President Eisenhower was fond of an old Army aphorism that proclaimed “Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.” He was on to something. The States of Change analysis has put together a methodologically robust and detailed look at how we expect the nation’s demography to change between now and 2060. This accompanying paper uses that good work to look at how these trends may interact with our political and electoral system. Surely it’s a fool’s errand to project out our politics more than 40 years, but merely engaging in the exercise is essential. Will we get it right? Probably not, but this sort of analysis forces a reflection that allows us the agility to adapt whenever new phenomenon conspire to throw well-made plans right in the dumpster and light them on fire. Which, as the 2016 election has shown us, they will - repeatedly and mercilessly.

The States of Change analysis has progressed into its third release this year: the first projecting the demography of our 50 states through 2060, the second bumping these projections up against a number of different electoral scenarios to see their potential impact, and this year investigating how well various demographic groups are represented on Election Day. To date, each release has been accompanied by analyses appropriately focused on the policy implications of these data. Yet before policy can be made, elections must be held, and so this year they’ve turned for analysis to that seedy underbelly of the electoral system: the political consultant and campaign strategist.

Campaigns represent the messy intersection between policy-making and demographic change. They are the first draft of policy and arguably the final draft of demography. A political consultant brings unique perspective to the States of Change data because their job is to win elections by leveraging favorable demography and minimizing harmful demography. The way we do this is by studying demographic trends and asking ourselves two questions: 1) how do these groups lean politically, and 2) how likely are they to vote?

Our answers frame the campaign’s approach to different demographics. Strategically, we ask ourselves what policies are especially resonant with this particular demographic, what messaging do we use to talk about our candidate’s positions on these issues, and what tone do we use when we communicate the message? Tactically, we think more specifically about matching the action and type
of communication to where they stand on their likelihood to vote and support our candidate.

This line of thinking is what motivates a political strategist’s interest in the States of Change project this year. By focusing on the representation gap for key demographic groups, campaign professionals can think more broadly about how turnout patterns may shift over the next half century.

According to the States of Change data this year, the overall representation gap among key demographic groups is shrinking, and in fact they conclude that “we may be at roughly peak levels of over- and under-representation at the current time.” Most relevant to this paper, they find that most of any remaining gaps in representation will primarily be due to participation gaps (the difference between those eligible to vote and those that actually vote), rather than eligibility gaps (the difference between the total population and the eligible population).

As these gaps fall mostly to participatory ones, the role of campaigns increases dramatically. Campaigns are the ones, after all, with the most resources to expend in turning out groups that would otherwise be under-represented. Who they decide to turn out will be a function of each group’s collective partisanship and ideological tincture. This only increases the importance of having this data interpreted by a political strategist, who must consider the current contours of the electorate as they piece together a winning coalition.

What follows is a look at the States of Change data through the eyes of a Republican campaign strategist. Someone that looks at these numbers and asks himself how parties, candidates and the institutions of the Right can and should adapt to the electorate of the middle of the 21st Century. We begin with a 50,000 foot view of the electorate as campaigns see it, along with the tactics they have at their disposal to shape it. The analysis then looks specifically at those demographic elements easiest to project into the future that we also expect to have outsize influence at the ballot box: first the immigrant population, then race and ethnicity, followed by educational trends, and finally a look at the impact of different age cohorts.

In the spirit of Eisenhower, I expect there’s much in here that we’ll get wrong, but in being wrong now, we set ourselves up to succeed as the electorate morphs over time. Mike Tyson famously said, “Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face” – it’s this author’s hope that planning such as this is what allows campaigns and political institutions to quickly recover, adapt and overcome any unexpected electoral punches to the face.

ANALYZING THE ELECTORATE

Political operatives think about the electorate in a much different way than anybody else. While the press, pundits and armchair strategists focus on pithy categories like “Soccer Moms” and “Security Dads,” campaigns instead are organizing themselves
around sophisticated individual level predictions of how likely a person is to vote and who they are most likely to pull the lever for. This 21st century political tactic is known in the industry as microtargeting, and known elsewhere as data-mining, predictive analytics, big data or data science.

The easiest way to think about microtargeting is as a sophisticated form of stereotyping. Analysts take the data they have on a voter – information like their gender, age, consumer interests, the car they drive, the place they live, and so on – and use that to come to some reasonably informed conclusion about whether and how they’ll vote.

You’ve microtargeted before. That person at the back of the line at the coffee shop? They’re casting off a gaggle of clues as to whether they voted for Clinton or Trump: the car they drove up in (what was the make and model? did it have bumper stickers?), the clothes they wear (casual or business? trendy or traditional?), the book they carry (nonfiction or fiction? classic or new release?), and even their demeanor (standing tall or slouching? garrulous or grumpy?). You’d be surprised just how accurate you can be using such subtle and fleeting information.

Microtargeting, however, is grounded in the mathematics of statistics. Think of it this way: if an unmarked Toyota Prius drove down the street, and you were asked who they voted for in 2016, you’d probably guess Clinton. After all, you’ve met Prius drivers before and passively processed their data; you’ve sensed they tend to be more concerned about the environment and therefore more liberal, and therefore a likely Clinton voter.

Pushed to be more mathematical about your prediction you might ask yourself how many Priuses you’ve seen with Clinton bumper stickers and how many with Trump stickers. If the answer were four Clinton bumper stickers and only one for Trump, you could back that into an 80% probability that a driver of an unmarked Prius voted Clinton. This is the fundamental premise of microtargeting, only it’s done with thousands of pieces of data and complex statistical and machine-learning algorithms.

The ultimate output of this process is a collection of scores for each voter that each range between zero and one, representing individual level probabilities; that they will vote, that they vote Republican, that they are persuadable, et cetera. By the end of a campaign, a voter may have dozens of scores along a variety of salient dimensions, but fundamentally it is their turnout score and their partisanship score upon which campaigns are organized.

THE SHAPE OF THE ELECTORATE

Analysis of the electorate frequently focuses on collapsed versions of the turnout and partisanship scores into 10 or 20 buckets and then arrayed against each other in a grid: likelihood to vote on the horizontal X axis running from the people most
likely to vote on the left to those least likely to vote on the right; then partisanship on the vertical Y axis running from the most Republican at the top to the most Democratic at the bottom (see Figure 1). Each cell in the grid displays counts of the number of registered voters in that particular political geography that fall into that specific intersection of partisan and turnout buckets.

This grid, more than any individual demographic, messaging strategy or press-friendly sound-bite, is the base organizing unit of the campaign. In the upper left are those registered voters that are definitely voting and most likely to support Republicans – the core of a GOP campaign from which they will recruit volunteers and solicit donations. The upper right are where Republicans will go for get-out-the-vote operations, where they can find those who are uncertain whether they will vote, but if they did, they would be reliably Republican. The middle left of grid is where persuasion efforts are focused, as this area holds the people most likely to vote but uncertain who to vote for.

