



Research Report

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Race, Immigration and America's Changing Electorate

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Introduction

One of the most profound changes in America's demography this century will be its shifting race and ethnic makeup. The rise of immigration from Latin America and Asia, the higher fertility of some minorities and the slow growth of America's aging white population will have profound impacts on the nation's demographic profile, with important implications for the electorate. The significance of these changes on identity politics, new racial coalitions and reactions to immigration have already been seen in the 2008 presidential sweepstakes. Yet, these shifts are only the tip of the iceberg of what can be expected in future election cycles as Hispanic, Asian, and Black Americans make up ever larger shares of the electorate.

This report discusses the shifts playing out in 2008, but with an eye toward what they will mean in the future.¹ It begins by examining the magnitude of new minority population growth, how it differs from past election cycles, and the lag that immigrant minorities experience in translating their growth into actual voting power. It then goes on to discuss how these groups differ from each other on basic social and demographic profiles and on key political issues, with special emphasis on immigration.

The report addresses the basic question of how important these groups will be in deciding the 2008 presidential election. It assesses their projected impact in key 'purple' battleground states, as well as their potential impacts in safer parts of the country.

It concludes by taking a longer view of what the nation's changing race-ethnic makeup will imply for the future, as both new and old minorities comprise larger numbers of younger and middle-age voters, and as their geographic reach affects ever greater parts of the electorate. At the same time, it emphasizes that, for the present, presidential candidates will need to cope with a racially balkanized electorate, with regionally distinct voting blocks that face sometimes conflicting interests, especially in the highly prized purple states.

Minorities Matter

If it were not obvious before, the crucial role that race and ethnic minorities can play in a presidential election became obvious in 2000 when the results of two racially diverse states, Florida and New Mexico, were determined by 537 and 366 votes respectively. Since then, political operatives' collective attention began to turn to the significant Hispanic population as a target of opportunity. Indeed, President Bush and his political guru Karl Rove subsequently placed greater emphasis on competing with Democrats for the Hispanic voting bloc. At the same time, left-leaning commentators have viewed their rising numbers as part of a new Democratic majority coalition (Judis and Teixeira, 2007). The importance of race and ethnic minority voters is still evolving in American politics as politicians at all levels grapple with the changes, backlashes, and interest groups associated with these new shifts in our population and electorate.

Indeed, most middle-aged Americans, Baby Boomers and their elders, grew up at a time when the primary minority group was African American located primarily in the South and in large cities in the North and West Coast. While Hispanics, Asians, and other minorities existed, they were heavily clustered in specific regions and locales. This is now changing dramatically, thanks to the huge immigration that has made its presence felt on a national level over the past two decades. Yet, its implication for politics may take another two decades to fully comprehend.

Since the 2000 Census, the minority population – all but non-Hispanic whites or ‘Anglos’ – accounted for more than four-fifths of the nation’s healthy 1 percent per annum growth.² For the first eight years of this decade, Hispanics and Asians each increased their populations by nearly a third and blacks grew by 10 percent, compared with a modest 2 percent for whites. **(see Figure 1)** Their impacts on the nation’s race-ethnic profile is both gradual and noticeable such that over five presidential elections, 2000-2016, the white population share will be reduced from about seven out of ten to nearly six out of ten US residents **(see Figure 2)**.

Due to both the clustering and dispersion of this minority growth across the United States, fully 14 states (including the District of Columbia) already are below or near 60 percent white. These include: ‘Majority minority’ states like California, Texas, New Mexico, and Hawaii; other fast growing interior states like Arizona and Nevada which are attracting new Hispanic and Asian minorities, and southern states, like Florida and Georgia that have substantial black populations and are also attracting many more Hispanics.

At the same time, a slew of states in the Upper Midwest, Great Plains, and New England remain predominately white where the new minority dispersion has yet to take effect. What these geographical variations imply for future politics will be discussed below. But it is important to note that the impact of immigrant minority dispersion, as well as the continued growth and southward migration of the black population, is placing the nation in a state of demographic flux, with respect to race-ethnic groups, that has not been seen for some time.

While these new race and ethnic demographic shifts may seem dramatic, their implications for the electorate and for politicians is only at the beginning of what is likely to be a long transformation. One reason for this is the uneven dispersal of new immigrant groups away from traditional gateway regions over broader parts of the United States. A more immediate reason is the slow ‘translation’ of demographic representation into electoral representation. This is especially the case among ‘immigrant minorities,’ Hispanics and Asians, whose representation in the overall population grossly outweighs their representation among eligible voters. This is because a large share of both communities is under age 18 and the adults are less likely to be citizens.

Figure 3 shows that, of whites in the US, 77 percent are eligible voters and among blacks, nearly two-thirds. Only five of ten Asians and four of ten Hispanic residents are estimated to be currently eligible voters due to their youthfulness and unattainment of citizenship status.

Figure 1. Growth in U.S. Minority Populations, 2000-2008

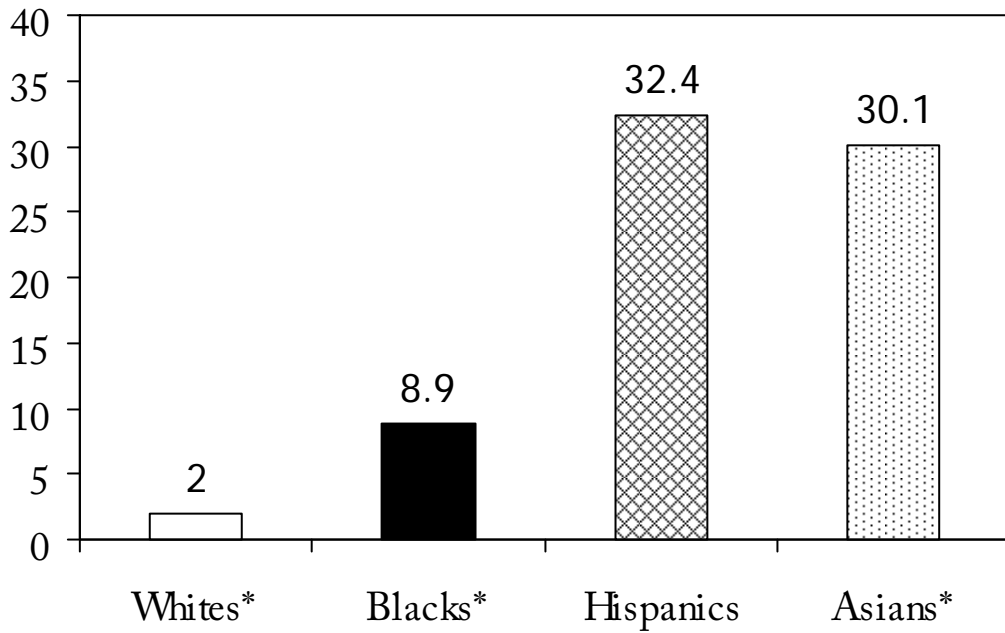
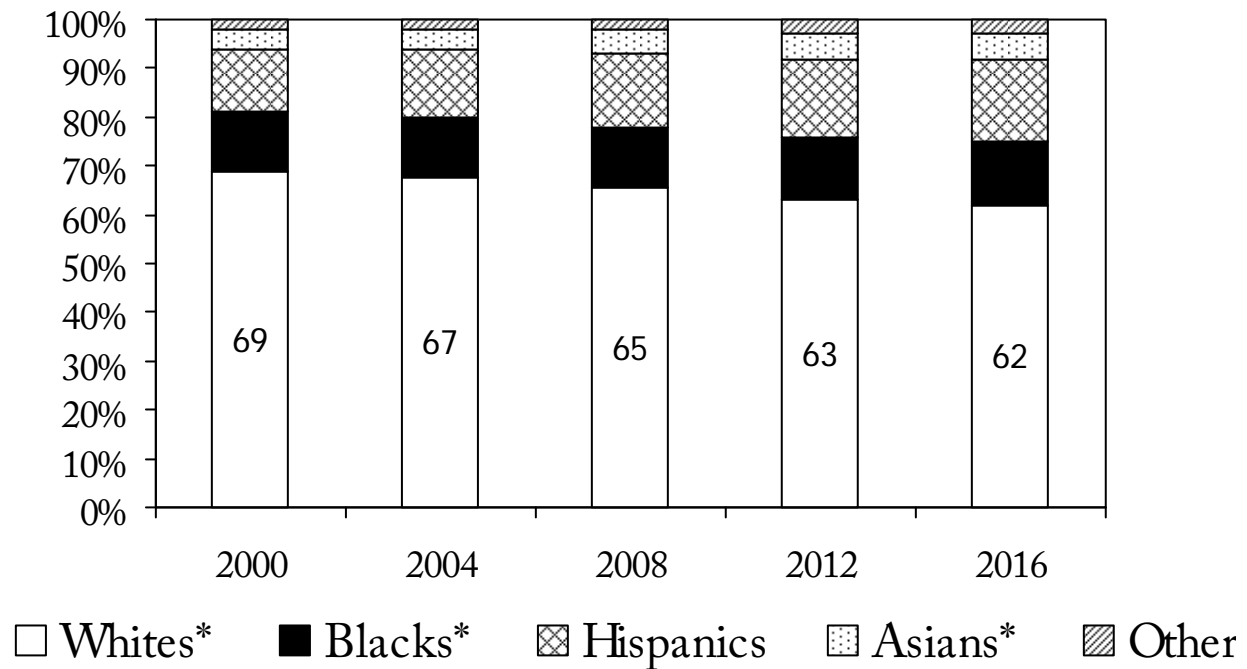


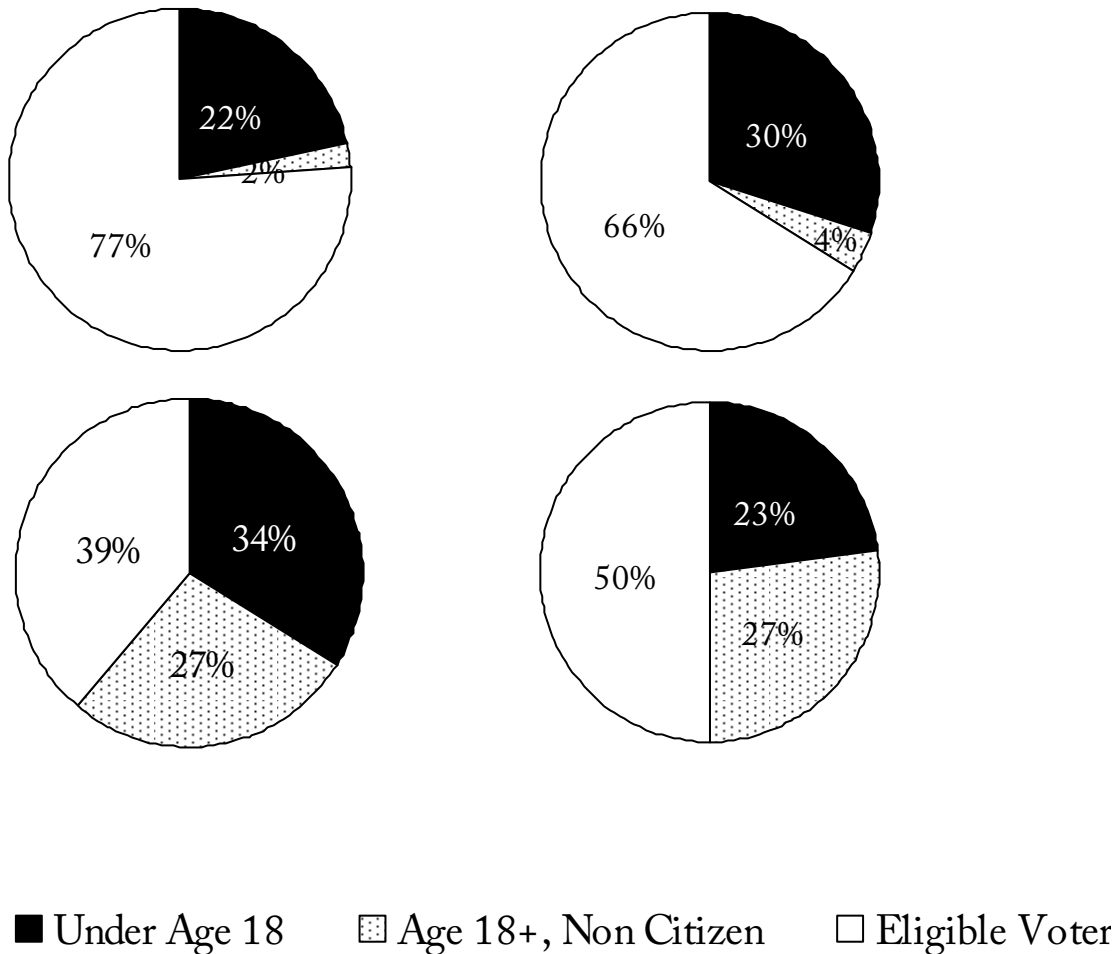
Figure 2. Race-Ethnic Structure of US Population, 2000- 2016



