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AQ1 K.C. et al. 2010—reference citation OK?

AQ2 See AQ1

AQ3 '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 and Howe 2008)—page number of quote?

AQ4 'Can conservatism survive mass immigration?', he asks (Teixeira 2010)—page number of quote?

AQ5 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' (2006)—page number of quote?

AQ6 US Bureau of the Census 2007b—2007b OK?

AQ7 PDE 2011—2011 or 1994?

AQ8 US Bureau of the Census 2007—2007a or b?

AQ9 K.C., Samir, Bilal Barakat, Anne Goujon, Vegard Skirbekk, Warren C. Sanderson, and Wolfgang Lutz. 2010. Projection of populations by level of educational attainment, age, and sex for 120 countries for 2005–2050, *Demographic Research* 22(15): 383–472—K.C., Samir OK?

AQ10 See AQ7

AQ11 Should the segments in Figure 2 add up to 100%?

Population Studies, Vol. 00, No. 0, Month 2011, pp. 1–15

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American political affiliation, 2003–43: A cohort component projection

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The recent rise in identification with American parties has focused interest on the long-term dynamics of party support. Liberal commentators cite immigration and youth as forces that will produce a natural advantage for the Democrats in the future, while conservative writers highlight the importance of high fertility amongst Republicans in securing growth. These opinions are not based on demographic analysis. We addressed that omission by undertaking the first ever cohort component projection (up to 2043) of populations by American party allegiance, based on survey and census data. On current trends, we predict that American partisanship will change much less than the nation's ethnic composition because the parties are similar in age structure. Nevertheless, our projections suggest that the Democrats will gain 2–3 per cent more support than the Republicans by 2043, mainly through immigration, although the higher fertility of Republicans may eventually offset that advantage.

Keywords: political demography; partisanship; American politics; Democrats; Republicans; political attitudes; population projections; multistate projections; fertility; immigration; cohort effect

[Submitted June 2010; Final version accepted April 2011]

Introduction

A large body of demographic research focuses on the impact of social and political attitudes on demographic outcomes. Yet there is limited work on demographic behaviour as an independent variable, especially in so far as it affects politics and culture. Some studies have examined the effects of gender roles and political orientation on marital stability and fertility (Greenstein 1995; Kalmijn et al. 2005; Axinn et al. 2008), but few have investigated the impact of differences in demographic behaviour on socio-political variables. There has also been a paucity of studies on the effects of demographic change on the social composition of the population, despite the fact that individual-level variation in demographic behaviour, such as fertility differences, often carry important aggregate-level implications for society and politics as a whole. The aim of our research was to build upon the growing set of demographic studies that use multistate projection models to assess the effect of demographic variables on socio-political change. These studies have included work on the effect of demographic factors on such phenomena as the balance between European and national identities (Lutz et al. 2006), educational attainment (e.g., K.C. et al. 2010), and religious composition (Skirbekk et al. 2010).

Unlike forecasts of, for example, long-term economic growth or energy use, demographic projections tend to have comparatively low error margins, even for projections made for half a century ahead (National Research Council 2000; Keilman 2001). Traits that systematically vary with age or cohort can thus be projected with a fair degree of accuracy (e.g., K.C. et al. 2010). Starting with the current age structures of the populations and incorporating alternative scenarios for migration and differential fertility allowed us to model—and to do so more accurately than previously—the social consequences of population change. Our study also used demographic projections as an exploratory tool, to show the long-term socio-political changes that might be driven by future changes in fertility and immigration, and when these socio-political changes might be expected to emerge.

ISSN 0032-4728 print/ISSN 1477-4747 online © 2011 Population Investigation Committee
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00324728.2011.628047

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Demography and politics

While popular essayists have raised the issue of political demography, proper demographic projections of party affiliation have never been made, either in the USA or elsewhere. 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 both demography and political science (Weiner and Teitelbaum 2001, pp. 11–12). Demographers may include political views as a determinant of demographic events (Liefbroer and Fokkema 2008), but seldom consider how demographic characteristics determine political views (an exception being Lutz et al. 2006). Meanwhile, political scientists neglect to factor demographic changes into their analyses, preferring institutional, structural, or cultural explanations of political change.

This neglect contrasts markedly with the rising interest in demographic change amongst 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 and Howe 2008). Today's under-5s, as well as future immigrants, will be the new voters of 2025 and will provide the political elites of the 2050s. Cultural and institutional forces, in addition to unforeseeable period effects will affect their socialization, but many of this generation's salient political views and loyalties will be inherited from their parents (Jennings and Niemi 1981, chap. 4; Beck and Jennings 1991, pp. 758–9; Abramowitz and Saunders 1998, p. 643). In our view, if party allegiances are enduring and formed in early adulthood, much of the story of future American partisanship has already been written.

The American context

One of our reasons for undertaking the first application of cohort component projections to American politics was to introduce systematic demographic techniques into a field marked by partisan claims and ad hoc forecasting. In the wake of Barack Obama's 2008 victory—that was supported by clear majorities amongst the under-30s, Hispanics, and college-educated urban dwellers—many began to speak of an increasing Democratic majority. Teixeira, for instance, contends that the young age structure and growth of Hispanics, Asians, the college-educated, the unmarried, and 'seculars' will tilt the partisan balance towards the Democrats for the foreseeable future (Teixeira 2008a, b). Teixeira is a political demographer whose co-authored book, *The Emerging Democratic Majority* (Teixeira and Judis 2002), was selected by the *Economist* as one of the best books of 2002 and was the most widely discussed political book of that year. More recently, in his *Demographic Change and the Future of the Parties*, he argues that Republican success in the 2010 mid-term elections reflects a cyclical swing that has masked underlying demographic factors, which, he says, are steadily moving in favour of the Democrats. 'Can conservatism survive mass immigration?', he asks (Teixeira 2010). This work is influencing elite opinion, yet it is not informed by a single demographic projection.

Teixeira's arguments are based not on the realignment of political allegiance among different social groups, but on the increase in numbers of those particular groups who tend to identify with, and vote for, the Democratic Party. The projections produced by our study showed that much of this optimism about support for the Democrats is misplaced. Demography *is* increasingly important for political partisanship given the growing polarization of the American population along party lines and the rapid demographic changes taking place within the population. Yet the age structures of the parties' supporters suggest that the Democrats will benefit only modestly from the demographic changes. Republican optimism about their fertility advantage over the Democrats is also misplaced because the fertility gap would need to widen and persist for the better part of a century before partisanship could be seriously affected. Both parties will therefore have to rely on old-fashioned political marketing, not demographic factors, to win elections.

