationship. Individuals who believed they had been discriminated against were more likely to be politically active (20.4%) than those who did not have the same perception (4.2%). The opposite was true at the other extreme, with those not having been discriminated against (45.8%) being less politically active than those who had been discriminated against (24.5%). Political participation was statistically related to the perception that an individual had been discriminated against ($\chi^2=6.108; p=.047$). While statistically significant, strength of the relationship could not be determined because lambda had a value of zero (Buchanan, 1974; Liebetrau, 1983).

Political participation and the belief of a linked fate to other Hmong Americans were significantly related to each other ($\chi^2=25.164; p<.001$), which confirms the association hypothesized earlier. Those who did not perceive a linked fate with the Hmong community (26.9%) or those who only believed there was somewhat of a linkage (39%) participated in one activity at the most. On the other hand, more individuals who perceived that what happens in the Hmong community affects them (40.5%)—as compared to those who believed there is only some effect (10.2%), or that there is no effect at all (15.4%)—were more politically active. The positive relationship was a moderate one, with those who believed that what happens to other Hmong people affects them being more likely to be politically active. Because both variables are ordinal, gamma was used for the measure of association, which gives us .380. In knowing this variable, the
proportional reduction in error when predicting political participation can be reduced by 38%.

When testing the perception of a linked fate to the at-large Asian American community against political participation, the statistical significance of the relationship changed. The variable measuring the perception of a linked fate to Asian Americans was not statistically related to political participation ($\chi^2=8.940; p=.063$). Political participation was not statistically significantly associated to an individual’s belief in commonalities between themselves and Hmong Americans and Asian Americans. Believing there are commonalities between the groups does not necessarily mean that one will participate more or less politically ($\chi^2=2.832; p=.243$). Also, it seemed that more of those who identified as Asian American (30.4%) were more politically active than those who identified as Hmong (14.9%), but the relationship between political participation and ethnic/racial identification is not statistically significant ($\chi^2=1.654; p=.437$). There is also no statistically significant association between political participation and the selection of a candidate based on the candidate’s Hmong ethnicity ($\chi^2=5.174; p=.075$). None of the hypothesized associations were confirmed to be correct within this group of variables (Table 2).

**Beyond the SES and Group Consciousness Models**

Among the remaining variables, political interest and political ideology were the only variables that had statistically significant relationships with political participation. Political participation was significantly related to political interest, which is in line with the hypothesis made earlier ($\chi^2=43.287; p<.001$). Political interest had a strong positive association with political participation. By knowing a participant’s level of interest, the proportion of error can be reduced by 65.5%.
Table 2

*Political Participation by Measures of Group Consciousness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Measure of Association</th>
<th>Chi-squared (χ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived discrimination</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>6.108*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked fate to Hmong/Hmong Americans</td>
<td>.380</td>
<td>25.164*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonalities between Hmong and Asian Groups</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>2.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked Fate to Asian/Asian Americans</td>
<td>.385</td>
<td>8.940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial/Ethnic Group Identification</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong Candidate</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>5.174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Denotes minimum significance level of p<.05

There was a vast difference between those who are very interested in politics and those who do not have any interest at all. Individuals who are very interested in politics did not fall in the “low” level of participation at all, while 11.1% interested, 34.3% somewhat interested, and 54.2% of those not at all interested took part in either no activity or just one activity. Although there were only a few very interested in politics, the majority (69.2%) of these respondents participate in more activities than those who are interested (25.9%), somewhat interested (7.5%), or not interested in politics at all (4.2%).

Most respondents fell into the category of “some” political participation with regard to political ideology. One hundred percent of conservatives fell in this same category as compared to individuals who are liberal (48.7%) and those who are moderate (48.7%). Individuals who are liberal tend to participate in a higher number of political activities (33.3%) than those who consider themselves to be moderates (23.1%), or conservatives (0%). The relationship between political participation and political ideology was a statistically significant one (χ=15.425; p=.004). The relationship was not clear from the measure of association because
the value was 0 (Buchanan, 1974; Liebetrau, 1983). With an unclear measure of association, the hypothesis can only be partially confirmed in terms of a present association (Buchanan, 1974; Liebetrau, 1983).

Although the relationship between political participation and political ideology was statistically significant, the relationship between party affiliation and political participation was not a significant one ($\chi^2=3.510; p=.476$). Political party affiliation does not make any statistically significant difference in level of political participation, thereby nullifying the hypothesis (Table 3).

