* Title Page

THE NEXT AMERICAN VOTER: THE POLITICAL DEMOGRAPHY OF AMERICAN PARTISANSHIP*

ERIC KAUFMANN

Reader in Politics and Sociology, Birkbeck College, University of London; Religion Initiative/ISP Fellow, Belfer Center, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Box 134, 79 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge, MA 02138

ANNE GOUJON

World Population Program, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) Schlossplatz 1 A-2361 Laxenburg, Austria

VEGARD SKIRBEKK

World Population Program, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) Schlossplatz 1 A-2361 Laxenburg, Austria

---

Approximate Word Count: 7, 868 words.

* Direct all correspondence to Eric Kaufmann, Belfer Center, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Box 134, 79 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge, MA 02138 (e.kaufmann@bbk.ac.uk). I am indebted to the Leverhulme Trust and the Harvard Belfer Center's Initiative on Religion in International Affairs and International Security Program (ISP) for supporting this research.

Figures

Figure 1

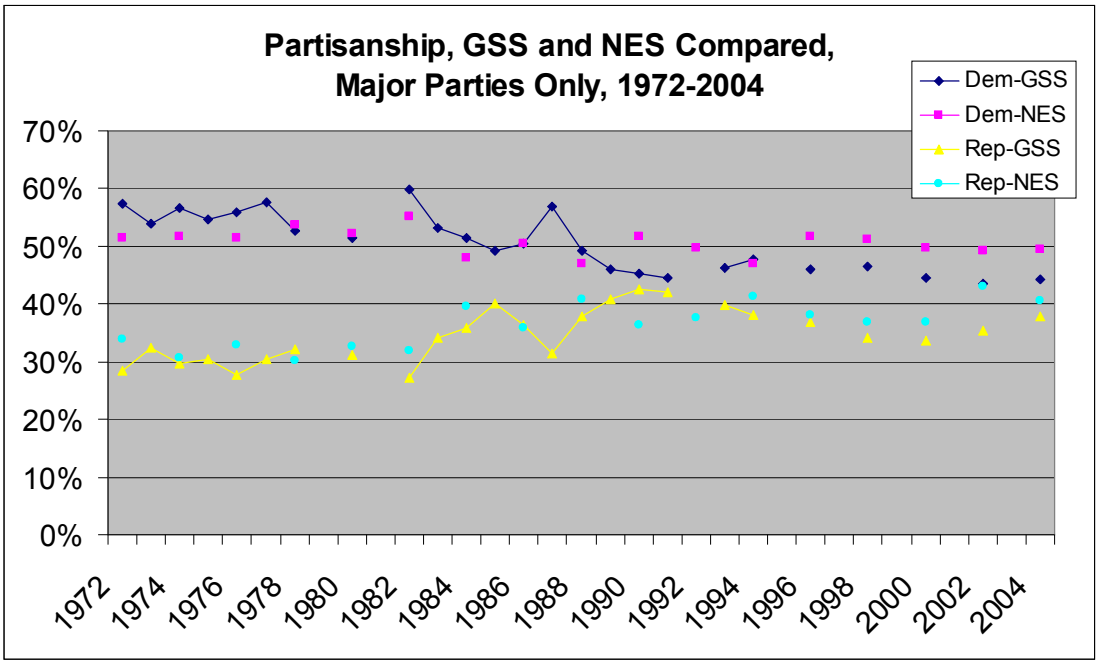


Figure 2

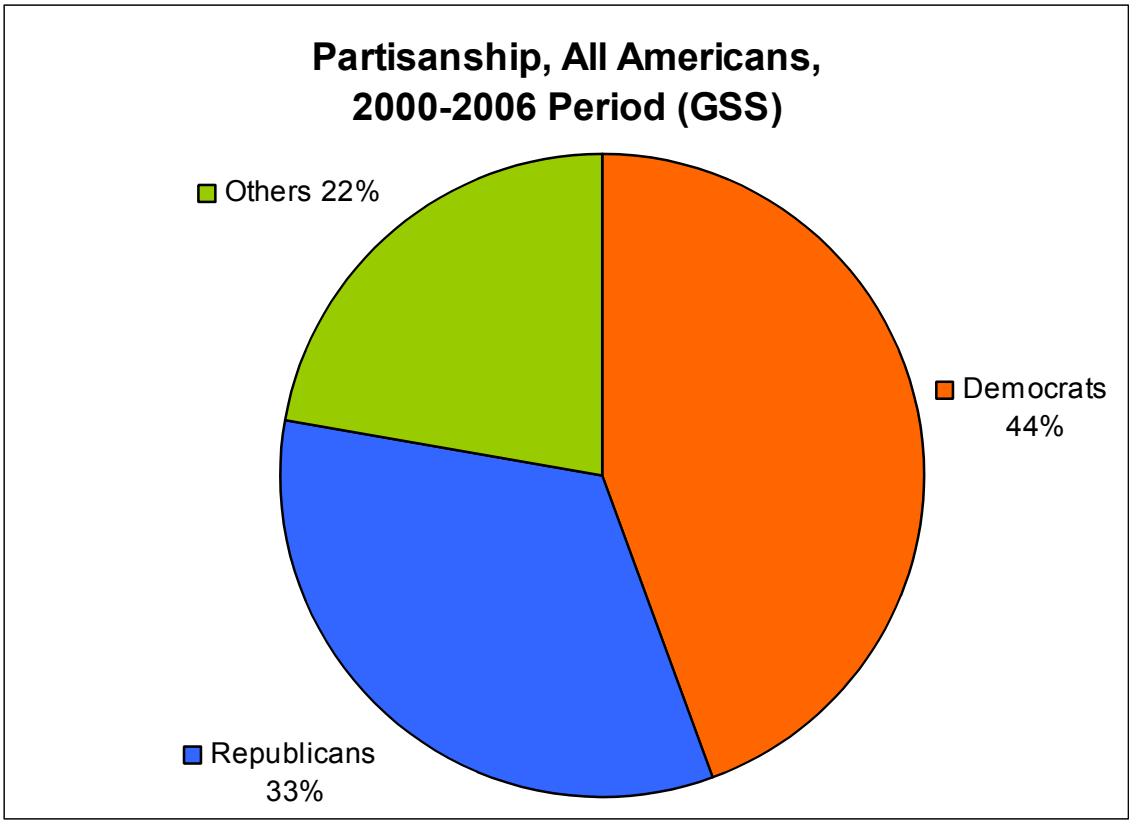

Partisanship, All Americans,
2000-2006 Period (GSS)
Others 22%
Democrats
44%
Republicans
33%