Ever since the publication of Kevin Phillips' *The Emerging Republican Majority* (1969), there has been a lively interest in the longer-term forecasting of American voting behaviour and the numerical strength of the core supporters of political parties. This interest has strengthened in recent years, partly because the major parties have made clearer distinctions between their policies, and this has had the effect of increasing the proportion of the electorate who identify with a party (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998; Carsey and Layman 2006). This identification is now so pronounced that it is structuring social life: in the USA, party loyalty is strongly associated with one's place of residence, one's church, and even one's religious denomination (Bishop and Cushing 2008; Putnam and Campbell 2010). With fewer floating voters and a more polarized electorate, analysts have

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inevitably focused on the size and growth potential of each party's support base.

Teixeira and Judis (2002) proposed that the growth of the non-white population and rise of a new post-industrial knowledge class would give the Democrats the benefit of an in-built majority. On the other hand, conservative writers like Arthur Brooks and Mark Steyn, and centrist commentators 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' (2006).

While their validity has not been rigorously tested using demographic projection techniques, the foregoing views do have a basis in well-established demographic trends. For example, population projections made by the US Bureau of the Census suggest a steady decline in the white non-Hispanic population from roughly 70 per cent in 2000 to below 50 per cent in 2050 (US Bureau of the Census 2007b). We know that Hispanics—with the exception of Cubans—have tended to favour the Democratic Party, and Asians slightly so (Miller and Shanks 1996, chap. 9; Alvarez and Bedolla 2003). Less clear is how changes in ethnic populations and internal migration will affect allegiance in critical swing districts and states. The projection of effects is ruled out by the absence of district-level or state-level data on the age structure of party supporters and on their net migration flows and fertility.

Work by leading demographers has confirmed the link between the demographic behaviour of white non-Hispanics and voting patterns in the 2004 presidential election in the USA. Lesthaeghe and Neidert (2006) found that the correlation between the total fertility (TFR) of white non-Hispanics in a state and the vote for George W. Bush in 2004 was 0.78. The corresponding correlation between postponement of first birth and the vote was -0.78, and between postponement of first marriage and the vote was -0.84.

The more polarized a society, the more important the effect of the relative population size of each contending party and the demographic behaviour of its supporters. The paradigm cases are divided societies like pre-1960s Holland, Northern Ireland, or Lebanon (Lijphart 1977; McGarry and O'Leary 2004). In these countries, changes in the religio-ethnic composition of the population translated fairly directly into corresponding changes in political support, as is evident from the increasingly successful Catholic parties in Northern Ireland, ultra-Orthodox Jewish ones in Israel, and Shi'ite parties in Lebanon (Horowitz 1985; Toft 2002).

In the USA, the Democratic Party benefited from non-Anglo Saxon immigration after 1830, and 'immigrant stock' votes became a mainstay of Democratic support in the northern states into the late twentieth century. This New Deal alignment—the alignment of northern 'white ethnics' and white southerners with the Democrats—only ended after 1968 (Burner 1968). More recently, research on California has shown that the rapid growth of the Hispanic and Asian electorate during the period 1990–2001 reduced Republican support by around 3 per cent and gave the state a secure Democratic majority in party support by 2001. Without this demographic change, California would have been a marginal state (Korey and Lascher 2006). Given that change in the ethnic composition of the overall population of the USA is following the change in California's composition, will party allegiance in the nation follow suit?

The importance of interest-driven voting should not be discounted, but party identification is far more enduring and predictable than is voting behaviour. According to Green et al. (2002), partisan attachments consist of positive affective images that are woven into regional, class, and personal identities. These have emotional resonance and resist the effects of short-term phenomena such as scandals or poor economic performance, which may buffet the popularity of candidates.

We accept that short-term influences do introduce volatility into party support, but its long-term resilience is evident from both the American National Election Study (ANES) and the General Social Survey (GSS). Figure 1 suggests a high degree of stability. The two series agree on the increase in identification with the Republican Party, and at least some decline in support for the Democrats over the period 1972–2004. There is evident volatility in the proportions, and short-term trends vary a good deal between the two surveys, especially for those who declare themselves 'Independents' (i.e., identifying with neither major party). For our purposes, we defined Independents as those who declared no leaning towards another party ('pure Independents'). Those who declared a leaning towards one of the parties were treated as partisans. Those who answered 'don't know' were excluded; they typically made up less than 1 per cent of the sample. For the seminal research on the importance of distinguishing between 'pure' and other independents, see Keith et al. 1992.

Researchers using post-1952 ANES data found that a majority of Americans retained their parents'

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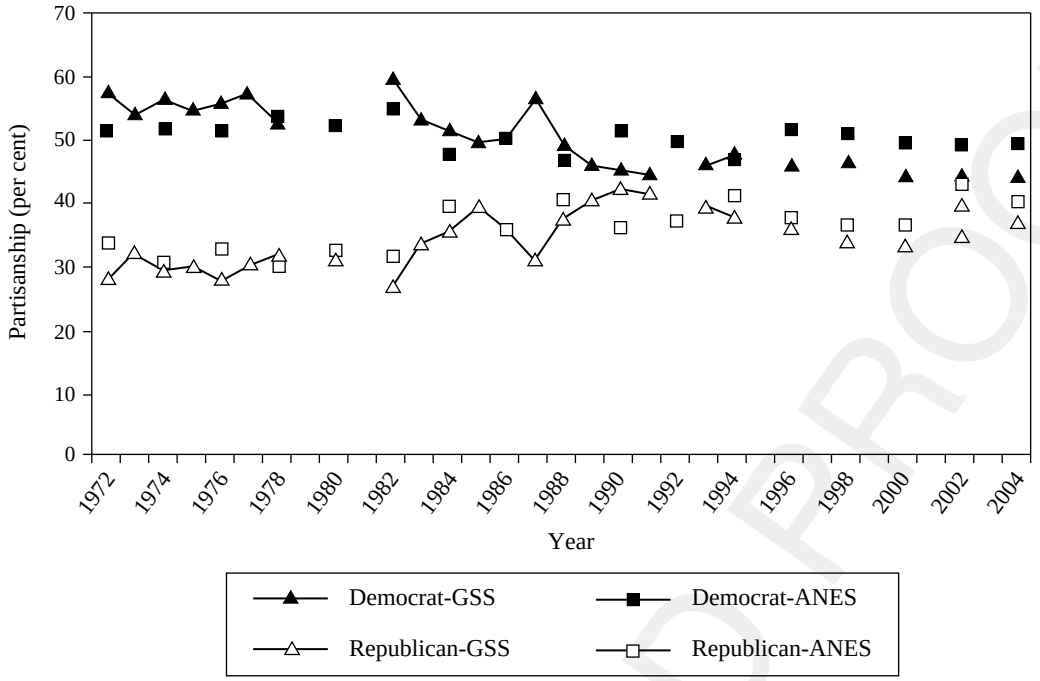

