

Asian-Black Political Relationships: Policy Voting of State Legislators in California and

Maryland

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in the Department of
Political Science in the Graduate School
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2014

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Asian-black political relations in the United States have been most frequently examined in the arena of urban/local politics and especially in terms of the degree of conflict and competition. No previous study on Asian-black relations outside of the local realm has been pursued. Given the small but growing numbers of Asian American elected officials, Asian Americans' political and social relations with other minority political elites are becoming an especially salient and relevant concern, and will likely become even more significant over time.

By moving beyond the urban arena, this study attempts to systemically assess Asian-black relations in the state level politics with the central aim of analyzing their nature whether those relations take the forms of conflict or cooperation. Analyzing state legislative roll call votes from California and Maryland on selected issues from 1999 to 2014, I show that black representatives have very supportive/cohesive voting records on the most salient concerns of Asians and that Asian representatives also have supportive voting records on the most salient concerns of blacks but slightly less than the blacks'. The findings indicate that Asian and black state legislators support each to a higher degree than party affiliation might alone suggest, and also suggest the absence of conflict that is often found in urban-level politics.

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1. Introduction

"The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line." - W.E.B DuBois

W.E.B. DuBois made his well-known observation about race relations in the United States almost over a century ago, yet the 'problem of the color line' has been prolonged onto the 21st century. Lee and Bean (2007) suggest that "if the problem of the 20th century was the color line, the question of the 21st century could be one of the multiple color lines" or the question of cross racial/ethnic relations (563).

The complexity of the racial landscape in the United States has grown considerably in the past few decades, largely due to increasing numbers of racial and ethnic minorities. Among them, Asian Americans are country's the fastest growing minority group—the 2010 Census shows that the "Asian population in the United States increased by 48 percent between 1990 and 2000¹ and by 43 percent between 2000 and 2010², and it is projected to reach 41 million by 2050" (Passel and Cohn 2008). Today they makeup nearly 6% of the U.S. population. While the rapid demographic transformation of the Asian American population is interesting and significant in its own right, Asian Americans' political and social relations with other minority groups are becoming an

¹ Population increased from 6,908,638 to 10,242,998

² And to 14,674,252 in 2010

especially salient and relevant concern. It will likely become even more significant over time as growing numbers of Asian Americans are participating in electoral politics and are considerably affecting policymaking in the states³ (Citrin et al. 1990, 537-41; Cain 1992; *Los Angeles Times* April 15, 2014).

Recently, the #BlackPowerYellowPeril online movement, which was organized by Suey Park and her group #NotYourAsianSidekick, went viral on Twitter discussing ways in which the Asian American community could "cooperate with the African American community to further similar anti-racist goals" (S. Park 2014). The movement argues, "for too long, Whites have benefitted from the horizontal oppression between Asian Americans and African Americans, and, therefore, collective consciousness is needed to find solidarity instead of aiming for white appeasement"⁴ (ibid.). Though it had succeeded garnering considerable amount of support online, the movement was also heavily critiqued that there can be no solidarity between the two groups because of the so-called 'Asian Privilege' and the discrimination towards African Americans by Asian Americans. Similar to this recent experience, previous historical examples of Asian-black relations were also often viewed and highlighted under conflicts rather than

³ For example, the recent defeat of an attempt to reinstate affirmative action in admissions to California's public universities and colleges (SCA 5) revealed the political power of Asian American voters and "challenged the conventional wisdom about their partisan loyalties to the Democrats" (Chen 2014).

⁴ This online movement does not have a designated website that contains information about the movement. Instead, the movement itself is only comprised of online messages on Twitter. The idea that is similar to the movement's mission statement was retrieved from the personal blog of Suey Park, the organizer of this movement. <http://criticalspontaneity.com/2014/01/17/997/>.

cooperation. Although Asian Americans have successfully joined in coalition with African Americans and Latinos to fight against discrimination and patterns of political exclusion (e.g., multiracial coalition in New York City to promote a redistricting plan) and elect candidates of color (e.g., pro-Bradley coalition in Los Angeles, election of Lee Brown as mayor of Houston) in the past, examples of Asian-black conflicts more often made the headlines (Ramakrishnan et al. 2009). Furthermore, Lie (2004) emphasizes that the "very interest in Asian-black conflict is predicated on the popularity of the conflict view." Consider few events from the 1990s to early 2000 in the United States. In the early 1990s, Willie Brown, the black mayor of San Francisco, charged the Asian Law Caucus with anti-black racism for bringing suit against the city on behalf of Vietnamese and Cambodian families being harassed by black residents in public housing⁵. In San Francisco in the mid-1990s, litigation⁶ initiated by Chinese-American plaintiffs took down the school district's desegregation plan – originally implemented in response to an NAACP lawsuit – on the grounds that it discriminated against Chinese-American students (Liu 1998). Moreover, news stories following the Los Angeles urban unrest in 1992, for instance, were "especially keen to highlight 'Korean-Black' conflict" (Ramakrishnan et al. 2009, 223). This unrest, also known as 'the worst riots of the century,' resulted in "at least 58 people were killed and more than one billion dollars in

⁵ The case, *Truong v. SF Housing Authority*, affirmed the district court's ruling in granting a preliminary injunction based on the fact that the San Francisco Housing Authority failed to protect Southeast Asians from racial violence.

⁶ *Ho vs. San Francisco Unified School District*

property damage, and thousands of arrests" (Hunt 2012, 10). It was initiated by the angry African-American community following the acquittal of police officers who brutally harassed Rodney King, and was carried over into aggression toward Korean-American shopkeepers (ibid.). Thirteen days after the King incident, the death of a 15-year-old African-American girl named Latasha Harlins, who was shot in the back of the head by a Korean store owner, Soon Ja Du, who wrongly assumed she was stealing orange juice, further fueled the existing tensions.

What all these events have in common is the reflection of complex racial tensions and antagonisms between Asian-black relations, which have been continuously emphasized and portrayed by the media. The highlighting of these conflicts in the media stirred journalistic and academic interests in Asian-black conflicts. For example, in the 1990s and early 2000s, more than a dozen sociologists published scholarships that solely examined the 1992 Los Angeles urban unrest and its effect on the minority communities⁷. Moreover, though small in volume, a considerable amount of previous scholarship finds that relations between Asians and blacks are often distant, competitive, even conflictual, especially in the urban/local spheres and are similarly manifested in groups' attitudes toward one another, as some survey results indicates (Bobo and

⁷Ramakrishnan et al. (2009) add how these scholars have well-pointed out that not only the "media accounts, more often than not, misrepresent and overplay the extent of this conflict, they also ignore the agency and voice of Asian Americans themselves and portray such events in terms of 'episodic frames' that point to individual-level prejudice rather than 'thematic frames' that point to factors that trigger intergroup competition" (223).

Johnson 2000; Chin et al. 1996; Cho and Cain 2001; Citrin et al. 1997; Hing and Lee 1996; Saito 1998; Ong 2000; Lien, Conway and Wong 2004). Much of the previous research has been focused on the local level; however, there has not been full appreciation of another side of the argument. That is while urban arena brings considerable constraints backed by its narrower scope, the larger arena and different policy responsibilities in higher-level politics facilitate other political relations. A focus outside of urban level and on political elites, rather than the public masses that have previously received a great deal of research attention, does not imply that studying the minority group relations at the local level politics is not important but gives a plausible reason to think that minority relations may be different at the state-level though not has been systemically examined previously. Moreover, those findings of Asian-black group tension may not fully represent the *overall* situation given that they assess just one level, the local/urban level, of and/or set of political actors, individuals or the mass public, in the complex system of American government. In a similar vein, Hero and Preuhs (2013) provides a fundamental reason why investigating such relation at only one level, the urban/local level, of the governmental system is insufficient in examining black-Latino political relations; they argue that it is because the "governmental authority is divided and shared geographically or territorially among the national, state, and local levels of government, politics is *different* in these levels" (4). Without a doubt, "the geographic and the policy authority *within* levels of government 'go together' and are essentially two

sides of one coin; that also pertains to differences in the geographic and the types of policy, authority *between* levels of government" (ibid.). In short, while the importance of mass attitudes is broadly recognized and studied, the significance of elites and leadership as central elements of politics including race and ethnic politics should be also emphasized and examined. This study is novel in addressing this gap in our knowledge and adding to the volume of research on Asian American politics. Moreover, this study grounds its base upon the idea that a separate systematic analysis is necessary for Asian-black political relations as it is evident that we cannot readily assume that the assumptions, analyses, and previous findings from black-white or black-Latino analytical models are applicable to and relevant for Asian-black relations (Segura and Rodrigues 2006). To this end, the focus of this study is an analysis of Asian-black political relations at the state level. The questions of greatest interest are the following:

1. Are the relations between Asian American and African American political elites at the state level cooperative or competitive?
2. When compared with Asian-black relations at the urban setting, are the state-level Asian-black relations likely to hold a similar or different pattern?