Figure 3

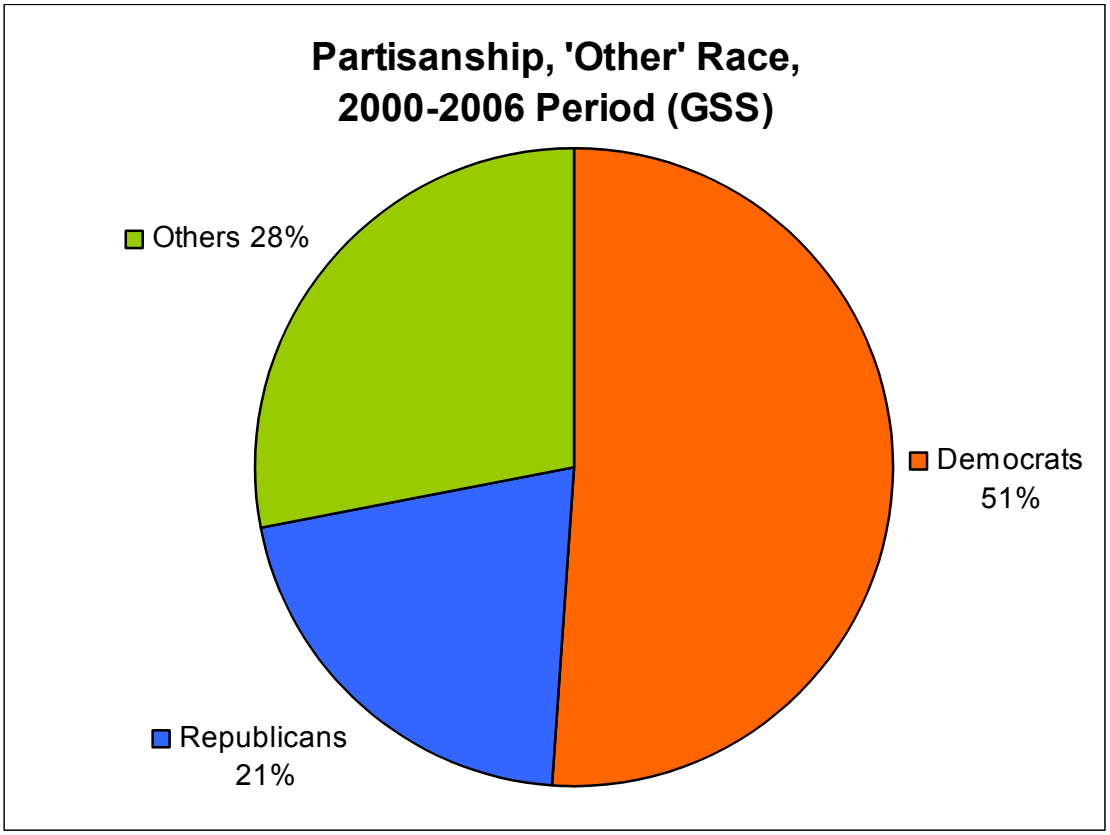

Partisanship, 'Other' Race,
2000-2006 Period (GSS)
Others 28%
Democrats
51%
Republicans
21%

Figure 4

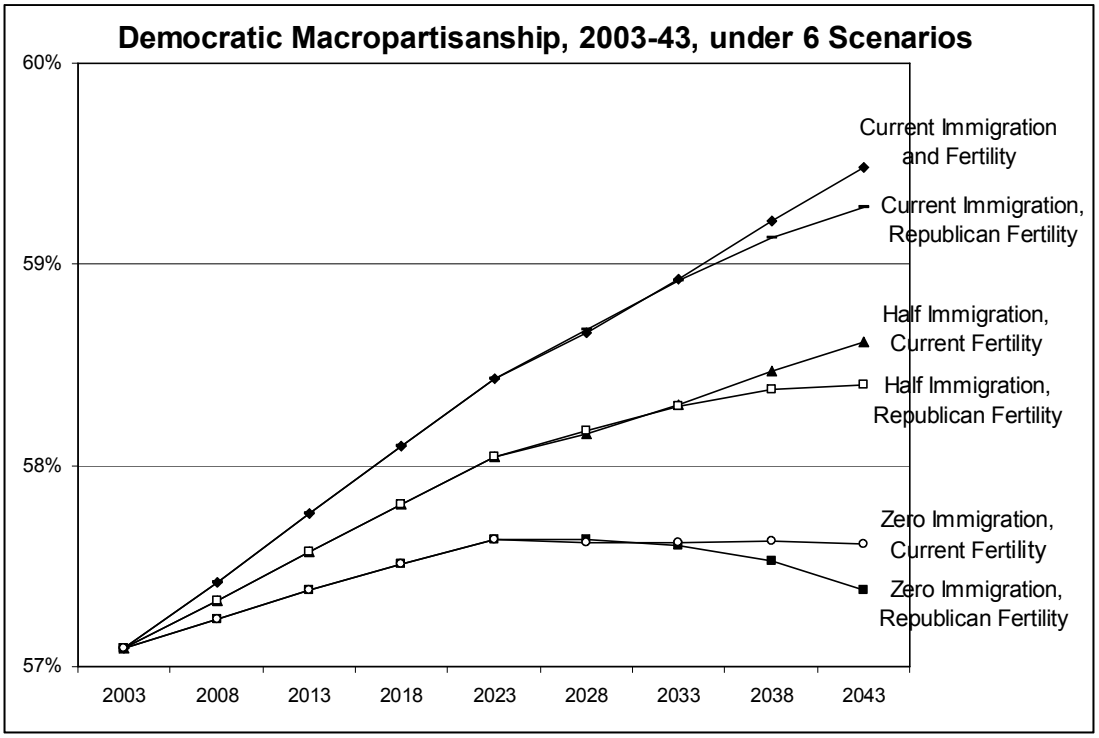

Democratic Macropartisanship, 2003-43, under 6 Scenarios
60%
59%
58%
57%
2003
2008
2013
2018
2023
2028
2033
2038
2043
Current Immigration and Fertility
Current Immigration, Republican Fertility
Half Immigration, Current Fertility
Half Immigration, Republican Fertility
Zero Immigration, Current Fertility
Zero Immigration, Republican Fertility

Figure 5

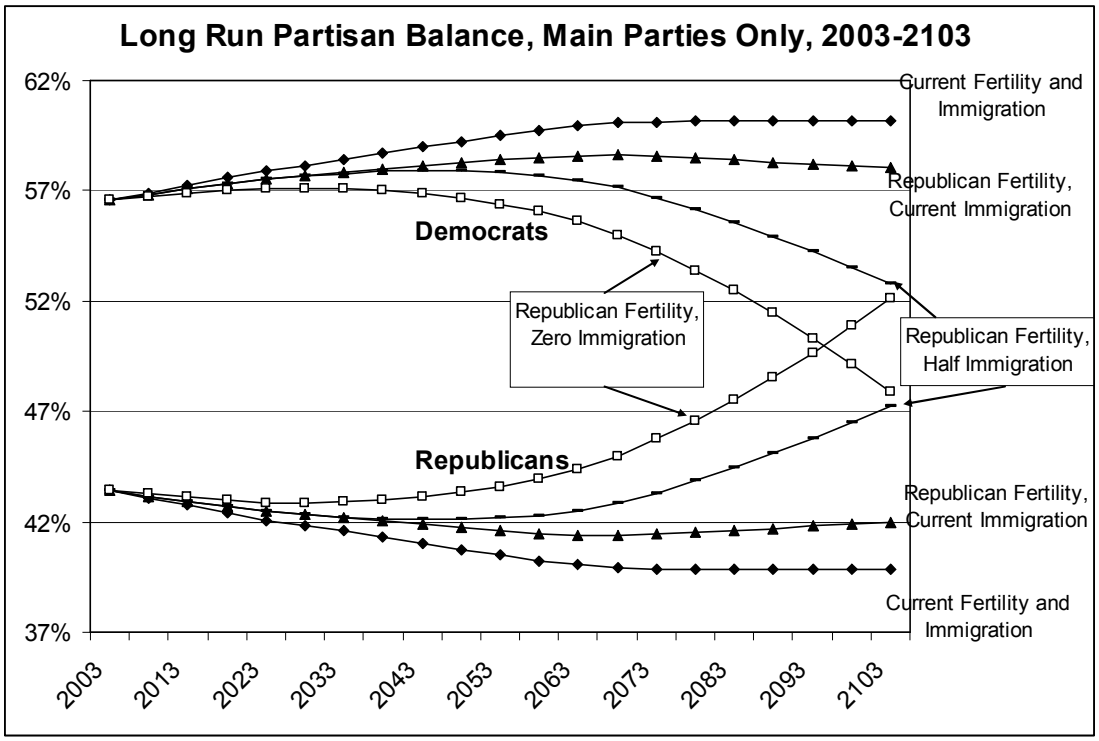

Long Run Partisan Balance, Main Parties Only, 2003-2103
62%
57%
52%
47%
42%
37%
2003
2013
2023
2033
2043
2053
2063
2073
2083
2093
2103
Current Fertility and Immigration
Republican Fertility, Current Immigration
Democrats
Republican Fertility, Zero Immigration
Republican Fertility, Half Immigration
Republicans
Republican Fertility, Current Immigration
Current Fertility and Immigration