The grid in Figure 1 is where campaigns directly overlap with this year’s States of Change analysis on the over- and under-representation of demographic groups in the electorate. Voters that have higher predicted turnout scores tend to primarily come from those groups the States of Change analysis finds to be over-represented – they are whiter, better educated, older and more likely to be women. Conversely, those voters predicted to be less likely to vote tend to come from groups that are over-represented: minorities, less educated, and younger.

Superior campaign organization coupled with a smart data and analytics infrastructure can exploit the representation gaps in this grid through their microtargeting. As an example, it’s no fluke that African-Americans were over-represented in the 2012 presidential election. While some of that is of course a macro function of the re-election of our nation’s first Black president, at a micro level this reflects both Obama campaigns’ success in identifying low-probability African American voters and getting them to the polls.

Looking at a specific state’s grid will help illustrate how campaigns use it, and Michigan, the surprise state of the 2016 presidential election, is especially interesting while also retaining an electoral dynamic similar to other swing states. Here the grid (see Figure 1) is likelihood to vote by the net partisanship of each bucket. The cell in the upper left hand-most corner has 138,012 voters that are the most likely to be Republican and the most likely to vote.

Counting up the number of voters in segments that have a net partisanship score of more than 40 points, either on the Republican side or the Democratic one, and then limiting it to the three highest turnout segments, Republicans have an advantage here of about 150,000 voters – there are more high turnout Republicans than there are high turnout Democrats. This can be good news for Republicans – their best voters are already highly likely to vote! And it’s this dynamic that drives their many successes in lower turnout midterm elections.
But there’s also bad news for Republicans. If we again look at the number of voters in segments that have a net partisanship score of more than 40 points but this time among the three lowest turnout groups, the Democratic bloc is orders of magnitude larger than the Republican one. Republicans have only 44,000 low turnout voters while Democrats have 505,000. Democrats simply have a much deeper well of unreliable voters that are reliably liberal to whom they can return to over and over again in order to win their elections. This helps explain why their presidential cycles are usually stronger than their midterms.

The shape of the electorate forces decisions upon campaigns. Each section of the grid naturally dictates a certain strategy: are there enough core supporters to help fund your campaign? how many do you have available to you for turnout? and how many people will you have to persuade? These cold hard numbers force Democrats to run campaigns that rely heavily upon turnout, while Republicans must worry more about persuasion. Of course all campaigns do all things, but the shape of the electorate forces each side to prioritize a certain way, and this has real implications for the over and under-representation of groups in the electorate.

**NAVIGATING THE ELECTORATE**

Each section of the electorate corresponds with a particular activity reserved for different parts of a party’s campaign apparatus. Firstly, those voters that don’t even appear on the grid – unregistered voters – are the focus of registration drives. These are typically done in off years when there are fewer elections monopolizing financial and human resources. Independent grassroots organizations with close ties to the community in question tend to be their primary executor. Drives are frequently targeted geographically to communities known to be favorable to the party through the analysis of recent election returns. Locations are usually chosen to reflect known partisan leanings or good messaging opportunities. For example, a GOP registration booth will likely pop up at a gun show in a county that votes reliably Republican, or near a community college job fair in a town that is trending more conservative.

Registration targeting can also be done at an individual level through mail, phone or door-to-door contact. In these instances, conservative grassroots organizations may have commissioned a microtargeting project of unregistered voters to identify their top prospects. These people are found by matching the voter file into consumer data files and identifying individuals in the consumer files that are not matched into the voter database. These individuals are then mined for consumer data patterns that match those of likely Republican voters so that an unregistered man in his forties that drives a truck, has a hunting license and owns a bible will be flagged for a registration contact. The end result of this registration targeting will be a variation on our grid in Figure 1; only this time, it will be comprised solely of unregistered voters and rather than likelihood to vote on the X axis, it will instead display the results of a “likelihood to register to vote” model.
Of course these efforts specifically close the registration gap outlined in the States of Change analysis. As we’ll see later in this paper, the largest registration gaps exist among groups more favorable to Democratic candidates. It’s no surprise then to find that Democrats tend to dedicate more resources to registration efforts than Republicans.

Once registered, two primary challenges remain: turnout and persuasion. Targeted turnout efforts focus on those voters that are registered, but unlikely to vote in that particular election. Turnout communications are usually done by the state or national party who can communicate with these voters about the entire ticket rather than a specific candidate. These turnout campaigns are extremely important to both parties, but it is Democrats that have to truly master their turnout technique as they have so many low turnout voters they could potentially activate. Even so, Republicans have run successful turnout heavy campaigns before – most notably the 2004 re-election of President Bush. Turnout efforts typically take the form of direct contact, preferably by a friend, neighbor or associate that actually knows them. We know from campaign studies that door knocks are the most effective form of communication, but they don’t scale very well; and while phone calls scale well, they are probably the least effective form of campaign communication. Mail and digital advertising lies somewhere in the middle, though it varies greatly depending upon the quality and frequency of contact.

Persuasion communications – targeted at that middle part of the partisanship scale that is definitely voting – is most typically done through concentrated television advertising. Of course, these persuasion targets are just as likely to receive door knocks, phone calls and mail, but most of a campaign’s video advertising (both TV and digital) is targeted specifically at persuading swing voters. Campaign targeting tools have advanced to a point where they can actually identify the television programming that swing voters are watching, and then skew their advertising accordingly in order to be more likely to hit them with a message. So while buying advertising on The Voice and America’s Got Talent may cost the same amount, by matching detailed viewership data anonymously into a list of swing voters, a Republican campaign can know they are more likely to hit their targets on The Voice and buy accordingly. These persuasion efforts are where Republicans must necessarily focus their attention because of the cold hard electoral math they face.

How you navigate the electorate and what emphasis you put on each path has profound consequences for campaigns – look no further than the Clinton campaign in 2016, which arguably relied too heavily on activating that large low turnout base while neglecting a persuasive message among over-represented voters.

Understanding the contours of today’s electorate has to be the fundamental starting point for understanding our looming demographic change. Though the party by turnout grid is the organizing lens of modern campaigns, within it we can identify important group level variation by immigration status, race and ethnicity, education,
age and a host of other demographics. As such, the next sections look individually at each of these demographic dynamics and their implications for future campaigns.

IMMIGRATION

Looking at this year’s exit polls, where only 13% of voters claimed immigration as a the most important issue facing the country\(^1\), you’d never think that immigration had dominated the cycle as much as it did. And yet it, more than any other issue, served as the catalyst to the successful campaign of our President. Donald Trump’s campaign announcement leaned heavily upon the President’s immigration position, in which he promised to build a wall on the United States’ southern border with Mexico; a commitment he reiterated time and time again at his well-attended rallies, the contentious GOP primary debates, and the victory speeches he gave week after week on his way to the Republican party’s presidential nomination. Clearly he tapped a rich vein of immigration-related anxiety within the party, and indeed, nationwide.