In order to answer these questions, I specifically examine voting behaviors of state legislators in California and Maryland, who are considered as political elites, and use their roll call histories as barometers of the nature of Asian-black relations. I attempt to

see if there is a possibility of devising successful agreements between Asians and blacks, without being devastated by the conflict, in the state-level politics.

The center of attention is the state-level rather than the national-level for the following reasons. First of all, Asian American political elites are extremely underrepresented in the U.S Congress at this moment⁸. Moreover, while the state legislatures are fundamentally important domestic public policy-making institutions that are different from urban/local politics in its nature, the two arenas are also very closely related as the state legislators are elected and represented by the residents who participate and make up the urban/local politics. Thus, the state legislatures provide an excellent ground for a direct comparison of Asian-black relations between the two levels regarding the same issues. Previous studies suggest racial/ethnic diversity, important in itself, may bridge economic, political, and cultural perspectives on state politics (Dye 1969; Fitzpatrick and Hero 1988). At the state-level, where policies are seen as less zero-sum and outcomes having less negative impact for the other and/or benefitting both groups simultaneously, I argue that we may see less conflict than seems to be found in urban-level studies because there will be less *direct* overlap in competing material interests. Also, the overwhelming affiliation of Asian American and African American state legislators with the Democratic Party (with a very few notable exceptions) should

⁸ To date, Asian Americans' electoral successes have been regional rather than national (Nakanishi 1991; McClain and Stewart 2014).

also be noticed because similar party identification can provide a broader ideological and interest coalition bases for advancing policy positions held in common. Besides, it can temper the tension and help channel it away from overtly conflicting outcomes, and this may be more likely in state and national levels of government than the urban environment.

This study contributes to the racial/ethnic politics literature in two important ways. First, the analysis provides a comparison of Asian-black political relations between the state and local levels by using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Second, the analysis offers the very first in-depth look at the structure and content of Asian-black relations in a different institutional context than the urban settings.

In the subsequent chapters, I review previous studies of Asian-black relations in urban/local politics, showing that competition and conflict have emerged more than cooperation. I also discuss the explanations of several studies suggesting that the nature, particularly the zero-sum quality, along with other factors such as context and groups' relative perceptions and difference in socioeconomic status, lead to competitive and distant relationship between Asians and blacks to provide a reference point for contrasting and juxtaposing the general urban/local level findings with findings in the state-level. Then, I introduce the data and observe roll-call voting patterns of California and Maryland state legislators, who are either Asian American or African-American, on the bills mainly related to the economy, education, and immigration for the period of

1999 to 2014. With the aggregated data, Asian-black political relation in the state legislatures will be analyzed by the two metrics that have been commonly used in the study of United States legislative behavior, namely the Rice Indices of Cohesion and the Likeness (1928). These indices provide estimates of the extent to which a group is cohesive and to which two groups voted in the same or the opposite way in the course of a given legislative session. Next, a case study of California's Proposition 209 will be examined in order to compare and contrast Asian-black political relations between the state and urban/local levels regarding the issue of affirmative action. In the last chapter I present the overall findings, discuss their importance for theory and practice, and conjecture about future trends. I also offer relevant and related questions that remain unanswered, yet are worthy of exploration in future studies and conclude with remarks on practical implications.

2. Literature Review and Analytical Approach

2.1 What Does Previous Research Tell Us?

An important sociological and political concern raised by the increasing diversity of urban areas is whether individuals of different racial groups "view one another as direct competitors for scarce economic, political, and social resources" (Bobo and Hutchings 1996, 951). Though much of the previous research on inter-minority group dynamics and relations focused on the interactions between minorities and white (e.g., Giles 1977; Giles and Hertz 1994; Glaser 1994), a growing body of literature examines the character of interminority interactions, particularly in what are considered 'competitive' situations (Olzak 1992).

Competition arises among the minority groups when blacks, Latinos, and Asians each have different goals, when there is a low level of trust, or when the size of one group is such that it no longer needs to form coalitions with other minority groups to gain political success (Falcon 1988; McClain and Karnig 1990; Warren, Corbett, and Stack 1990; Meier and Stewart 1991; McClain 1993; McClain and Stewart 2014). Moreover, there is a large volume of research that showed evidences of competitions among blacks, Latinos, and Asians for scarce jobs, adequate housing, and government services (MacManus and Cassell 1982; Oliver and Johnson 1984; Johnson and Oliver 1989;

Mollenkopf 1990)⁹. One approach used to examine inter-minority relations, especially black-Latino relations, has been analyzing minority groups' relative electoral successes, and some policy outcomes, focusing on socioeconomic data and examining associations to the size of minority populations in a number of cities (McClain and Karnig 1990; McClain 1993; McClain et al. 2006). McClain et al. (2006) compared the group of cities in the year 2000 from the earlier years first examined in 1980 (McClain and Karnig 1990) regarding the socioeconomic and political conditions for blacks and Latinos. Although the results did not present a consistent pattern, rather it was mixed evidences of socioeconomic and/or political competition or cooperation, a substantial amount of evidences indicated "competitive or non-positive black-Latino relations" (McClain and Stewart 2014, 322).

Another approach that has been commonly used in examining black-Latino relationships was case studies. Browning, Marshall and Tabb's (1984) studies are the "leading examples of the case study research which produced several important conclusions toward the political situation of blacks and of Latinos in ten northern California cities from the 1960s to 1980s and beyond" (Hero and Preuh 2013, 33). Their discussion often stated blacks and Latinos were not mutually supportive, and even

⁹ However, as Hero and Preuhs (2013) state, we must also acknowledge that the urban-level findings of conflict may be at least slightly exaggerated or findings of cooperation are understated. This could be the "results of selection bias associated with the particular areas (cities), the specific questions posed, and the policies examined directing toward considering more visible happenings and contentious issues rather than the others" (30).

when they both supported similar policies and coalitions "relationships between the groups sometimes remained highly competitive as the implementation of policies had distributive consequences" (Browning, Marshall and Tabb 1984, 124).

On the other hand, Hero and Preuhs (2013) realized the virtual lack of systematic assessment of minority intergroup relations at the national level and provide important new findings of black-Latino relations and novel insights about the role of institutions in shaping such relations. Their research sought to answer the question whether if black-Latino relations at the *national* level are best characterized by conflict, or cooperation orientation and whether mediating and formal institutions adopt strategies of competition, coalition, or independence. They examined series of evidence within the institutional context of the national government, mainly the Congress and the Supreme Court, and regarding different sets of political elites and various types of political activities (e.g., participating in congressional hearings, examining legislative scorecards, voting on legislation) that provides a firm base for assessing black-Latino relations at the national level (54). Their findings showed that the national sphere appears to prompt an inter-minority approach to politics characterized by the absence of conflict and based on independent, occasionally cooperative, agenda setting. This study takes a similar approach in examining Asian-black political relations at the state-level and models after their theoretical justifications.