Figure 6

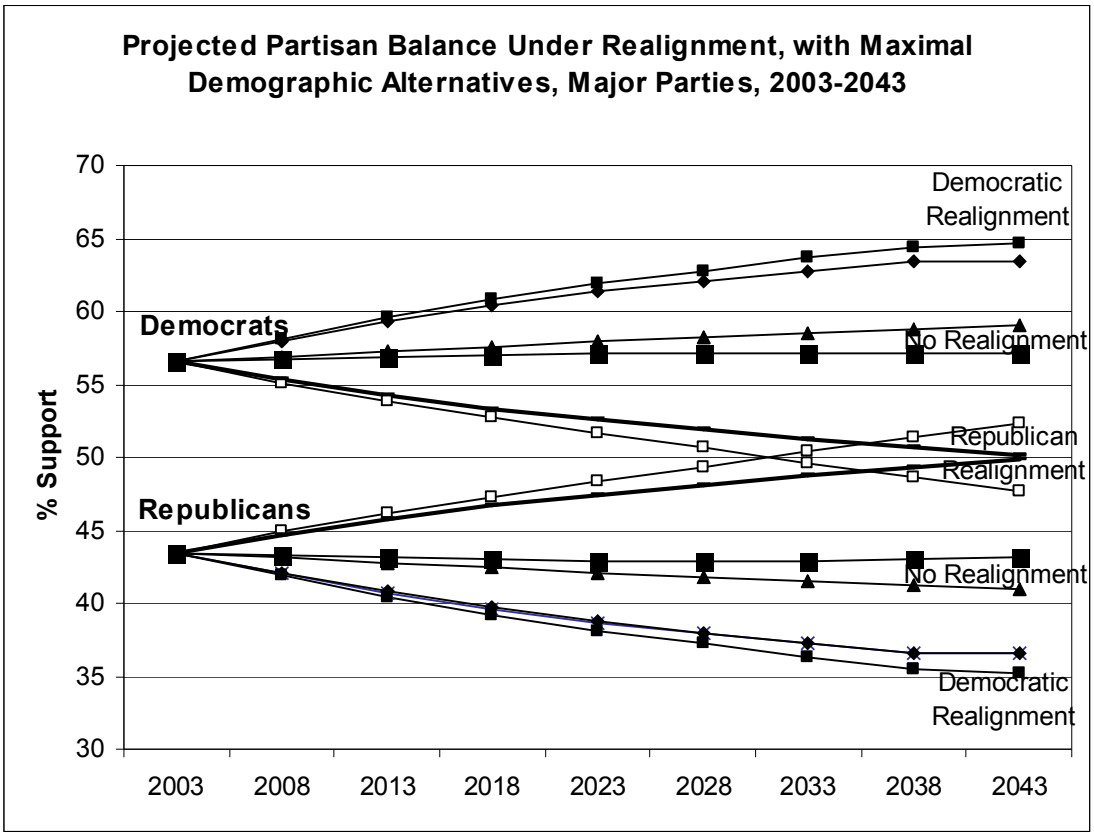

Projected Partisan Balance Under Realignment, with Maximal Demographic Alternatives, Major Parties, 2003-2043
% Support
70
65
60
55
50
45
40
35
30
2003
2008
2013
2018
2023
2028
2033
2038
2043
Democrats
Republicans
Democratic Realignment
No Realignment
Republican Realignment
No Realignment
Democratic Realignment

Figure 7

Democrats **Republicans**

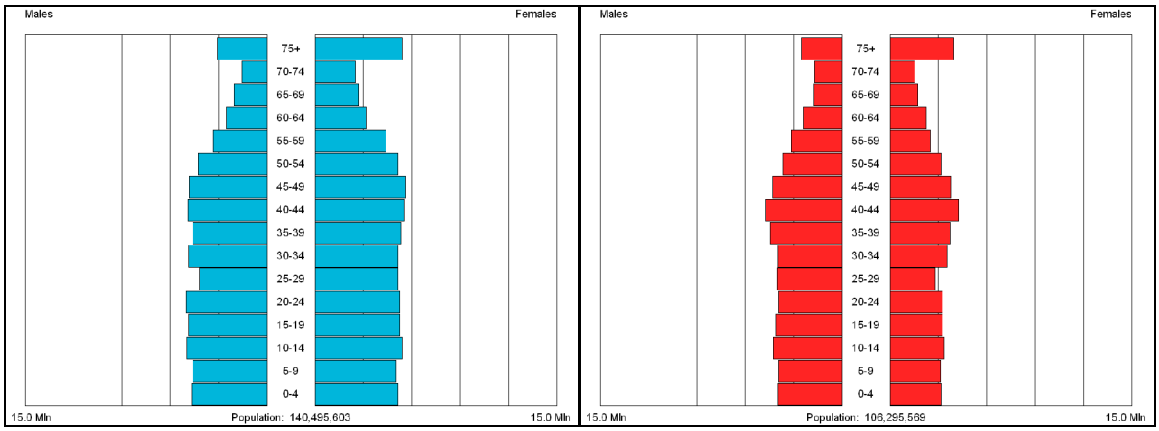
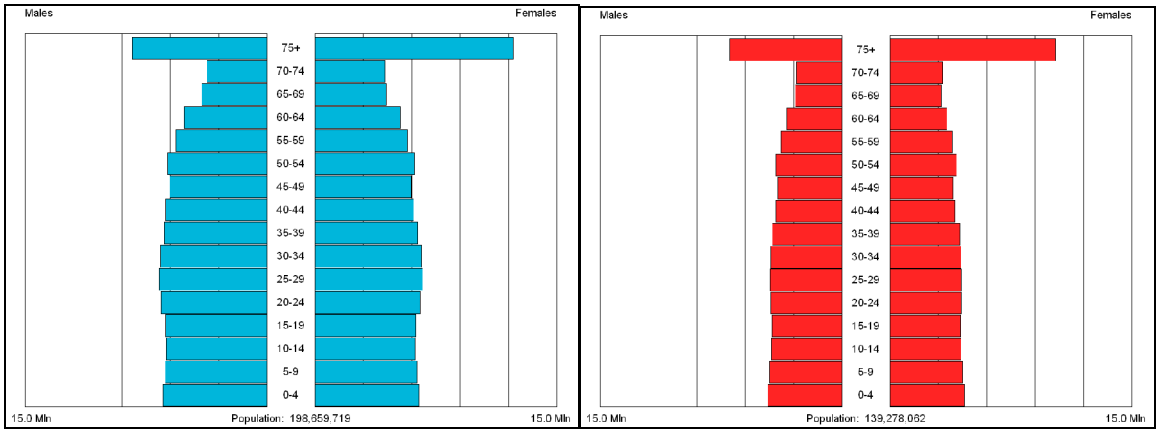


Figure 8

Democrats **Republicans**



The Next American Voter: The Political Demography of American Partisanship

Ever since Kevin Phillips' *The Emerging Republican Majority* (1969), there has been a lively interest in forecasting the longer-term bases of American macropartisanship and voting behaviour. These issues resound with the 'culture wars' debate over the polarization of America into natural 'red' Republican and 'blue' Democratic constituencies. (Hunter 1991; Fiorina, Abrams et al. 2005) With fewer floaters comes a concern over the size and growth potential of each party's base. Texeira and Judis (2002), two liberal commentators, claimed that the growth of the nonwhite population and rise of a new postindustrial knowledge class would endow the Democrats with an inbuilt majority. Texeira takes the analysis a step further in recent work for the Brookings Institution, suggesting that the young age structure of Hispanics, Asians, the college-educated, unmarried and seculars will tilt the partisan balance in a Democratic direction in the future. (Texeira 2008a; Texeira 2008b) On the other side of the ledger, conservative writers like Arthur Brooks and Mark Steyn or centrists like Philip Longman point to the marked fertility advantage of white Republicans over Democrats. As Brooks put it, 'liberals have a big baby problem: They're not having enough of them, they haven't for a long time, and their pool of potential new voters is suffering as a result'. (Brooks 2006) 'In Seattle,' adds Longman, 'there are nearly 45% more dogs than children. In Salt Lake City, there are nearly 19% more kids than dogs.' (Longman 2006) What is lacking, however, is academic work which can test the veracity of such statements against models utilising the latest demographic projection techniques.