* non-Hispanic

Source: William H. Frey analysis of US Census estimates

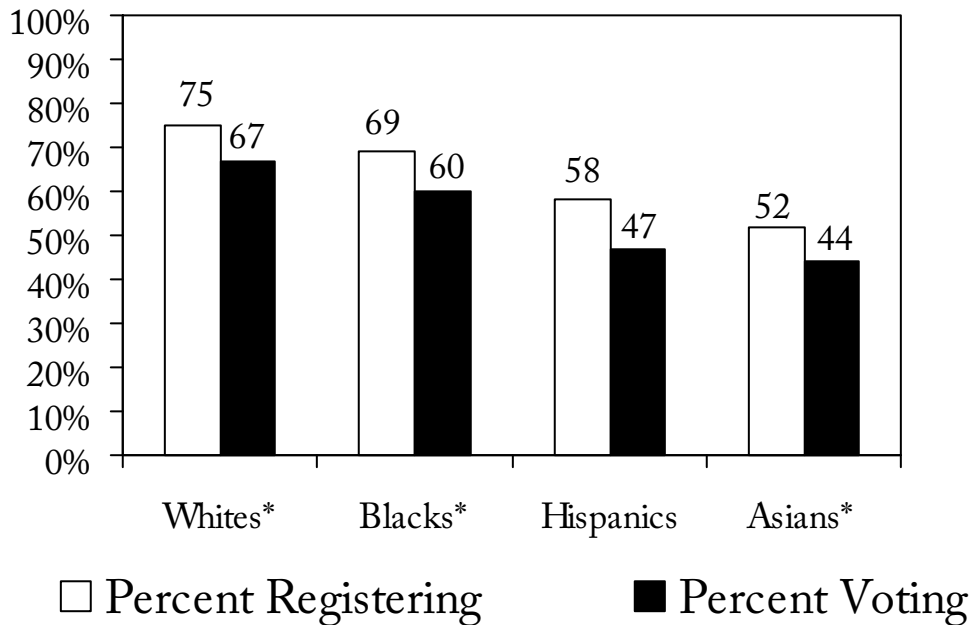
Figure 3. Eligible Voters as Share of Total Population: Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians



*non Hispanic

Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2007 CPS

The problem of under representation is further compounded by the fact that Hispanic and Asian citizens exhibit a lower propensity to register and actually vote than is the case for whites and blacks. Registration patterns for the 2004 presidential election showed less than half of all Hispanic and Asian citizens will vote compared to two-thirds for whites and 60 percent for blacks (See **Figure 4**). Overall, if these past patterns still hold, for every 100 Hispanics residing in the US in November 2008, only 19 will actually vote, and for every 100 Asians, 22 will vote. Comparable numbers of whites and blacks are 52 and 40.

Figure 4. Percent of Eligible Voters, Registered and Voting (based on 2004 election results)

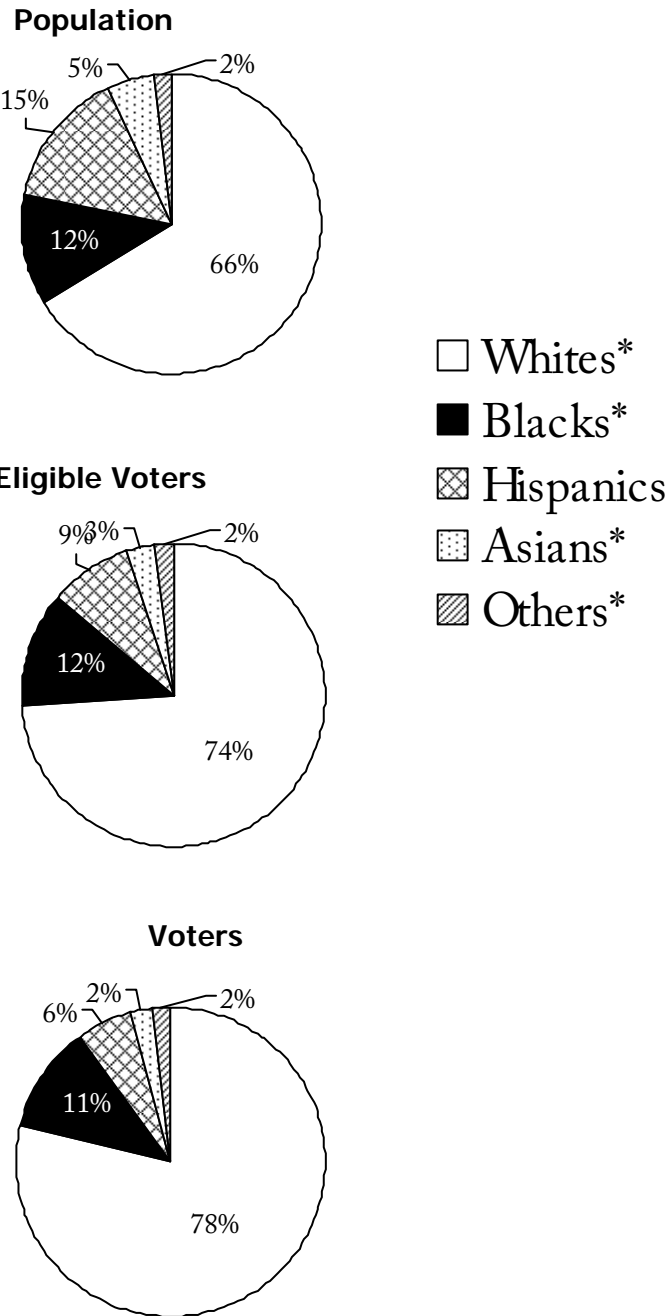
* non Hispanic

Source: William H. Frey analysis of US Census sources

This 'translation' gap can be viewed in a broader context, by comparing the racial profiles of the total population with those of the citizen population and, finally, the actual voting population. **Figure 5** shows that, while it is true that America's population is more diverse than ever before, such that more than one-third are minorities and 15 percent are Hispanic, the actual citizen population is nearly three-quarter white and only 9 percent Hispanics. Finally, the expected voting population is the least diverse at all. Almost four out of five voters will be white and only 6 percent will be Hispanic.

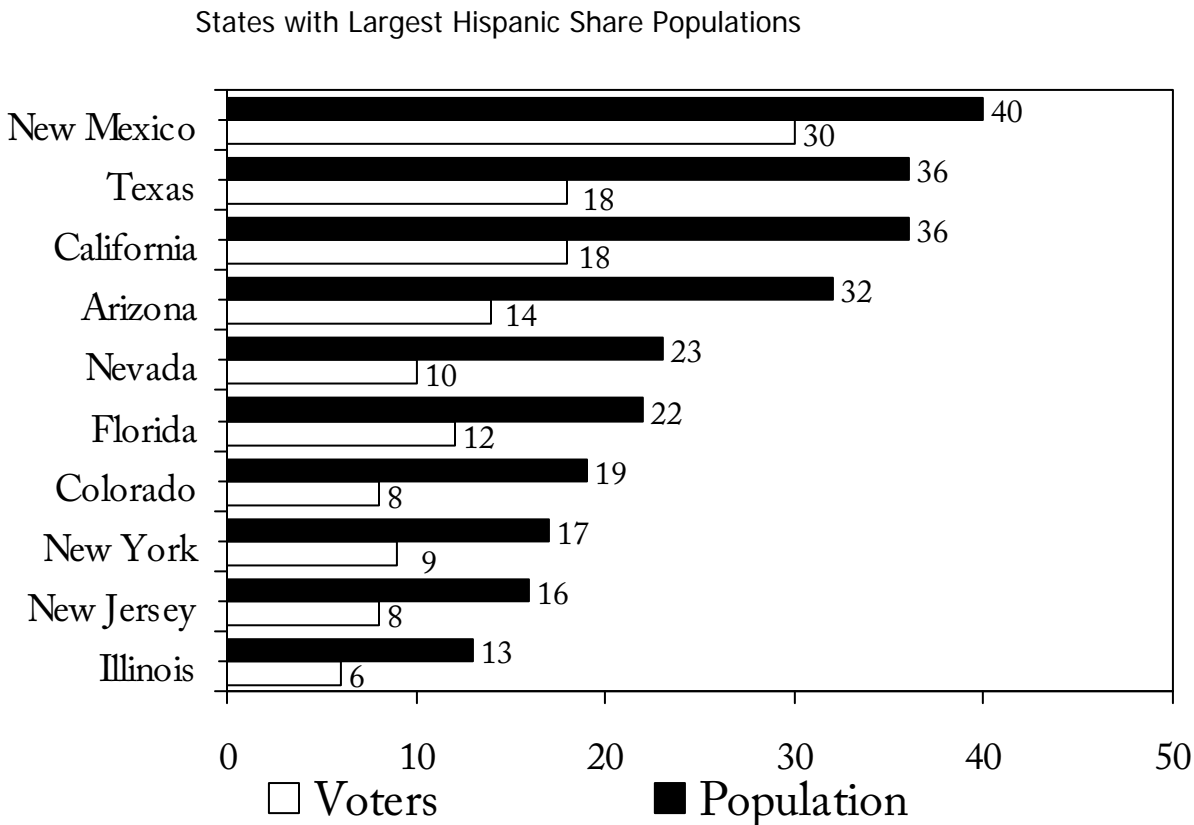
The 'translation' gap varies by states. In many immigrant 'new destination' states like Georgia, North Carolina, and Nevada, a smaller share of the adult immigration population are citizens, are likely to register and likely to vote. This contrasts with the historical destination states like New Mexico, which have a higher share of Hispanic citizens more prone to register and vote. The relative gaps can be seen in **Figure 6** among the ten states with the largest Hispanic population shares. These shares range from 13 percent (Illinois) to 40 percent (New Mexico), the shares Hispanic of their voters range from 6 percent to 30 percent. In states with fast-growing Hispanic immigrant populations like Arizona, Nevada, and Colorado, the Hispanic representation among voters is less than half of its representation in the total population.

Figure 5. Profiles: Total Population, Eligible Voters, Likely Voters



* non Hispanic

Source: William H. Frey analysis and 2007 CPS

Figure 6. Hispanic Percent of Population, Percent of Voters.

Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2007 CPS

In comparison to Hispanics, Asian representation is not high except for a few states such as Hawaii, California, New Jersey, New York, Washington, and Nevada. As with Hispanics, the Asian 'translation' gap is widest in those states where the Asian presence is newer and a higher percentage of them are foreign born. These states include Virginia, Georgia, Kansas, Colorado, and Nebraska.

