Voter Concerns and Attitudes about California’s November 2020 Election

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Project Overview

Motivation:
Voting in California will change this November, so outreach should change with it.

Aims:
- Assess needs for low-propensity voters in November 2020
- Probe awareness of voting options and voting mode preferences
- Explore messages that motivate and inform
- Deliver recommendations to larger ecosystem of community organizations and election officials
Design and Implementation

Target: First-time and low-propensity voters
Method: Focus group interviews + community advisors
Strategy: Multi-stage, multiple stakeholders, collaborative
Timeline

Mid-June:
Building community advisory group

End of June:
Train-the-trainer sessions

End-June/Early July:
Recruit focus group participants
Screener survey, Zoom primers (translation, troubleshooting, etc.)

Early July:
Craft custom focus group guides (translate, select appropriate messages, etc.)

Mid-July:
Conduct focus groups
Some monolingual (eg. Korean), some mixed (eg. Tagalog)

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Conduct focus groups
Some monolingual (eg. Korean), some mixed (eg. Tagalog)

End of July:
Report with full findings released soon.
# Snapshot of focus group sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Advisory Group</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English (Youth)</td>
<td>ALIANZA</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17-25</td>
<td>Inland Empire</td>
<td>July 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26-56</td>
<td>Fresno</td>
<td>July 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>KRC</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33-65</td>
<td>LA</td>
<td>July 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>CHIRLA</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27-63</td>
<td>Bay Area / Central / SoCal</td>
<td>July 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog/English</td>
<td>FILIPINO</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18-62</td>
<td>Bay Area / NorCal</td>
<td>July 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>ocapica</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18-78</td>
<td>OC / LA</td>
<td>July 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>CAA</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35-55</td>
<td>OC/ LA / Bay Area</td>
<td>July 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Impressions

1. Sense of duty and understanding power mobilizes people to vote
2. Trusted messengers and information sources vary by group
3. Elevated preference to vote by mail or drop-off because Covid-19
4. Concerns about mail-in ballot link to whether vote will be counted
5. Concerns about drop-off are about box locations and availability
6. Explaining verification and tracking services alleviates VBM concerns
7. Recommendations for broader representation in voter messaging
8. Community expertise was key to executing and completing project
“I vote because others can’t.”
- 47 yo, woman, Los Angeles County, Spanish language focus group

“Be that the issue of the pandemic, or social movements such as Black Lives Matter, I am very concerned ... about what future generations will have to deal with, their safety and survival... through voting we express our demands.”
- 59 yo, man, Orange County, Korean language focus group
Motivations to Vote

Civic duty and voice

- Sense of obligation
- Privilege

Power

- Want to vote out of office a high-profile incumbent
- Desire for policy change and community improvement
- Contribute to decision-making process
“Coming from a family that doesn’t want to vote or are scared, scared for their background information to be shared,..., we need more reassurance in our community to understand it’s okay to vote.”

- Under 25 yo, woman, Alameda County, Tagalog/English focus group

“[I]n my Vietnamese community... the important question is, “Who will be the spokesperson?”

- 52 yo, woman, Orange County, Vietnamese focus group
Trusted Messenger and Info Sources: Screener

“When it comes to getting messages about voting, what are the different ways that you have received messages for voting?”

- Most marked three or more sources
- Voter guides and other materials from local election officials
- Ethnic media for non-English, monolingual communities
- Social media: not just for youth!
Trusted Messenger and Info Sources: Focus Group

- Community anchor organizations
- Official election sources: online and for deadlines and rules
- Family/friends: among those who use word-of-mouth
- Traditional and ethnic media: radio, television and print
- Social media: linked to age and ethnic group
How will you vote this November? Focus Group

“Will polling stations and equipment be sanitized?”
- 49 yo, woman, Fremont, Tagalog/English focus group

“Drop box! Especially when you are leaving in the morning ... just drop your ballot on the way, save time.”
- 52 yo, man, Los Angeles, Korean language focus group