To be sure, both of the aforementioned scenarios have their basis in well-established demographic trends. U.S. Census Bureau population projections, for example, chart a steady decline in the white non-Hispanic population from roughly 70 percent in 2000 to below 50 percent by 2050. (United States Census Bureau 2007) We know that Hispanics - with the exception of Cubans - have tended to lean Democratic and Asians slightly so. (Alvarez and Bedolla 2003; Miller and Shanks 1996, ch. 9) With much of the increase in Asian and Hispanic electorates taking place in large Democratic states like California, New York or Illinois, their growth could lead to a significant rise in Democratic electoral college votes. Conversely, work by leading demographers confirms the link between reproductive behaviour and voting in the 2004 presidential election. Hence (Lesthaeghe and Neidert 2006) find the correlation between the non-Hispanic white Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in a state and the vote for Bush in 2004 to be .78. The correlation for postponement of first births and the vote in the same group is -.78 and that for postponement of first marriage is -.84.

Common to the logic of these arguments is the idea that society can change even if individuals do not. This ties in with political scientific ideas about the resilience of certain social bases of voting behaviour. Ethnoreligious cleavages form the bedrock of political geology, and served as the basis for early models of voting behaviour such as the Columbia Model. Electoral cleavages are constituted by overlapping sets of symbolic repertoires and associational memberships which reproduce the link between social identity and party membership. (Bartolini and Mair 1990) The paradigm case here are confessionally 'pillarised' societies like pre-1960s Holland or ethnically divided ones like Northern Ireland or Lebanon. (Lijphart 1977; McGarry and O'Leary 2004) In these

situations, changes in the religious or ethno-demographic composition of a society translate fairly clearly into the electoral realm, as is evident in the increasing success of demographically buoyant Catholic parties in Northern Ireland, ultra-Orthodox Jewish ones in Israel or Shi'ite parties in Lebanon. (Horowitz 1985; Toft 2002) Even in more loosely-bounded societies like the United States, ethnoreligious change can power electoral shifts. The Democratic party benefited from heavy Irish and German Catholic immigration in the antebellum period, and Catholic and Jewish 'immigrant stock' votes proved a mainstay of the northern wing of the party until the erosion of the New Deal Democratic alignment after 1968. (Burner 1968) Immigrant party machines may be countered by those of dominant ethnic groups like Ulster-Protestants, Fijians or Anglo-Protestant 'Native' Americans. (Kaufmann and Haklai 2008) More recently, research on California shows that the rapid growth of the Hispanic and Asian electorate during 1990-2001 reduced Republican partisanship by around 3 percent and gave the state a secure Democratic character by 2001. Were it not for this demographic change, California would be a battleground state. (Korey and Lascher 2006) As the United States follows California's ethnic trajectory, will the nation's partisan politics follow suit?

Maybe not. A central insight of the Michigan model of voting behaviour is that ethnoreligious and other sociological cleavages are only part of a nation's political geology. (University of Michigan Survey Research Center and Campbell 1960) Overlaying ethnoreligious orientations are somewhat independent affiliations of partisanship, ideology and issue position, though these may be almost as stable within a population. Atop these political landforms lie the choppier Downsian currents of rational-

interest voting, random events and personalities which are, by definition, extremely difficult to predict.

Unsurprisingly, these contending psephological traditions have been translated into the literature on macropartisanship. One school of thought, in the Michigan tradition, led by Donald P. Green and his colleagues, contend that partisan attachments consist of positive affective images which are woven into regional, class and personal identities. These identities have emotional resonance and resist the kind of short term pressures (scandal, events, economic performance) which buffet the popularity of candidates. (Green, Palmquist et al. 2002) The opposing view cleaves to a Downsian approach which stresses that partisanship can be as malleable as vote choice, and is tied to short term issues and the vagaries of candidate popularity. Partisanship is thus better envisioned as a shorthand or 'running tally' of issue preferences and evaluations. (Fiorina 1991; Erikson, Mackuen et al. 1998; Achen 2002) An intermediate view accepts that rare shocks to the system can result in realignments which alter the partisan equilibrium around which short-term party evaluations fluctuate. (Meffert, Norpoth et al. 2001) This article accepts that short term currents introduce volatility into partisanship numbers, and that realignments can alter equilibria. However the long-term resilience of the partisanship data from both the American National Election Study (ANES or NES) and General Social Survey (GSS) shown in figure 1 suggests that a high degree of path-dependency constrains the scope for large shifts. There is evident volatility to the numbers and the trend varies a good deal between the two surveys, especially when it comes to measuring independents. That said, the two series agree on rising Republican identification and at least some decline in Democratic fortunes over 1972-2004.

Figure 1

[Figure 1 here]

Source: GSS 1972-2004; ANES 1972-2004[1].

Demographers' biological populations are hardly identical to the socially constructed groups of Republican and Democratic party identifiers. Though the question has not been asked by ANES since 1992, researchers using post-1952 ANES data found that a majority of Americans retained their parents' partisan allegiance if both parents shared the same affiliation. (Mattei and Niemi 1991: 168) Thus a major source of group membership is inheritance, and relative partisan stability suggests that a demographic approach can be productively applied to the problem of macropartisanship. Consider the realignment which followed the New Deal Democratic alignment of 1932-68. This was a largely sociological phenomenon, with the civil rights movement reorienting white southerners away from their traditional Dixiecrat inclinations in favour of the Republicans whilst black Southerners experienced a reverse conversion. Even so, the demographic component of this change should not be underplayed. Time-series cross-sectional examination of partisan loyalties among southern whites after 1952 shows that partisanship demonstrated remarkable resilience in the teeth of changing ideological winds. Older white southerners clung to their Democratic affiliations. Youth changed

more easily since partisan attachments do not tend to crystallize until early adulthood. Green et. al. (2002) found that society was changing because emerging generations of more Republican young voters comprised a growing component of the white southern electorate.

All told, roughly half the change in white southern partisan loyalty in the period from the 1950s to the 1990s consisted of cohort replacement, a demographically-influenced force, rather than individual conversion from Democrat to Republican. New voting cohorts started their electoral lives more Republican than previous ones, though all experienced some conversion to the Republicans over this period. In other words, much of the shift to the Republicans could have been predicted by a demographic model of cohort replacement adjusted for a steady rate of Republican conversion among successive 5-year electoral cohorts. Adding a steady, albeit lower, rate of conversion among adults of older age cohorts to the model would afford it a very high degree of accuracy since individual conversion to the Republicans was more gradual than episodic. (Green, Palmquist et al. 2002: 141, 160-2)

Demography and Politics

While popular essayists have raised the issue of political demography, there have never been proper demographic projections of partisan affiliation in the United States. Moreover, the field of political demography, defined as 'the study of the size, composition and distribution of population in relation to both government and politics' is

dramatically under-represented in the discipline. (Weiner and Teitelbaum 2001: 11-12) In a recent symposium, a number of former APSA presidents, notably Robert Putnam and M. Kent Jennings, pointed out that while rapid demographic change is one of the most certain and predictable of future trends, it remains one of the least studied and has not been properly integrated into the wider discipline of political science. (Putnam in (Hochschild 2005: 314; Jennings in Hochschild 2005: 320) This neglect contrasts markedly with the rising interest coming from policymakers. 'Ten years ago, [demography] was hardly on the radar screen...Today, it dominates almost any discussion of America's long-term fiscal, economic or foreign-policy direction.' (Jackson, Howe et al. 2008) Today's under-5s (along with the immigrants of tomorrow) will be the new voters of 2025 and the political elites of the 2050s. Cultural and institutional forces along with unforeseeable period effects will alter their socialisation, but many of this generation's salient political characteristics will be inherited from their parents. (Jennings and Niemi 1981, chap. 4; Beck and Jennings 1991: 758-9; Abramowitz and Saunders 1998: 643) Demographic momentum tends to amplify or delay macro-political changes even if changes occur at the micro level within individuals. Just as no credible political scientist can afford to ignore the role of economic incentives, institutions or culture, we claim that demography needs to be considered as a political force in its own right. (Hout 2006) In this article, we suggest that if partisan attachments are enduring and crystallize in early adulthood, much of the future story of American partisanship has already been written.