2.1.1 Asian-Black Relations at the Urban/Local Level

In this section, I review what is currently known about Asian-black relations at the urban/local level. Though this is not a comprehensive list of previous studies, these several research efforts at the urban/local level are notable in the sense that findings of conflict and tensions between these two groups are not an unusual phenomenon.

Bobo and Johnson (2000) attempted to gauge whether members of racial minority groups are seen as zero-sum competitors for economic resources and political influence, and their results confirmed that the perception of competition was moderate and quite recognizable among the racial minority groups while it was low among the whites (120). Their studies also showed that there is a strong relationship between stereotypes and perceptions of group competition among the Asian respondents holding for perceptions of competition with both blacks and Latinos (*ibid.*). Some scholars have put more emphasis on the political competition in their research; Fong (1998) and Saito (2001) analyzed the cases of Asian Americans' unsuccessful experiences with interracial electoral politics—e.g., Michael Woo's failure to bid for mayor of Los Angeles in 1992 and Ted Dang's failure to bid for mayor of Oakland in 1994— and their results indicated Asian-American candidates may not necessarily depend on strong support from non-Asian minorities. Along the same line, using 1990s data of the now ninety-six cities in the United States with more than 25,000 people and whose populations were at least 10 percent black and 10 percent Latino, McClain and Tauber (2001) found that political

competition between blacks and Latinos had increased, and the new source of political competition was between blacks and Asians in many urban centers which, in turn, Asian populations also bringing significant negative consequences for black city council representation and the election of black mayor (McClain and Stewart 2014, 322-323). Moreover, Cain, Citrin and Wong (2000) examined public attitudes toward growing diversity in California and investigated how these reactions are related to their electoral choices about racial policies (3). Using their unique survey data of the Californian voters conducted just before the vote on Proposition 209 in 1996, their results indicated that economic conditions affected perceptions of Asians and Latinos more than beliefs about blacks, and this confirms the findings of the influence of economic adversity in stimulating opposition to immigration (Citrin et al. 1997, 875).

Studies that examine interracial contact also help understanding the prospects for and potential barriers to cooperation between Asian Americans and other minority groups. Some studies have focused intensely on numerous sites of interracial contact, including residential areas, work places, networks of friends, and public spaces (Bobo, Johnson and Suh 2000; Green, Strolovich and Wong 1998; Massey 2000; Massey and Denton 1993, 2000; Umemoto 2000; Lien et al. 2001; Oliver 2010). Oliver and Wong (2010) states, though the United States moves towards the "multiracial plurality, it remains a nation 'divided by color' whereas whites and blacks, to a smaller degree, Asians and Latinos continue to be highly segregated by neighborhood and municipal

boundaries" (567). The segregated residential areas indicate a distinct structuring of interracial contact and racial attitudes in the United States—blacks and whites are the most distant from one another whereas Asians and Latinos fall in between, in terms of daily contact, material conditions, and attitudes toward racism. Blacks live the most 'hypersegregated'¹⁰ lives of any racial/ethnic group in the United States (Massey and Denton 1993) whereas Asian Americans live significantly less segregated lives (Bonilla-Silva 2006, 193), and are somewhat less segregated from whites than Latinos are (Hum and Zonta 2000; Massey 2000). Once again, Asian Americans and blacks appear to lack the extensive contact and shared experiences that facilitate cooperation and coalition building. This notion is also supported by the work of Oliver (2010) where he uses the National Politics Survey (NPS) to measure closeness, as the simplest measures of racial attitudes based on contact, among the minority groups. His major findings showed that: 1) all respondents were likely to feel closest to their own racial group, 2) Asians and Latinos were much more likely to feel close to whites than to blacks or each other, and 3) more blacks feel close to Latinos and whites than do to Asians (44-47).

¹⁰ Using factor analysis, Massey and Denton (1988) narrowed down twenty different segregation indices to five "distinct axes of measurement: evenness, exposure, concentration, centralization, and clustering" (281). They specifically argued that because segregation is a "multidimensional phenomenon," it should be measured by different combination of the five dimensions of segregation rather than one single index (312). Especially, one specific combination-pattern has received much of the attention: the hypersegregation pattern, which represents high segregation ratings on *all five dimensions*. Wilkes and Iceland (2004) affirmed their findings and showed that more metropolitan areas were 'hypersegregated' for African-Americans than for Latinos and Asians.

Turning to a different interpretation of conflict and cooperation between Asian Americans and other minority groups, some studies have viewed the relations within the context of racial and/or economic hierarchy. Rather than focusing on overt intergroup behaviors and attitudes alone, these works refer to groups' different positions in society and the economy in order to explain why they interact with each other (in forms of conflict mostly) in the ways they do. C. Kim (1999) argues that Asian Americans have been "racially triangulated" in reference to blacks and whites by simultaneous processes of relative valorization and civic ostracism (41). Whites have "valorized" Asian Americans relative to blacks in order to dominate both groups (ibid.). Model minority myth is, in fact, precise image highlights that they are constructions serving to affix the two groups (model minority and underclass) in their respective places within the field of racial positions (58). Despite criticism, major opinion makers such as politicians, the media, and business elites continue to embrace this myth. Previous studies have shown that institutional power holders sometimes cite the model minority myth as a justification for giving preferential treatment to Asian Americans over blacks (Gotanda 1995; Hatamiya 1993). To the extent that Asian Americans themselves buy into this myth and evince feelings of superiority toward blacks, the racial hierarchy becomes that much more deep-seated (K. Park 1999). On the other hand, through the process of "civic ostracism," whites construe Asian Americans as "immutably foreign and inassimilable" in order to maintain the group's otherness (C.

Kim 1999, 58). This results in triangulation because "Asian Americans are ranked between whites and blacks on the superior/inferior scale but lower than both blacks and whites on the foreigner/insider scale, which when represented on a two-axis scale, creates a racial triangle" (59). Consequently, the triangulation of Asian Americans brings a less common ground for Asians and blacks as minorities to build coalitions. Moreover, some studies of Korean-black conflict explore the way in which racial/economic hierarchy shapes intergroup the nature and extent of the conflict (C. Kim 2000). Using Bonacich's middleman minority framework (1973) few research has focused on the close urban economic formation within which Korean merchants come into contact with poor blacks and thus encounter the latter's frustrations (K. Kim 1999; Min 1996; Ong et al. 1994). On the other hand, a few studies theorized more broadly about the impact of power relations, racial ideology, and the social construction of racial categories and meanings (Cho 1993; K. Park 1997). C. Kim (2000) rejects the conventional wisdom that the Korean-black conflict constitutes racial scapegoating, the irrational venting of black rage on Korean merchants. Instead, she argues that it is "in response to white dominance in American society, which generates a distinct racial order that encourages conflict among different groups, provokes racial resistance, and delegitimizes and silences such resistance" (10). Kim asserts that racial power is "a systemic tendency that expresses itself through myriad processes, some of which involve intentional domination and

some of which do not" (9). She argues that the racial power in America constructs racial ordering that provide a framework for group interaction and conflict.

There is another body of research, focused on the individual or micro-level, on mass attitudes or public opinion, which has also often found Asian-black competition or conflict. A few survey-based studies find that relations between Asians and blacks are often competitive, even conflictual, especially in the urban/local arenas. Using data from the 1992 Los Angeles County Social Survey (LACS), Taeku Lee (2000) found that Asian Americans exhibited distinct attitudinal preferences for intermarriage and residential segregation with whites over blacks (109, 110). The Pew Research Center's 2012 Asian-American Survey asked respondents to rate "how well members of their Asian group (such as Vietnamese Americans, Korean Americans) get along with each of four groups: whites, blacks, Hispanics and Asian Americans from different countries" (Pew Research Center 2013, 99¹¹). The results showed that Asian Americans are "most positive about relations with whites and other U.S. Asian groups. They were less positive about relations with Hispanics and most negative about relations with blacks" (ibid.).

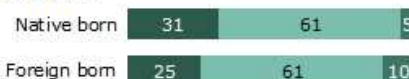
¹¹ A full report can be retrieved from: <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2013/04/Asian-Americans-new-full-report-04-2013.pdf>.