To what extent can this 'translation gap' be reduced or eliminated? Part of this problem has to do with the fast growth of the under-18 population. Historical analysis undertaken by the Pew Hispanic Center (Suro et al, 2005) showed a widening of the gap between population and voter representation of Hispanics-- attributing it to the continued growth of the young population due to immigration, high fertility, and greater rates of non-citizenship among new immigrants. As a larger share of the Hispanic population becomes native born, however, the translation gap should peak due simply to the demographic structure.

One way to close the translation gap would be to increase the citizenship rate among permanent residents. In late 2007, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced a three-year backlog due to the surge of applications for immigrants during the first part of the year. Then, almost one million naturalization applications were pending approval. This surge

was caused by several factors including citizenship campaigns across the country with the charged political climate of the 2007 immigration debate and the 2008 presidential election. In addition, many applicants were hoping to avoid a significant increase in the application fee for adult naturalization.

The increased demand for naturalization among legal permanent residents is a positive step toward reducing the 'translation gap' noted above. Equally encouraging is an increased registration among Hispanic citizens as evident in the turnout for the 2008 Democratic primaries in most states with large Hispanic populations. Particularly noteworthy is the doubling in California's Hispanic representation from 16 percent in the 2004 Democratic primary to 29 percent in 2008. To further close the Hispanic and Asian "translation gaps," it will be necessary to energize their younger citizens to register and vote.

Identity Politics

The new immigrant minorities represent a break from the recent past in American politics, when the primary minority group was African American with a strong Democratic preference. With the prominence of Hispanics and Asians in all parts of the country, this dynamic is changing. It was already apparent in the 2008 Democratic primaries when Barack Obama, the first nationally viable African American candidate, began to garner black support at the same time that Hillary Clinton got significant support from the Hispanic population. In fact, in some states, the white population, and specifically white males, took on the role as a swing group. Does each minority race-ethnic group represent a distinct voting block? As background, it is important to understand how the groups differ in their social and demographic profiles and how they lean in terms of party identification, ideology, and signature issues.

Minority Demographic Profiles

To understand race-ethnic voter blocks that may be emerging, it is first necessary to look at demographic profiles of key minority groups and their comparison with whites for eligible voters based on recent census statistics (**see Table 1**).

One attribute of the white eligible voter population that clearly distinguishes it from the others is its age. More dominated by Baby Boomers than the other groups, over half are over age 45 and nearly one-fifth are over age 65. Compared with the total US eligible voter population, whites are more highly educated, have higher incomes, are more likely to be married, and are almost universally native born. It is their age more so than any other attribute that drives their demographic profile.

Table 1 : Social and Demographic Profiles of Eligible Voters: Race Ethnic Groups,

| Social and Demographic Profiles * | | | | | |
|--|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| | Total | Whites# | Blacks# | All Hispanics | Asians# |
| Age | | | | | |
| 18-29 | 21.3 | 19.3 | 25.8 | 30.4 | 22.1 |
| 30-44 | 26.4 | 25.2 | 29.0 | 31.0 | 30.0 |
| 45-64 | 35.1 | 36.5 | 32.8 | 27.6 | 34.0 |
| 65+ | 17.2 | 19.0 | 12.3 | 11.0 | 13.9 |
| Education | | | | | |
| College Graduate | 26.7 | 29.2 | 16.3 | 14.3 | 45.3 |
| Some College | 28.5 | 28.6 | 29.1 | 27.8 | 22.7 |
| High School Only | 32.1 | 31.9 | 36.8 | 31.4 | 21.2 |
| Not High School Graduate | 12.7 | 10.2 | 17.9 | 26.5 | 10.9 |
| Family Income | | | | | |
| Over \$100,000 | 22.6 | 24.8 | 11.6 | 14.8 | 35.4 |
| Less than \$25,000 | 22.7 | 20.1 | 35.9 | 28.3 | 16.4 |
| Poverty Status | | | | | |
| Poverty | 9.9 | 7.6 | 20.0 | 14.7 | 7.6 |
| Marital Status (women) | | | | | |
| Currently Married | 53.2 | 57.3 | 31.4 | 48.6 | 60.3 |
| Never Married | 22.1 | 18.1 | 39.3 | 28.2 | 24.7 |
| Divorced, Separated or Widowed | 24.7 | 24.5 | 29.4 | 23.2 | 15.0 |
| Marital Status (men) | | | | | |
| Currently Married | 58.0 | 61.4 | 41.3 | 50.7 | 62.3 |
| Never Married | 28.1 | 24.7 | 42.0 | 36.7 | 31.5 |
| Divorced, Separated or Widowed | 13.9 | 13.9 | 16.8 | 12.6 | 6.2 |
| Nativity | | | | | |
| Percent Foreign Born | 6.9 | 2.7 | 5.2 | 25.0 | 61.4 |
| English Proficiency** | | | | | |
| Speaks English at Home | 87.0 | 95.2 | 95.7 | 28.2 | 28.6 |
| Does not Speak English Well | 1.8 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 11.1 | 13.7 |

*from 2007 US Census Current Population Survey March Supplement unless otherwise noted

** from 2006 US Census Bureau American Community Survey

#pertains to Non-Hispanic members of racial group

Source: William H. Frey analysis of US Census sources

The Hispanic population is the youngest of these eligible voter groups: three out of ten are under age 30, and only about a tenth are over age 65. They are also the least well educated such that over a quarter did not graduate from high school; likely to be in poverty and are less likely to be currently married than whites. And as immigrant minorities Hispanics show a low propensity to speak English at home, only about a tenth of them do not speak English well.

It is nonetheless important to distinguish between the Hispanic eligible voters and adults who are not citizens (**see Table 2**). While census surveys do not identify undocumented residents, it is fair to say that some segment of the non-eligible voters could be classed as such. Compared with Hispanic eligible voters, non-citizen adults are somewhat older and far less well educated. In fact, well over half do not have a high school education, more than a fifth are in poverty and three out of five do not speak English well. This sharp distinction raises the question: to what extent do Hispanic eligible voter preferences and concerns differ from those of Hispanics who are not able to vote?

The demographic profile for black eligible voters lies somewhere in between whites and Hispanics on age and education. They have higher rates of poverty, and are more likely to be single or divorced than any of the other groups. Their eligible voters are more likely to be college graduates and less likely to be high school drop outs than Hispanics. However, their family situation and related poverty levels reflect a unique aspect of the African American profile.

As a group, eligible-voter Asians are by far the most highly educated with well over four out of five holding college degrees or higher. They have high incomes and low poverty levels and are more likely than any other group to live with a spouse. Yet, as the newest immigrant group fully 60 percent are foreign born and 13 percent do not speak English well. Because Asian eligible voters are not that distinct from their adult non-citizen counterparts (Table 2), their interests may well reflect their racial counterparts who are not eligible to vote.

The distinct social and demographic profiles shown for eligible voters in different race-ethnic groups indicate that Hispanics and Blacks rank below Asians and whites on dimensions of education and income. As subsequent sections show, these attributes shape each group's party preferences to some degree, but not completely.

Party Preferences

The suggestion that specific minority groups should be thought of as solid voting blocks is certainly up for debate. African Americans have a long history of voting solidly Democratic. In 2004, when their support for the Democratic candidate, John Kerry, dipped to just 88 percent (from 90 percent in 2000) questions were raised about their disaffection for the party. A Pew Research Center (2007) analysis of blacks who either identify or lean toward the Democratic Party shows a high and consistent level of black Democratic Party identification annually since 1990. Black groups most strongly identified with the Democratic Party are older blacks, more middle income blacks and those with more than a high school education. This strong identification with the Democratic Party is well over 50 percent, among blacks in almost all demographic groups. Nonetheless, there are possible shifts apparent. The 2006 General Social Survey question on Party ID reveals that younger blacks aged 18-29 are almost as likely to identify themselves as independents as Democrats; for blacks aged 45 and above, however, the ratio of Democrats to independents is 3 to 1.

Table 2 : Comparison of Eligible Voter and Non Eligible Adults: Hispanics and Asians

| Social and Demographic Profiles * | All Hispanics | | Asians# | |
|--|---|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| | Age 18+ Not Eligible to Vote | Eligible Voters | Adults Not Eligible to Vote | Eligible Voters |
| Age | | | | |
| 18-29 | 32.8 | 30.4 | 24.8 | 22.1 |
| 30-44 | 43.0 | 31.0 | 43.7 | 30.0 |
| 45-64 | 20.1 | 27.6 | 24.5 | 34.0 |
| 65+ | 4.1 | 11.0 | 7.0 | 13.9 |
| Education | | | | |
| College Graduate | 6.4 | 14.3 | 50.8 | 45.3 |
| Some College | 10.5 | 27.8 | 15.6 | 22.7 |
| High School Only | 26.3 | 31.4 | 19.3 | 21.2 |
| Not High School Graduate | 56.8 | 26.5 | 14.3 | 10.9 |
| Family Income | | | | |
| Over \$100,000 | 5.1 | 14.8 | 24.5 | 35.4 |
| Less than \$25,000 | 38.5 | 28.3 | 24.2 | 16.4 |
| Poverty Status | | | | |
| Poverty | 21.4 | 14.7 | 13.2 | 7.6 |
| Marital Status (women) | | | | |
| Currently Married | 63.9 | 48.6 | 69.7 | 60.3 |
| Never Married | 21.5 | 28.2 | 19.0 | 24.7 |
| Divorced, Separated or Widowed | 14.7 | 23.2 | 11.4 | 15.0 |
| Marital Status (men) | | | | |
| Currently Married | 56.0 | 50.7 | 66.3 | 62.3 |
| Never Married | 36.6 | 36.7 | 30.4 | 31.5 |
| Divorced, Separated or Widowed | 7.3 | 12.6 | 3.3 | 6.2 |
| English Proficiency** | | | | |
| Speaks English at Home | 2.8 | 28.2 | 7.5 | 28.6 |
| Does not Speak English Well | 61.0 | 11.1 | 27.3 | 13.7 |

*from 2007 US Census Current Population Survey March Supplement unless otherwise noted

** from 2006 US Census Bureau American Community Survey

Source: William H. Frey analysis of US Census sources

The Hispanic population has leaned more strongly toward the Democrats than Republicans. Yet many, especially among their leadership, promote them as a 'swing group' in order to keep their issues in play for both parties. There is some substance to this point of view: most notably that their relatively strong (40 percent) support for George W. Bush in 2004 nearly doubled the 21 percent they gave Robert Dole in 1996. Hispanic support for the previous eight presidential cycles ranged from 21 percent to 40 percent for Republicans and from 56 percent to 76 percent for Democrats. Still, a Pew Research Center analysis of Hispanic party identification over the period 1999-2007 shows relative stability in their registration as Democrats ranging from 42-48 percent, with the low point being in 2006. When one counts Democratic leaners as well as those registered with the Democratic Party one finds a general 55 percent in support for Democrats with the exception of

July 2006 when it dipped to 49 percent. Republican preferences among registrants and leaners ranges from 23-28 percent, with the highest points in 2004 and 2006. It would appear, therefore, that the national swing of Hispanics to Republicans as evidenced in the 2004 election has bounced back. On the other hand, it is well known that voting patterns for Hispanics differ broadly across states for different candidates. In 2004, the Hispanic support for George W. Bush was 49 percent in Texas, but only 32 percent in California. But it was in the latter state that Hispanics showed close to 40 percent support in the 2006 election of Republican governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The Asian vote is probably even more unpredictable in light of the varied Asian populations and their geographical clustering in particular parts of the country. In terms of presidential support, Asians split parties in the last four elections--voting strongly for Republican candidates in 1992 and 1996, but favoring Al Gore and John Kerry over George Bush by substantial margins (54-41; 58-44) in the last two presidential elections.