Figure 1 Preferred political party (Republican or Democratic), USA, 1972–2004; comparison of GSS and ANES findings
Note: Much of the difference between the two series results from the size of the Independent/unaffiliated group, which tends to be larger in the GSS than the ANES. Lines connect annual data only. Lines showing biennial data are disconnected.
Source: GSS and ANES surveys, 1972–2004.

party allegiance if both parents shared the same affiliation (Mattei and Niemi 1991, p. 168); the question has not been asked by ANES since 1992. In the case of respondents from a 'mixed marriage' between a Republican and a Democrat, the children reflected this mix in their political allegiance. According to ANES results for the period 1952–92, children with a Democrat father and a Republican mother exhibited a Democrat:Republican party allegiance ratio of 46:41, while for those with a Republican father and a Democrat mother, the Republican:Democrat ratio was 45:47. Early literature on the subject suggested that stronger affective bonds between mother and child, combined with mothers' increasing levels of participation since the 1960s in education, the workforce, and politics, would result in a disproportionate influence of mothers on the political socialization of children (Jennings and Langton 1969). However, subsequent studies have not confirmed this prediction (Beck and Jennings 1991). Overall, the relative stability of party allegiance suggests that it is strongly supported by intergenerational transmission, which implies that models that include fertility differentials and the parent–child transmission of party allegiance are likely to be useful.

Consider the realignment to the Republicans in the south that followed the New Deal Democratic alignment of 1932–68. This involved white southerners defecting en masse from the Democrats to the Republicans. Conventionally this is treated as largely a shift in political values, with the civil rights movement reorienting white southerners away from their traditional Democrat inclinations in favour of the Republicans, while black southerners experienced a reverse conversion to the Democrats. Even so, the demographic component of this change should not be under-estimated. 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 Democrat 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.

Roughly one-half of the shift in white southern allegiance from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party between the 1950s and the 1990s consisted of cohort replacement, a demographic mechanism, rather than conversion from Democrat to Republican. New cohorts of voters started their electoral careers more Republican than had previous ones, though all experienced some conversion

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to the Republican Party over this period. In other words, much of the shift to the Republican Party could have been predicted by a demographic model that included cohort replacement adjusted for a steady rate of Democrat-to-Republican conversion among successive 5-year electoral cohorts. Adding a steady, albeit lower, rate of conversion among adults of older-age cohorts to such a model would afford it a very high degree of accuracy since conversion to the Republican party has been found to be more gradual with age (Green et al. 2002, pp. 141, 160–2).

There is a clear tendency for shifts in political allegiance and attitudes to be largest among young adults and then sharply decline at older ages, implying that cohorts tend to have stable political allegiances for much of their adult life. Change largely takes place, therefore, through replacement of successive cohorts (Alwin and Krosnick 1991). Other ideological and cultural changes, such as religious conversion, are also found to peak in the early 20s and decline later in life (Iannaccone 1992), and similarly, personality traits tend to stabilize after young adulthood (Roberts and DelVecchio 2000). When survey respondents are asked about the most important events of the past half century, there is a tendency to over-report events that took place when the individual was aged under 30 (Schuman and Scott 1989). At the aggregate level, this means that demographic factors—such as which segments of the population are younger, more fertile, or better represented among immigrants—can slow or accelerate political change.

Method

We used the cohort component projection method and PDE (Population–Development–Environment) multistate projection software (PDE 2011). The projections were of the population aged over 20 only, which is a good approximation of the electorate. The variables used in the analysis are described below—beginning with base-year variables then moving to those that change over time.

Base-year (2003) variables

The base-year populations by party affiliation (Republican, Democrat), subdivided by 5-year age group, were derived using the GSS, a biennial survey of roughly 3,000–4,500 people for the years 2000–2006. Independents were removed from the total population, which reduced the 2003 population on which projections would be based by 15 per cent. The actual proportion of Independents in the population varies somewhat, but the 15-per-cent figure accords with the range of the 'pure' (i.e., non-leaning) Independent population in recent years. The ANES estimate is closer to 10 per cent, but shows a limited band of oscillation similar to that of the GSS data. Independents tend to be younger than partisans, but are more erratic in their voting behaviour over the life cycle. Our view is that the data do not justify modelling scenarios based on a rising or falling share of Independents. Nevertheless, this might be a subject for future research, which could investigate the age structure and relative share of 'dropouts' in both parties. Rather than risk erroneous predictions, we decided to focus on the firmer trends exhibited by the major parties. Finally, we assumed that the population of children (0–19) would inherit the political preferences of their parents. Since women and men differ in their voting behaviour on average, we assumed that the 0–19 population would inherit a political preference that was intermediate between the averages for their mothers and fathers (see below for more details).

Variables that change over time

Our core variables were net immigration by party affiliation, subdivided by 5-year age group and sex, and age-specific fertility rates for women of each party. Differentials in fertility rates were based on the average number of children ever born (CEB) per woman over age 40, derived from an average of the GSS-based rates for the period 2000–2006. These differentials were then applied to the age-specific fertility rates reported for 2003 by the US Bureau of the Census. In addition, we assumed the same standard mortality schedule for developed countries for both groups. Immigration assumptions were based on annual data on legal immigration from the US Bureau of the Census. Immigration to the USA in the period 2000–2007 averaged 1.2 million per year, a large component of which consisted of undocumented immigrants who were granted amnesty (US Bureau of the Census 2007). Because 28 per cent of respondents of 'other race' do not identify with one of the main parties, we reduced the flow of net migrants in our model to 863,000 per year.

This reduction under-estimated the impact of immigration since the children of immigrants show a profile of party allegiance closer to that of the host population. On the other hand, the impact of immigration was over-estimated because many do

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not vote. Thus the two assumptions would have opposite effects (see below for further discussion of this issue). In view of the intense debate among American congressmen over immigration reform (an issue that remains unresolved) and the demographic transition in Latin America, we assumed a reduction in the level of immigration for one of our scenarios. We modelled one set of scenarios based on zero immigration, and another set on one-half of the 2001–2006 level of immigration.