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Measure of Association</th>
<th>Chi-squared ($\chi^2$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Interest</td>
<td>.655</td>
<td>43.287*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Ideology</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>15.425*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Affiliation</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>3.510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Denotes minimum significance level of $p<.05$

Conclusion

Hmong Political Participation as Compared to Asian American Political Participation

The state of Hmong political participation is similar to that of Asian American political participation. In terms of party affiliation, the Hmong community looks similar to the Asian American community at large (Wong et al., 2011). Many more identify as Democrat than Republican. Many also choose to remain independent, not adhering to one party or the other. Like their Asian American counterparts, Hmong Americans identify as liberal or moderate, as opposed to conservative. The Hmong are not as civically engaged as other Asian Americans (Wong et al., 2011). While many Hmong still maintain their traditional
religion, Asian Americans are more varied in the religions they subscribe to (Wong et al., 2011). In term of electoral participation, the Hmong American community was less likely to vote as opposed to the Asian American community. Regarding other forms of political participation, the Hmong are more passive participators, engaging in political discussion with friends and family.

The findings from this study reaffirm many of the same conclusions made regarding specific variables (Wong et al., 2011). As it was for the general Asian American population, education was a significant variable in determining political participation for Hmong Americans as well. Similarly, income was not a statistically significant variable in explaining participation nor was job status (Wong et al., 2011). While Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) insisted on the socioeconomic model’s generalizability, it is not one that can be so easily generalized to Asian Americans, nor to Hmong Americans. Wong et al. (2011) made a point of this in their explanation of what affects political participation among Asian Americans. The conundrum for Asian Americans has been “why high levels of socioeconomic resources appear not to engender corresponding high levels of political engagement for Asian Americans” (Wong et al., 2011, p. 7). Generally, when compared to Asian Americans, the Hmong continue to fall behind in socioeconomic attainment, but it still holds true that for Hmong Americans more or less income has no effect on political participation.

Although relationships between political participation and secular community engagement and political participation and religion were both statistically significant for the at-large Asian American community, this was not the case for Hmong Americans (Wong et al., 2011). Religion was not statistically significant, while belonging to a secular community group was. Similar to findings on Asian American participation, the Hmong have a higher number
identifying as Independents rather than affiliating themselves with one specific political group. While political affiliation is significant for Asian Americans, it was not for the Hmong; rather, political ideology was the significant variable.

As concluded by the results of 2008 National Asian American Survey, group consciousness and group identity have no effect on political participation (Wong et al., 2011). Findings from this study tell a different relationship. While the perception of what happens to Asian Americans affecting the respondent was not a significant variable, a linked fate to other Hmong Americans had a moderate relationship with political participation that was statistically significant. This finding is significant in that group consciousness has been deemed to not be as relevant as it was at one time. Discrimination was significant for both Asian Americans as a whole and for Hmong Americans. In general, the study pointed out some similarities but also differences. It is these differences that make further study worthwhile. It is this reason that, while there are many ethnicities that comprise the large racial group, studies of Asian Americans still often generalize across the board. However, differences found make the study a worthwhile one.

The More Effective Model

In general, the effectiveness of the models—socioeconomic and group consciousness—has often been debated (Cho, 1999; Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999). Because previous socioeconomic status did not have a diverse enough sample, it was said not to be generalizable to the entire population. While Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) confirmed generalizability, Cho (1999) disagreed and underlined the significance of education to socialization. The SES model has had mixed results in its generalizability. For Asian Americans and the Hmong, it is indeed
true that aspects of the SES model may be applicable, such as education, while others may not be applicable at all.

The argument is similar for group consciousness and group identity. While group consciousness was first used to explain the activeness of African Americans in political participation, it is not so generalizable to other ethnic groups (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999; Wong et al., 2005). Its association with political participation has often been questioned (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999). Findings by Wong et al. (2011) reconfirmed those of Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) and Wong et al. (2005) that it is indeed not generalizable. On the other hand, some variables are significantly associated to political participation. This study shows particularly that a linked fate to other Hmong Americans is positively associated to political participation. The same association cannot be said for a linked fate to Asian Americans.