Immigration offers a unique challenge to campaign strategists in that it is both a campaign issue in and of itself, and a demographic phenomena we must contend with as we seek to shape the electorate. Immigration’s dualism is especially pronounced in the Republican Party, in which the rank-and-file primary-voting electorate is acutely concerned about it as a political issue, while immigration’s demographic power is something politicians and strategists have to wrestle with in the general election.

Of course, immigration as a political phenomena is no new thing. Indeed, Presidents of the 19\(^{th}\) and early 20\(^{th}\) century had to navigate treacherous political passages frothed by xenophobia and nationalism. And while the type and nature of immigration these last few decades is different, today’s rate and volume nearly matches immigration’s zenith in 1890.

To put it in perspective, the immigrant population of the United States stood at 9.7 million in 1960, but had grown by more than a factor of four by 2013 to stand at 41.3 million. This, despite the fact that the overall population of the United States grew by a factor of only 1.6 over the same time period. The high water mark for immigrant impact on the United States occurred in 1890, when the immigrant share of the US population stood at 14.8%; in 2013 their share was only 13.1%, approaching, but not yet overtaking the record\(^2\). However, this record does look as though it will be broken soon, as Pew Research projects that by 2065 it will hit 17.7%, approximately 78.2 million foreign born people living in the United States\(^3\).

\(^1\) http://www.cnn.com/election/results/exit-polls/national/president
\(^2\) http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/chapter-5-u-s-foreign-born-population-trends/
Yet this time immigration’s footprint is decidedly different. Not only do we have more immigration from non-European countries than we did 25 years ago\(^4\), but immigrants are increasingly settling outside the urban core of metropolitan areas. According to a recent Brookings Institute review of American Community Survey data in the top 100 metro areas, 61% of today’s immigrants live in suburban areas, while the remaining 39% reside in the metro area’s primary city. That’s 21 million suburban immigrants compared to only 9 million in 1990\(^5\).

So not only do we have some of the highest immigration levels of the last one hundred years, but immigrants are increasingly settling in non-traditional areas. This means that more and more Americans who previously have had little interaction with immigrants are now faced with them more and more each day. It’s this daily friction that powers much of the concern among traditional Republican voters.

A 2016 survey by the Public Religion Research Institute and Brookings found that 50% of all Americans agree that "It bothers me when I come in contact with immigrants who speak little or no English." The percentage agreeing climbs to 66% among Republicans and soars to 77% agreement among Trump supporters\(^6\).

Just a year earlier, Pew Research asked Americans about their perception of recent immigrants’ uptake of the English language. Only 39% thought they learned English in a reasonable amount of time while 59% said they did not. Similarly, they found that just one third of Americans thought immigrants in our country today generally want to adopt American customs and way of life, while 66% said immigrants prefer to hold on to customs and the way of life of their home country\(^7\). This, in spite of the fact that according to an assimilation index compiled by the Manhattan Institute, “immigrants of the past quarter-century have assimilated more rapidly than their counterparts of a century ago\(^8\).”

If immigrants appear to be assimilating faster than ever before, what then can we know about their level of participation in our political system? The States of Change data on the representation levels of Hispanics in the electorate touches directly upon the impact of immigrants at the ballot box. Hispanics, thanks to their high levels of immigration over the last few decades are generally underrepresented in the electorate through a citizenship gap. This particular component of the overall representation gap is a function of the difference between the group’s representation in the US voting age population and their representation in the voting eligible population.

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Interestingly, this is an instance where at least some of the demographic in question can voluntarily change their eligibility status by seeking citizenship. The Washington Post recently reported a surge in citizenship applications over the first three months of 2016. According to their report, this follows a trend in increased applications in presidential election years as interest in the race generates a corresponding interest in voting. This cycle in particular saw applications jump 6% over the same three month time period in 2012, indicating a higher level of engagement by immigrants this cycle⁹.

Given immigrants’ interest in politics, as well as the long-term impact of a person’s first vote on their partisanship (discussed in later sections of this paper), it makes sense for campaigns to engage them for targeted outreach – but how to identify them? Traditionally campaigns have relied upon Coalition Directors – staff whose job it is to identify key influencers and groups for targeted outreach in distinct communities such as Hispanics, Asians, farmers or hunters. In an era of data-driven campaigning (discussed earlier), one would think campaigns would have the ability to do mass targeting of immigrants and ethnic communities at scale. Unfortunately, most information around a voters’ language preferences and place of birth are either extremely limited or aggressively inferred. Were a campaign to pull a list of voters they deem to be Hispanic immigrants, for example, their success rate would likely be better than random, but still woefully short of expectations. As such, we can expect political outreach to immigrants to remain for the most part at the Coalition level of a campaign.

Nonetheless, these data around immigration have clear implications for how campaigns function and communicate. First and foremost, immigrants undeniably lean Democratic. Thomas Holbrook, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee found that the correlation between the percentage of the population in a state that is foreign born and support for Democratic candidates has massively increased over time. In the electoral period between 1972 and 1980, the correlation was a fairly weak but positive 0.18 (the correlation coefficient runs from -1, a perfect negative relationship, to 1, a perfect positive relationship). By 2012 the relationship was strongly positive at a correlation of 0.60¹⁰.

Data from a proprietary survey this author was involved in during the fall of the 2016 election more directly captured the relationship between immigration and voting. Among all eligible immigrants, Hillary Clinton held a 28 point lead over Donald Trump while her lead dropped to only 4 points among those that were second generation Americans and beyond.

Despite all this, Republicans still value immigrant outreach and believe there are a number of resonant issues they can communicate with them on. So GOP candidates continue to do targeted communication to immigrant communities, most notably in

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the form of $10 million spent by Republican advertisers on Spanish language ads in 2016. This interaction with Hispanics is detailed in a later section, but there are a number of other telling examples of conservative cultivation of non-Hispanic immigrant groups.

In the fall of this year’s campaign, the Trump campaign released an ad wishing Indian Americans a happy Diwali that featured Trump speaking in Hindi and mimicking the slogan of Indian Prime Minister Modi, saying “This time Trump Government.” Similarly, at the local level there are Republican candidates in places like Virginia, with Barbara Comstock and Ed Gillespie doing traditional retail politics targeted to the emerging Asian community there that grew 68% between 2000 and 2010 and now stands at 5% of the voting population.

Campaigns have usually done this simply because it felt like the right thing to do – just showing up in a community, even if it is overtly hostile to you, can go a long way toward at least softening opposition to the Republican party, and perhaps ultimately toward winning their vote. But more recently we’ve seen research that quantifies just how much of a difference this effort can make. Testing by Alejandro Flores and Alexander Coppock has found that targeted language appeals can have a profound impact on in-language voters’ perceptions of the candidate doing the talking. Their experiment leveraged a unique opportunity afforded by the Jeb Bush presidential campaign in which they released nearly identical ads, but for the language they were spoken in. Jeb Bush – fluent in Spanish – talks directly to the camera, with the same message, same set, same b-roll, but two different languages.