Approximate details of immigrant age structure, fertility, and party preference can be derived from the GSS sample of foreign-born Americans for the years 2000–2006 inclusive. However, the stock of foreign-born estimated from the GSS is considerably more white (54.8 per cent) in ethnic profile than that of the current inflow. This is partly because the origins of the foreign-born American population do not match those of the current inflow. For instance, in the period 2000–2005, 76 per cent of American immigrants came from Latin America and East Asia alone, yet those of 'other race'—defined in the GSS as those who do not identify as white or black—comprised under one-third of the immigrant population in 2000–2006. The proportion of immigrants of 'other race' in the 1972 GSS was just 0.25 per cent, but by 2004, this proportion had reached 7.15 per cent (US Bureau of the Census 2005). Currently the vast majority of immigrants are of 'other race', and this will also be the case in the future. Indeed, the proportion of white foreign-born in the period 2000–2006 declines steeply across birth cohorts within the GSS, from around one-third of the youngest to around two-thirds of older cohorts.

Rather than assume that the immigration flow would match the current immigrant stock, we assumed that the future pattern of immigrants' party allegiance would match the pattern of those of 'other race' already in the country. This assumption implied a ratio of Democratic to Republican Party support of 71:29, which is strikingly different from the 46:54 ratio for the population as a whole, and substantially different from the 63:37 ratio for the entire foreign-born population estimated from the GSS (see Figures 2 and 3). We also ran parallel projections using the GSS foreign-born population as a proxy for the immigration flow. These showed that the projected Democratic-to-Republican shift in 2043 would be reduced by 1.3 per cent. Evidently, immigration is a factor that has the potential to create a more Democratic electorate, as it did in California in recent decades. The effect might be similar to that of the non-Protestant immigrant voters who buttressed support for the Democrats in the urban north-east in the period 1900–70.

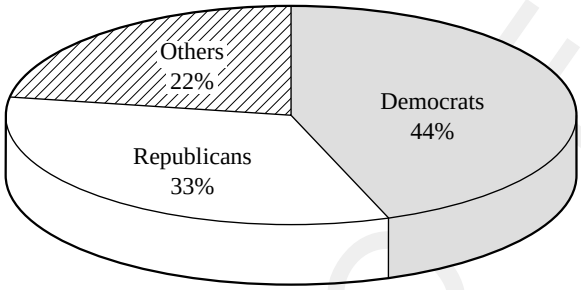

Figure 2 Preferred political party, all Americans, USA, 2000–2006
Source: GSS 2000–2006. AQ11

Fertility differences by party preference

Fertility differences between those who identify with the major parties are important, and their trajectory over the course of the twentieth century is highly revealing. If we consider women aged 40–59 (i.e., those who had completed their fertility) in the period 1972–84, our data show that women who supported the Democrats had 2.85 CEB on average, while women who supported the Republicans had 2.59. However, the pattern has been changing. In the years 2001–2006, the corresponding averages were 2.39 and 2.38, respectively. Thus the Democrats' fertility advantage of 10 per cent during the 1972–84 period had completely disappeared two decades later. An independent estimation based on ANES data, which uses an imperfect measure of fertility based on children present in the household (the own-child method), confirms the general trend. In 1956, female respondents aged over 18 who supported the Democrats had an average of 1.40 children per household, while for their Republican counterparts the average was only 1.09, fewer by 29 per cent. By 2004, the averages had drawn much closer: 0.56 children per household for Democrats

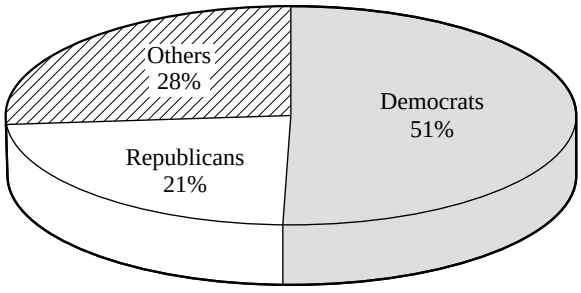

Figure 3 Party preference of Americans of 'other race', USA, 2000–2006
Source: As for Figure 2.

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and 0.52 for Republicans, a difference of only 8 per cent.

Expanding the category to encompass all women aged over 17 offers us a glimpse into the future, though some of these women have yet to complete their fertility. For the 1972–84 period, the total fertility of Republican supporters was only 93 per cent of that of the Democrats' supporters, but by the period 2001–2006 the Republicans had overtaken the Democrats and had a total fertility 4 per cent higher than their rivals. The Republican fertility advantage is particularly marked among white Americans; the advantage would be even greater if it were not partly offset by higher fertility Hispanic and African-American mothers, who tend to be Democrats (Lesthaeghe and Neidert 2006).

It may be that white Democratic women will 'catch up' and recuperate some of their fertility in later periods, but the evidence seems to support second-demographic-transition theory, which assigns values an increasingly prominent role in determining fertility levels in modern societies (Van de Kaa 2001; Surkyn and Lesthaeghe 2004). Undoubtedly, part of the explanation for this growing gap also involves shifting social bases of support for the two parties. Relatively fertile evangelical Christians and white Catholics from lower socio-economic backgrounds increasingly identified as Republican between 1984 and 2001, while the growing but less fertile non-religious population and tertiary-educated professionals shifted slightly to the Democrats. One aspect of the second demographic transition that we cannot account for is the possibility that Republican women start their childbearing earlier than do Democrats. This is certainly true for Republican white women (Lesthaeghe and Neidert 2006). If it were true for all women, the time interval between Republican generations would be shorter than the interval for Democrats, and in consequence, the fertility advantage for the Republicans would be greater than that reported in this paper.

Current fertility assumes that the fertility of women within each party remains, on average, at the level observed in 2003. Although the projections take the average number of CEB by supporters of each party in 2003 as the baseline levels (i.e., 2.38 for Republican women and 2.39 for Democrat women), past trends suggest the possibility of a continued widening of the fertility gap in favour of the Republicans, and half our scenarios assume this will occur. Between the two periods 1972–84 and 2000–2006, the fertility of Republican supporters fell by 10 per cent and that of Democrat supporters by 23 per cent. The scenarios involving a growing Republican fertility advantage assume that fertility rates continue to widen as they have since 1972. This would see the Democrats' TFR decline from 1.98 in 2003 to 1.59 in 2025 to 1.4 in 2043, while the Republicans' TFR declined more slowly, from 2.08 in 2003 to 1.89 in 2025 to 1.8 in 2043, thus widening the fertility difference between the two major parties. While immigration is often much more important for population composition in the short term, fertility differences can have a substantial impact over a period of decades. This is well illustrated by the growth in the populations of both Mormons and evangelical Protestant denominations during the twentieth century (Hout et al. 2001; Sherkat 2001).

The complete set of combinations of assumptions for fertility, immigration, and conversion of party allegiance embodied in the different scenarios is presented in Table 1. Note that the combination of assumptions yields eleven different scenarios, labelled hypotheses H_0–H_{10}. H_0 is the baseline scenario, based on current values.