Demographic Models

Arthur Stinchcombe remarked that multivariate causal models which seek to explain levels of a dependent variable at the individual level are inadequate to explain many phenomena, especially aggregate ones. Certain questions, such as the size of a nation's GNP, require more complex forms of causal explanation such as demographic or functional models.[2] Demographic models are the simpler of these, involving two parts: 'one set of causal processes determines the numbers of people of different kinds, while a second determines a proportionality factor by which these numbers of people are multiplied to get the effective causal force.' (Stinchcombe 1968: 58) If we wish to predict the proportion of Democrats in a population, it is insufficient to know which variables (i.e. class, race) predict Democratic affiliation within individuals. We also need to know the proportions of these predictor subgroups in the total American population, a piece of demographic information. From a diachronic perspective, we could make a similar argument with respect to the forces impinging on individuals to convert from one party to another. Suppose, in a population consisting entirely of Republicans and Democrats, that we knew - from classic multivariate models - the precise strength of the forces determining individuals' party identification, and hence the equilibrium between Republican and Democratic identification. In the very long run, we would be able to predict the proportion of both groups in the American population, but not in the period prior to long-run equilibrium.

Modifying Stinchcombe's (1968: 77) equation somewhat, for a population consisting only of Republicans and Democrats, and for a given time period, this may be expressed as:

$$\Delta R = q_{dr}n_d - q_{rd}n_r$$

where ΔR represents change in proportion of Republican identifiers, q_{dr} is the proportion of Democratic identifiers who change to Republican, n_d is the proportion of Democrats in the population, q_{rd} the proportion changing from Republican to Democrat and n_r the proportion of Republicans in the population. Equilibrium is reached when the forces causing change in either direction come to balance each other, fixing the proportion of each group in the population. That is, $\Delta R=0$ when $q_{dr}/q_{rd} = n_r/n_d$.

However, there is always a lag period as society adjusts to a new equilibrium. Without knowing the existing proportion of the two partisan groups, as well as their age and sex structure and respective fertility rates, we could not provide a resolution to the question we really want to answer: i.e. what the picture would look like four, twenty or fifty years from now. It is also possible that high fertility or immigration among the declining group could indefinitely forestall the achievement of the 'natural' equilibrium of social forces which determine partisan identities. These forces could even lead to a reversal of the vector of macropartisanship.

Classic multivariate causal models largely focus on retrospective, individual-level data, even as they offer predictive, universal models. Demographic models can be tested against retrospective data, but their main objective is to set out a future time series, or scenario, which follows from existing population age and sex structures combined with a set of change parameters. Finally, demographic models tend not to explain at the individual level, but rather operate by internalising individual-level causal insights (i.e. the relationship between parents' and children's partisan identities or the degree of partisan change over the life cycle), multiplying these by group proportions and thereby translating these into an aggregate-level prediction.

Methodology

The demographic models we use employ the cohort component projection methods and utilise PDE multi-state population projection software. Projections only display the over-20 population, a good approximation of the electorate. Input parameters include:

Starting (base) year parameters (2003): population by partisan affiliation (Republican, Democrat), subdivided by 5-year age band and sex. We use the GSS[3] for the years 2000-2006 to derive these parameters. Based on time-series data from the GSS and American National Election Study (ANES or NES), we hold the proportion of Independents constant at 15 percent of the population. The actual figure varies somewhat, but this accords with the general range of the independent population in recent years.[4]

Independents tend to be younger than partisans, but exhibit an erratic life cycle effect. Rather than risk erroneous predictions, we have decided to focus on the firmer trends exhibited by the major parties. Finally, we assume that the population of children (0-19) inherits the partisanship of their parents. Since women and men differ on average, we assume that the 0-19 population inherits a partisan breakdown which is intermediate between the averages for their mothers and fathers (more on this later).

Dynamic parameters that can change with time period: net immigration by partisan affiliation, subdivided by 5-year age band and sex; age-specific fertility rates for women of each party. Differentials in fertility rates are based on the average number of children ever born (CEB) per woman over the age 40, derived from an average of the GSS 2000-2006. Those differentials were then applied to the age specific fertility rates as reported for 2003 by the US Census Bureau. In addition, we assume a standard developed country mortality schedule which is identical for both groups. Immigration assumptions are based on annual legal immigration data from the US Census Bureau. Immigration to the United States in the period 2000-2007 averaged 1.2 million per year, a large component of which consisted of undocumented immigrants who were granted amnesty. (CPS 2007) Since 28 percent of respondents of 'other race' do not identify with one of the main parties, we have reduced the flow of net migrants in our model to 863,000 per year.[5] Given the intense debate over immigration reform in the 110th Congress, one of our scenarios posits a reduction in the level of immigration. Here we model scenarios based on both zero immigration and half the 2001-6 level of immigration.

Immigrant age structure, fertility and partisanship could be approximated from the GSS sample of foreign-born Americans for the years 2000 to 2006 inclusive. However, the GSS immigrant pool is considerably more white (54.8 percent) than the current inflow. This means that the American immigrant stock does not match the current flow. For instance, in 2000-2005, fully 76 percent of American immigrants came from Latin America and East Asia alone, yet those of 'other' race comprised under a third of the GSS immigrant population for 2000-6. (CPS 2005) Now, as in the future, the vast majority of immigrants will be of 'other' race. Indeed, the proportion of white foreign-born as of 2000-2006 drops steeply across age cohorts within the GSS, from roughly two-thirds among upper age groups to around a third among the most recent cohorts. Rather than assume that the immigrant flow will match the current immigrant stock, we therefore posit that future immigrants' partisanship will match that of those of 'other' race already in the country. This implies a Democratic to Republican slant of 71:29, a very different picture from the 46:54 balance within the population as a whole, and considerably different from the 63:37 Democrat/Republican tilt within the GSS immigrant stock population.[6] (see figures 2 and 3) Evidently, immigration is a demographic ingredient which has the potential to create a more Democratic electorate, as in California in recent decades, perhaps along lines similar to the non-Protestant immigrant-origin voters who buttressed successive Democratic machines in the urban northeast during the first seven decades of the twentieth century.

Figure 2.

[Figure 2 here]

Source: GSS 2000-2006.

Figure 3.

[Figure 3 here]

Source: GSS 2000-2006.

Partisan Fertility Differences

Fertility differences between party identifiers are important, and their trajectory over the course of the twentieth century is highly revealing. If we consider women aged 40-59 (i.e. who have completed their fertility) in the period 1972-1984, our data show that Democratic women had 2.85 children ever born (CEB) on average, compared to 2.59 for Republican women. But things are changing. During 2001-6, by way of illustration, the respective figures are 2.39 for Democratic women and 2.38 for Republican women. Thus

the Democratic fertility advantage of 10 percent for the 1972-84 period had completely disappeared two decades later. Triangulation with NES data, which uses an imperfect measure of fertility based on children present in the household, confirms the pattern. In 1956, the average Democratic respondent had 1.4 children present in their household, compared to 1.09 for the average Republican, a 29 percent advantage. In 2004, the positions had drawn much closer: .56 children for Democrats against .52 for Republicans, now just an 8 percent Democratic advantage. Expanding the category to encompass all women over age 17 can offer us a glimpse into the future, though these women have yet to complete their fertility. This analysis reveals that Republican women had only 93 percent of Democrats' over-17 total fertility in the 1972-84 period, but had overtaken Democrats by 2001-2006, with the typical Republican woman over 17 now 104 percent as fertile as her Democratic counterpart. The Republican fertility advantage is particularly marked among white Americans since higher-fertility Hispanic and African-American mothers help redress the balance in favour of the Democrats. (Lesthaeghe and Neidert 2006) It may be that white Democratic women will have their children later, and will make up some of the gap, but overall, the evidence seems to support second demographic transition theory which assigns values an increasingly prominent role in determining fertility levels in modern societies. (Surkyn and Lesthaeghe 2004; Van de Kaa 2001) Undoubtedly, part of the explanation for this growing gap also involves realignment between the two parties. Relatively fertile evangelical Christians and white Catholics from lower socioeconomic backgrounds increasingly identified as Republican over this period while the growing but less fertile nonreligious population and tertiary-educated professionals have shifted slightly to the Democrats. Constant fertility assumes that

fertility within each party remains at the level observed in 2003.[7] Though our expected projection takes 2003 CEB as its baseline for respective fertility rates (i.e. 2.38 Republican v. 2.39 Democrat), retrospective trends point to the possibility of a continued widening of the fertility gap in favour of the Republicans, which we account for in half of our scenarios. Taking samples from two periods, 1972-84 and 2000-2006, we find that Republican fertility has dipped by 10 percent and Democratic fertility by 23 percent. The growing Republican advantage scenarios assume that fertility rates continue to widen as they have since 1972. This would see Democratic TFR decline from 1.98 in 2003 to 1.59 in 2025 to 1.4 in 2043. Republican TFR declines more slowly from 2.08 in 2003 to 1.89 in 2025 to 1.8 in 2043, widening the partisan fertility differential. While migration is often much more important for population composition in the short term, fertility differences can have a substantial impact on populations over a period of decades. This is evident in the growth of both the Mormon and evangelical Protestant denominations during the twentieth century. (Hout, Greeley et al. 2001; Sherkat 2001)