Flores and Coppock recruited Spanish/English bilingual voters to randomly view one of the two ads, which were then followed by key questions around their support for Bush in both the general and the primary election. What they found has enormous implications for how campaigns – especially Republican ones – think about their interaction with immigrants. In all, the bilinguals that watched the Spanish version of the ad had Bush primary-election support levels 6 points higher than those that saw the English version and 5 points higher in their general election support. With perfect controls for message, candidate, and imagery, the results can be attributed directly to the mere act of speaking in these respondents native language. Now, to be fair, we do not know to what extent these findings would travel well to other candidates, other languages or other immigrant groups. But nonetheless, it offers a tantalizing insight into how Republican candidates can do a better job reaching out to immigrants.

**RACE / ETHNICITY**

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12 http://www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2014/10/08/354637986/in-northern-virginia-candidates-see-opportunity-in-asian-vote

13 https://alexandercoppock.com/working-papers/effects-of-spanish-language-ads/
Of course, much of the immigration story in the last quarter century is also one of race and ethnicity, as Hispanics and Asians comprise the majority of the foreign born population in the United States and represent our fastest growing racial groups. A full half of our population growth since 2000 is accounted for by Hispanics, while Asians and African Americans account for another 27%. This wave of immigration has accelerated us down a path towards a time when the majority of the country is no longer White.

Already, there are a growing number of demographic outposts in which non-white majorities are the norm: 364 counties and four states as of the most recent count. Last year, for the first time, white children will be a minority group in the pre-school population, and overall we are only about 25 years away from being a majority minority nation.

Hispanics

Population growth, however, does not necessarily mean a growth in representation at the ballot box. Despite the massive growth of the Hispanic population, their representation gap has increased drastically over time. According to the States of Change analysis, the representation gap among Hispanic voters was only -3 in 1980 and -4 in 1982, but by 2012 and 2014, that gap had grown to -8 and -10 respectively. By these numbers, they are the racial group that is the most underrepresented electorally and that have also seen the biggest increase in their under-representation. Right now this is primarily driven by their eligibility gap – much of the growth in the Hispanic population during this time can be attributed to both legal and illegal immigration, which creates citizenship barriers to voting (discussed earlier in this paper). But gaps in participation among eligible Hispanics have lingered. These gaps are projected to improve over time, but even so, the States of Change project has predicted that by 2060 Hispanics will end up with a -5 representation gap. By that time, eligibility concerns will be minimal but participation (registration and turnout) gaps are expected to remain.

As with the immigrant population, there is little doubt that decreasing the representation gap among Hispanics is more of an immediate net positive for Democratic candidates than Republican ones. Historically, strong majorities of Hispanics have supported Democratic voters, with 66% most recently supporting Hillary Clinton for President. There are, however, instances of Republican candidates doing well, most notably President George W. Bush in 2004, when he won 44% support among Hispanics, according to the national exit poll.

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14 http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/07/01/share-of-counties-where-whites-are-a-minority-has-doubled-since-1980/
But Republicans can read Census tables too, and there is an acute understanding of these looming demographic trends among conservative candidates, operatives and consultants. Hispanic outreach has become a priority of Republican institutions that can afford to take a longer view of the situation. In 2013, the Republican National Committee hired Hispanic engagement staff in eighteen states meant to build out grassroots operations to directly interact with Hispanics in local communities. These staff give Republicans a permanent local presence that can identify issue concerns, messaging opportunities, key influencers and even potential candidates within the Hispanic community.

Thinking more tactically, political campaigns have a number of encumbrances when it comes to understanding and communicating with Hispanic voters. First and foremost is the measurement challenge of understanding these voters through traditional survey work. The most common problem is the language barrier. In an ideal world, campaigns would translate each of their surveys into Spanish and then engage a call center with bilingual interviewers that can conduct the survey in Spanish. As you can imagine the drag on time and money this causes is significant. Most campaigns forego this option completely, while those campaigns to whom the Hispanic vote is critical will usually do a separate survey specifically of Hispanic voters in their district rather than incorporating Spanish-only Hispanics into all their other surveys.

More importantly you have to get Hispanics on the phone in the first place, and this is proving to be problematic. The deterioration of political polling has been well documented elsewhere – between increasing cell phone penetration, the slow death of the landline, and sickly response rates, it is now harder than ever to get a survey complete. Those that do take the time to answer the phone and sit through a 15 minute political survey tend to be those groups that are most over-represented per the States of Change analysis. And of course those that do not take the survey tend to be those that are most under-represented. According to a recent analysis by Civis Analytics, a firm founded by the head of the Obama 2012 data operation, it takes approximately 300 phone calls to get one survey complete from a young Hispanic male.

It is also difficult to measure how targeted groups of Hispanic voters watch television due to the fact that many viewers of Spanish language television watch via over the air antenna reception. Campaigns are increasingly turning to detailed viewing data for key voter groups in order to build optimized television advertising campaigns targeted at groups of key voters. By matching lists of targeted voters into subscriber data from cable, satellite or telecom companies, they are able to reorient their advertising more towards those voters they are most interested in. However, campaigns are limited in their ability to do this with Hispanic targets because so many are not subscribed to pay TV operators.

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Moreover, Spanish language mail and phone calls only go to those designated as Hispanic on the file and consumer classifications of Hispanics notoriously fall short of targeters' needs. Most ethnicity and race flags found on commercial data files are inferred based upon analysis of an individual’s last name and US Census data about the racial composition of their neighborhood. If your name is Ramirez and you live in a heavily Hispanic neighborhood, then you will almost certainly be classified as a Latino. But according to the 2010 Census, there are about 344 Hispanics in the United States with the last name Wu, and another 1107 Hispanics with the last name MacDonald\(^\text{19}\). The examples here are obviously edge cases, but they are frustrating nonetheless, as it is these race classifications that dictate who receives the campaign's messages.

**Asians**

While so much of the United States’ growth has been fueled by Hispanics, it is actually Asians that have recently passed Hispanics as the largest group of new immigrants to the United States\(^\text{20}\). Their overall share of the electorate remains low – only 4% in the recent presidential election – and the States of Change data indicate they are under-represented, with their participation (registration and turnout) gap now accounting for about half of their underrepresentation. Their participation gap is projected to grow over the next few decades and become the dominant reason for Asian underrepresentation.

Here again, Republicans are faced with a growing minority demographic that is also growing in their favorability towards Democrats. According to the National Asian American Survey, Democrats improved from 51% market share among Asians in 2012 to 57% in 2016, while Republican party ID dropped by four points to 24%. The net result was an eleven point shift in party ID away from Republicans. The only silver lining here for the GOP was that movement wasn’t uniform across nationality: Filipinos shifted most aggressively towards the Democrats, while Cambodians, Japanese and Chinese Americans all shifted more towards Republicans. But more fundamentally, a real hesitancy emerges in the data for Asian Americans to associate themselves with either party: a strong 41% identify as Independent, though admittedly once independent “leaners” are allocated the Democrat advantage grows\(^\text{21}\). It’s this reluctance that Republicans can tap into in order to pull this emerging electorate to their side.