Getting Along across Group Boundaries, by Nativity

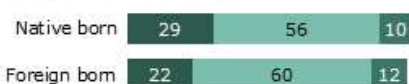
% saying their U.S. Asian group and each of the following get along ...

■ Very well ■ Pretty well ■ Not too/Not at all well

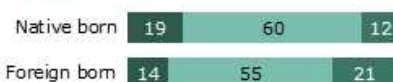
With whites



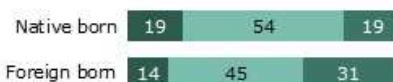
With other U.S. Asian groups



With Hispanics



With blacks



2012 Asian-American Survey, Q49a-d. Responses of "Don't know/Refused" not shown.

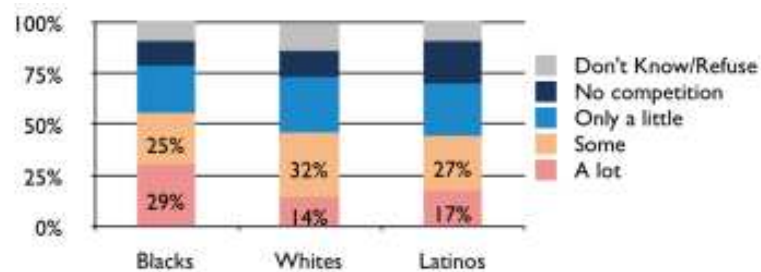
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 1: Intergroup Relations from the Asian Americans' Viewpoint

Also, the 2008 National Asian American Survey (NAAS) indicated that a sizeable proportion of Asian Americans does not find much political commonality with members of other racial and ethnic groups. 38 percent of Asian Americans found little or no political commonality with whites, and the percentage is higher for both Latinos (44%) and blacks (48%). In the same vein, results from the 2008 Collaborative Multiracial Post-election study (CMPS) yielded similar results—Asian Americans' perceived lack of political commonality also correspond with a feeling of political competition that other

groups feel with respect to Asian Americans (See Figure 2). In other words, a complicated picture emerges when it comes to building common political ground between Asian Americans and other groups.

In this section, I have summarized the key findings of previous research regarding Asian-black relations at the urban/local level and several different interpretations of their seemingly competitive and conflictual relation. What is missing from this fairly large body of research is Asian-black political relations in the state and/or national level. The next logical question is whether if the two groups likely to be competitive and conflictual as it is in the urban/local arena. I believe I can contribute to and advance the substantive knowledge of Asian-black relations by providing empirical evidences in the following chapter from examining Asian-black relations within the institutional context of the state legislatures.



Source: 2008 Collaborative Multiracial Post-election Study

Figure 2: Reports of Perceived Political Competition with Asians, by Other Groups

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Realistic group conflict theory argues that prejudice and discrimination are often based on conflicts of interest between groups (LeVine and Campbell 1972). In examining the theory more in depth, Esses et al. states that "a common theme seeming to run across theorizing in the various disciplines was that intergroup attitudes and behavior reflect group interests, and are based, at least in part, on the nature of and the compatibility of group goals" (Esses, Jackson, and Armstrong 1998, 701). When group goals are congruous, positive relationships are likely to occur, whereas when group goals are noncongruous or in opposition to one another, conflict and negative intergroup attitudes and behavior are found. It is crucial to bear in mind that the basic presumptions of this theory do not necessitate that actual competition over resources exists (ibid.). Rather, it is the "*perception* of competition that leads to conflict and intergroup hostility" (ibid.). Drawing on the work of Blalock (1965), Bobo (1983), Bobo and Johnson (2000), and Key (1949), the members of different racial and ethnic groups often feel a strong sense of competition with other groups over a range of political, economic, and social resources. This sense of competition or conflict is not constant but rather is likely to vary as the perceived threat posed by another group increases. Olzak and Nagel (1986) argue that group identities and solidarity are heightened by competition among groups for political and economic resources often triggered by increased minority population. The assessments of Asian-black relations in the urban arena often indicate competition or

conflict. However, when taking in the nature of different political arenas into an account, there are theoretical reasons to think that politics can be different in diverse domains of the political system as the sizes of the arenas of interactions vary and as the state-level (and national-level) political elites are not directly involved in zero-sum games against other groups of color.

Schattschneider (1960) extends the Madisonian argument in which he emphasizes the critical and general importance of the scope of politics. The scope of the policy arena also, in turn, has implications for the types of public policy considered. And, it is also significant for minority intergroup relations in different arenas of American politics. If policy frequently shapes politics (Lowi 1964), including intergroup relations, then the factors that shape policy in the first place are also undoubtedly important. Policy questions are likely to be relatively more abstract, philosophical, or broadly ideological where the scope is broader, that is, in larger political arenas such as at the state and national levels, where issues concerning procedural and substantive equality are frequently considered (Hero and Preuhs 2013). On the other hand, in the local and urban arenas, where the scope is way narrower, policies are more zero-sum, proximate, material and interest-based issues are more likely to predominate (Meier, McClain, Polinard and Wrinkle 2004; Hero and Preuhs 2013). As policy debates "can be more readily framed in less zero-sum nature, as at the national and state level, general egalitarian concerns are more predominant, and there is less likely to be a conflict

between minority groups" (Hero and Preuhs 2013, 2). In essence, the prevalence and configurations of values (or ideas) versus interests makes conflict more likely at the local level and less so at the state and national level.

In summary, we may see less conflict than seems to be found in urban-level studies because there will be less direct overlap in competing material interests. Also, the ideological agreement can temper the tension and can help channel it away from overtly conflicting outcomes, and this may be more likely in state and national levels of government or institutional context than the urban settings.

2.3 Data and Methods

Data

The datasets are collected from the period of 1999 to 2014 for California and 2002 to 2013 for Maryland. These two states are selected because both have relatively high representation of Asian Americans in the state legislatures. Although Hawaii holds numerous Asian American state legislators, it is excluded in this study because of its unique background and extremely low number of African American state legislators. The timeframe of the data also depends heavily upon the representations of Asian Americans in the two states; their numbers were large enough (more than three

members) for the proper analysis only after the late 1990s¹². For the analysis, I have divided the timeframe into pre-2010 census period and a post-census period. The rationales being legislative districts are typically redrawn after each census, and this could lead to changes in whom the legislators represent and, therefore, how they behave.

The data includes the following key variables¹³: 1) Asian American and African-American state legislators in California and Maryland, 2) length of terms, 3) roll-call history, 4) party affiliation, and 5) districts represented.

Next, determining if the bill dealt with the Asian American and/or African American interests was a key component in this research process. After coding all bills for primary and secondary policy area, I then determined which bills fit the categories of general Asian/African American interest. To determine this, I relied on the policy priority information provided by the major caucuses in California and Maryland, namely California Asian and Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, California Legislative Black Caucus, Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland, Congressional Black Caucus, and Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. Opinion polls and surveys also provided information about what policies and programs Asian/African Americans desired. The

¹² The November 1996 election was historically significant and pathbreaking for Asian American electoral empowerment because the number of Asian Pacific Americans elected to public office significantly increased throughout the nation (Nakanishi 1991).

¹³ Source of this data comes from the California and Maryland state legislature websites: <http://www.legislature.ca.gov> and <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov>.

bills examined in the analysis fall into three general categories: economy, education, and immigration. Although the two groups' deeper interests and concerns varied under this realm of issues, economy and education were most commonly stated priority issues by the caucuses. The results of 2012 National American Asian Survey also showed that economy in general, including the issues unemployment and jobs, was the most commonly cited priority issue followed by education for the Asian Americans. African Americans also held on to the similar views on their priority issues; according to a report titled *A Year After Obama's Election Blacks Upbeat about Black Progress, Prospects (2010)* released by the Pew Research Center, the majority of blacks (79%) viewed economy and unemployment as the most serious problems followed by crime (67%) and poor public education (56%). Though immigration is prioritized less by both groups (and even less for the blacks) than the two major issues previously listed, it still remains as a pivotal subject for the Asians, and is growing attention from the blacks as the members of the Congressional Black Caucus "unanimously support Comprehensive Immigration Reform legislation that provides a path to citizenship for millions of immigrants currently living in America and particularly for the more than 3 million immigrants of African descent" (Congress Black Caucus¹⁴).