Rather than support one or the other completely, findings from this study support both views. The SES model and the group consciousness model are neither more effective nor less so than the other. Rather than the finding that group consciousness is a better model for the prediction of Hmong political participation as opposed to the socioeconomic model, the conclusion here is that a one-size-fits-all model is not adequate. Political interest, which is not captured in either model, has a significantly strong association to political participation. Political participation, being a complex concept, should not be limited to such models. In a more practical view, specific variables are significant not an entire model.
Addressing the Methodological Limitations of the Study

As previously discussed, the survey tool and the method chosen to disseminate the survey are limitations to this study. As expected, the study’s small sample was not an adequate representation of the Hmong population at large because of the small size of the sample and the fact that the majority of respondents were born in the United States. Respondents over the age of 44 years were nonexistent. It would be wise to consider making the survey available in different formats, paper and online as well as given over the phone. Doing so will allow access to a greater number of respondents and databases as well as the ability to obtain a higher response rate. Additionally, it would be necessary to make the survey available in Hmong in order to be able to have participants who do not speak English represented in the survey. Because the sample is not representative, it is necessary to be cautious when making generalizations for the entire Hmong population in the United States.

This study differs in how it measures political participation, using an 8-point scale. This differs significantly to models used by other scholars, which are limited to just one activity as confirmation of political activity, or in the case of Wong et al. (2011), an index of four political participation activities. With differences in how political participation is operationalized, the direct comparison of relationships between variables is hindered. Comparison is also obstructed by the statistical analysis used to determine relationships. It would be beneficial to work towards a more uniform definition of political participation.

Bivariate statistical analysis is performed on nominal and ordinal data using nonparametric statistics. There is the potential that variables deemed significant may become insignificant should other variables be controlled through multivariate analysis. Serving as an exploratory look into factors affecting
political participation, bivariate analysis may be suitable, but future studies should utilize stronger statistical analysis in order to control for the effect of other variables (Lutz, 1983). As Cho (1999) mentioned in her study on socialization, the addition of two socialization variables removed the effect of ethnicity as a variable on political participation. Additionally, this may also fix the problem of missing measures of association, as was the case for a few of the more significant variables including political ideology and discrimination.

Future Directions for Research

Future research on Hmong political participation should utilize a multi-modal approach. This would incorporate different formats such as telephone surveys and random digit dialing to get a more representative sample of the Hmong population. This could then include individuals who do not have access to the Internet and those who do not speak or read English. Additionally, research should also utilize a multivariate approach in order to control for the influence of one variable on another. Political participation research should also attempt to move towards a more uniform definition of political participation, allowing for more comparison of findings among studies. Finally, this research should cast a wide theoretical net and incorporate variables from multiple models of political participation. This will allow for a fuller explanation of the complex concept known as political participation.
REFERENCES
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APPENDIX: SURVEY ON HMONG POLITICAL PARTICIPATION
You are invited to participate in research being conducted for the completion of a master’s thesis. Kau Vue is currently a student in the Masters of Public Administration (MPA) program at California State University, Fresno. She is completing the thesis as part of her graduate degree requirements.

Your participation is voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey about your views on Hmong political participation. This survey should last between 10 to 15 minutes. The student will use this information as part of her master’s thesis.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. This information will be used only in the writing of the thesis. No results that can be used to identify individuals will be made public without their expressed written consent.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with California State University, Fresno. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. The Department of Political Science Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects at California State University, Fresno has reviewed and approved this research.

If you have any additional questions, please contact either Kau Vue (kauvue@sbcglobal.net) or Dr. Kurt Cline (559.278.2865 or kcline@csufresno.edu) and we will be happy to answer them. Questions regarding the rights of research subjects may be directed to the CSUF Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects, 559.278.4468.
1. What is your race or ethnicity?
   - White
   - Black or African American
   - American Indian or Alaskan Native
   - Asian
   - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
   - From Multiple races

2. Do you consider yourself Hmong?
   - Yes
   - No

3. Were you born in the United States or some other country?
   - United States
   - Some other country
   - Don’t know

4. (If born in some other country) What year did you first come to live in the United States on a permanent basis?
   - Year __________
   - Don’t know
5. How interested are you in politics?
   Very interested
   Interested
   Somewhat interested
   Not at all interested
   Not sure

6. Where do you currently get your news about politics? (Check all that apply)
   Television
   Radio
   Newspaper
   Magazines
   Internet
   Other (please specify) ____________________________

7. In what language do you pay attention to for information about politics?
   Hmong-language
   English-language
   Both
   N/A

8. If election materials were available to you in Hmong, would you make use of them?
   Yes
   No
   Don’t know
   N/A
9. What do you think is the most important problem facing the United States?
(Please select one)
Budget deficit
Economy
Terrorism
Education
Immigration
Poverty
Health care
Don’t know
Other (please specify) ______________________________

10. What about “[Answer to Question 9]” concerns you?
______________________________

Next, I would like ask you about your views on political issues and the U.S. presidential election. I am interested in your views, even if you are not eligible to vote or not registered to vote.