The Republican playbook here again looks to an expansion of on-the-ground interaction with key members of the Asian community. The Republican National Committee has hired field directors and communications directors to focus on targeted outreach. These communities have become of particular importance in Nevada and Virginia, two swing states where Asian Americans make up more than

\(^{19}\) https://www.census.gov/topics/population/genealogy/data/2010_surnames.html  
\(^{21}\) http://naasurvey.com/presentations/
5% of the eligible voter population. 2017 will be an interesting year to watch the Asian American community in Virginia, where Republican gubernatorial candidate Ed Gillespie has made it a priority to talk to Asian voters.

**African Americans**

Since 1980 we’ve seen a steady improvement in Black representation in the electorate. Indeed, President Obama’s election and reelection pushed the Black representation to gap to zero and beyond giving them a slight over-representation in 2012. The African-American representation gap will be most interesting for the most recent election, which unfortunately won’t be available until next spring when we have the Census’ supplemental voter data for 2016. Preliminary data from exit polling and other survey work certainly point to lower enthusiasm and turnout among Black voters than President Obama enjoyed, potentially making the difference between a Hillary win or loss. Precisely where the Black electorate falls on the representation scale will tell us a lot about the contours of President Trump’s win.

At its core, however, Republicans should be doing more than simply hoping that Democrats can’t sufficiently enthuse the African-American community. After all, hope is not a strategy. Instead, just like with many of these other minority groups, many Republicans are actively considering how they can do a better job of within the African-American community. The sad truth is that Republicans did not always do so badly with Black voters – incredibly in the 1960 presidential race, Nixon won 32% of the Black vote, and in 1968 in a contentious three way race he pulled 15% of the vote. In the ’68 campaign the Nixon team undertook a focused African-American strategy with a “black brain trust” and targeted issue appeals in publications like Jet Magazine. He showed up at local African-American political clubs and made personalized appeals to key community influentialss.

All this is to say that Richard Nixon – the man who in 1972 would pivot into the Southern Strategy that pitted whites against blacks – can actually be held up as a model of Republican outreach to minority groups in the 21st century. At the end of the day, most of the tools campaigns have in their arsenal remain unchanged from the pre-digital era. Sure campaigns can do targeted Facebook ads or work up sophisticated simulation models, but ultimately there remains a real amount of shoe leather to wear out, hands to shake and babies to kiss in order to create real change in a community whose support for Republicans is in the single digits. Mitt Romney’s 6% support among African Americans in 2012 and Trump’s marginal improvement to 8% in 2016 is a long way from Nixon’s performance 56 years ago. In order to claw our way back there, there’s a lot of work to be done.

**Whites**

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In the midst of all this rapid demographic change, white voters continue to pull more electoral weight than their numbers would have you think. According to the States of Change data, white voters have actually become more and more over-represented in the electorate while their overall share of the population fell. In 1980 and 1982 white voters enjoyed a seven point representation advantage, and that grew to 10 and 14 point advantages in 2012 and 2014. However, based on simulations run by the States of Change team this year appears to be the apex of their over-representation, as it is projected to fall through 2060. But even then, 44 years from now, it’s believed they will still be over-represented – especially in midterm elections at an estimated seven point advantage. These advantages aren’t thought to derive from age or citizenship – those are projected to fall to near zero. Rather, nearly all of the advantage will come from their higher likelihood to register and vote.

One reason Whites are and seemingly will continue to be over-represented could be the mere fact that they’ve always been over-represented. Multiple studies have shown that voting itself is habit-forming. Once you have voted in an election you are very likely to simply continue doing so. A famous field experiment by Gerber, Green and Shachar randomly contacted 25,200 people and encouraged them to vote in the 1998 general election, and compared to a random set of voters that weren’t contacted, they were much more likely to vote. But this difference continued into local elections in 1999, and the researches found that “voting in one election substantially increases the likelihood of voting in the future.” Moreover, they found this effect to be stronger than age and education effects\(^\text{24}\). Not only does this help us explain Whites’ continued over-representation in the electorate, but it also underscores the importance of campaign contact to advantageous groups that may typically be under-represented. If Republicans can activate more white non-college educated voters and improve their representation numbers, that could have lasting electoral impact for the party.

In the meantime, Republicans benefit greatly from White voter over-representation in midterm elections. Recent patterns in off year voting suggest an electorate that is inherently more conservative in these non-presidential years, leading to Republican advantages in non-presidential level offices, from the United States Senate, all the way down to state legislatures. The result is an unprecedented map for the GOP in which Republicans have a majority in 69 of 99 state legislative chambers, they hold both legislative chambers in 32 states, and have 33 Governorships, and 31 of 50 Secretaries of State\(^\text{25}\).

\textit{Campaign Consequences}

\(^24\) \text{http://isps.yale.edu/research/publications/isps03-004}
\(^25\) \text{http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2016/11/18/republicans-build-on-their-dominance-in-state-legislatures.html}
There is no better exemplar of the racial component to voter turnout than the presidential campaign we all just experienced. Coming off of President Obama’s reelection in 2012, the Democratic Party in general, and the Clinton campaign in particular, pursued a strategy in which they relied upon the recreation of Obama’s “coalition of the ascendant.” The idea being that a rising tide of a diverse electorate would lift Clinton into the presidency and usher in a new era of Democratic dominance.

The problem with this, of course, lies in the data discussed above. High tide is still years away; the coalition of the ascendant hasn’t quite ascended yet; use whatever metaphor you like. Relying on racial minorities meant reliance upon demographic groups which remain under-represented in the electorate. Activating those voters was dependent upon maintaining the support levels they had with Obama (a tall task considering Clinton was the second least popular presidential nominee of all time), and then meeting or exceeding the already heightened turnout levels of these historically under-represented groups. Essentially, we return to the electoral conundrum this paper opened with: there are more low-turnout Democrats than Republicans, which is good news for the Democrats if they can actually turn them out, but bad news if they cannot be made to be enthusiastic about their candidate.

Meanwhile, the Trump campaign played the other side of this math problem. They banked on the over-representation of a white electorate that already leaned Republican. For them, it become a persuasion based election among high likelihood white voters, along with activation of the small low turnout base they had. They were also able to take advantage of geographic patterns of over and under-representation built into the Electoral College that give advantages to more rural states. Indeed, Trump’s loss of the national popular vote points to just how efficient they were in leveraging the electorate’s built in representation gaps.