Results

The 'benchmark projection', scenario H_0 in Table 1, assumes that the contemporary pattern of fertility differentials and political alignment will remain constant. This projection is then compared with a number of alternatives based on different assumptions about future trends in fertility, migration, and political socialization. Figure 4 shows the proportion of the electorate aged 20 or over projected to identify with the Democratic Party (assuming the two parties comprise the entire electorate) under each of the six scenarios H_0–H_5 from 2003 to 2043. These scenarios assume no realignment of party allegiance or other social changes. Scenario H_0 projects a maximum gain for the Democrats of 2.4 per cent between 2003 and 2043, but this would be achieved gradually: 1 per cent by 2018, 2 per cent by 2038.

By 2043, in the absence of any realignment of allegiance among individuals, Democrats will outnumber Republicans 59:41, an increase from the current ratio of roughly 56.5:43.5. This change is mostly the result of the immigration of those of 'other race', who are more inclined to vote Democrat than are native-born Americans. It is also partly because of the slightly younger age structure

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Table 1 Projection scenarios for preference between Democrats and Republicans, 2003–43

Fertility differential between women of the Democratic Party and those of the Republican Party	Change of preference	Immigration			
		Current[1]	Half[2]	Zero	Double[2]
Current[1]	*No realignment*	H_0	H_1	H_2	H_6 (Figure 6 only)
	Democratic realignment				H_7 (Figure 6 only)
	Republican realignment				H_8 (Figure 6 only)
Growing Republican advantage	*No realignment*	H_3	H_4	H_5	
	Democratic realignment			H_9 (Figure 6 only)	
	Republican realignment			H_{10} (Figure 6 only)	

[1]Maintained at 2003 levels.
[2]Relationship to 2003 level.

of Democrat supporters. This in turn is linked to the greater diversity of party affiliation among younger cohorts entering the electorate than of elderly voters—whose deaths remove their influence on the national voting pattern. As Figure 4 shows, even if immigration were zero (scenario H_2), one-fifth of the gain in party allegiance, 0.5 per cent, would still accrue to the Democrats. The magnitude of the projected change in partisanship is important but not decisive: it is only 40 per cent as strong as the effect observed by Korey and Lascher (2006) for California during the years 1991–2001. Republican supporters will be fewer even if Republican women maintain their past trend of increasing their fertility advantage. Figure 4 shows that there is only a 0.2 per cent difference between corresponding scenarios based on a growing Republican fertility advantage ($H_{3,\ 4,\ 5}$) and the current even fertility balance ($H_{0,\ 1,\ 2}$) (i.e., comparing the results of scenario H_3 with H_0, H_4 with H_1, and H_5 with H_2).

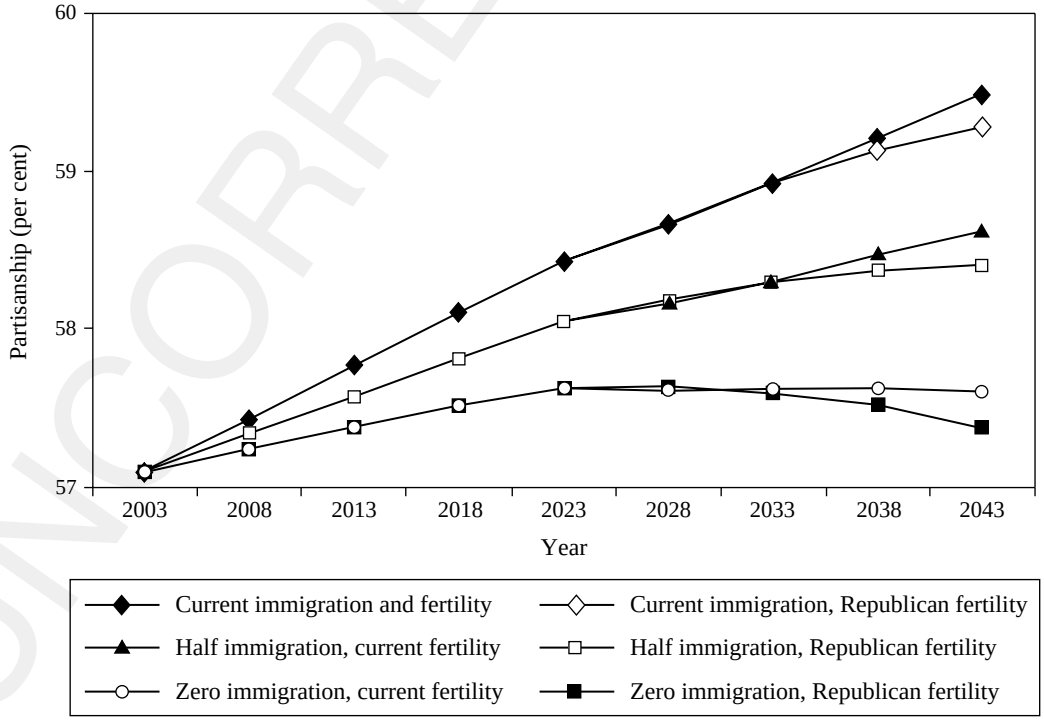

Figure 4 Projected preference for the Democratic Party in the USA, 2003–43, under six scenarios
Source: Authors' projections.

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Long-run projections

Why does the Republican fertility advantage have such a slight effect? One conclusion from these simulations is that fertility differences tend to increase their impact only in the long run, whereas immigration is more important in the short and medium term. In addition, in contrast to what occurs in divided societies like Northern Ireland or Lebanon, a considerable switching of party allegiance over the generations moderates—but does not eclipse—the impact of demographic change on American political allegiance. Population projections are more uncertain when the projection period is over a century rather than over several decades, but long-run projections are useful in revealing the relationship between demographic variables and compositional effects. Consider scenario H_3 of a widening fertility advantage for Republicans, stabilizing at a TFR of 1.8 for Republicans and 1.4 for Democrats in 2043. This scenario will affect partisanship, but with the fertility gap being only relatively narrow in the early years of the projection, its impact will be felt first in maternity wards and primary schools rather than in the voting booth. There will be a 20-year delay before the change in fertility will affect the electorate. Only in 2033 will the Republicans begin to reap the benefits of their (probable) fertility advantage of 2013.