Recent data collected by the Institute of Politics at Harvard University suggests a new Democratic leaning among Asians led by the younger segment of Asian American voters (Adler, 2007). Observers of this trend indicate that the Republican leaning preferences of older Asian Americans can be attributed to their pro-business positions, and among Korean and Vietnamese refugees, their hard anti-Communist stances. Yet younger Asian Americans are less swayed by those issues than to the anti-Iraq War and pro-immigration stance by the Democratic Party. Indeed, it has been speculated that the strong young Asian vote in Virginia helped to defeat Republican senator George Allen after the 'Macaca' incident in 2006. A 2006 General Social Survey question on party ID asked of all adults shows Asians to be somewhat more strongly identified as Democrats than Hispanics, though both groups on the whole have a relatively large (50-56 percent) independent orientation (**see Table 3**).

All three minority groups are more heavily Democratic than whites. This is apparent in the 2006 General Social Survey data shown in Table 3. It is also evident from the presidential results. More whites favored the Republican candidate in each of the last eight cycles with white Republican support ranging from 52-58 percent in elections that did not have major third party candidates. Of course there are well known divisions by gender, class, marital status, and age that are much more dramatic than those apparent within other racial groups. As with blacks, the percentage of whites claiming 'independent' identification is much higher for the under-30 age group, than among those in older ages.

This leads to the question: To what degree do race and ethnic groups reflect distinct political identities? The 2006 General Social Survey data in Table 3 permit a comparison. The detailed responses ranging from 'strong Democrat' to 'strong Republican' show that there are wide ranges of responses within each of these groupings. Yet, there is a strong clustering of responses toward the different ranges of the spectrum associated with each group. The most distinct is that for blacks where almost two out of five respondents consider themselves a 'strong Democrat,' the end of this seven-point scale. Hispanics and Asians range mostly between independents and strong Democrats. And it is whites who span a much larger spectrum, though with very few non-leaning independents.

This same survey queried these groups on political ideology and shows some similar tendencies, though a broad spectrum of responses for all race-ethnic groups (see **Figure 7**). Blacks are clearly the most liberal. Fully one third classify themselves as liberal or slightly liberal. Hispanics and Asians are much more balanced on political ideology than they are on party affiliation. In fact, it is the white group which seems to be most out of balance, showing almost four out of ten members in the conservative or slightly conservative category. Nonetheless, the modal category for all groups is 'moderate' suggesting that, although there are strong party IDs associated with each minority group, the ranges of views within party tend to be fairly wide.

Table 3: Party Identification for Race-Ethnic Groups

| Party Identification# | Whites# | Blacks# | Hispanics | Asians# |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| | <i>Percentages</i> | | | |
| Detailed Responses | | | | |
| Strong Democrat | 11 | 39 | 11 | 9 |
| Not very strong Democrat | 13 | 25 | 18 | 29 |
| Independent, close to Democrat | 11 | 13 | 11 | 11 |
| Independent | 20 | 17 | 39 | 33 |
| Independent, close to Republican | 9 | 2 | 6 | 6 |
| Not very strong Republican | 19 | 3 | 9 | 7 |
| Strong Republican | 15 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| Other party, refused to say | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| <i>N</i> | 3,087 | 550 | 653 | 158 |
| Major Party Summary:** | | | | |
| Democrats | 24 | 64 | 30 | 38 |
| Independents | 40 | 32 | 56 | 50 |
| Republicans | 34 | 4 | 14 | 13 |

*responses, "do not know and don't answer" are not included the universe

** category "Other Party, Refused to Say" not shown

pertains to Non-Hispanic members of racial group

Source: William H. Frey analysis of 2006 NORC General Social Survey 2006, persons 18 and over

2008 Election Issues

What do these patterns mean for the forthcoming election? A hint is given in a survey of likely voters by Peter D. Hart Research Associates in January 2008 asking them to describe their overall point of view in terms of political parties (as opposed to actual registration). It reveals distinct race-ethnic preferences attributable to Blacks, Hispanics and whites. Not unexpectedly, Blacks show a strong tendency to lean or be Democratic as opposed to lean or be Republican (71 percent vs. 7 percent). The disparity for Hispanics is also quite strong, 65 percent vs. 15 percent. Both of these differ from the preferences of whites, which are more even handed but favor Republicans to Democrats 42 percent vs. 37 percent.

These early 2008 likely voters were also asked which issues would be most important to them in the upcoming election. In light of the economic situation when these questions were asked, it is not surprising that 'the economy and jobs' are the number one concern for blacks, Hispanics, as well as for whites, though it is a much more primary concern for the former group. **(See Table 4)** For Hispanics, in fact, there is a virtual tie between economic issues, the war in Iraq, and health care, the latter two issues being also important for blacks.

In light of the importance of immigration as a prospective 'wedge issue' in the 2008 campaign, it is significant that 'illegal immigration' is ranked in a tie for second place, along with health care and the war in Iraq among white voters; fourth among Hispanics, and not among the first five for blacks. The issue of illegal immigration has been used especially by Republicans, who proffered more punitive and strict immigration measures in the 2006 congressional campaign. Although many of their candidates were not successful, it still appears to be an important issue for whites. In fact, whites stand alone in not placing strongest importance on the 'big three'--economy, health care, and war in Iraq -- which were the top issues for 77 percent of black expected voters and 78 percent of Hispanic expected voters. In contrast, after the economy, white concerns are split among a myriad of issues, two of which are illegal immigration and terrorism and national security.

Overall, then, identity politics are evident and quite nuanced. There are strong distinctions between blacks, Hispanics, and Asians with whites on their party preference which, at least for blacks and Hispanics, may be attributable to their significantly lower socioeconomic standing. Yet, even the highly educated Asian population is much more strongly Democratic than Republican especially among their younger members while the economy seems to be the preeminent issue among all groups. The importance of the war and health care, areas that impact more heavily on lower income populations, are more prevalent among blacks and Hispanics than is the case for whites.

Table 4: Issues Most Important in This Year's Elections: Race-Ethnic Groups#

| | ISSUE** | Percent Most Important |
|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Whites* | | |
| 1 | The economy and jobs | 25.5 |
| 2 | Health care | 15.3 |
| 3 | Illegal immigration | 15.3 |
| 4 | The war in Iraq | 14.5 |
| 5 | Terrorism and national security | 11.9 |
| | (N=1107) | |
| Blacks* | | |
| 1 | The economy and jobs | 35.0 |
| 2 | Health care | 22.6 |
| 3 | The war in Iraq | 19.5 |
| 4 | Energy prices | 5.8 |
| 5 | Terrorism and national security | 4.6 |
| | (N=152) | |
| Hispanics | | |
| 1 | The economy and jobs | 25.7 |
| 2 | The war in Iraq | 25.1 |
| 3 | Health care | 22.9 |
| 4 | Illegal immigration | 12.1 |
| 5 | Terrorism and national security | 6.4 |
| | (N=98) | |
| Total | | |
| 1 | The economy and jobs | 27.1 |
| 2 | Health care | 16.5 |
| 3 | The war in Iraq | 15.7 |
| 4 | Illegal immigration | 13.4 |
| 5 | Terrorism and national security | 10.5 |
| | (n=1407) | |

Responses to question, "Please tell me which one of these issues will be most important you personally in this year's elections for Congress and the President."

* pertains to Non-Hispanic members of racial group

** Issues include the following: The economy and Jobs; Health Care; The War in Iraq; Illegal Immigration; Terrorism and National Security; Energy Prices; Reducing Taxes; Others

Source: William H. Frey analysis of Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Immigration Survey of likely voters, January 7-10, 2008

Immigration as an Issue

In the analysis of likely voter issues above, whites showed greater concern for 'illegal immigration' than either blacks or Hispanics. Nonetheless, both of the latter groups, as well as Asians, have a strong interest in immigration for different reasons. Surveys have shown that many blacks, especially those with low income and educational attainment, feel there would be more job opportunities available to them were it not for immigrants (Pew Research Center, 2007); whereas many Hispanics tend to favor high current levels of immigration and are put off by political punitive measures against undocumented immigrants in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2006, Carroll, 2007).

To get a sense of the opinions of likely voters about immigration, **Table 5** shows responses from a survey taken by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research of a sample of likely voters in November-December, 2007. When asked about whether immigration was good or bad for America, more than half of the likely voters from each race-ethnic group regard immigration as good. It is only among Hispanics, however, that a majority of respondents feel strongly that immigration is good for America. At the other extreme, about 45 percent of blacks feel that immigration is bad. Whites lie somewhere in the middle, though typically have a positive view of immigration.

Table 5: Attitudes on Immigration for Voters: Race-Ethnicity, Whites by Education

| Race-Ethnic Groups/ Education | | Responses to Question:* | | | | N |
|----------------------------------|--|--|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----|
| | | Is Immigration Good for America or Is Immigration Bad for America? | | | | |
| | | Good (strong) | Good (not strong) | Bad (not strong) | Bad (strong) | |
| <i>Race-Ethnicity</i> | | <i>Percentages</i> | | | | |
| Whites# | | 43 | 22 | 10 | 25 | 718 |
| Blacks# | | 21 | 34 | 18 | 27 | 97 |
| Hispanics | | 58 | 16 | 4 | 22 | 80 |
| Whites# | | | | | | |
| College Grads | | 51 | 23 | 9 | 16 | 311 |
| Some College | | 41 | 20 | 12 | 27 | 210 |
| High School or Less | | 32 | 22 | 9 | 37 | 196 |

#pertains to Non-Hispanic members of racial group

* universe excludes responses " both, neither, or Don't know/refused"

Source: William H. Frey analysis of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, Democracy Core survey of likely voters, November 29-December 3, 2007

This is not the case for all categories of whites. Earlier studies have shown that less educated whites feel threatened by immigration as possible competition for their jobs. The survey, in fact, shows that such whites have the least favorable view of immigration. Yet, white college graduates, many of whom employ immigrants and benefit from the jobs that they provide, show a strongly favorable view of immigration, almost to the same level as Hispanics.

How do these attitudes about immigration translate into support for Democratic or Republican views of the immigration issue? This needs to be seen in the context of the fierce immigration debate that took over the first half of 2007. A largely Democratic led group of senators had attempted to provide a 'comprehensive' immigration reform bill that would both offer greater enforcement measures directed toward illegal immigration to the US, but would also provide a 'path toward citizenship' among large numbers of undocumented immigrants (Greenblatt, 2008) While led by Democrats, many Republicans supported this bill, as did President Bush who had a long-standing interest in overhauling our immigration system. A conservative Republican rebellion occurred against what they saw as the 'amnesty' provision (allowing undocumented residents to obtain citizenship), which ultimately defeated the bill.

In December 2007, likely voters were asked if they were more inclined to trust the Democrats or Republicans in their views of immigration. (**see Table 6**) Not, surprisingly Hispanics have a much more favorable view of the Democrats' position towards immigration than do whites, but this is not the case for African Americans. Perhaps because of strong African American allegiance with the Democratic Party, blacks' less- than-positive view of immigration, overall, does not translate into a lack of trust in the Democratic Party to deal well with immigration. Equally surprising is the tendency for less-skilled rather than highly educated whites to trust the Democrats on improving immigration. At the time the survey was taken, Democrats were less inclined to adopt a strictly pro-enforcement stance.

The issue of whether immigration per se is good or bad appears less a point of contention than the issue of illegal immigration. A survey by Peter D. Hart Research Associates in January 2008 (**Table 7**) queries respondents on just how big a problem illegal immigration is for the country today. Here again, there are noticeable race differences, but a broad consensus among all groups that illegal immigration is at least a moderately big problem. The distinction across groups varies, however, on which ethnicities deem it to be a 'very big problem'. While approximately half of all whites feel this way, this is the case for less than a third of Hispanics and Blacks. This strong feeling for whites is especially amplified for those with no more than a high school education where six out of ten are quite concerned about illegal immigration. Even among that large segment of whites who have only some college, fully half believe that illegal immigration is a very big problem.