Results

As mentioned, for each projection, we develop an expected scenario based on contemporary trends but we also experiment with a number of alternatives in which fertility, migration and political socialization assumptions differ from the expected scenario. Figure 4 shows the projected trend in the electorate (aged 20+) for the Democrats (assuming the two parties to comprise 100 percent of the total) for the period 2003-2043. This assumes no realignments or other social changes. Overall, we predict a

maximum drift to the Democrats of 2.4 percent between 2003 and 2043. The change will bed down gradually as Democrats claim 1 percent from the Republicans by 2018 and 2 percent by 2038. By 2043, in the absence of any realignment among individuals, Democrats will outnumber Republicans 59:41, up from roughly 56.5:43.5 today. This is mostly due to the immigration of those of 'other' race who are more Democratic than native-born Americans, but also because of the slightly younger age structure of Democrats, in turn linked to the greater diversity of the younger populations which will be entering the electorate as opposed to elderly voters who die off. As figure 4 shows, even if immigration was cut to zero, a fifth (.5) of the shift to the Democrats would still materialize. The magnitude of the projected change in partisanship is important but not decisive: only about 40 percent of the strength observed by Korey and Lascher for California during 1991-2001. Republican partisans will be disadvantaged even if Republican women are able to maintain their past trajectory of widening fertility advantage. Figure 4 displays just two-tenths of a point of difference between scenarios based on growing Republican fertility advantage and the current even fertility balance.

Figure 4. Projected Democratic Partisanship under Two-Party Model, 2003-2043

[Figure 4 here]

Source: Author's calculations.

Long Run Dynamics

Why does the Republican fertility advantage have such a slight effect? Fertility differences tend to increase their power only in the long run while migration is more important in the short and medium term. Consider the aforementioned scenario of a widening fertility advantage for Republicans, stabilizing at a TFR of 1.8 for Republicans and 1.4 for Democrats in 2043. This will have an effect on partisanship, but with the fertility gap only now emerging, its impact will be felt first in maternity wards and primary schools rather than in the voting booth. This means a twenty-year delay before the wave of fertility change crashes through into the electorate. Only in 2033 will the Republicans begin to reap the benefits of their probable fertility advantage of 2013. By way of comparison, we can look to Northern Ireland, where predictions that Catholics' longstanding fertility advantage would soon tip the electoral balance in their favour (given the 2001 estimate of 53% Protestant to 47% Catholic) have been shown to be erroneous. Changing demography will not translate into a Catholic-majority electorate until 2041 at the very earliest. (Courbage 2003) Likewise, the fact that ultra-Orthodox and Arab pupils comprise nearly half the Israeli primary school total has thus far had only a modest effect on Israeli elections and policies. (Ben David 2007)

Having said this, if fertility trends continue to widen along their current path toward Republican advantage, Republican growth will begin to pick up dramatically by mid century at the expense of the Democrats: by the 2060s, even at current immigration levels, the GOP will have checked its post-2003 slide, and begin to narrow the Democrats' lead. If immigration levels were to drop to zero, the Republicans would

overtake the Democrats before the end of the century. Under the more plausible scenario of a 50 percent reduction in immigration, we would see the Republicans, by 2073, make up all of the ground lost during 2003-43. Change would begin to accelerate so that the two parties would draw to within 6 points by century's end - from 13 points today - with the Republicans surging past the Democrats in the following century. (See figure 5)

Figure 5.

[Figure 5 here]

Source: Authors' calculations.

Political Socialization

We are currently in a period of relative partisan stability, but a great deal can transpire in 20 or 40 years, never mind a century. For the purposes of this model, we assume that children have the same party affiliation as their parents, regardless of the type of union, mono-party or mixed. This of course raises the question of which parents tend to influence the partisan affiliations of their offspring, a pressing question given the markedly more Democratic leanings of women as compared to men. Here we assume that, across the population, half the children follow their fathers while half take their

mothers' partisanship. In other words, the first generation, aged 20-24 in our projections, inherits a partisan identity intermediate between those of the maternal and paternal generation of parents. Early literature suggested that stronger affective bonds between mothers and children combined with mothers' increasing post-60s education, workforce and political participation levels would result in a disproportionate maternal influence on the political socialisation of children. (Jennings and Langton 1969) However, subsequent studies have failed to confirm this. (Beck and Jennings 1991) Having said this, any shift toward maternal or paternal socialization will have a significant impact on partisan trends.

Following (Green, Palmquist et al. 1998, 2002), our expected scenario, presented in figure 4, assumes that partisan loyalties are stable over the life cycle and that there is no net conversion between party identifications (i.e. $q_{dr/}q_{rd} = 0$) Though at least some partisan conversion almost certainly will occur in the future, we are in no position to render predictions of exogenous socio-political change. We merely note that partisan loyalties tend to change very little over the long-term and we seem to be in an era of particular partisan stability since the effects of the post-Civil Rights realignment have largely passed. That said, what we can do is to experiment with realignment scenarios in which there is a steady rate of conversion from one party to another. We base this on the level of partisan conversion from Democratic to Republican experienced by white southerners between 1964 and 1998. (Green et al. 2002: 150) This amounts to one-fifth of a scale point per decade on the seven point GSS/NES partisanship scale. Aggregating into a simplified two-category Republican-Democrat scale gives us 2/35 or a 5.7 percent per

decade rate of partisan conversion across all age groups. Bear in mind that this somewhat overstates the pace of partisan change by collapsing a 7-point scale which includes independents into just two partisan categories, and is thus a fair simulation of the impact of sociological realignment. Using the two major parties as the categories, we run this realignment scenario in both a Republican and Democratic direction for the period 2003 - 2043.

Figure 6 displays the projected impact of major realignments, with each pair of lines denoting maximal and minimal demographic effects. The graph shows that the effects of a major electoral realignment - in this case a southern white post-1964 style period effect of 5.7 percent per decade across all age groups - would dwarf those of demography. If realignment occurred in a Republican direction, the GOP would gain ten points on the Democrats by 2043. If the realignment was Democratic, the Democrats as the larger party would benefit less, but would still add seven points to their partisan support. By contrast, the most Republican demographic scenario (zero immigration, widening fertility gap) would only lead to a maximum gain of 2.3 percent for the Republicans by 2043 and the most Democratic demographic outlook (no fertility gap, double immigration) would benefit the Democrats by just 1.3 percentage points. In other words, about 80 percent of the change to 2043 would be socio-political and just 20 percent demographic. Still, for the Republicans (assuming Republican realignment), the most favourable demographic picture would bring forward the point at which they overtake the Democrats by nearly fifteen years, from 2043 to roughly 2030.

Figure 6.

[Figure 6 here]

Source: Authors' calculations.

Nobody expects another post-1964 realignment any time soon, so we need to consider another possibility. Suppose that only emerging cohorts of young voters in the 20-24 age bracket were realigned - a 'cohort effect' scenario. In this case, change would take place far more slowly and demography would play a concomitantly greater role. For instance, the difference in outcome between the Republican and Democratic 'cohort effect' scenarios is less than three points by 2043. The Republican maximum gain is less than two points, a major contrast with the ten point gain registered under the previous Republican realignment (i.e. period effects) scenario. Moreover, favourable Republican demography - in the form of zero immigration and a widening fertility advantage – now accounts for 42 percent of the Republican gain, a far larger proportion than under the realignment (period effect) scenario.