The four sub-categories (three for immigration) of each three priority issues were also identified from the caucuses listed above mainly based on the mix of Asian and

¹⁴ See <http://cbc.fudge.house.gov/immigration-reform/>

black interests (see Table 1). These issues of economy, education, and immigration can and do apply to other constituents, but I argue these often play a central role in the everyday lives of many Asians and blacks. The purpose was to capture the issues most closely associated with 'Asian/black interests' based on the caucuses, previous research, and accepted conventional wisdom. Some sub-categories overlap in both groups' interests (e.g., infrastructure investment, unemployment, and better school environment) whereas some applies relatively closer to one specific group (e.g., truancy, achievement gap, citizenship assistance). This difference can provide us with an excellent ground to examine whether if Asians and blacks show support/cooperation towards each other even if the bill directly affects or positively influences the other group in a relatively larger degree. Total of 11 bills are selected in each session, which results in 96 roll-call histories to examine for each regular session for both states.

Table 1: Policy Priorities of Asian/African Americans Examined

Economy	Microenterprises economic development Infrastructure investment/ Promote access to capital Unemployment Housing and Community Development
Education	Sustainable funding Better and safe school environment Truancy/ Drop-out rate Achievement gap
Immigration	Border control/ Deportation /Immigration reform Citizenship assistance Immigrant children assistance

The data also includes information on the party affiliations and districts represented by the previous and current state legislators of California and Maryland. Out of 42 Asian American and African American members of the California State Assembly, two assembly members, Van Tran and Alan Nakanishi, are Republicans whereas all 63 Asian American and African American members of the Maryland House

of Delegates are democrats (see Appendix A). For the empirical analysis, the Asian American legislators of California will be further divided into the two sub-groups as Asian-Democrats and All-Asian American legislators, and will be examined separately in comparison to African American legislators.

Last but not least, the dataset is not without some potentially important limitations: 1) it examines only small areas of priority policies—it omits health care, social welfare, and law and crime issues, which also greatly accounts as priorities for the Asian and African American populations, 2) it does not include comprehensive lists of bills in the areas of education, economy, and immigration, and thus may produce bias within the bill selection process, and 3) in Maryland's dataset, the years 2003-2007 are omitted due to having only one Asian American legislator serving in the state legislature.

Though may be limited, this dataset is extensive enough, containing approximately 1200 observations for California and 2300 for Maryland, to capture a general picture of Asian-black political relations in the state-level that shows whether if their relations are cooperative or conflictual, and to provide directions for future research.

Methods

By aggregating the data, I am able to estimate two metrics that have been

commonly used in the study of United States legislative behavior, namely the Rice Indices of Cohesion and the Likeness (1928)¹⁵. A measure of cohesion is defined as "the degree of departure from the most probable chance distribution of votes" (i.e., 50-50, which yields a score of zero); hence maximum cohesion (score of 100) is attained whenever the group is in total agreement or total disagreement (Rice 1928, 208). It provides an estimate of the extent to which Asian American or African American legislators voted in agreement with each other. The index has a range of 0 to 100 and is calculated based on the following formula:

$$\text{Cohesion} = | \% \text{yes}_A - \% \text{no}_A |.$$

The average cohesion for each issue area was calculated for each session by summing the individual roll calls and dividing by the number of votes per issue area. A weighted average score per issue area was calculated by summing per-session cohesion scores weighted by the percentage of to all roll call votes each session contributed for that particular issue area. I define a high level of agreement as a cohesion score between 80 and 100; a low level was defined as less than 50. While this method is useful in viewing how Asian Americans and African Americans vote cohesively as each group, it holds few limitations as well. There is no operational consensus on how to treat abstentions and non-votes and most followed Rice in simply ignoring these votes. This is also the

¹⁵ Few previous research that used Rice's Indices include Truman (1956), Cox and McCubbins (1991), Gile and Jones (1995), Morgerstern (2004), Sullivan and Winburn (2009).

approach I employ here¹⁶. Moreover, there is a problem of overestimating unity in smaller groups. Desposato (2005) suggests a solution to this problem as to equalize the party (group) size by making large groups small. However, this analysis does not use this adjusted method because 1) the California's sample sizes are fairly small (there is no one specific group remarkably larger than the other), and 2) though the accuracy of the scores may increase in a small degree, it does *not* change the significance of the differences or the substantive conclusion as Desposato states (737).

The cohesion score alone cannot explain the questions of the extent to which various groups are alike or unlike in their voting responses to political issues. Therefore, the Rice Index of Likeness between Groups (1928) complements the void and provides evidences of the extent to which two groups tend to be in mutual opposition or mutual support of a given bill. The possible range of this index is also from 0 to 100. The likeness score is measured in two steps. First, we calculate the absolute difference between the percentage of Asian American state legislators voting yes on a given bill and the percentage of African American state legislators voting yes on the same bill. Once we have computed this absolute difference, we subtract the result from 100. Hence, the

¹⁶ Rahat (2007) defines a cohesion measure also based on Rice's but which treats an abstention as a 'halfway' vote between 'yes' or 'no'. Also, the measure only includes the number of abstentions in the numerator of the cohesion measure if this was the majority vote. The measure is thus defined by two formulas; the first when majority of a party (group) vote for or against a bill (same as Rice's), the second when the majority abstains, $\frac{NAbs_j}{N}$. I did not choose this particular method because there was no single case where abstention was the majority.

formula to measure the likeness score between two groups A and B on a bill can be written as:

$$\text{Likeness} = 100 - \left| \% \text{ yes}_A - \% \text{ yes}_B \right|.$$

By averaging the scores across all the votes held in the course of a legislative session, the likeness score between the two groups in the course of that legislative session can be calculated. I define a high level of likeness in voting score between 80 and 100; a low level was defined as less than 50.

3. Asian-Black Political Relations in State-level Politics

3.1 Asian-Black Relations in California and Maryland State Legislatures

The primary question of this research is to analyze whether the relations between Asian American and African American political elites at the state level are cooperative or competitive. With the aggregated data, Asian-Black political relations in the state legislatures are analyzed by the two metrics, the Rice Indices of Cohesion and Likeness (1928). These scores provide the estimates of the extent to which Asian American legislators or African American legislators are cohesive as a group and to which the same two groups voted in a cooperative or a conflictual way in the course of a given legislative session. The results showed that unlike from often competitive and conflictual Asian-black relations at the urban level, their state-level relation is cooperative and absent of conflicts.

In the case of California, the cohesion scores of Asian-Democrats are all relatively high, well ranging above the score of 87, throughout the time span of the study. They are especially high regarding the issues of education and economy scoring 97.81 and 96.15 respectively (See Table 2, 3 and 4). These scores indicate Asian-Democrats are most likely to vote as a cohesive unit on these issues. In contrast, Asian-Democrats have a slightly lower level of agreement on the issue of immigration (87.64) during the period of 1999-2010, which later increases to 96. I speculate that there has been an unique

political context prior to post-census era where immigration bills were highly contentious. A partial explanation can be offered with the example of the Senate bill titled Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007 (SB 1639). The most important provisions of the bill would offer amnesty to those who were in the U.S. illegally, through the creation of a new 'Z' visa (Aoki and Takeda 2008, 167). On the other hand, the bill proposed a significant change in immigration preferences¹⁷. Asian Americans strongly opposed to the provisions because the amnesty did not bring many benefits, as only roughly about 10 percent of Asians are unauthorized migrants. In contrast, the amnesty provision was extremely important to Mexican Americans. According to Passel (2005), Mexican migrants makeup "close to 60 percent, and Latin Americans as a whole approximately 85 percent of unauthorized migrants" (4). The changes in immigration preferences were greater concern for the Asian Americans than the amnesty provisions, since a higher percentage of Asian immigrants become American citizens via the "old family preference system" (167). Though this bill died, this simple example shows the complexity of immigration bills, highlighting the difficult position of Asian American legislators where they cannot be always in full support of *all* immigration bills even if immigration is one of their key priority issues. For instance, some may be more inclined to take his or her racial context more closely as his or her district holds large Asian

¹⁷ The change in immigration preferences will cancel "the old family preference system" and would be "replaced by a new point system that greatly favored those with greater skills, education, and knowledge of English" (Aoki and Takeda 2008, 167).