For a comparison, we can consider Northern Ireland, where predictions that Catholics' long-standing fertility advantage would soon tip the electoral balance in their favour (given the 2001 estimate of 53 per cent Protestant to 47 per cent Catholic) have been shown to be erroneous. Changing demography is not likely to translate into a Catholic-majority electorate until 2041 at the very earliest (Courbage 2003). Similarly, the fact that ultra-Orthodox and Arab pupils comprise nearly half of the total enrolment in Israeli primary schools has as yet had only a limited effect on the country's elections and policies (Ben David 2007).

Nevertheless, were fertility trends to continue to widen as before in favour of the Republican Party (reaching a maximum TFR of 1.8 against the Democrats' 1.4 under scenarios $H_{3,\,4,\,5}$), Republican growth would begin to increase by mid-century at the expense of the Democrats. Projections that span more than a few decades are more uncertain because of the increased possibility of social change. It is nevertheless noteworthy that under the scenario of Republican fertility advantage, even at current immigration levels (H_3), the Republicans would have checked their post-2003 decline by the 2050s, and begun to narrow the Democrats' lead. The impact of higher Republican fertility would begin to accelerate the Republican share of the vote by around 2085, reversing the entire Democratic gain of 2003–43.

The contrast between the situations in 2043 and 2103 is noteworthy. In 2043, the difference in partisanship resulting from immigration is 10 times the difference attributable to fertility. By 2103, the effects of the two are approximately equal, with enhanced Republican fertility exhibiting a much stronger effect on partisanship than a halving of immigration. Zero immigration combined with enhanced Republican fertility (scenario H_5) would enable the Republicans to overtake the Democrats before the end of the century. Under the more plausible scenario (H_4) of a halving of immigration and a growing Republican fertility advantage, the Republicans would make up all of the ground lost during the period 2003–43 by 2073. Change would begin to accelerate so that the two parties would draw to within 6 per cent of each other by the end of the century—from the current difference of 13 per cent—with the Republicans surging past the Democrats in the following century (see Figure 5). Of course, much can change in a century, but this model shows that in the very long term, higher Republican fertility could be just as important politically as immigration is to the Democrats.

Political socialization: the inheritance of political views

We are currently in a period of relative stability in partisanship, but much can happen in 20 or 40 years, let alone a century. For the purposes of our modelling, we assumed that children would have the same party affiliation as their parents, regardless of their type of union and whether they supported the same or different parties. That assumption accords with findings in the literature and survey evidence reviewed earlier. In our projections, the first generation, aged 20–24, inherits a division of party allegiance intermediate between that of the mothers and fathers in the parent generation. Of course, any shift in the relative importance of mother's or father's effect on political socialization would have a significant impact on partisan trends.

Following Green et al. (1998, 2002), our expected scenario, presented in Figure 4, assumes that partisan loyalties remain stable over the life cycle and that there is no net conversion from one party to the other. Although at least some conversion will almost

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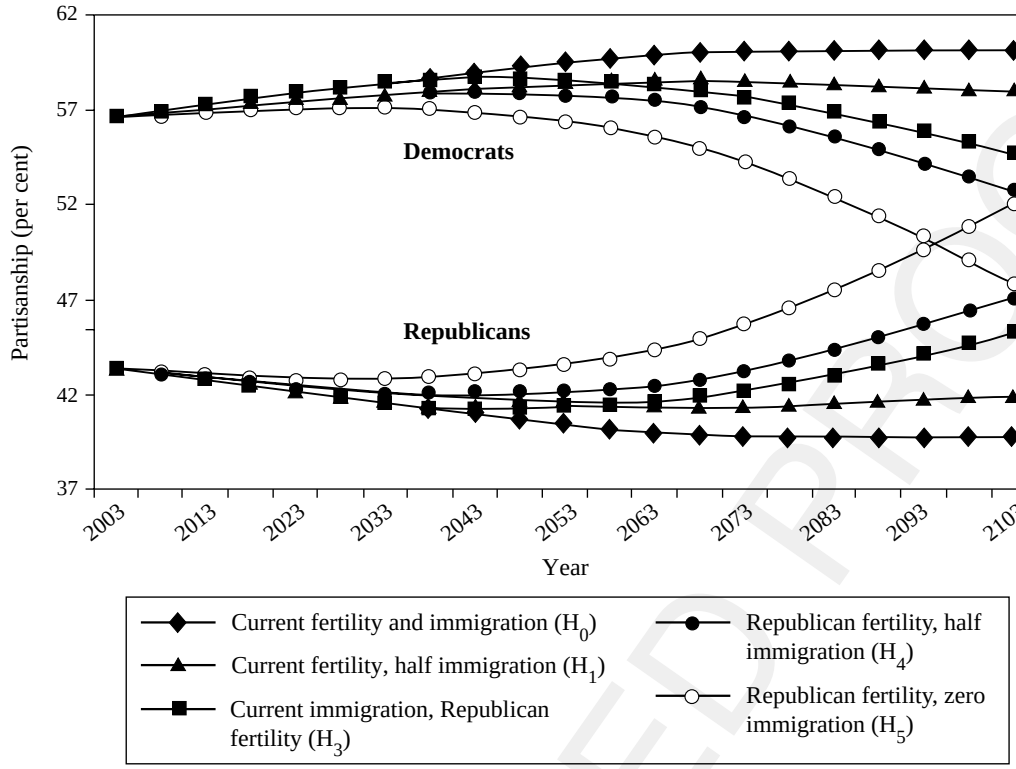

Figure 5 Long-run projections of preference between Democratic and Republican parties, USA, 2003–103
Source: As for Figure 4.

certainly take place in the future, we are in no position to predict it. We merely note that party loyalties of individuals tend to change very little over the long term and that we seem to be in an era of particular stability now that the effects of the post-Civil Rights realignment have largely ended.

Nevertheless, 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 estimate on the rate of conversion from the Democratic to the Republican Party observed for white southerners between 1964 and 1998 (Green et al. 2002, p. 150). This rate was 0.2 per cent per decade on the 7-point GSS/ANES partisanship scale. Aggregating into a simplified two-category Republican–Democrat scale gives us 2/35 or a 5.7 per cent per decade rate of partisan conversion across all age groups. It is necessary to bear in mind that by collapsing a 7-point scale that includes Independents into just two parties, the pace of partisan change is somewhat understated as compared with a model based only on 'pure' partisans, and is thus a relatively cautious simulation of the impact of realignment. Using the two major parties as the categories, we ran six different scenario projections for the period 2003–43 with this rate of conversion both from Democrat voters to Republican voters (scenarios $H_{5,\ 9,\ 10}$) and from Republicans to Democrats (scenarios $H_{6,\ 7,\ 8}$).