Demography is relatively predictable, but we cannot say the same for cohort and period effects. Assuming the absence of these socio-political changes, we face a period of modestly rising Democratic partisanship. Contrast this placid partisan picture with that for race, where a major change in the American population, from 70 percent non-

Hispanic white in 2000 to 50 percent in 2050, is taking place. This is an entirely demographic phenomenon, and if the new racial minorities lean Democratic, why wouldn't partisanship exhibit similar shifts? Clearly the answer lies with age structure. Hispanic and Asian populations are much younger than whites, so can power demographic change in the future. Conversely, as we see in figure 7, Republicans and Democrats have a similar age structure. This suggests that Republicans have made sufficient inroads among younger voters to offset immigration-driven demographic losses. Indeed, since 1990, the GSS shows that younger Americans, especially African-Americans and those of 'other' race, lean a few points more toward the Republicans than older voters from the same racial group. Immigration and higher fertility are magnifying the 'browning of America', and much of America's future ethno-racial composition is already locked in by these age structures. The same cannot be said for partisanship, however, where the present has locked in relative stability, though there will be some momentum favouring the Democrats for the next few decades. (See figures 7 and 8)

Figure 7: Age Structure of Democratic and Republican Partisans, 2003

[Figure 7 here]

Source: GSS. NB: 75+ are large because they encompass more than 5 years; women exceed men at higher ages due to higher life expectancy. 0-19 population's partisanship is assumed to be intermediate between mother and father.

Figure 8: Current Projected Age Structure for Partisans, 2043

[Figure 8 here]

Source: GSS. NB: 75+ are large because they encompass more than 5 years; women exceed men at higher ages due to higher life expectancy. 0-19 population's partisanship is assumed to be intermediate between mother and father.

The current evenness of the partisan age structure reduces the effect of immigration: current immigration levels will add just 1.9 points to Democratic partisanship in 2043 despite the overwhelming 72:28 advantage of the Democrats among immigrants. If immigration halves, Democrats would gain just .9 points from immigration. These are not large shifts compared to what might occur in the event of partisan realignment. All of which reminds us that the demographic momentum built into

partisan age structures will blunt the partisan impact of immigration upon the electorate. This is the reverse of what is happening with race in America, where change rather than stability is built into the racial age structure. Much of the growth of the Hispanic and Asian populations is assured by demographic momentum even if immigration ceases or becomes wholly white while Hispanic fertility drops overnight. Were we to examine the age structure of white southerners in the 1980s, we would find a similar mechanism of 'locked-in' dynamism because southern white Republicans were younger than Democrats. As the population aged, more southern Democrats died and more southern Republicans entered the electorate. A demographic analysis in 1980 would indicate that cohort replacement would be sufficient to drive growth in Republican partisanship in the 1990s and 2000s, which is precisely what happened. (Green et al. 2002) Today, however, partisan age structures have largely stabilized nationwide, hence new cohorts of voters are reproducing the same patterns that exist within the electorate at large. Much more is required to generate the kind of changes that would lead to a 'natural' party of government, as with the Liberals in Canada, Congress in India or the Ulster Unionist Party in Northern Ireland prior to 2003.

Nonetheless, these results suggest the Democrats will reap a demographic dividend in the coming decades. In a finely balanced, polarized electorate, this is important. Partisanship is by no means everything – if it were, the Democrats would carry every election - but it is among the strongest predictors of voting behaviour. We must also frame these results within the context of civic engagement due to immigrants' lower rates of citizenship, registration and turnout. Overall, just 39 percent of Hispanics and 50 percent of Asians over 18 were eligible to vote in 2004 as compared to 77 percent among

whites. Even within the eligible voter population, just 47 percent of Hispanics and 44 percent of Asians voted in 2004, against 67 percent for whites. The results are startling: 'In Nevada' writes William Frey, 'Hispanics account for 20 percent of the voting-age population but are expected to amount to only 10 percent of the state's voters. In Arizona, Hispanics are 24 percent of those who are of voting age, but only 12 percent of those expected to turn out at the polls.' (Frey 2004; Frey 2008) This is reflected in the GSS, where just 6.7 percent of respondents during 2000-2006 were of 'other' race, as compared to over twice that number in the over-18 population at large. Our data may therefore be viewed as a good approximation of the actual 'other race' electorate. All of which would suggest that citizenship initiatives and amnesties, voter registration drives and canvassing among Hispanics and Asians could have an effect equal to, or greater than, immigration. In a sense, such activity could greatly increase the 'immigration' of new minorities into the electorate and thereby points to the need to upwardly revise our estimate of the boost to Democratic support. However, all future immigrants in this model are assumed to be of 'other' race and to immediately join the electorate when we know that many, if not most, will not do so. Our assumptions therefore undercount resident Asians and Hispanics but are biased toward over-participation by future Asian and Hispanic immigrants. In other words, we presume that today's undercounted minorities will join the electorate, making up for tomorrow's overcounted, nonparticipating immigrant minorities. Since the two forces work at cross-purposes, we may fairly assume that our results yield an accurate projection. That said, the considerable stock of unenumerated Hispanic and Asian respondents in the GSS means that the *potential* electorate is already more Democratic than we have outlined.

Conversely, the nonparticipation of many future immigrants indicates that immigration levels will not affect the electorate as much as we suggest, or will affect it only after a considerable lag period. The upshot is that more of the changes we have outlined (i.e. 2.4 point shift to Democrats by 2043) are already built in to the resident population while the impact of a moratorium on immigration is correspondingly reduced, i.e. will not remove 1.9 of the expected 2.4 point Democrat gain. None of which should be taken to alter our overall macropartisan projection of a modest 2.4 point shift from the Republicans to the Democrats by 2043.

Conclusion

A number of political scientists, notably Green et al. (2002) have remarked upon the relative stability of partisan attachments. The rise in macropartisanship and decline in the proportion of floating voters has raised the importance of shifts in parties' core electorates. Together, this has spawned a cottage industry in political forecasting within policy and media circles. However, American partisan trends have never been the subject of politico-demographic projections. This paper seeks to rectify this deficiency in the literature by drawing upon data from the GSS, supplemented by the NES and US Census, to project the relative balance between Republicans and Democrats to 2043. These partisan 'populations' allow for clearer forecasts than current conclusions drawn from trends like the growth in the population of elderly, college-educated, secular or Hispanic Americans because our partisan population model encompasses them all. In contrast to race, where Asians and Hispanics are markedly younger than native whites, we find the

age structure of the two parties to be relatively similar. Thus demographic momentum favours change in racial, but stability in partisan, composition. To be sure, Democrats are slightly younger than Republicans and will add half a percentage point to their partisan support by 2043 at the expense of Republicans, even in the absence of immigration. On current trends, which assume a continuation of current immigration levels, immigrant partisan composition and partisan fertility trends, we expect Democratic identifiers to increase by 2.4 percentage points between 2003 and 2043 while Republicans decline by the same amount. A halving of current immigration levels – which current immigration reform efforts may produce - will reduce this figure to 1.4 points.

The fertility of Republican women has been rising at an increasingly quick pace (in relative terms) against that of Democrats since the 1950s and has now reached parity. Within the white population, Republicans maintain a considerable lead. If this trend continues into the future, it is likely that Republican fertility will surpass that of Democrats as a whole and settle down at a markedly higher level. This will have a negligible impact prior to 2043, reducing Democratic gains to 2.2 points, just a fifth of a point less than under current fertility trends. In the very long run (i.e. 2100), however, Republicans' fertility advantage will lead to a reversal of Democratic gains and, in the event of reduced immigration, will allow Republican partisans to surpass the Democrats – an unprecedented event since survey work began in 1956. But that eventuality lies in the distant future. In the coming decades, Republicans will be playing demographic defense. This may prompt the Republicans to more vigorously pursue an ethnically-inclusive, universalist brand of conservatism based on moral values and economic

individualism in order to appeal to growing segments of the electorate. The result will be to accentuate the exceptionalism of American conservatism *vis á vis* Europe's more ethno-nationalist brand of right-wing politics. By contrast, as Hispanics and Asians replace blue-collar whites among swing voters, the Democrats may – in a replay of their historic strategy - seek to burnish rather than downplay their ethnic credentials as the party of immigrants and minorities. Naturally, demographic changes move more slowly than events or sociological shifts, and are thereby less important for macropartisanship in the short term. Yet realignments are rare in American politics while partisanship tends to be stable, and during periods of stability, demography moves out from the shadows to play a more prominent role on the political stage.