**Table 6: Agreement with Democratic, Republican Immigration Views:
Race-Ethnicity, Whites by Education**

| Responses to Question: On Immigration, I am more inclined to trust the Democrats right now OR On immigration, I am more included to trust the Republicans right now. | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------|----------|
| Race-Ethnic Groups/ Education | Democrats (strong) | Democrats (not strong) | Republicans (not strong) | Republicans (strong) | Neither | N |
| <i>Percentages</i> | | | | | | <i>N</i> |
| Race-Ethnicity | | | | | | |
| Whites# | 26 | 15 | 17 | 30 | 12 | 711 |
| Blacks# | 54 | 14 | 14 | 10 | 8 | 100 |
| Hispanics | 39 | 28 | 2 | 26 | 4 | 82 |
| Whites# | | | | | | |
| College Grads | 23 | 18 | 19 | 31 | 10 | 310 |
| Some College | 25 | 13 | 16 | 31 | 15 | 208 |
| High School or Less | 32 | 14 | 14 | 28 | 12 | 193 |

#pertains to Non-Hispanic members of racial group

* universe excludes responses "both, don't understand, refused"

Source: William H. Frey analysis of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, Democracy
Core survey of likely voters, November 29-December 3, 2007**Table 7: Attitudes about Illegal Immigration: Race Ethnicity, Whites by Education**

| Responses to Question: How big of a problem do you think illegal immigration is for the country today, if at all --- a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem, or not at all? | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|-------|----------|
| Race-Ethnic Groups/ Education | Very Big Problem | Moderately Big Program | Small Problem | Not a Problem or Not Sure | | |
| <i>Percentages</i> | | | | | | <i>N</i> |
| Race-Ethnicity | | | | | | |
| Whites# | 50 | 33 | 13 | 3 | 1,107 | |
| Blacks# | 32 | 37 | 17 | 13 | 152 | |
| Hispanics | 31 | 31 | 19 | 19 | 98 | |
| Whites# | | | | | | |
| College Grads | 38 | 38 | 19 | 5 | 384 | |
| Some College | 52 | 33 | 12 | 3 | 311 | |
| High School or Less | 60 | 30 | 9 | 2 | 404 | |

#pertains to Non-Hispanic members of racial group

* universe excludes responses "both, don't understand, refused"

Source: William H. Frey analysis of Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Immigration Survey
of likely voters, January 7-10, 2008

Some reasons underlying these opinions are indicated in **Table 8**, from the same survey. It shows that white likely voters, especially low-skilled whites, are most adamant about wanting to have illegal immigrants deported, getting control of the border and fearing that immigrants may be taking jobs away from American citizens. On the other side of the spectrum are Hispanics, who feel strongly that immigrants who are here illegally should have the opportunity to earn legal status and that these immigrants are mostly taking jobs that Americans do not want. Among whites, college graduates are closest to these views and blacks typically fall somewhere in between.

Clearly, illegal immigration is a political concern and there is a specific geography associated with it. Recent immigration has begun to disperse widely across the United States away from the so-called 'immigrant magnet' states. As a result, views associated with large numbers of immigrants that were often confined to a few states, like California, New York, Texas, or Florida, have now spread out to other parts of the country. As evidence of this, all 50 states have proposed and enacted immigration-related laws, many of them punitive. These laws focus on verifying the legal status of workers and renters and withholding medical and social services to illegal immigrants and their families (Greenblatt, 2008). According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 1,562 pieces of legislation related to immigrants or immigration were introduced across the states up through November 2007, and 244 were passed into law. These reflect three times the number of bills and laws that were introduced in the previous year.

The dissemination of immigrants into areas that have not traditionally been immigrant magnets can be seen in the attitudes of white voters. **Map 1** classifies states as immigrant magnets (e.g. California, New York); non-magnet fast immigrant growth states (e.g. Georgia, Nebraska); and non-magnet modest immigrant growth states (e.g. Ohio, Maine Montana) Using this scheme, January 2008 survey results indicate that white likely voters who are most concerned about immigration being a very big problem are located in non-magnet fast-growth immigrant states (**see Table 9**). Well over half of whites in these states saw immigration as a very big problem, compared to 48 percent in immigrant magnet states or those that have not seen the immigrant population grow as rapidly. The distinction across these states is especially important for whites that have at most a high school education. Among these likely voters in the high immigrant growth states, 70 percent feel that illegal immigration is a big problem, compared to 58 percent in the immigrant magnet states. In essence, it is the fast growth of immigrants in areas that have not had a long history of receiving them which seems to raise the greatest concern among whites, and especially less-educated whites.

This is also the case when one compares the attitudes about illegal immigration between urban areas and suburban and small town areas (**see Figure 8**). Here again, it is the less educated whites in suburban areas that have the highest negative attitudes about immigration. Suburban areas, to which immigrants are just starting to filter, are where negative attitudes toward immigration are largest.

Table 8: Illegal Immigration Issues for Voters: Race-Ethnicity, Whites by Education

| Issues: | <i>Percentages</i> | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------|-----------|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| | <u>Race-Ethnicity</u> | | | <u>Education</u> | | |
| | Whites* | Blacks | Hispanics | HS or Less | Some College | College Grads |
| I. Percent who Strongly Favor*: | | | | | | |
| Find and deport immigrants who are in the country illegally | 48 | 39 | 18 | 59 | 51 | 32 |
| Allow immigrants who are here illegally to receive earned legal status, if they obey U.S. laws and pay taxes | 29 | 39 | 60 | 21 | 28 | 39 |
| II Which of these two statements do you agree with more? | | | | | | |
| Getting control of the border | 46 | 29 | 22 | 54 | 48 | 37 |
| Requiring illegal immigrants to become legal | 50 | 66 | 74 | 43 | 48 | 59 |
| Not sure | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| III Do you think illegal immigrants coming to this country today take jobs away from American citizens, or do they mostly take jobs that Americans do not want? | | | | | | |
| Mostly take jobs away from American citizens | 44 | 37 | 9 | 54 | 43 | 33 |
| Mostly take jobs Americans do not want | 47 | 57 | 85 | 36 | 48 | 59 |
| Not sure | 9 | 6 | 6 | 10 | 9 | 8 |
| <i>N</i> | 1,107 | 152 | 98 | 404 | 311 | 384 |

#pertains to Non-Hispanic members of racial group

* choices include: strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, strongly oppose, not sure

Source: William H. Frey analysis of Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Immigration Survey of likely voters, January 7-10, 2008

Table 9: Attitudes on Immigration by State Grouping, White Likely Voters

| White Likely Voters by Education/ Response to Immigration Question | State Grouping* | | | Total United States |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| | Immigrant Magnet State | NonMagnet High Immigrant Growth | NonMagnet Moderate Immigrant Growth | |
| Question: How big a problem do you think illegal immigration is for the country today, if at all — a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all? | | | | |
| Whites | | | | |
| Very big problem | 48 | 55 | 48 | 50 |
| Moderately big problem | 33 | 30 | 38 | 33 |
| Small problem | 15 | 13 | 11 | 13 |
| Not a problem | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Not sure | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Whites, High School Graduates or Less | | | | |
| Very big problem | 58 | 70 | 53 | 60 |
| Moderately big problem | 26 | 25 | 39 | 30 |
| Small problem | 14 | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| Not a problem | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Not sure | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Whites, Some College or More | | | | |
| Very big problem | 43 | 47 | 43 | 44 |
| Moderately big problem | 37 | 32 | 37 | 35 |
| Small problem | 16 | 18 | 15 | 16 |
| Not a problem | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Not sure | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 |

*Immigrant Magnet State= States where Foreign Born comprise at least 10% of 2006 Population
 NonMagnet High Immigrant Growth= NonMagnets where 1990-2006 Immigrant growth exceeded 150%
 NonMagnet Moderate Immigrant Growth = NonMagnets with 1990-2006 Immigrant growth less than 150%

Source: William H. Frey analysis of Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Immigration Survey
 of likely voters, January 7-10, 2008

Table 10: Race-Ethnic Compositions of Likely Voting Population, US States in Red-Blue-Purple Categories
(states within categories ranked by lowest Bush-Kerry margin in 2004 Presidential election)

| Categories of States/ | Bush-Kerry Margin '04 | Race Ethnic Composition of Likely Voters ^a | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---------|---------|-----------|
| | | Whites# | Blacks# | Asians# | Hispanics |
| Fast Growing Purple States | | | | | |
| New Mexico | 0.8% Bush | 55.7 | 2.0 | 1.1 | 30.4 |
| Nevada | 2.6% Bush | 76.2 | 6.3 | 4.8 | 9.7 |
| Oregon | 4.2% Kerry | 91.2 | 0.9 | 2.1 | 2.1 |
| Colorado | 4.7% Bush | 87.0 | 2.3 | 0.6 | 8.4 |
| Florida | 5.0% Bush | 74.7 | 11.4 | 1.0 | 11.9 |
| Washington | 7.2% Kerry | 87.4 | 2.1 | 4.2 | 2.6 |
| Delaware | 7.6% Kerry | 79.7 | 15.7 | 1.6 | 2.0 |
| Virginia | 8.2% Bush | 79.8 | 15.4 | 1.6 | 2.2 |
| Arizona | 10.5% Bush | 77.1 | 2.7 | 1.2 | 14.3 |
| Slow Growing Purple States | | | | | |
| Wisconsin | 0.4% Kerry | 91.6 | 4.0 | 0.6 | 2.5 |
| Iowa | 0.7% Bush | 94.4 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 1.5 |
| New Hampshire | 1.4% Kerry | 96.6 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 1.2 |
| Ohio | 2.1% Bush | 86.6 | 10.0 | 0.4 | 1.7 |
| Pennsylvania | 2.5% Kerry | 89.2 | 7.8 | 0.5 | 2.0 |
| Michigan | 3.4% Kerry | 83.3 | 12.5 | 1.0 | 1.8 |
| Minnesota | 3.5% Kerry | 93.0 | 2.7 | 1.5 | 1.3 |
| New Jersey | 6.7% Kerry | 73.1 | 12.5 | 5.5 | 8.3 |
| Missouri | 7.2% Bush | 85.2 | 11.3 | 0.6 | 1.1 |
| Hawaii | 8.7% Kerry | 28.5 | 1.1 | 48.1 | 4.4 |
| Maine | 9.0% Kerry | 96.7 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0.5 |
| Arkansas | 9.8% Bush | 84.0 | 12.7 | 0.4 | 1.1 |
| Solid Blue States | | | | | |
| California | 10.0% Kerry | 64.1 | 7.7 | 8.4 | 17.7 |
| Illinois | 10.3% Kerry | 76.3 | 15.5 | 2.0 | 5.5 |
| Connecticut | 10.4% Kerry | 85.3 | 7.1 | 1.9 | 5.2 |
| Maryland | 13.0% Kerry | 68.5 | 25.4 | 2.3 | 2.5 |
| New York | 18.3% Kerry | 74.0 | 12.3 | 3.8 | 9.1 |
| Vermont | 20.1% Kerry | 96.9 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| Rhode Island | 20.8% Kerry | 90.4 | 2.8 | 1.3 | 4.2 |
| Massachusetts | 25.2% Kerry | 90.4 | 3.4 | 2.8 | 2.6 |
| District of Columbia | 79.8% Kerry | 42.5 | 52.1 | 1.4 | 2.9 |
| Solid Red States | | | | | |
| North Carolina | 12.4% Bush | 74.0 | 21.7 | 0.9 | 0.6 |
| West Virginia | 12.9% Bush | 96.7 | 2.0 | 0.3 | 0.1 |
| Tennessee | 14.3% Bush | 82.2 | 15.2 | 1.2 | 0.3 |
| Louisiana | 14.5% Bush | 69.9 | 27.9 | 0.3 | 1.7 |
| Georgia | 16.6% Bush | 67.2 | 30.0 | 0.8 | 1.4 |
| South Carolina | 17.1% Bush | 70.5 | 26.3 | 0.5 | 1.6 |
| Mississippi | 19.7% Bush | 60.1 | 37.9 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| Kentucky | 19.9% Bush | 90.9 | 7.0 | 0.2 | 1.0 |
| Montana | 20.5% Bush | 92.8 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.9 |
| Indiana | 20.7% Bush | 90.2 | 7.5 | 0.3 | 1.3 |
| South Dakota | 21.5% Bush | 94.0 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 1.8 |
| Texas | 22.9% Bush | 66.6 | 12.2 | 1.9 | 18.3 |
| Kansas | 25.4% Bush | 90.0 | 4.2 | 0.8 | 3.0 |
| Alabama | 25.6% Bush | 71.6 | 26.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| Alaska | 25.6% Bush | 78.6 | 2.3 | 2.6 | 2.2 |
| North Dakota | 27.4% Bush | 91.0 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.5 |
| Oklahoma | 31.1% Bush | 77.9 | 6.1 | 0.2 | 1.5 |
| Nebraska | 33.2% Bush | 92.4 | 2.6 | 0.5 | 2.0 |
| Idaho | 38.1% Bush | 95.7 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 1.9 |
| Wyoming | 39.8% Bush | 92.9 | 0.5 | 0.1 | 4.2 |
| Utah | 45.5% Bush | 91.8 | 1.0 | 1.9 | 3.4 |