American constituency. Likewise, there were bills initiated in the California state legislature that also contained items that focused on immigration reform (e.g., AJR37 in 2009-2010 Regular legislative session), and similar controversy and context might have played a role in the state legislature causing few Asian-Democrats to vote against the bill. Also, this small fluctuation in the immigration cohesion scores makes more sense in the Californian context where Asian American population is fairly large, and the issue of immigration is always a 'hot potato' in comparison to Maryland.

A slightly different picture emerges when you examine Asian American legislators as a whole; all three cohesion scores for education, economy, and immigration, take a drop to roughly about 12 points below the Asian-Democrat scores. Although they manage to keep their scores above 80 on the issues of education and economy, Asian American legislators fail to meet the minimum criterion (80 and above) of a high level of voting agreement on the policy issues of immigration. A feasible explanation to this phenomenon is the two Asian-Republicans voting along their party line, which often led them to vote against the Asian-Democrats, and thus resulting in a drop in the agreement level¹⁸. On the other hand, the results show very high levels of

¹⁸ In several cases, Asian-Republicans showed their opposition by choosing not to vote, which makes it more difficult to analyze the roll-call behaviors of Asian American state legislators. This leads to one of the drawbacks of Rice Index; Krehbiel points out that Rice Index cannot discriminate between situations of perfect and no party discipline at all. That is, the index does not take into account *legislators' preferences* (Krehbiel 1993, 2000). Perhaps this was their way to show opposition and staying loyal to their party while not significantly influencing the prospect of the bill that may be negative towards the Asian American in general.

agreement among black legislators in all three issue areas throughout the time span of the study. They were most cohesive regarding the issue of the economy, and then followed by immigration and education. One possible explanation of black legislators' high cohesiveness on the immigration issues in comparison to the Asian legislators' can be that, the amnesty bills are not examined in this particular study. If included, because such bills can significantly affect black communities and make employment opportunities harder for all Americans but disproportionately for blacks, it may have resulted in different voting patterns for the blacks that are similar to Asian-Democrats' on immigration bills.

Table 2: California Index of Cohesion 1999-2010

	Democrats	African American Democrats	Asian American Democrats	Asian Americans
Education	95.44	91.88	98.91	82.89
Economy	94.08	95.01	98.44	91.18
Immigration	93.84	94.52	87.64	74.87

Table 3: California Index of Cohesion 2011-2014¹⁹

	Democrats	African American Democrats	Asian American Democrats
Education	94.97	91.76	94.65
Economy	95.55	96.44	91.33
Immigration	95.21	100	96.45

Table 4: California Index of Cohesion 1999-2014

	Democrats	African American Democrats	Asian American Democrats	Asian Americans
Education	95.07	93.46	97.81	85.78
Economy	95.05	94.62	96.15	90.68
Immigration	94.93	95.89	89.84	80.26

¹⁹ There were no Asian American Republicans during this period.

These results carry more significant implications when analyzed with the mean scores of likeness in voting. If the cohesion scores indicated the solidarity of the group, the likeness scores would help us to specify the direction of the both solidified groups. Similar to cohesion scores, the likeness scores between Asians and blacks were fairly high, well reaching above the threshold of 80. However, the effects of Asian-Republicans voting against Asian-Democrats are also evident in the mean indices of likeness between Asian and blacks (See Table 5 and 6). The results point out, while the period of 2011-2014, Asians and blacks are far more likely to vote alike and cohesively as there are no Asian-Republicans serving the term. Then again, both cohesive and likeness scores drop 5-6 points when Asian-Republicans are present in the legislature 1999-2010.

Overall, the results indicate that Asians and blacks are likely to vote in a similar and cooperative manner regarding all three issues. For instance, blacks voted in favor of immigration bills that focused on citizenship assistance whereas Asian-Democrats voted also in favor of bills that dealt with reducing truancy and dropout rates (e.g., AB1446, SB1709) although those issues were not their number one priorities under the major issue of immigration or education. No clear signs of conflict between Asians and blacks emerge throughout the entire time span of this study.

Table 5: California Mean of Likeness between Asian American and African American Legislators

	1999-2010	2011-2014²⁰	1999-2014
Education	85.86	92.86	87.61
Economy	90.68	96.44	92.12
Immigration	86.64	98.22	89.31

Table 6: California Mean of Likeness between Asian-American Democrats and African American Legislators

	1999-2010	2011-2014	1999-2014
Education	93.33	92.86	93.21
Economy	94.53	96.44	95.01
Immigration	93.96	98.22	95.02

²⁰ Again, there were no Asian-American Republicans in this timeframe.

Maryland presents a far less complicated picture than California—both Asian and black legislators held extremely high cohesiveness scores, all ranging above 94 in each category, throughout the entire sessions (See Table 7,8 and 9). Because both Asian and black legislators in Maryland are wholly affiliated with the Democratic Party, a comparison of their respective indices of cohesion may be made directly. The likeness scores were also extremely high; the two groups almost voted exactly alike throughout the course of eight regular legislative sessions on the issues of education, economy, and immigration (See Table 10). Again, no signs of conflict or competition emerge. In Maryland's case, it is important to notice that the majority of legislators, both Asian and black, serve in the legislature for more than 10 to 12 years. The rotations of the legislators are not quickly happening as in California. One can speculate that the long length of terms can form a sub-culture within the two groups, facilitated by the party affiliation, which increases the possibility of cooperation and/or negotiation prior to voting.

Table 7: Maryland Index of Cohesion 2002-2010

	Democrats	African American Democrats	Asian American Democrats
Education	95.26	94.19	95
Economy	97.66	98.6	100
Immigration	92.33	96.8	100

Table 8: Maryland Index of Cohesion 2011-2013

	Democrats	African American Democrats	Asian American Democrats
Education	98.71	98.08	100
Economy	97.54	96.07	100
Immigration	95.79	96.5	100

Table 9: Maryland Index of Cohesion 2002-2013

	Democrats	African American Democrats	Asian American Democrats
Education	96.92	95.76	96.9
Economy	95.05	97.6	100
Immigration	93.21	95.9	100

Table 10: Maryland Mean of Likeness between Asian American and African American Legislators

	2002-2010	2011-2013	2002-2013
Education	97.89	98.08	97.97
Economy	96.34	97.25	96.69
Immigration	96.06	96.39	96.19

In sum, the overall high scores of cohesiveness and likeness in voting in state legislatures of California and Maryland represent Asian-black cooperation. It is difficult to tell whether if cooperation might be forged via shared party identification for the results showed the cohesion of Democrats in both states as high as both groups' scores. Previous research showed that the legislators' voting decisions could be influenced by numerous factors. Krehbiel (2000) and Fiorina (1974) argue that the relationship between party and vote decisions is bogus; the fundamental relationship is between principles and votes, not partisan identification and votes. Nevertheless, few studies attempt to counteract this claim by arguing politicians may stand by their party because parties facilitate achieving their policy goals (Aldrich and Rhode 1997). Others argue politicians support their party based on a sense of commitment and belongingness in the party organization (March and Olsen 1989). In a recent study, Jenkins (2006) discuss a member's political party and/or ideology are consistently shown to explain "much of roll

call voting whereas magnitude of this impact varies from chamber to chamber" (235). Overall, it is important to recognize the evidences that were found consistent with the partisan model of support for minority interests. These findings can be re-connected to the larger argument that were used in the first place to support the reasoning behind examining Asian-black relationships beyond the urban arena—the state-level politics tend to base upon broader-based ideas, which are often reflected in party and ideology. In the same vein, one can speculate that this ideology and party seem to reduce potential conflicts and promote at least independence, and sometimes cooperation, among minority officeholders. This initial glimpse of Asian-Black intergroup voting patterns clearly reinforces the interpretation that intergroup relations show essentially no conflict at the state level and provide a partial evidence of cooperation between the minority groups.