Some Democrats may be consoled, thinking this is the last time such an electorate could be assembled or looking to demographic inevitability to save the day. But recent research has demonstrated there is a possibility for demographic backlash. According to one set of researchers, simply informing white voters that are “high in ethnic identification” that we will soon be a majority-minority country increases ballot support for Donald Trump, as well as for anti-immigration policies. Most stunningly, the effects are similar for both Republicans and Democrats26.

Additionally, research by Mara Ostfeld that was shared on Twitter indicates that “democratic outreach to Latino voters turns off White Dems.” The study appears to be the results of a randomized controlled experiment – a method that is very popular in political analytics circles to isolate and identify the impact of a particular message. It seems that white Democrats were randomly assigned to hear information that Hillary Clinton was either a) specifically courting undecided voters

26 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309366637_The_threat_of_increasing_diversity_Why_many_White_Americans_support_Trump_in_the_2016_presidential_election
or b) that she was courting Latino voters. Her slides indicate that Clinton ballot support among white Democrats that heard about her Latino outreach was nine points lower than it was among the “undecided” treatment\(^{27}\). Minority outreach appears to be a double-edged sword.

But there may be ways to work against this sort of demographic backlash. After all, given racial projections it is in the interest of both parties to do targeted outreach to minorities. The difficulty then lies in white voters’ reactions to it. One method for potentially mitigating this risk is by increasing the exposure and interaction rate that white voters have with minorities. This is essentially sociology’s “contact hypothesis” – that as people have direct and meaningful encounters with people they have little experience with, their attitudes are likely to become more favorable towards those groups and issues. Moreover, the change is lasting, with a slow rate of decay. This is what makes this especially powerful as most forms of campaign communication – especially the persuasive kind – have incredibly short half-lives thanks to aggressive decay effects.

Recent research by David Broockman and Joshua Kalla showed that a single ten minute conversation between a voter and a transgender person can “markedly reduce prejudice for at least 3 months.\(^{28}\)” Though the study focused specifically on transgender issues, it isn’t hard to imagine this being used either by immigrant advocacy organizations or minority groups to alleviate any sort of cultural anxiety by white voters.

These findings could also be used by campaigns well beyond identity politics and instead used around key issues that have direct and sometimes highly emotional consequences on the personal lives of voters. One can imagine sending women door to door to have a frank conversation around their own experience with abortion, or factory workers that have lost their jobs when a company moves overseas, or a gun owner who protected themselves with their firearm, or a small business owner tangled up in bureaucratic red tape, or somebody that just got audited, or a charter school parent grateful for the choice they have. Conservatives have any number of interesting stories to tell to voters enabling them to humanize and personalize their issue agenda. The contact hypothesis points to a way to do this and have lasting effects.

**EDUCATION**

In disentangling the demography of a Trump win, no category has gotten more attention than education. The gap between college educated and non-college educated whites was stark, and his performance among non-college whites was a marked improvement from Mitt Romney’s four years earlier. While Romney’s advantage among this “white working-class” voter was 26 percentage points,
Trump’s advantage grew to 37 points. This shift allowed Donald Trump to gain a sizeable number of voters among this group in spite of the fact that their overall share of the electorate fell by 2 percentage points from 36% to 34%, according to the exit polls.

Meanwhile Clinton saw big gains among white college graduates, losing by only 4 points to Trump, while Obama had lost the same group by 14 points in 2012. Interestingly, this educational divide didn’t exist among minorities: Clinton got 75% of nonwhites without a college degree and 71% of nonwhites with a college degree.

It seems education is also the culprit when it comes to the surprise of Trump’s win. Education was strongly related to the sizeable polling errors of the cycle. Across all state level polling, the error on Trump’s support number was highly correlated with the percentage of white adults with a college degree in the state: the less educated the state, the more likely Trump’s polling number was wildly off from his actual ballot support. Clearly, we have to consider education’s relationship with representation gaps in the electorate.

The States of Change analysis reveals significant differences in representation gaps by educational status. Unsurprisingly to political professionals who have seen this in turnout models across many cycles, college graduates have positive representation gaps, while non-college graduates have negative gaps, and the underlying data varies significantly by race. This over and under-representation of college and non-college grads has only grown more pronounced as the former group grows and the latter shrinks.

The increase in college degree attainment in this country is stunning: in 1940 only 4.6% of the people over the age of 25 had completed four years of college. By 2015, that number was 32.5%, a boost of nearly eight times. This has corresponded with an increase in their over-representation – the gap among college graduates stood at 5 and 6 points respectively in 1980 and 1982, and that gap grew to 8 and 11 points in 2012 and 2014. At that same time the non-college educated under-representation gap grew from -5 in 1980 to -8 in 2014. These gaps become accentuated in midterm elections when there is an upturn in over-representation among the college educated and under-representation swells among non-college educated voters.

The non-college education gap is tied up tightly with race. White non-college voters generally hovers close to zero on the representation gap over the last thirty years. Non-college African Americans have gradually closed their under-representation gap over the years, and in 2012 they were actually over-represented. On the other hand, non-college Hispanics and Asians have seen their representativeness decrease over time.

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29 https://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/education/data/cps/historical/
This relationship – between race, education and turnout – is what the 2016 election seems to have pivoted upon. When updated numbers arrive in the spring, we will be able to see how representation gaps were impacted by Clinton and Trump at the top of ticket. If these numbers mirror much of the initial evidence collected so far, it would only reinforce the difficulty Clinton had in reassembling the Obama coalition. Yes, college educated whites are one of the most over-represented demographic groups the States of Change project has studied. And yes, college educated whites increased their support for the Democratic nominee from 2012 to 2016. But, consider that non-college whites likely were able to keep their representation gap near zero, while increasing their support for Donald Trump. Couple this with increases in the representation gaps among non-college Hispanic and Asian voters, who we know to be heavily Democratic, and you can see in retrospect how Donald Trump was able to thread this election’s demographic needle.

Layered upon this are widespread regional disparities in educational attainment. While the college-educated population has grown massively, those gains have not been evenly distributed. Research by Thurston Domina detailed the disproportionate growth of college degrees across the country between 1940 and 2000 and found that what started as a spread-out phenomenon has increasingly become concentrated in a few “cosmopolitan communities (that have) become magnets for the highly educated.” While Domina measures this in detail at the micro level of the county and census tract, the regional divides offer a broad look at the sort of change the country has seen: in 1970 there was only a 5 point difference between the most highly educated region in the US (the Mountain and Pacific census divisions at 13%) and the least highly educated region (the East South Central division at 8%). In 2000 that difference grew to 13 percentage points between New England (31% college degree) and East South Central at 18%.