References

Abramowitz, A. I. and K. L. Saunders (1998). "Ideological realignment in the US electorate." Journal of Politics **60**(3): 634-652.

Achen, C. F. (2002). "Parental Socialization and rational Party Identification." Political Behaviour **24**(2): 151-70.

Alvarez, R. M. and L. G. Bedolla (2003). "The Foundations of Latino Voter Partisanship: Evidence from the 2000 Election " Journal of Politics **65**(1): 31-49.

Bartolini, S. and P. Mair (1990). Identity, Competition and Electoral Availability: The Stabilisation of European Electorates, 1885-1985. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Beck, P. and M. K. Jennings (1991). "Family Traditions, Political Periods, and the Development of Partisan Orientations." Journal of Politics **53**(3): 742-63.

Ben David, D. (2007). The Moment of Truth. Ha'aretz.

Brooks, A. (2006). The Fertility Gap: Liberal politics will prove fruitless as long as liberals refuse to multiply, Opinion Journal (Wall Street Journal). New York. **August 22**.

Burner, D. (1968). The Politics of Provincialism: The Democratic Party in Transition, 1918-1932. New York, NY, Alfred A. Knopf.

Courbage, Y. (2003). "Northern Ireland's Catholics and Protestants: issues in the 2001 census." Population and Societies **(390)** (May): 1-4.

CPS (2005). Current Population Survey, US Bureau of the Census

CPS (2007). Current Population Survey, US Bureau of the Census

Erikson, R. S., M. B. Mackuen, et al. (1998). "What moves macropartisanship? A response to Green, Palmquist, and Schickler." American Political Science Review **92**(4): 901-912.

Fiorina, M. (1991). Elections and the Economy in the 1980s: Short and Long-Term Effects. Politics and Economics in the Eighties. A. Alesina and G. Carliner. Chicago, Chicago University Press**:** 17-38.

Fiorina, M., S. Abrams, et al. (2005). Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America. New York, Pearson Longman.

Frey, W. H. (2004). "Battling Battlegrounds." Brookings Institution Newsletter(September).

Frey, W. H. (2008). Race, Immigration and the Changing Electorate. The Future of Red, Purple and Blue America: Election Demographics, 2008 and Beyond, Washington, DC.

Green, D., B. Palmquist, et al. (1998). "Macropartisanship: A replication and critique." American Political Science Review **92**(4): 883-899.

Green, D. P., B. Palmquist, et al. (2002). Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters New Haven, CT, Yale University Press.

Hochschild, J. (2005). "APSA Presidents Reflect on Political Science: Who Knows What, When, and How?" PS: Political Science and Politics **3**(2): 309-34.

Horowitz, D. (1985). Ethnic Groups in Conflict. Berkeley, University of California Press.

Hout, M. (2006). The Demographic Imperative in Social Change: Political Implications, conference on Political Demography: Ethnic, National and Religious Dimensions , London School of Economics

Hout, M., A, Greeley, et al. (2001). "The Demographic Imperative in Religious Change in the United States." American Journal of Sociology **107**(2): 468-500.

Hunter, J. (1991). Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America. New York, Basic Books.

Jackson, R., N. Howe, et al. (2008). The graying of the great powers : demography and geopolitics in the 21st century. Washington, D.C., Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Jennings, M. K. and K. P. Langton (1969). "Mothers Versus Fathers: The Formation of Political Orientations Among Young Americans." Journal of Politics **31**(2): 329-358.

Jennings, M. K. and R. G. Niemi (1981). Generations and Politics: A Panel Study of Young Adults and Their Parents. Princeton, N.J, Princeton University Press.

Kaufmann, E. and O. Haklai (2008). "Dominant Ethnicity: From Minority to Majority." Nations and Nationalism **14**(4).

Korey, J. and E. Lascher (2006). "Macropartisanship in California." Public Opinion Quarterly **70**(1): 48-65.

Lesthaeghe, R. and L. Neidert (2006). "The Second Demographic Transition in the United States:. Exception or Textbook Example?" Population and Development Review **32**(4): 669-698.

Lesthaeghe, R. and L. Neidert (2006). The "Second Demographic Transition" in the US: Spatial Patterns and Correlates, PSC Research Report

Lijphart, A. (1977). Democracy in Plural Societies. New Haven, Yale University Press.

Longman, P. (2006). The liberal baby bust. USA Today. **3/13/06**.

Mattei, F. and R. Niemi (1991). "Unrealized Partisans, Realized Independents, and the Intergenerational Transmission of Partisan Identification." Journal of Politics **53**(1): 161-74.

McGarry, J. and B. O'Leary (2004). The Northern Ireland conflict : consociational engagements. Oxford ; New York, Oxford University Press.

Meffert, M. F., H. Norpoth, et al. (2001). "Realignment and Macropartisanship." The American Political Science Review **95**(4): 953-962.

Miller, W. E. and J. M. Shanks (1996). The New American Voter. Cambridge, MA & London, Harvard University Press.

Sherkat, D. E. (2001). "Tracking the Restructuring of American Religion: Religious Affiliation and Patterns of Religious Mobility, 1973-1998." Social Forces **79**(4): 1459-93.

Stinchcombe, A. L. (1968). Constructing Social Theories. Harcourt, Brace & World.

Surkyn, J. and R. Lesthaeghe (2004). "Value Orientations and the Second Demographic Transition (STD) in Northern, Western and Southern Europe: An Update." Demographic Research **Special Collection 3**: Article 3.

Texeira, R. (2008a). The Future of Red, Blue and Purple America. Governance Studies. Washington, D.C.**:** 1-15.

Texeira, R. (2008b). Red, Blue, and Purple America: The Future of Election Demographics. Washington, DC, Brookings Institution Press.

Toft, M. (2002). "Differential Demographic Growth in Multinational States: The Case of Israel's Two-Front War." Review of International Affairs **Fall**.

United States Census Bureau (2007). Projections for 2000-2050 by single year of age, by sex, and the race and Hispanic origin.

University of Michigan Survey Research Center and A. Campbell (1960). The American voter. New York: Wiley.

Van de Kaa, D. (2001). "Postmodern fertility preferences: from changing value orientation to new fertility behaviour." Population and Development Review (**27**): 290-331.

Weiner, M. and M. S. Teitelbaum (2001). Political Demography: Demographic Engineering. New York & Oxford, Berghahn.

[1] Much of the difference between the two series concerns the size of the Independent/unaffiliated group, which tends to be higher in the GSS than NES in recent years.
[2] Functional models, such as autoregressive time-series models, are familiar to political scientists, and involve a function's previous effects (ie. proportion Democrats) becoming one of its causes (ie previous year's Democratic networks, incentives and institutions helping to sustain the proportion Democrats this year. (Stinchcombe 1968)
[3] These surveys have been conducted by the National Opinion Research Center annually since 1972, except for the years 1979, 1981, and 1992 (a supplement was added in 1992), and biennially beginning in 1994.
[4] The NES estimate is closer to 10 percent, but shows a similar, limited, band of oscillation to NES data.
[5] This underestimates the impact of immigration since the children of immigrants have a rate of partisan identification closer to that of the native population. On the other hand, we have overestimated the impact of immigration since many do not participate in the electorate, hence the two assumptions work in different directions – see subsequent discussion in this article.
[6] We have run parallel projections using the GSS immigrant stock population as a proxy for the immigration flow, which lowers the projected 2043 Democratic-to-Republican shift by 1.3 points.
[7] Note that the total fertility rate for the whole country may change as a result of the changing partisan composition of the electorate.