Figure 6 shows the projections with these realignments, with each pair of lines giving the maximum and minimum demographic effect on party allegiance for the given type of realignment. In other words, we are assuming the most favourable and unfavourable immigration and fertility scenarios for each party under each of the three realignment possibilities. 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 per cent per decade across all age groups—would dwarf the effects of demographic change. If the realignment occurred towards the Republicans, they would gain between 7 per cent (H_8) and 10 per cent (H_{10}) at the expense of the Democrats by 2043. Conversely, if the realignment were towards the Democratic Party, they would benefit less because they are the larger party. They would still add 7 per cent to their support under their most demographically favourable scenario (H_7).

In contrast, in the absence of any political realignment, the scenario most favourable to the Republican Party, H_5 (zero immigration, widening fertility gap), would lead to a maximum gain of only 2.3 per cent by 2043, whilst the scenario most favourable to the Democratic Party, H_6 (no fertility gap, double immigration), would benefit them by just 1.3 per cent. In other words, about 80 per cent of the change up to 2043 would be the result of a

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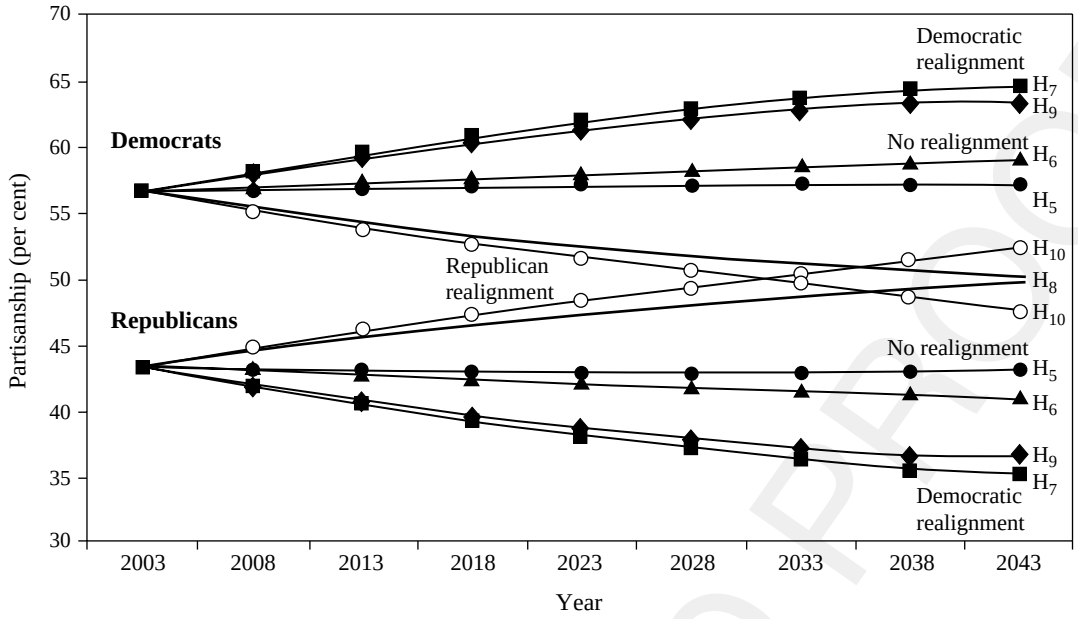

Figure 6 Projected preference between Democratic and Republican parties, under different patterns of realignment and with maximum and minimum demographic effects for each pattern, USA, 2003–43
Note: Top line in each pairing denotes maximal Republican immigration and fertility advantage and lower line maximal Democratic advantage. See Table 1 for details.
Source: As for Figure 4.

realignment of party allegiance and just 20 per cent the result of demographic change. Nevertheless, for the Republicans (assuming realignment was towards them), the most favourable demographic scenario would bring forward the point in time when they would overtake the Democrats by nearly 15 years, from 2043 to roughly 2030.

Nobody expects another post-1964 realignment of party allegiances in the near future, so we need to consider another possibility. Suppose that only young voters aged 20–24 changed their party allegiance—a 'cohort effect' scenario. In this case, change in party support would take place far more slowly and fertility would play a much more important role. For example, the difference in outcomes between the scenarios in which realignment takes place only among young voters (not listed in Table 1) is less than 3 per cent by 2043. The maximum gain for the Republicans is less than 2 per cent, in contrast with the 10 per cent attained under the earlier scenario, H_{10}, in which there is realignment to the Republicans at all ages. Moreover, the scenario most favourable to the Republicans—zero immigration and a widening fertility advantage to the Republicans—accounts for 42 per cent of the Republican gain under the more restrictive realignment resulting from cohort effects, a far larger proportion than under the all-ages realignment of scenario H_{10}.

Demographic change is relatively predictable, but we cannot say the same for cohort and period effects. Assuming the absence of socio-political changes, we foresee a period of modestly rising support for the Democratic Party. The rate of change will be much slower than the shift in the racial composition of America. A major change is projected to occur in the composition of the American population by 2042, from 70 per cent non-Hispanic white in 2000 to 50 per cent in 2042. Given that the growing minority population is inclined to support the Democrats, why is the expansion in their share of the population not reflected in a more rapid rise in Democratic partisanship?

Clearly, the answer has to take account of age structure. Because Hispanic and Asian populations are much younger than whites, they will increase their share of the population in the future. However, Republican and Democrat voters have a similar age structure, which suggests that the former have gained sufficient support among younger minority voters to offset the loss of support resulting from immigration. Indeed, the GSS shows that, since 1990, younger Americans, especially African-Americans and those of 'other race', are more likely to identify with the Republican Party than are their older counterparts. Immigration and higher fertility in some groups are accelerating the 'browning of America', and much of America's future ethno-racial composition is already predetermined by the age structures of the different racial groups. The same cannot be said for partisanship. Its present

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balance is relatively stable, although there will be some momentum favouring the Democrats for the next few decades.

The current similarity in age structure of the two major parties means that the effect of immigration is less than might be assumed: the scenario with current immigration levels (H_0) would increase the number of Democrat supporters by only 1.9 per cent by 2043, despite the overwhelming 72:28 preference of immigrants for the Democrats rather than the Republicans. If immigration were to halve, scenario H_1, Democrats would gain only 0.9 per cent more supporters from immigration by 2043. Evidently, these changes in support are much more modest than the changes that might occur in the event of a major realignment in party support. In short, the demographic momentum built into the age structures of the parties will largely outweigh the effect of immigration on the electorate.

