

I asked University of Washington political-science professor Matt Barreto about the differences. He's director of the UW's Institute for the Study of Ethnicity, Race and Sexuality and one of three UW professors who gave advice to the survey's researchers.

Voting is affected by country of origin, generations in the U.S., religion, and the experiences that typically shape a person's world view.

Vietnamese-Americans have some similarity to Cuban Americans politically, Barreto said, in that people who immigrated during and after the Vietnam War embraced Republicans, whom they viewed as tougher on the communist regime in their former homeland.

Religious beliefs may also be a factor. Catholic Filipinos and Korean Americans who attend evangelical churches may hold socially conservative views that affect their political preference.

All of that still needs to be explored in more depth, Barreto said, but the study is a big step beyond previous polls.

It said 37 percent of Asian-American registered voters report being contacted by a party or campaign organization. In a study after the 2004 election, 43 percent of all voters reported contact.

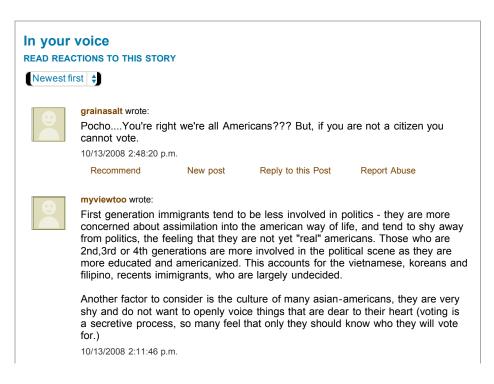
Barreto said follow-up studies will help explain remaining questions, such as the extent and effectiveness of those efforts to reach voters.

New immigrants, including many Latinos and Asian Americans, tend to get less information about politics, Barreto said. "Both candidates are running commercials on Spanish-language media but not Asian-American media."

Language and other barriers do make getting information to, and from, some newer populations difficult. That's one reason this new survey was not only multiethnic, but was multilingual, too.

Trying to reach everyone might be too difficult, but with better data, candidates can pick which group to focus on in a given state.

And as the number of Asian Americans continues to grow, it will become increasingly important for national candidates to make the effort.



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