We’ve seen similar ideas in works like Richard Florida’s study of the “creative class” or the “big sort” hypothesis by Bill Bishop. The overall point remains the same – that Americans are increasingly finding themselves living with like-minded people. There are serious electoral consequences to this. In proprietary research overseen by this author for an independent advocacy organization in 2016, it was found that white college-educated Clinton voters had an average of 4.1 of their 5 closest friends that were college graduates. Among college-educated Trump voters, the average number of their 5 closest friends with a college degree was only 3.7. In other words, college-educated Trump voters were more likely to have an educationally diverse social network than their counterparts on the Clinton side, who were more likely to live in an educational bubble. Much of this was likely a function of geography.

One of the primary problems with Clinton’s coalition was that her white college educated supporters were too densely concentrated in areas that weren’t useful to her. Sure, Clinton can run up the score in areas like New York City or San Francisco, but that does her little good in the Electoral College. Political demography is

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exacerbated by political geography and Clinton ends up with a moral victory thanks to a popular vote win but an actual loss thanks to the Electoral College. So while educational trends certainly accrue to her favor, to some extent they are washed away by geo-educational trends.

There's no better illustration of this than the New York Times post-election publication of a map detailing the "Two Americas of 2016" that imagined separate nations whose geography was built upon the presidential results. Trump's America is a landmass pock-marked by large inland bodies of water such as the Selma Sea, Lake Flagstaff and Austin Pond. Clinton's America, on the other hand is an archipelago of urban centers giving us Reno Island, the Carolina Islands, and a series of interconnected water ways such as the Albany Narrows, the High Plains Seas, and Bakersfield Bay.31

Democrats should avoid overly relying upon their new coalition of demographic minorities at the expense of maintenance among the white working class. Such an unexpected loss by Clinton must surely smart enough for them to learn this lesson, but then again, there's always the threat they overcorrect too much and neglect a group core to their future as a party. Still, what we seem to see happening here is a reorientation of each party, freshly sorted by education. We've certainly seen a shift in support among white college educated voters more towards Democratic candidates, and a shift towards Republicans among white non-college voters. This most recent election seems to have accelerated that shift.

We can see this manifesting itself already in some of the issues and policies emphasized by campaigns. The Democratic primary had Bernie Sanders making college debt forgiveness a centerpiece of his campaign, while Donald Trump's rhetoric around job loss to Mexico and China spoke directly to the white working class voters he did so well with. College campuses have always been a safe space for Democratic voter registration drives, election rallies, and volunteer recruitment; we'll likely see an expansion of this in the near term. Meanwhile, Republicans will continue to register, recruit and gather on factory floors and VFW halls as an outgrowth of the success they've had among the white working class.

Education has emerged as one of the most forcefully formative demographics in American politics. It is consistently a top predictor in the targeting models built by campaigns, was the lynchpin of the 2016 election, and served as the springboard to Donald Trump taking office as the 45th President of the United States. As it becomes more and more powerful as a partisan sorting mechanism we'll see more of these sorts of distinctions between the parties on this critical variable.

AGE

The United States is about to get a whole lot older, and that’s going to have serious consequences for our elections. Not only are people living longer lives, but the Baby Boom has started to retire. We are bound for a big policy and political realignment around our aging population, so it’s important that political strategist understand how represented different age groups are at the ballot box.

Since 1950, average life expectancy in the United States has gone from only 68 years to 79 years in 2013 thanks to incredible improvements in medicine that have greatly reduced mortality among seniors. This, coupled with the aging of the Baby Boom generation, has grown the senior population dramatically. Indeed, every single day from now until 2030, 10,000 Baby Boomers will turn 65. To see a preview of what America will look like 20 years from now, take a trip to Florida, whose current population approximates the age profile we eventually expect to see nationwide. In 2014 there were about 46.2 million seniors representing 14.5% of the population, but by 2060, that number is expected to grow to 98 million seniors accounting for 21.7% of the population. By that point the 65+ age group will be the second largest group in the nation, barely behind those aged 45-64.

This aging is tangled up tightly with another demographic trend – the growing ethnic and racial diversity of younger generations. As mentioned earlier, we are well down the road towards being a non-white majority country, but those retiring Baby Boomers? Still majority white. By 2048, we’ll find ourselves a nation in which every age group except seniors will be majority-minority, the logical endpoint of a growing diversity gap across age cohorts that’s bound to impact our political system.

There wasn’t always such a difference between age groups politically. The post-Nixon political era saw little distinction in party support levels by age – 51% of 18-29 year olds supported Carter in 1976, while seniors were only 4 points lower at 47% support. This rough alignment lasted through the 2000 election, where Al Gore held 48% of 18-29 year olds and 50% of those 65 or older. The age gap emerged in 2004 when we saw a seven point difference between the under 30 and over 65 age groups, and it grew to 21 points for President Obama’s first election in 2008. In 2016, the gap remains, though not as pronounced: 45% of seniors voted for Clinton versus 55% of 18-29 year olds.

A heavily Democratic youth presents a long-term challenge to Republicans, as an individual’s vote preference has been shown to be highly related to both who was president when they turned 18 and who they pulled the lever for in their first presidential election. As an example, younger Baby Boomers and older Generation X-ers that came of age during the Reagan and Bush presidencies were 5 points more

33 http://www.pewresearch.org/daily-number/baby-boomers-retire/
34 https://aoa.acl.gov/Aging_Statistics/Index.aspx
likely to support Romney in the 2012 presidential election. Whereas younger Generation X-ers and older Millennials who turned 18 in the Clinton years were 10 points more likely to support Obama in 2012.\textsuperscript{36}

The weight of one’s coming-of-age era extends beyond the Presidency at the time to the larger political and historical milieu as well. Two economists’ investigation of the voter registration preferences of Californians that turned 18 just before and just after the September 11\textsuperscript{th} attacks reveals just how profound and lasting an impact context can have on political allegiance. The study by Ethan Kaplan and Sharun Mukand found that voters who turned 18 just after the attacks were more likely to register as Republicans than those who turned 18 just before them, and that this difference persisted through at least 2008 even among those who moved and changed registration addresses.\textsuperscript{37}

So where then do things stand in regard to the representation of these age groups at the ballot box? Generally the States of Change data finds that younger age groups are getting smaller and less represented, while older age groups are getting larger and more over-represented. Young voters’ under-representation goes back to 1980 and has only gotten worse over time – especially in midterm elections. Their smallest gap recently was in 2008 when their enthusiasm for Barack Obama pushed their representation gap to only -5. It grew slightly in 2012 to -6, and, though it remains to be seen exactly how it moved in 2016, presumably it did not improve or we would be looking at a different outcome.

But it’s not just the youngest voters who have become less represented over time – the 30-44 age cohort has gone from being over-represented from 1980 through the early nineties to a notable decline over time. In 1980 and 1982 this group was over-represented by 1 point and 0.3 points; by 1994 and 1996 it dropped into negative territory and has not yet recovered.

On the other hand the oldest groups have been over-represented and maintained that over-representation for 36 years – especially in midterm elections. The senior population in particular has gotten more and more over-represented each year since 2010, hitting representation highs in each of the last two election cycles. Recall that this is happening as every other age group shrinks as a percentage of the population and seniors grow. The richly represented are becoming more richly represented.