3.2 Asian-Black State and Urban Level Relations: The Case of California's Proposition 209

In the previous subsection, the political relations of Asians and black state legislators in California and Maryland were examined, and the results showed that they vote alike on the issues of economy, education and immigration, and are in support of each other's interests. These findings are more notable when contrasted with the real examples of Asian-black conflict at local level. Our attention now shifts to see whether

these cooperative, or non-conflictual, patterns among Asian and black political elites in the state-level also emerge regarding the *same* problem of conflict in the urban level.

In this subsection, the focus of the inquiry is on the cooperative aspect of Asian-black relationships among the state-level political elites developing a successful agreement and finding alternative ways to build a positive relationship for sharing power and resources without being influenced by Asian-black conflict in the urban level. The California's Proposition 209 is a useful case study for examining the Asian-black political relations in both urban and state levels mainly because while it shows a relatively large degree of divergence of interests between the two groups in the local level, almost little or no conflict is present and moves toward the direction of negotiations or small degree of cooperation at the state level.

On November 5, 1996, California voters were asked to respond to Proposition 209, an initiative on the general election ballot targeting affirmative action. The "most important provision was the following: (a) *The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public education, or public contracting*" (Alvarez and Butterfield 1998). 54.3% voted 'Yes' to terminate the program (*Los Angeles Times* November 5, 1996). The *Los Angeles Times* exit polls showed that 45 percent of Asian voters, compared to 27 percent of blacks, supported the Proposition 209. In a similar vein, Bobo (2001) found the Asians' and blacks' opinion for and against affirmative

action has "tended to follow a hierarchical structure with the bottom (occupied by African-Americans) holding the least negative perception, followed by Latinos, then Asians, and finally whites, who hold the least negative perceptions" (200). Cho and Cain (2001) also affirmed that the Asian Americans' views toward the Proposition 209 "sit squarely between the attitudes of whites and those of other minorities"²¹ (148).

However, in the state-level, the Asian-black political relations regarding the issue of affirmative action were shown to be the opposite; it showed little or almost no conflict. After the enactment of Proposition 209, there have been constant efforts of outreach made to bridge both groups' interests that were permissible under the Proposition. One good example is an education measure related to Proposition 209 signed into law in the 2001-2002 legislative term, AB652. This bill demands the UC Regents to "report to the Legislature on existing and planned efforts to recruit students to the universities' schools of medicine, dentistry and optometry from communities and populations that are medically underserved" (California Senate Office of Research 2002, 13). The bill also asks the university to use "existing resources for outreach related to these graduate health programs" (ibid.). Its roll call history also shows positive Asian-black relation-- all Asian

²¹ The 2012 NAAS Survey offers a comprehensive, updated and definitive view of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) public opinion on affirmative action. While a handful of groups in the Asian American community have claimed that there is little support for affirmative action, their findings showed the opposite (74% in favor). The results indicated that AAPI overwhelmingly support affirmative action programs though showed a slight decline in support when the rationale of diversity was mentioned. However, the recent uproar of anti-SCA5 sentiment among Asian Americans, especially Chinese-Americans, represents a different view yet once again.

American and African American assembly members voted alike in favor of the bill. In addition, in 2011, SB185, authored by Democratic State Senator Ed Hernandez tried to reverse the banning of affirmative action in university admissions. Although Governor Brown ultimately vetoed it²², the roll call history of both Senate and Assembly floors show that Asian and black legislators voted alike in support of the bill. Three years later, Senator Hernandez has advanced a Senate Constitutional Amendment (SCA 5), which again overturns the lift of affirmative action at the state's public institutions of higher education (*The Economist* March 22, 2014). The three Asian American Democrats in the State Senate-- Lieu, Liu, and Yee²³-- have all voted in favor of the bill and one African American Democrat State Senator, Mitchell, voted for the bill, as well. State Senator Wright, who is also an African American Democrat, did not vote. However, in mid-March 2014, the Speaker of the Assembly Perez returned the bill to the Senate without any Assembly action. Facing vehement opposition from various segments of the public, specifically from the Chinese-Americans, he withdrew the measure (*The Sacramento Bee* March 17, 2014). The turnout of Chinese-American citizens at rallies and meetings in opposition to SCA 5 was unprecedented-- legislators received tens of thousands of angry messages, letters and emails. In response, Democratic State Senators Ted Lieu, Carol Liu

²² Governor Brown said he agreed with the goals of affirmative action but that it was up to the courts, not the legislature, to limit Proposition 209 (Veto message, http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/sen/sb_0151-0200/sb_185_vt_20111008.html).

²³ Senator Leland Lee is now a former state Senator who was recently indicted on seven charges of corruption and firearms trafficking.

and Leland Yee changed their stances and objected the bill (*Wall Street Journal* March 21, 2014). Because state legislators maintain strong ties to their constituents, who wish to have their views and concerns heard in the policy-making process, it is unquestionable for those three Senators to take those voices into account. Yet, this is far from being a clear-cut matter of all Asians against and all blacks/Latinos for SCA5; Asian American disapproval for affirmative action is hardly uniform or universal. From an interview with *The Economist*, Ramakrishnan pointed out "Chinese-Americans dominated the SCA 5 campaign. Indians did not play much of a role; Southeast Asians, poorer and less likely to attend university, tend to back affirmative action" (*The Economist* March 22, 2014; *The Nation* March 18, 2014). Even some Chinese-Americans supported SCA 5²⁴. Mike Honda, an Asian American California-based Democrat Congressman, also officially opposed SCA 5; he heavily criticized the "bill's incapability of addressing the underlying problem, which is a lack of funding for public higher education²⁵" (Honda 2014). He argues that funding for Californian public universities should "keep pace with the growing population" (ibid). He also established the national Commission on Equity and Education "specifically to increase the equity of opportunity" (ibid.). As Honda argues, instead of following a broader pattern of drawing the racial lines in the local arena,

²⁴For example, see "Why I Support Affirmative Action: One Asian American Perspective" A blog post. <http://www.hyphenmagazine.com/blog/archive/2014/03/why-i-support-affirmative-action-one-asian-american-perspective>

²⁵ This statement is retrieved from Mike Honda's website: <http://honda.house.gov/news/blog-posts/my-view-on-sca-5>

Asian, black and Latino legislators will need to step aside from the heart of the conflict and have a broader discussion about increasing access to higher education across all races. According to the Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, he would create a forum in the forthcoming weeks to discuss SCA 5 and affirmative action. He added:

"Public debate over restoring affirmative action has grown too harsh. The way that this debate and discussion has been had so far shows the danger in deliberately trying to divide people along racial and ethnic lines. We need *a calm and intelligent discussion* about what affirmative action is and is not. Affirmative action is not quotas... Our state's history and the continued challenges we face to improve relations between people are far too important to see a wedge driven between our diverse communities²⁶ (Steinberg 2014)."

State Senator Hernandez also stated that he views the upcoming bicameral commission hearings would "clear up any confusion and misinformation about SCA 5 and act as a forum for anyone wishing to engage on these issues"²⁷ (*CBS Sacramento* March 17, 2014). A task force will be also created including "a commission of elected officials; experts in constitutional law; community leaders from different racial groups; students; parents, and representatives from the universities and community colleges in California" (*ibid.*).