* does not sum to 100% due to omission of other racial groups

non-Hispanic members of race

Source: William H. Frey analysis of US Census sources

Map 1. Immigrant Magnet and Growth States

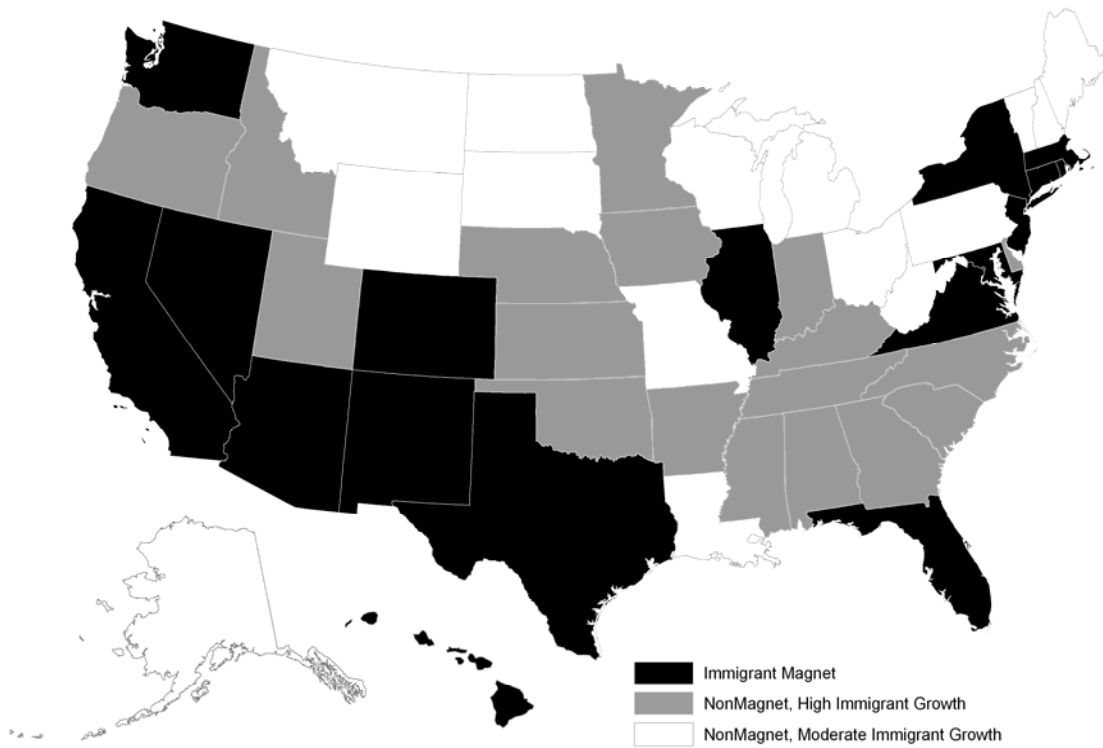
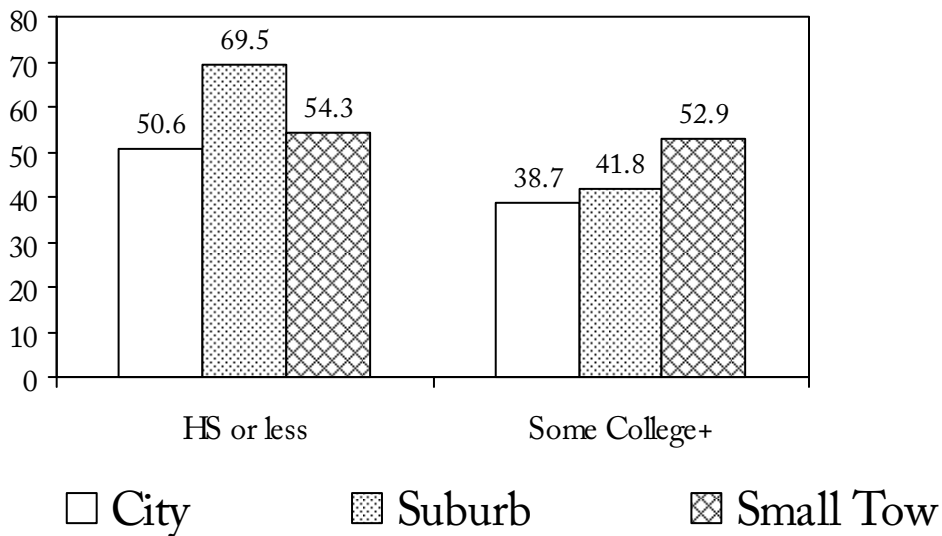


Figure 8. Immigration- A Very Big Problem: White Likely Voters for Urban-Suburban Areas



Source: Frey analysis of Peter D. Hart Immigration Survey, 2008

Overall, then, immigration, especially illegal immigration appears to be a bigger issue for whites than for blacks and Hispanics. It is more likely to become a 'wedge issue' in parts of the country where immigrants are growing rapidly. Many of these areas are 'purple' battlegrounds states, where in some cases, whites and, in other cases, Hispanics represent significant voting blocks.

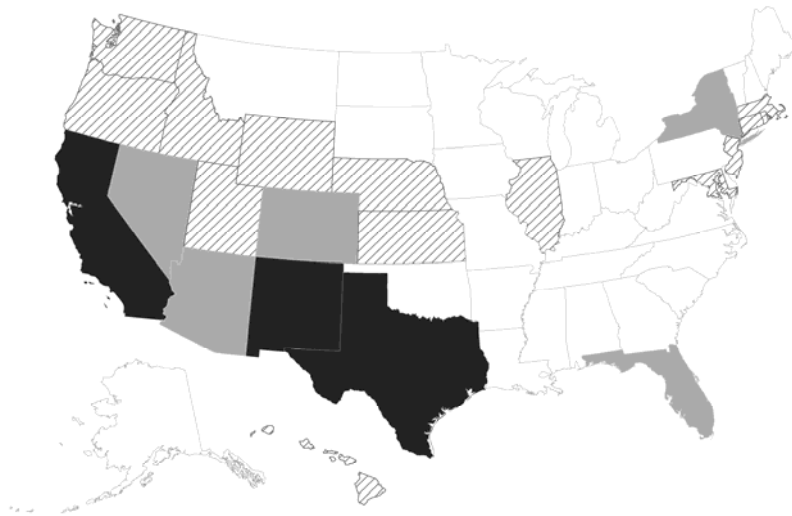
Race and America's Political Geography

The report thus far has taken more of a national view of trends than one specific to regions. Yet, because in presidential politics the focus is often on states, it is useful to examine how these trends play out in states and regions that are important politically. Hispanic, black, Asian, and white populations are distributed quite differently across the country, even taking into account the broad dispersal of immigrant minorities to new destinations. **Maps 2, 3, 4 and 5** provide perspective by showing states where these groups comprise the greatest shares of eligible voters. They also point up where recent minority group dispersal has begun.

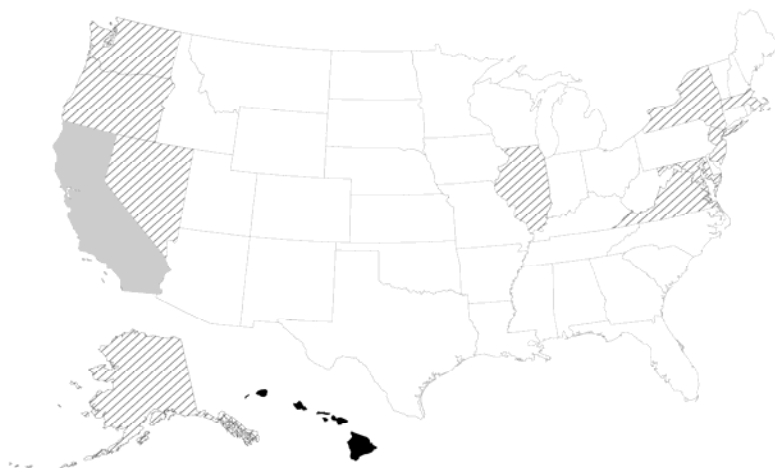
For instance, the inter-mountain West states like Arizona, Nevada, and Colorado now show significant Hispanic shares of their electorate. These states, as well as New Mexico and Florida, are important battlegrounds where Hispanics can have a significant say in the next election. The Asian eligible voter population is quite small and has its biggest effect in California and Hawaii. Yet, as has been seen in the Nevada 2008 Democratic primary, as well as local elections in states like Washington and Virginia, Asian voters can make a difference even when they make up a relatively small segment of the electorate. Blacks have a long history of affecting elections in the South as well as Northern cities. The recent phenomenon of black middle class professionals returning to the South may serve to tip elections in this Republican-dominated region toward socially progressive issues, if not toward more Democratic candidacies. The rising black population in Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina, for example, may soon serve to uproot long-standing Republican dominant elections in those states.

Finally, a look at white eligible voters in Map 5 makes plain that broad swaths of states in New England, the Midwest, Upper Great Plains, and Appalachia are still overwhelmingly white. Population shifts over the last 20 years continue to move whites from the snowbelt down to the Southeast and from the west coast into the inter-mountain West, the same states that are now attracting Hispanics and blacks. Yet, because most Northern and Midwest states do not attract as many new minorities and are sustaining an out-migration of whites, they are left with slow-growing aging white populations. In these states, voter profiles and issues differ strikingly from those in states with larger minority populations. And the fact that whites tend to be more well represented in the voting population than any other minority group gives them an outsized influence, relative to their population, in most states electorates.