11. These days, people are so buys they cannot find time to register to vote or they have moved and the voter registration has lapsed. Are you now registered to vote at your current address?
   Yes
   No
   Not eligible
   Don’t know
12. (If registered to vote) What party are you registered with?
   - Democrat
   - Republican
   - Independent
   - Don’t know

13. How often do you vote?
   - Every election
   - Only general elections
   - Sometimes
   - Not at all
   - Not eligible
   - Don’t know

14. I would like to rate the chances that you will vote in the presidential election in November 2012. How likely are you to vote in the upcoming election in November 2012?
   - Absolutely certain to vote
   - Will probably vote
   - Change is 50/50
   - Less than half
   - Not eligible
   - Don’t know
15. Thinking about past elections, did you vote in the 2008 U.S. Presidential election?
   Yes
   No
   Not eligible
   Don’t know

16. (If voted in 2008) Who did you vote for President in the 2008 election? Was it:
   Barack Obama
   John McCain
   Other candidate
   Did not vote
   Not eligible to vote
   Don’t know

17. People take part in many types of civic and political activities. In the past 12 months, what types have you participated in? Select all that apply.
   Discussed politics with family and friends
   Worked for a candidate, political party or some other campaign organization
   Contributed money to a candidate, political party, or some other campaign organization
   Contacted your representative or a government official in the U.S.
   Worked with others in your community solve a problem
   Visited an internet site or online community to discuss a candidate or issue
   Attended a protest march, demonstration, or rally
18. Now I have a few questions about the country where you or your ancestors are from. In the past 12 months, have you:

- Sent money to people in that country? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don’t Know
- Participated in any activity dealing with the politics of that country? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don’t Know
- Been in contact with family or friends in that country? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Don’t Know

19. Which party do you feel better reflects your views regarding [Respondent’s Answer to Question 9]?

- Democrat
- Republic
- Neither
- Don’t Know

20. For each statement, please select your level of agreement or disagreement—agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat or strongly disagree:

- The federal government should guarantee health care for everyone
- Marriage should only be between a man and a woman
- The U.S. should provide a path to citizenship for people who are in this country illegally.
Sometimes politics and government seems so complicated that a person like me can’t really understand what’s going on. We can trust our government in Washington to do what is right. Public officials and politicians care about what people like me think. People are better off avoiding contact with government.

21. What do you consider to be your political affiliation?
   Republican
   Democrat
   Independent
   Some other party
   Don’t know

22. (If Independent) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republicans or the Democrats?
   Closer to Republicans
   Closer to Democrats
   Don’t know

23. When it comes to politics, what do you usually think of yourself as?
   Liberal
   Conservative
   Moderate
   Haven’t thought much about this
   Don’t know
24. (If Moderate) Do you identify more with liberals or conservatives?
   Liberal
   Conservative
   Neither
   Don’t know

I now have a few questions about groups in society.

25. People of Asian descent in the U.S. use different terms to describe themselves.
   In general do you think of yourself as:
   A Hmong
   A Hmong American
   An Asian
   An Asian American
   Other
   Don’t know

26. Do you think what happens generally to other Asians in this country affects what happens in your life?
   Yes
   No
   Don’t know
27. (If yes it will affect what happens in your life) Will it affect you a lot, some, or not very much?
   A lot
   Some
   Not very much
   Don’t know

28. Do you think what happens generally to other Hmong in this country affects what happens in your life?
   Yes
   No
   Don’t know

29. (If yes it will affect what happens in your life) Will it affect you a lot, some, or not very much?
   A lot
   Some
   Not very much
   Don’t know

30. Suppose you have an opportunity to decide on two candidates for political office, one of whom is Hmong-American. Would you be more likely to vote for the Hmong-American candidate if the two candidates are equally experienced and qualified?
   Yes
   No
   Don’t know
31. Have you ever been a victim of discrimination due to your race or ancestry?
   Yes
   No
   Don’t know

32. Thinking about government services, political power and representation, how much in common do you feel Hmong Americans have with:

   Other Asian Americans: A lot in common, Some common, Little in common, Nothing at all in common, Don’t know
   African Americans/Blacks: A lot in common, Some common, Little in common, Nothing at all in common, Don’t know
   Latinos or Hispanics: A lot in common, Some common, Little in common, Nothing at all in common, Don’t know
   Whites: A lot in common, Some common, Little in common, Nothing at all in common, Don’t know

Next, I have some questions about your community.