“I don’t want to go out... I will do it by mail.”
- 38 yo, woman, Redwood City, Spanish language focus group

“Is there an option to vote online, just like the Census 2020?”
- 56 yo, woman, San Francisco, Chinese focus group
## Shift to mail-in and drop box for November 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>Pre-focus group Usually vote in-person</th>
<th>During Focus Group Plan to vote in-person November 2020</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hmong</td>
<td>2 in 8</td>
<td>1 in 8</td>
<td>25% → 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>5 in 16</td>
<td>1 in 16</td>
<td>31% → 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>6 in 10</td>
<td>0 in 10</td>
<td>60% → 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>4 in 9</td>
<td>2 in 9</td>
<td>44% → 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>7 in 18</td>
<td>2 in 18</td>
<td>39% → 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>6 in 10</td>
<td>2 in 10</td>
<td>60% → 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English/Youth</td>
<td>6 in 14</td>
<td>1 in 14</td>
<td>43% → 7%</td>
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**ALERT*: People still want in-person services!

“I found those volunteers who work at the voter center very diligent and helpful.” - elder from Chinese Focus Group
How will you vote this November? Focus Group

In-person: Some interest because of services provided, but greater hesitancy in 2020

Mail-in: Highest interest and enthusiasm, some concern about delivery and vote is counted

Drop box: Great interest and enthusiasm, questions about locations and availability in my county
When will you vote this November? Focus Group

Not asked explicitly. However...community advisors from:

- **Chinese group**: People prefer taking **time to learn** about candidates and propositions on the ballot.
- **Vietnamese group**: They enjoy having the **time to research** and fill out the ballot.
- **Korean group**: Participants are concerned about **receiving timely instructions** for voting.
- **Hmong group**: With VBM, community can get support from family and trusted organization and **time to complete the ballot**.
Reactions to voter outreach material

- Six different videos: Fresno, OC, LA, and CA SoS
- Five different print materials: Fresno, Napa, San Bernardino
- Four different slogans and phrases: Fresno, San Bernardino
- Some voters see material outside of their jurisdiction
- Custom and in consultation with community advisory group
Praise of voter outreach material

Print
- Visuals and symbols are helpful
- Clean and simple graphics to convey key information

Video:
- More engaging than “old” outreach material
- Translations and voice narration follow imagery presented
- Packed with great information that answers questions
Critiques of voter outreach material

Print
• Text is too lengthy in some postcard and flyer material
• Not motivating for first-time voters, “feels like not for me”
• Translations limited to procedures and “how-to’s”

Video:
• Where are the people who look like my friends and family?
• Backgrounds and scenarios feel corporate and “high-class”
Suggestions for voter outreach material

Print
• Use symbols, calendars, checklists, drop box location maps
• Translate candidate and proposition details
• From elders: keep the “official” look and add hotline

Video:
• Make sure narration matches information presented
• Add blue-collar scenarios and family in public settings like parks
• Finish clip with community leaders at the end to offer help
Example Reaction to Outreach Flyer

“Maybe having a visual of masks, drop box, or a calendar of all the “More Ways”.... to indicate each of those things would be helpful.” - 22 yo, woman, Upper Marlboro

Facilitator Probe: “If the word “Safety” was implemented in the messaging how would that influence your decision to vote?”

“I think not clarifying it’s safe during COVID is [more of] a barrier not to vote than not having it on at all.” – 25 yo, male, Chino Hills
Example Reaction to Outreach Flyer

Fresno County VCA flyers - (Hmong) **Flyer 2-Up** & (English) **Flyer 2-Up**

- Hmong translated materials, text is too lengthy

- Participants want flyers with more visuals and infographics like calendar with the timeline.

- Include graphics that are culturally relevant.