In sharp contrast are the future effects of racial differences in age structure, which promise ethnoracial change rather than stability. Much of the growth of the Hispanic and Asian populations is assured by their age structures even if immigration were to cease or becomes wholly white and Hispanic fertility were to fall precipitously. Were we to examine the age structure of white southerners in the 1980s, we would find a similar case of built-in momentum 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 of the position in 1980 would indicate that cohort replacement would be sufficient to drive the growth of Republican support in the 1990s and 2000s, which is precisely what happened (Green et al. 2002). Currently, however, the age structures of Democrat and Republican Party identifiers are relatively stable nationwide, and new cohorts of voters are changing partisanship more slowly than the nation's racial composition. Much more would be required to lead to a 'natural' party of government, such as that once enjoyed by the Liberals in Canada, the Congress Party in India, or the Ulster Unionist Party in Northern Ireland.

Nonetheless, these results suggest the Democrats will reap a demographic dividend in the coming decades. In a finely balanced, polarized electorate, this advantage is important. Party preference is by no means the whole story—if it were, the Democrats would win every election—but it is among the strongest predictors of voting behaviour. In assessing our results, we must also take into account the extent of immigrants' lower rates of citizenship, party registration, and turnout. Overall, just 39 per cent of Hispanics and 50 per cent of Asians aged over 18 were eligible to vote in 2004, whereas 77 per cent of whites were. Even within the eligible voter population, just 47 per cent of Hispanics and 44 per cent of Asians actually voted in 2004; the figure for whites was 67 per cent.

Referring to these disparities, William Frey writes: 'In Nevada Hispanics account for 20 per cent of the voting-age population but are expected to amount to only 10 per cent of the state's voters. In Arizona, Hispanics are 24 per cent of those who are of voting age, but only 12 per cent of those expected to turn out at the polls' (2004, 2008). A similar disparity is reflected in responses to the GSS: in the period 2000–2006, just 6.7 per cent of respondents were of 'other' race, whereas they made up over twice that proportion in the overall population aged over 18. Our data may therefore be viewed as a good approximation to the actual 'other race' electorate. Taken together, these findings suggest that citizenship initiatives, amnesties for illegal immigrants, voter registration drives, and canvassing among Hispanics and Asians could have an effect equal to, or greater than, immigration.

Because these activities could greatly increase the 'immigration' of new minorities into the electorate, it might be suggested that we should increase our estimate of the boost they could give to support of the Democratic Party. However, it would be implausible to assume that all immigrants are of 'other race' and that all join the electorate as soon as they are eligible. We know that many, if not most, will not join the electorate immediately, if at all. The assumptions in our model therefore under-estimate the support to be expected from *resident* Asians and Hispanics, but probably over-estimate support by future Asian and Hispanic *immigrants* entering the country. In other words, we assume that today's undercounted minorities will join the electorate, and that they will make up for tomorrow's overcounted, non-participating immigrant minorities. Since the two tendencies tend to offset each other and are of similar magnitude, we may fairly conclude that the assumption yields an accurate projection.

Nevertheless, the large stock of unenumerated Hispanic and Asian respondents in the GSS implies that the *potential* electorate is already more Democratic than we have assumed. Conversely, the non-participation of many future immigrants implies that immigration levels will not affect the electorate as much as we have assumed, or will affect it only after a considerable time lag. The result is that a number of the projected changes (for example, the 2.4 per

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cent gain by the Democrats by 2043) are already built into the resident population, while the impact of a moratorium on immigration is correspondingly reduced, and will therefore not remove all its contribution (1.9 per cent) to the expected 2.4 per cent increase in support for the Democrats. None of these considerations alters our overall projected conclusion of a modest 2.4 per cent swing from the Republicans to the Democrats by 2043.

Conclusion

Demographers have tended to neglect the role of demography as a source of independent variables that affect the socio-political composition of populations. The aim of our study was to contribute to the small literature in this subfield. In the wake of Barack Obama's 2008 victory, and notwithstanding the setbacks of the 2010 mid-term elections, some speak of an emerging Democratic majority, built less on a realignment of party preference than on the nation's changing demography. Others point to the fertility advantage of Republicans. Surprisingly, despite a plethora of qualitative work and forecasting by extrapolation, American trends in party preference have never been the subject of demographic projections. Our study used this technique, drawing on data from the GSS supplemented by the ANES and US Census to project possible changes in preference between America's Republican and Democratic parties up to 2043.

Because they take account of every age group, these party 'populations' can be projected to give better estimates of party support than those based on such trends as the share of the population that comprises the elderly, the college-educated, the secular, or Hispanic Americans. In contrast to the pronounced difference in age structure between American racial groups (Asians and Hispanics are markedly younger than native whites), we find that the age structures of the two parties are comparatively similar. There is therefore a momentum for change in the racial composition of the population, but for stability in its composition by party preference.

Having outlined the prospects for a demographically driven change in party support, it is vital to remind ourselves that despite the current polarization of the main parties, the USA is not a divided society like Northern Ireland or Israel. Political marketing and social change have the potential to alter the balance of party identification, which, it must also be remembered, is only one among several determinants of voting behaviour. Of course, Democrat supporters are slightly younger than their Republican counterparts. We expect the proportion of Democrats to increase by 2.4 per cent between 2003 and 2043, and Republican partisans to decline by the same amount. Yet despite their longstanding advantage in partisanship, the Democrats have been out of power far longer than the Republicans since 1968. Independents, especially in marginal constituencies, are critical to parties' electoral success. Seen from this standpoint, a shift of 2.5 per cent—even in a polarized electorate—is insufficient to create an in-built electoral majority for the Democrats.

The fertility of women who support the Republican Party has been rising at an increasing pace relative to that of their Democrat counterparts since the 1950s, and has now reached parity. Within the white population, Republican supporters maintain a considerable lead. If this trend were to continue, it is likely that the fertility of Republicans would overtake that of the Democrats as a whole and plateau at a markedly higher level. Such a scenario would have a negligible impact on party preference before 2043. However, if this scenario were to continue into the very long run (i.e., beyond 2100), the Republican fertility advantage would lead to a reversal of Democratic gains and, in the event of reduced immigration, would result in support for the Republicans overtaking that of the Democrats—a state of affairs never recorded since ANES data began to be collected in 1956. However, a century is a long time. Differential fertility takes much longer than immigration to change the composition of a population.

Overall, the lesson of applying demographic projection techniques to party preference in America is that the effects of migration, fertility, and age structure on the make-up of electorates has been greatly neglected. Period influences change political attitudes and orientations almost immediately, though in ways that are difficult to predict. Cohort effects, which are largely demographic, operate more slowly. Immigration, which is wholly demographic, has a smaller immediate effect than cohort change, but, as in America's case, produces relatively important political effects in the long term. Fertility differences between political parties take even longer than immigration to produce changes in party support, but may bring more significant socio-political change than immigration over the course of a century.

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Note

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