Campaigns necessarily craft their actions specifically towards those most likely to vote. (Per the earlier discussion around the shape of the electorate, this is particularly the case for Republican campaigns). This data tells us that, short of a massive reversal among young people, campaigns will continue to orient themselves toward older generations. Campaigns are, after all, organizations that inherently

\textsuperscript{36}http://www.people-press.org/2015/04/30/a-different-look-at-generations-and-partisanship/

\textsuperscript{37}http://econweb.umd.edu/~kaplan/ideologypersistence11-15.pdf
inhabit the now, unconcerned about long term trends. More permanent partisan institutions on the other hand, should take a more specific interest in young voters given the long-term impact of party identification at a formative age. In other words, organizations like the Koch Brothers grassroots network or the Republican National Committee should be doing whatever they can to rock the vote among young people.

Most of any concern among Republicans about focusing on Millennials revolves around the conventional wisdom that young people aren't the best targets for conservatives. And yes, given the last few cycles, they aren't, but it’s not always been the case that younger generations are more liberal: in 1994 there were actually more Republicans than Democrats among 18-29 year olds.38 Of course there are broader contextual and demographic issues that exacerbate Republicans’ challenge there: not only is there the generational impact of 8 years of newly registered 18 year olds under an Obama presidency, but they are also more educated and more diverse.

That’s three pro-Democratic structural factors for Republicans to contend against. Add in some of the more eye-raising sociological stats of the Millennial generation and the conservative challenge only grows. Millennials are delaying their marriage age – in 2011 the median age of a person’s first marriage was 28.7 for men and 26.5 for women, while in 1960, the median ages were 22.8 and 20.3 respectively.39 Millennials are also more reluctant to strike out on their own: 40% of Millennial men were living in their parents’ homes in 2012, the highest share in modern history.40 None of these are Republican-leaning trends – the GOP does better among married voters and homeowners. This of course just reinforces the importance of Republican efforts to capture the hearts and minds of younger voters, lest they risk losing a generation of voters.

CONCLUSION

This year the foundation of the States of Change project is an implicit assertion that an electorate that looks more like the general population is a more desirable – indeed a more democratic – outcome. The idea being that a more representative electorate creates favorable conditions toward more representative policy. It is an admirable goal. Unfortunately, it also runs counter to the goals of party politics. The ambition of partisans is alternately a more liberal or a more conservative policy, rather than simply a more representative one.

Our elections are where these ideological battles are fought, and partisans seek to leverage every advantage they have to win. It makes sense then to bring political strategists and campaign consultants to this analysis, as we bring a unique

38 http://www.people-press.org/2015/04/30/a-different-look-at-generations-and-partisanship/
40 http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/08/01/a-rising-share-of-young-adults-live-in-their-parents-home/
perspective. Our job is not to strive for some platonic ideal of democracy. Our job is to win.

Our analysis of the States of Change data on representation should necessarily be clear-eyed about the motivations of electoral actors. Both sides of our two-party system are ideological agents that at best represent the views of only slightly more than half the country, and they compete in winner-take-all contests. Of course between multiple races, a bicameral legislature, and the direct election of our executive, there are opportunities for our government to be more complex, more diverse, and more representative of our country.

But for any given race? There will be an ideological winner and loser. In order to win, the campaign will do what it must to shape the electorate in a way more favorable to their side. Representation gaps will be exploited. In other words, no one should be counting on political institutions and actors to close all representation gaps to zero. This is the reality of electoral politics and the States of change team is to be applauded for confronting this reality with a hefty dose of their data on representation. Hopefully then, it has been helpful to see how Republican and Democratic campaign strategists think about these gaps in order to better understand their repercussions and how non-political institutions – at odds with the campaign strategists of the world - can adapt accordingly.

Of course, there are many more considerations when it comes to gaps of representation well beyond those discussed above. Those that were chosen were chosen for their importance along with their reportability and their ease of projectability through the next decades. But there are dozens of other groups and segments of the electorate we could similarly investigate. Future analyses should consider the over-representativeness of rural voters, the impact of inter- and intra-state migration on political attitudes, the growing gender divide in which women are better-represented than men, the under-representation of lower and middle income voters, and the electoral staying power of highly religious voters.

Most immediately, however, we have to consider the geography of this new demography. We’ve seen in the above analysis how the current geography of over- and under-representation favors Republicans, but how might this change as Boomers retire and our majority-minority Pre-K population ages into the electorate? Over the next fifty years, the battleground map will distort and shift over time – indeed it may already be happening.

The 2016 election saw Iowa and Ohio recede into the Republican column, while Nevada and Colorado may now be more decisively Democratic. We also had Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania re-emerge as presidential battlegrounds. Though we won’t know until the release of data in the Spring, many of these shifts are likely thanks to shifts in the representation gaps of White and minority voters, coupled with educational differences. And there are more shifts to come. Given what we’ve seen in the data above, we can expect states like Georgia and Arizona to
at some point become more competitive thanks to growing minority populations and closures of their representation gaps.

Future analyses should also consider all these trends in the context of the rapid technological change we've faced since the turn of the century. Differential access and distinctive media and technology consumption by age, ethnicity, education, and other key segments mean a varied impact on things like ideology and electoral representativeness. For example, how might Millennials' politics be impacted by being the first generation to become politically aware and active within the Internet Age? What does it mean for electoral turnout patterns that mobile web consumption is so much higher among Minority communities than it is among Whites? How might online and mail voting impact voter participation? Non-demographic factors such as this are harder to foresee and therefore complicate any organization's or institution's ability to do something about representation gaps they may wish to close.

Ultimately this year's States of Change data underscores that parties are going to have to be adaptable in order to win during this looming period of massive demographic transformation. The data reinforce that there are structural advantages for the Republican Party built-in through over-representation gaps of right-leaning demographic groups, but Democrats continue to have a massive opportunity among low turnout groups that are under-represented. Moreover, these groups are not only under-represented, they are also growing, so there is quite a bit of opportunity there for Democrats if they can manage it effectively. So if Republicans want to prepare for a future where representation gaps are merely participatory, then they have to prepare for a more diverse electorate. Fortunately, Republicans are indeed planning for this future, despite the fact those plans will likely be useless – after all, the electorate does tend to punch us in the face from time to time. Hopefully the next time it does, we'll be ready.
Voters are each assigned a score between 0 and 1 on three predictive models built by analytics professionals on the campaign: likelihood to vote, likelihood to support the Republican Party, and likelihood to support the Democratic Party. Voters are then binned into equal sized groups based on those scores – ten for the likelihood to vote and 20 for their Republican partisanship.

The left-most cells colored red to blue display the net party score for each bin. The cells in green running from left to right display the average turnout score for each bin. The cells in yellow running from left to right display the number of registered voters at the intersection of each model’s bin.

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