- It also did not inspire or motivate the participants to vote. One of the participants expressed that she felt this flyer was for someone who was already ‘motivated’ to vote.
Reaction to voter mobilization / information videos

“Add someone driving up to the box and dropping ballot. That would show it is safer.” - 51 yo, woman, Spanish language focus group

When I saw the drop box across from the Arirang Market in Fullerton, it was impressively big, you can’t miss it. What a genial idea, I thought” – 59 yo, man, Korean focus group

I think it’s targeting a specific demographic. It’s not representing all people, It’s not very inclusive.” – 18 yo, woman, Youth focus group

So instead of that environment maybe more family orientated like at a local park.” - 18 yo, Coachella, Youth focus group

Orange County Registrar, “Vote From Home”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1onUozqplQ
Reaction to voter mobilization / information videos

“They should add someone from The Fresno Center or Hmong Innovating Politics on the video … someone they can trust locally about voting”

- 29 yo, male, Hmong focus group

“A hotline phone number of location would be more beneficial for elders than a website link because elders have limited computer skills.”

- 29 yo, woman, Hmong focus group

Fresno, “Mail it, Drop it.” Hmong Voice Over

https://www.co.fresno.ca.us/home/showdocument?id=41171
“Lots of good information, but it went too fast.”
- 41 yo, woman, Spanish language focus group

“As add that “everyone counts” message, like they do with the Census.”
- 17 yo, woman, English/Youth focus group

“This makes me feel better that my vote will be counted because I can track it.”
- 20 yo, woman, Tagalog language focus group

“This would motivate and demystify the process of voting, especially for first time voters.”
- 49 yo, woman, Korean language focus group
Yellopain, “The Things They Don’t Teach us in School” on TikTok

https://www.tiktok.com/@yellopain/video/6839913702548983046?source=h5_m

**Reaction to voter mobilization / information videos**

“This video is motivational.”
- 25 yo, man, English/Youth focus group

“It caught my attention because it was musical...helpful in teaching basic information that it’s about us...”
- 18 yo, woman, English/Youth focus group

“Love that this emphasizes local elections.”
- 20 yo, woman, English/Youth focus group
Reaction to outreach and mobilization phrases

“Be heard November 3rd”: okay

“We Rise Together”: well liked

“People Power Starts Here”: mobilizing

“Our Voice. Our Vote”: mobilizing

“Strengths in Numbers”: okay
## Recommendations to Election Officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation #1</th>
<th>Recommendation #2</th>
<th>Recommendation #3</th>
<th>Recommendation #4</th>
<th>Recommendation #5</th>
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<td>If in-person voting available, make COVID-19 rules clear and enforced.</td>
<td>Demographically representative and culturally relevant outreach and information material.</td>
<td>Messaging collaboration between Election officials and cultural experts from community advisory groups.</td>
<td>Use simple visuals in voting and outreach materials. Clean symbols and graphics</td>
<td>Convene similar efforts as the one producing this report early on to coordinate across levels of expertise and authority.</td>
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**Recommendations to Community Organizations**

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<tr>
<th>Recommendation #1</th>
<th>Recommendation #2</th>
<th>Recommendation #3</th>
<th>Recommendation #4</th>
<th>Recommendation #5</th>
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<td>Keep emphasizing importance of community anchors as trusted messengers.</td>
<td>Collaborate with ethnic media -- synergy with other trusted messengers.</td>
<td>When creating your own material, stick with simple, clean graphics that are easy to understand for visual learners.</td>
<td>Prepare information regarding impact of specific policies -- our communities want to know this.</td>
<td>We encourage you to convene remote meetings with your communities -- now more than ever, our community wants to connect and be heard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Share with your communities**

[WheresMyBallot.sos.ca.gov](WheresMyBallot.sos.ca.gov)
Additional resources on COVID-19 and voter attitudes

Future of California Elections website


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7fxMHEy3I4&feature=youtu.be
Thank you!
Reflections from Community Partner Organizations
Question and Answers
We Are Available!

Center for Social Innovation at UC Riverside and California Common Cause are available for consultation between now and Election Day in November.