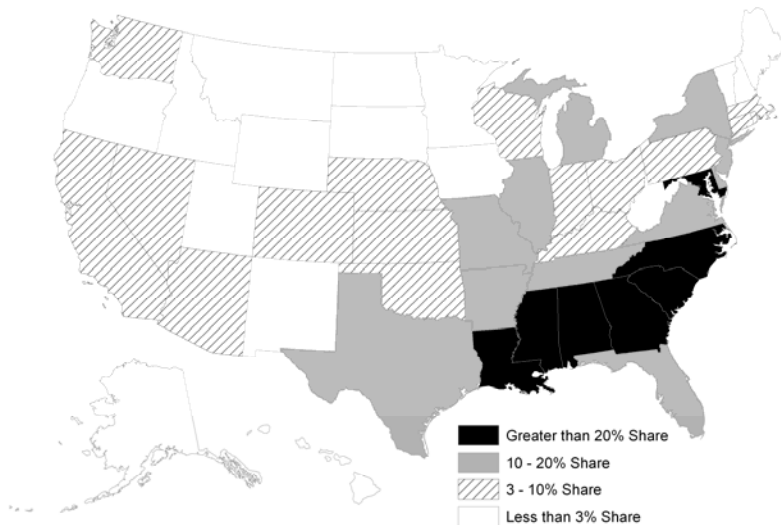
Map 2. Hispanic Share of Eligible Voters

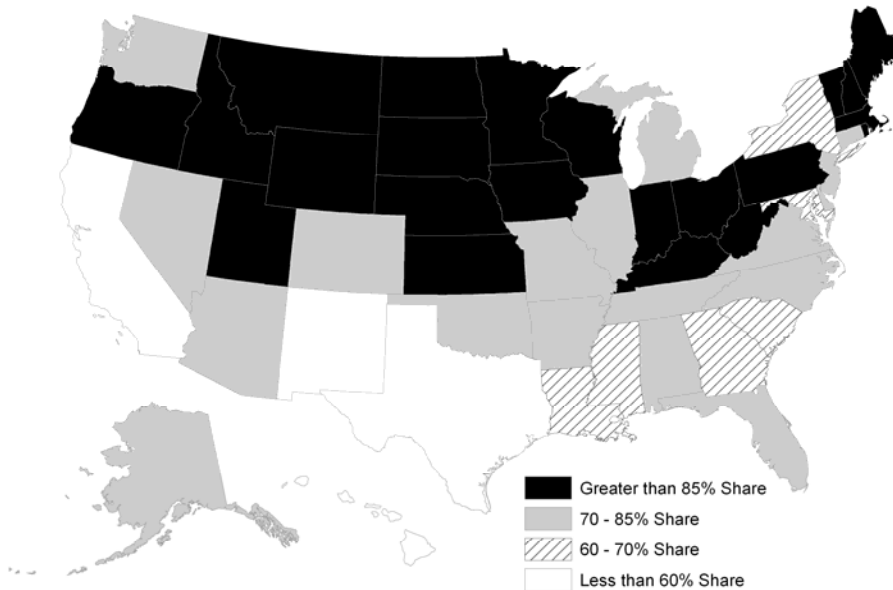


Map 3. Asian Share of Eligible Voters

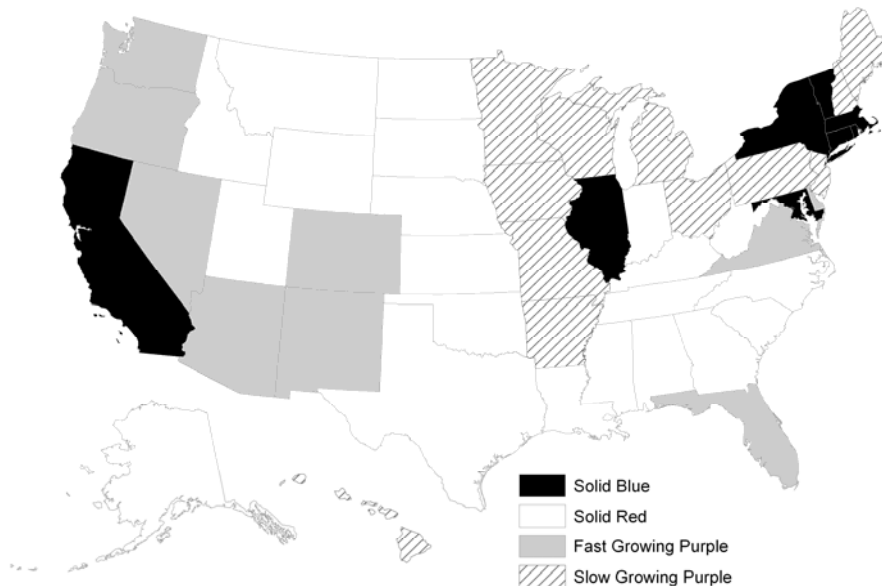


Map 4. Black Share of Eligible Voters



Map 5. White Share of Eligible Voters

Having reviewed these regional racial distributions of eligible voters, it is useful to superimpose on them a map of the states that will be most and least 'up for grabs' in the 2008 presidential election. To do this, I have classed states into four categories based, in large measure, on the results of the 2004 presidential election. (See **Map 6 and Table 10 for list**) These include nine **solid blue states** (including Washington, DC) and lying mostly on the coasts where John Kerry beat George Bush by a greater than 10 percent margin; 21 **solid red states** located mostly in the nation's South, Great Plains, and Northern Mountain West that were won by Bush by more than 10 percent.

Map 6. Red, Blue and Purple States

I have designated two categories of 'purple' states, so-called battleground states, which Bush or Kerry carried by less than 10 percent, plus Arizona, which is now widely viewed as a battleground state. These two categories distinguish between 'fast-growing purple states' and 'slow-growing purple states.' These categories are meaningful because it is the former states that are experiencing the turbulent demographic shifts associated with new immigrant minorities, as well as fast growth of their white middle class populations. There are 9 *fast-growing purple states*, most located in the western part of the United States except for Florida, Virginia and Delaware. The second group of purple states are 12 *slow-growing purple states*, which are located in the eastern and central part of the United States and are not experiencing significant demographic change except for recent but small growth in their immigrant or new minority populations. Compared with the fast-growing purple states, population shifts in these areas are stagnant and emphasize communities with long term residents.

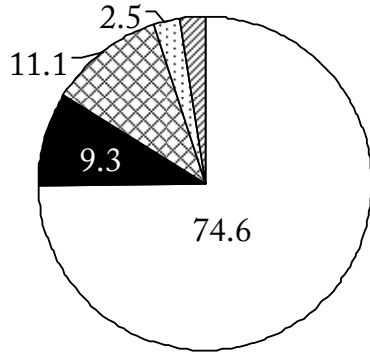
Putting together the racial clustering of the population with my classification of red, blue, and purple states yields distinct race-ethnic signatures of eligible voters in each category of state (see **Figure 9**). The Solid Blue category of states, located mostly on the nation's urban immigrant magnet coasts, has the most racially diverse population. This stands in contrast to the Solid Red category of states which is generally whiter, but with a large black population because it includes a good number of southern states. However, the main focus here is the distinction between the racial profiles of the Fast-Growing and Slow-Growing Purple states. The Fast-Growing Purple states, with their rapidly changing new minority populations are far more diverse than the Slow-Growing Purple states in the racial profiles of their eligible voters.

The former are states where minorities are having a substantial impact in the *change* in their eligible voter populations. As **Figure 10** indicates, the eligible voter populations in Fast-Growing Purple states have grown by over 12 percent in the seven years since the 2000 election was held, while the Slow-Growing Purple states have grown only about a third as much. Moreover, race-ethnic minorities—especially Hispanics, Asians and others—accounted for almost half of the net gain for these states, the result of the revolving door of many in and out movers in this dynamic part of the country. In contrast, the Slow-Growing Purple states are gaining mostly from whites where the 'natural increase' of new voters rather than in-migration is its major source.

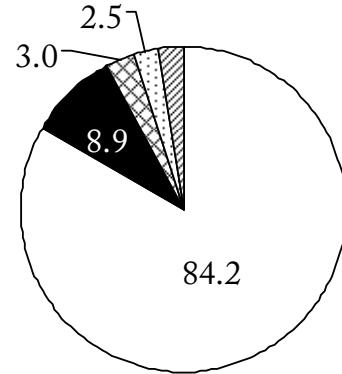
The growth patterns of eligible voters in five Fast-Growing Purple states are depicted in **Figure 11**. In Nevada the eligible voters grew by 27 percent with Hispanics, Asians, and Blacks contributing more than half of these gains. Similarly, Arizona grew by nearly 20 percent with two-thirds of that growth contributed by minorities. The significance of these eligible voters when translated into estimated voters is shown in **Table 10**, which indicates that the Hispanic share of currently estimated voters is far greater than the 2004 Bush margin of victory in New Mexico, Nevada, Colorado, Florida, and Arizona.

Figure 9. Eligible Voter Profiles: Red-Blue-Purple State Categories

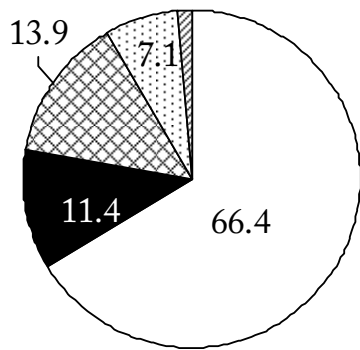
Fast Growing Purple



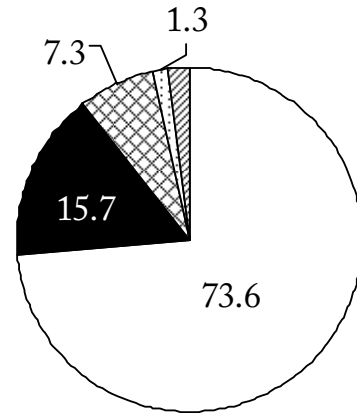
Slow Growing Purple



Solid Blue



Solid Red



Whites*
 Blacks*
 Hispanics
 Asians*
 Others*

* non Hispanic

Source: William H. Frey analysis and 2007 CPS

Figure 10. Growth in Eligible Voters, 2000-7 by Race-Ethnicity: Fast Growing and Slow Growing Purple States

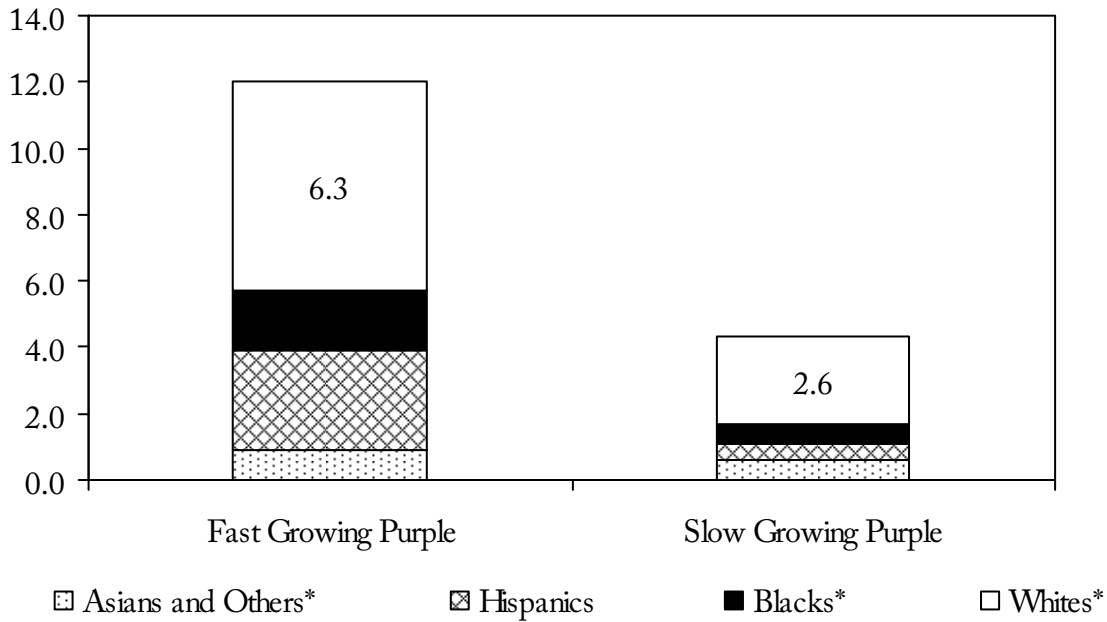
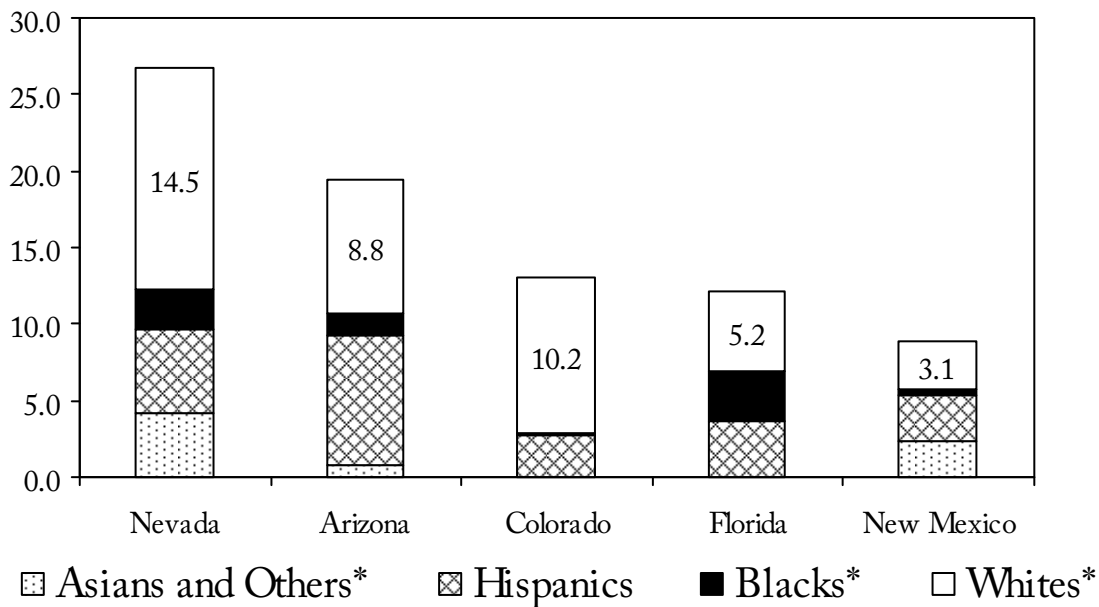