33. What is your religious background?
   African Methodist Episcopal/AME
   Agnostic or Atheist
   Baptist
   Buddhist
   Catholic
Christian
Christian Scientists
Church of Nazarene
Congregationalist (includes United Church of Christ)
Disciples of Christ, Churches of Christ
Episcopalian, Anglican
Hindu
Jehovah’s Witnesses
Jewish
Lutheran
Methodist
Mormon, Church of the Latter Day Saints
Muslim, Mohammedan, Islam
Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox
Pentecostal (includes Church of God in Christ)
Presbyterian
Protestant
Reformed, Dutch Reformed, Christian Reformed
Unitarian, Universalist
Jain
Shamanism
Sikh
Falun Gong
Other ______________________________
34. How often do you attend your place of worship?
   At least every week
   Almost every week
   A few times a month
   Only a few times a year
   Hardly ever
   Never
   Don’t know

35. (If religion is shamanism) If there is an illness, marriage, birth, death, or other occasion in your family, do you call a shaman?
   Always call
   Sometimes call
   Never call
   Don’t know

36. Other than a religious group or place of worship is there any other group or organization in your community that you are involved with?
   Yes
   No
   Don’t know

37. (If involved with any other group or organization) How many of this community group would you say are Hmong?
   All of them
   Most
About half
Some of them
None
Don’t know

38. In what state or U.S. territory do you live?
   Alabama
   Alaska
   American Samoa
   Arizona
   California
   Colorado
   Connecticut
   Delaware
   District of Columbia (DC)
   Florida
   Georgia
   Guam
   Hawaii
   Idaho
   Illinois
   Indiana
   Iowa
   Kansas
   Kentucky
   Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Northern Marianas Islands
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Puerto Rico
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Virgin Islands
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

39. In what year were you born? (Enter 4-digit birth year; for example, 1976)
   Year __________

40. Are you male or female?
   Male
   Female

41. What is the highest level of formal education you completed?
   Primary or grammar school
   Some high school
   High school graduate
   Some college
   Bachelor’s
   Master’s
   Professional degree
   Law degree (JD)
Medical degree (MD, DO: Dentistry, Optometry)
Doctorate (all other doctorates: Ph.D., Ed.D, Psych. D)
Other
Don’t know

42. What is your marital status?
   Married/Living as married
   Widowed
   Divorced
   Separated
   Never been married

43. What is/was the race or ethnicity of your wife, husband, or partner?
   Black/African American
   Asian
   Native American/American Indian
   Hispanic/Latino
   White/Caucasian
   Hmong
   N/A
   Other (please specify) __________________________________________

44. What is your employment status?
   Full time
   Working part time
   Laid off
Student
A homemaker
Retired
Permanently disabled
Unemployed
Other (please specify) __________________________________________

45. Which of the following best describes your total individual pre-tax income earned last year?
   Up to $19,999
   $20,000 - $34,999
   $35,000 - $49,999
   $50,000 - $74,999
   $75,000 - $99,999
   $100,000 - $124,999
   $125,000 - $149,999
   $150,000 - $249,999
   $250,000 and over
   Don’t know

46. On average, how many hours a week do you work? (Round to nearest hour)
   Hours _________
   Don’t know
   N/A
47. Many people in the U.S. are not citizens. Some are on student or travel visas, or they have green cards because they are permanent residents. Are you currently on a visa, have a green card, or are you a U.S. citizen?

- Visa
- Green card
- U.S. Citizen
- N/A
- Don’t know

Thank you very much for participating in this survey. If you have any questions, please ask us. If you have any additional questions later, please contact either Kau Vue (kauvue@yahoo.com) or Dr. Kurt Cline (559.278.2865 or kcline@csufresno.edu) and we will be happy to answer them. Questions regarding the rights of research subjects may be directed to the CSU Fresno Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects, 559.278.4468.
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<th>Kau Vue</th>
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Type full name as it appears on submission

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Date