²⁶ This statement is retrieved from Darrell Steinberg's website: <http://sd06.senate.ca.gov/news/2014-03-17-steinberg-statement-sca-5>

²⁷ The confusion that State Senator Hernandez refers to is that some of the petitions filed by the Chinese-Americans stated that SCA 5 would apply quotas whereas "quotas have been ruled unconstitutional since the 1978 *Bakke v. UC Supreme Court Case*." (*The California Aggie* April 18, 2014). He emphasized no quota will be implemented (*San Jose Mercury News* April 5, 2014).

All of these efforts represent the willingness to address concerns of the opponents and to reflect on amending the proposal rather than focusing on the rhetoric of the conflict. It also suggests the possibility of state-level politicians, including Asians and blacks, capable of conditioning or mediating intergroup conflicts in the urban level.

Last but not least, we cannot ignore the fact that all Asian American and African American state legislators are Democrats, and thus they are more likely to move towards negotiation, rather than diverging in different directions. Moreover, though there are disagreements in the stance between Asian and black/Latino legislators at this moment, there always remains room for compromise and cooperative actions as long as they maintain discussions that move forward and focuses on how the party should restore its commitment to Asian Americans and its component subgroups.

Even if ideas or interests are shared, they many not have the same degree of salience for each group. Hence, one group's important issue may simply not be high on the agenda of the other. This is more likely to happen in the institutions of the state government since the range of potential issues is broader if contrasted relatively to what it is in local politics. Besides, while the State legislators are closely related to their constituents, they also belong to a political party. There is bound to be friction, minor quarrels, and the periodic arguments. However, along with the history of fairly

cooperative Asian-black relations until recently and the influence of party ideology²⁸, Asian-black state-level relations regarding the issue of affirmative action seem to be more positive, or negotiable at least, rather than competitive and conflictual as it is in the urban/local level.

3.3 Conclusion

To this point, there has not been a systematic analysis of Asian and Black political relations outside of the urban/local level politics. This study attempts to fill the gap and systemically assess the question of interminority relations between Asians and blacks in state legislatures by examining roll-call voting patterns on salient minority issues identified by public opinion and Asian/black caucuses. This study is based on theoretical frameworks attentive to potential differences in how policies and intergroup relations may vary across different levels of government. The empirical results show there is no evidence of conflict as Asian and black state legislators' roll-call behaviors show high levels of cohesiveness and likeness between the two groups. This contrasts what has often been identified in the urban politics literature. Asian-Democrats have voting records somewhat compatible with salient concerns of blacks and blacks have voting records supportive of the most salient concerns of Asians.

²⁸ In this case, party ideology specifically refers to those of the Democratic Party as the majority of Asian American and African-American State Senators and State Assembly members are Democrats.

At the same time, a good deal of evidence I found is consistent with the partisan model of support for minority interests. An expanding body of research suggests that political party elites in the U.S have grown increasingly polarized along a single ideological dimension (Jacobson 2000; Hetherington 2001). Parties are key coalitional factor that influences between-group support; similar party affiliation can provide a broader ideological and interest coalition base for advancing policy positions held in common. These findings on the impact of ideology and party are also consistent with the theoretical justifications of this study where the broader-based ideas often reflected in party and ideology have more substantial impacts and good prospects for cooperative Asian-black relations, at least at the political elite level. It remains to be seen whether the apparent compatibility of Asian and black interests demonstrated here will continue to be the case among senatorial political elites—and even at the national level— and under circumstances where some potentially conflicting issues persist.

A case study of California's Proposition 209, concerning the affirmative action, also showed a less conflictual and competitive Asian-black relation in the state-level in contrast to the urban/local level. Although SCA 5, which intended to reinstitute affirmative action in higher education admissions, brought disagreements between the Asian legislators and black/Latino legislators just recently, the process that they are willing to take is headed toward a positive direction, which includes negotiation and compromise, rather than exacerbating the rift. Again, party may have played a

significant role in bridging their divergence and provide good prospects for cooperative Asian-black relations, at least in the state level.

There are also several limitations to this study, however. This study showed only one aspect of Asian-black political relations at the state-level, which are the roll-call behaviors in the state legislature. In order to establish a stronger argument that there are less or no conflict involved between the Asian and black political elites at the state-level, further analyses that incorporate historical and institutional studies of a number of especially salient and/or unique policy issues relevant to Asian-black relations must be further researched. The methods used in this study are also limited in a way that the Rice Indices only allows dichotomy analysis, thus, disables the option of adding more states into the study. It also falls short on presenting accurate level of cohesiveness and likeness as the scores are based on probability-- the smaller the group, the larger the fluctuation of score as individual deviates. Furthermore, the bill selection process may be also biased, as this study was only able to examine a handful number of bills mainly due to the large volume of bills and difficulty of categorizing the bills. While there exists numerous sub-categories of bills within the three major priority issues, only three or four of them were selected and within those sub-categories, only one bill per sub-category was analyzed. It also leaves out other priority issues claimed both by Asians and blacks, such as health care, social security, crime, civil rights. This study will need to be further extended with larger datasets that incorporate a comprehensive list of bills.

If combining all the arguments and findings presented above, one simple and broad implication of Asian-black relation can be offered: there are no significant signs of conflict or competition in the state-level politics. This study also underscores the need for greater conceptual and empirical care in the study of Asian-black relations in state-level politics. Taking this study as a small step towards the scholarship of Asian-black relations in the state-level politics, I hope more future research can build upon and move to the forefront of future efforts to understand Asian-black relations in American politics.

Appendix A

List of Asian American and African American State Legislators Served in California (1999-2014) and Maryland (2002, 2007-2013)

	Asian American	African American
California (1999-2014)	Mariko Yamada	Chris Holden
	Richard Pan	Isadore Hall III
	Rob Bonta	Steven Bradford
	Phil Ting	Holly Mitchell
	Paul Fong	Reggie Jones-Sawyer, Sr.
	Ed Chau	Sebastian Ridley-Thomas
	Al Muratsuchi	Cheryl Brown
	Fiona Ma	Shirley Weber
	Mary Hayashi	Chris Holden
	Mike Eng	Mike Davis
	Warren Furutani	Wilmer Carter
	Ted Lieu	Sandre Swanson
	Van Tran (R)	Karen Bass
	Alan Nakanishi (R)	Curren D. Price, Jr.
	Wilma Chan	Mervyn M. Dymally
	Judy Chu	Laura Richardson
	Carol Liu	Jerome Horton
	Leland Yee	Gloria Negrete McLeod

George Nakano

Mark Ridley-Thomas

Sally Havice

Herb Wesson, Jr.

Roderick Wright

Carl Washington

Maryland
(2002, 2007-
2013)

Aruna Miller

Emmett Burns, Jr.

Susan C. Lee

Adrienne Jones

Sam Arora

Shirley Nathan-Pulliam

Saquib Ali

Al Carr, Jr.

David Valderrama

Joseline Pena-Melnyk

Kriselda Valderrama

Tawanna Gaines

Alonzo Washington

Marvin Holmes, Jr.

Carolyn Howard

Darren Swain

Michael Vaughn

Aisha Braveboy

Dereck Davis

Melony Griffith

Veronica Turner

Jay Walker

Frank Conaway, Jr.

Barbara Robinson

Shawn Tarrant
Jill Carter
Nathaniel Oaks
Mary Washington
Keith Haynes
Keiffer Mitchell, Jr.
Melvin Stukes
Talmadge Branch
Nina Harper
Michael Summers
Tiffany Alston
Hattie Harrison
Gerron Levi
Herman Taylor
Scherod C. Barnes
Joanne Benson
Karen Britto
Craig Rice
Ruth Kirk
Rushern Baker III
Michael Dobson
Clarence Davis
Lisa Gladden
Kerry Hill

Salima Marriott
Clarence Mitchell
Jeffrey Paige
Obie Patterson
Wendell F. Phillips
Howard Pete Kawlings
Kenneth Montague Jr.
Rudolph C. Cane
Cheryl D. Glenn
James E. Proctor, Jr.
Frank Turner
Tony Edward Fulton
Marshall T. Goodwin
Darryl A. Kelley
Gareth E. Murray

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