Figure 11. Growth In Eligible Voters, 2000-7 by Race-Ethnicity: Five Fast Growing Purple States

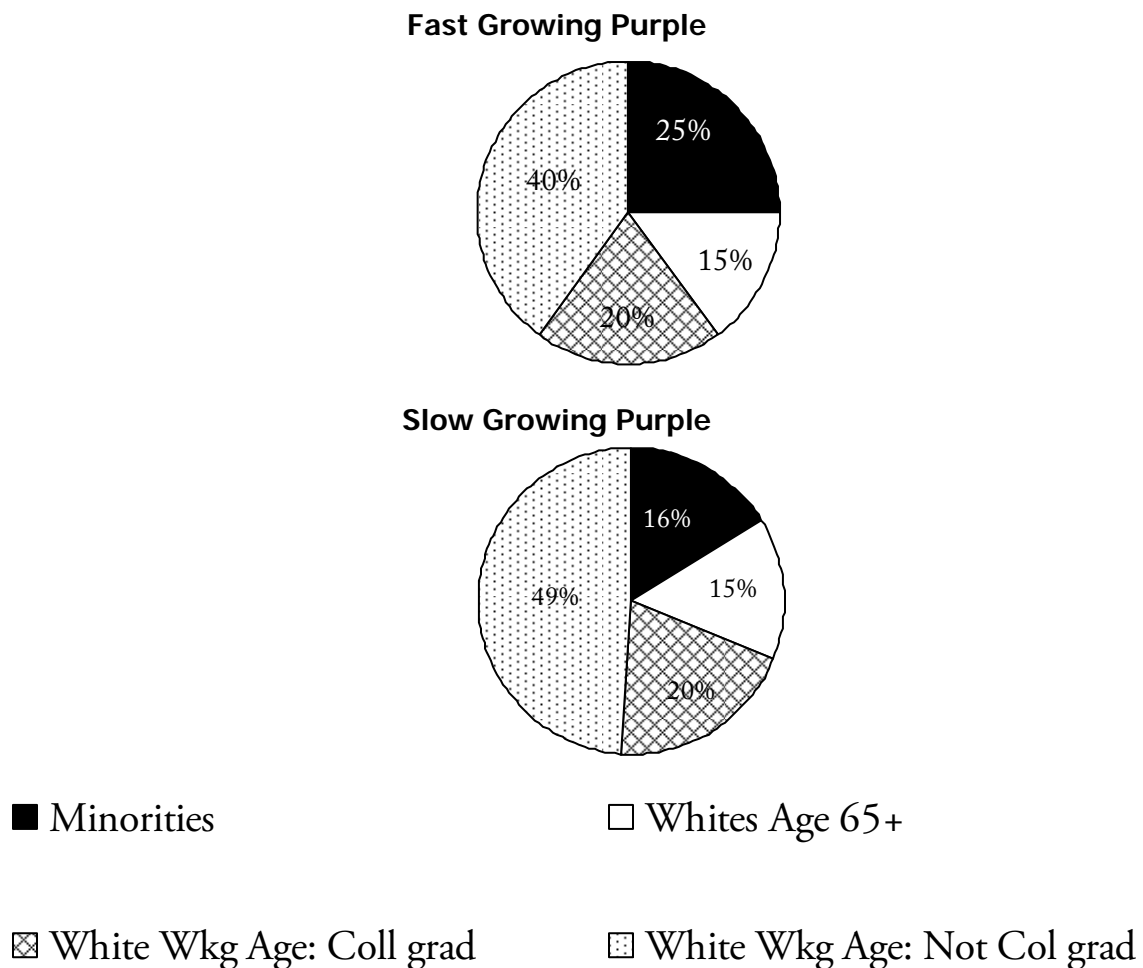


* non Hispanic

Source: William H. Frey analysis of US Census sources

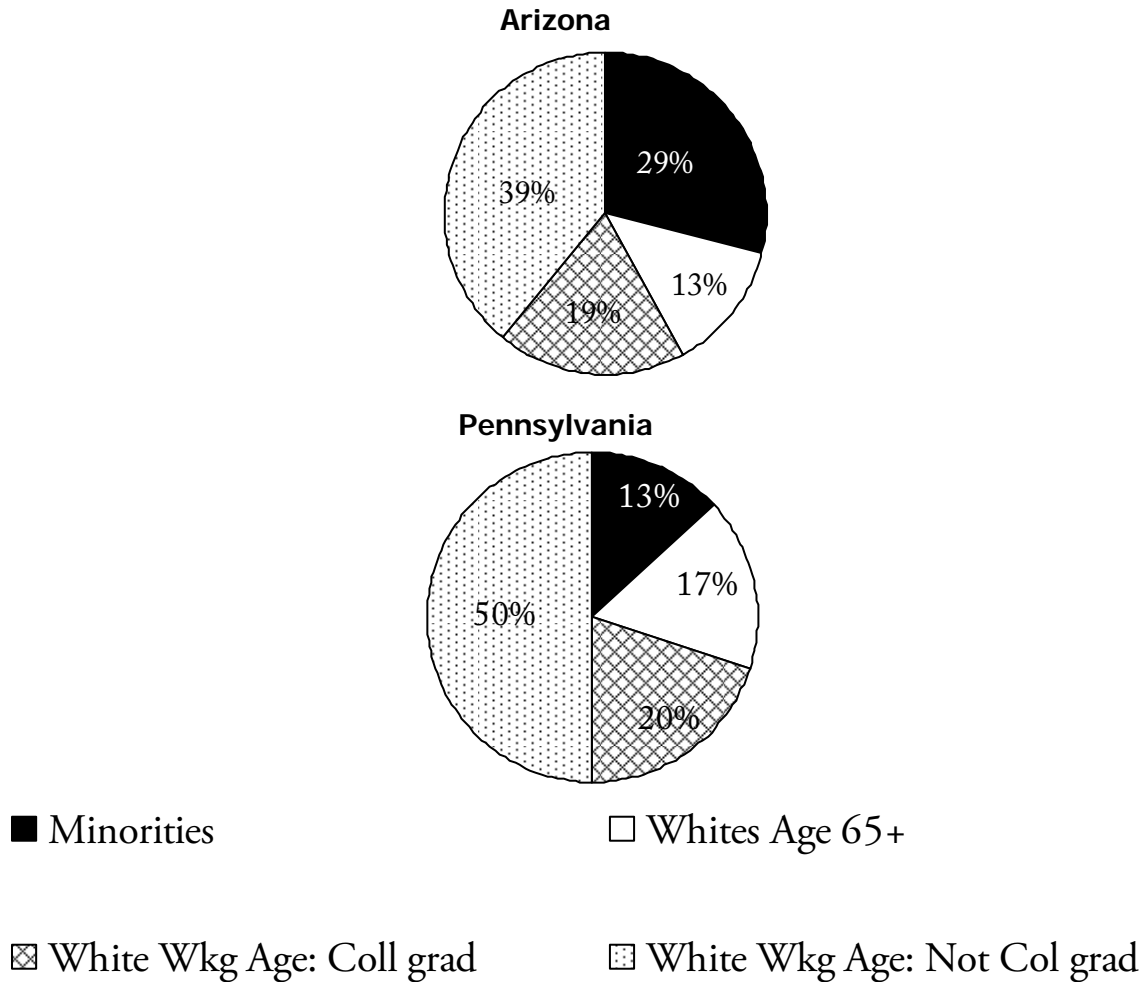
The racial dynamic is not the only demographic distinction between Fast-Growing Purple and Slow-Growing Purple states, but it is related to other aging and socioeconomic differences in their respective electorates. **Figure 12** contrasts these two classes of states on the basis of eligible voters who are: minorities, whites over 65, working age whites with college degrees, and non college working age whites. It makes plain that Fast Growing Purple states have a substantially larger minority electorate shares but the Slow-Growing Purple states have the advantage with non college whites. The contrast is even more vivid when one examines key fast- and slow-growing purple states, Arizona and Pennsylvania, with its large white senior population, in **Figure 13**. These comparisons point up that the steady demographic transformation of America's national electorate holds more immediate implications on politically strategic states that are undergoing dramatic shifts in their race-ethnic voter populations.

Figure 12. Eligible Voters in Demographic Groups: Purple States



Source: William H Frey analysis of US Census Sources

Figure 13. Eligible Voters in Demographic Groups: Purple States



Source: William H Frey analysis of US Census Sources

Implications for the Future

The new race-ethnic mix in the United States is clearly beginning to show an impact on America's political demography and geography. Courting the Hispanic vote in recent elections has paid off for both Republicans and Democrats: in reelecting George Bush in 2004 and in some early 2008 primary victories by Hillary Clinton. With the rise of the first nationally viable African American presidential candidate in 2008, the black population as a constituency has become the focus of attention for both old and new Democratic allies. The importance of the Asian population was brought to light in the Virginia 2006 US Senate election where Asian American voters have taken credit for electing Jim Webb in reaction to George Allen's slip of the tongue about use of the term 'Macaca' in reference to an Asian American bystander.

Yet, these are only “tip of the iceberg” instances of where minorities have made a difference in particular places and elections. Census projections show that the nation as a whole will be in minority white in 2050 which means that states like California, New Mexico, and Texas, which already hold ‘majority minority’ populations may be showcases for what to expect in other parts of the country.

One can get a glimpse of this by looking at the race-ethnic composition of eligible voters who are currently aged 18-29 in the 50 US states and the District of Columbia (see **Figure 14**). Twenty-one states show minority shares over 30 percent among these young eligible voters, compared with only 12 states for actual voters (of all ages) In California, for example, 56 percent of the under-30 eligible voters are minorities, compared with only 36 percent of its estimated voters of all ages. Respective contrasts are 51 percent versus 33 percent in Texas, and 42 percent versus 23 percent in Arizona. As these young voters move into their 30s and 40s, they will bring with them a much more varied multi-ethnic electorate.

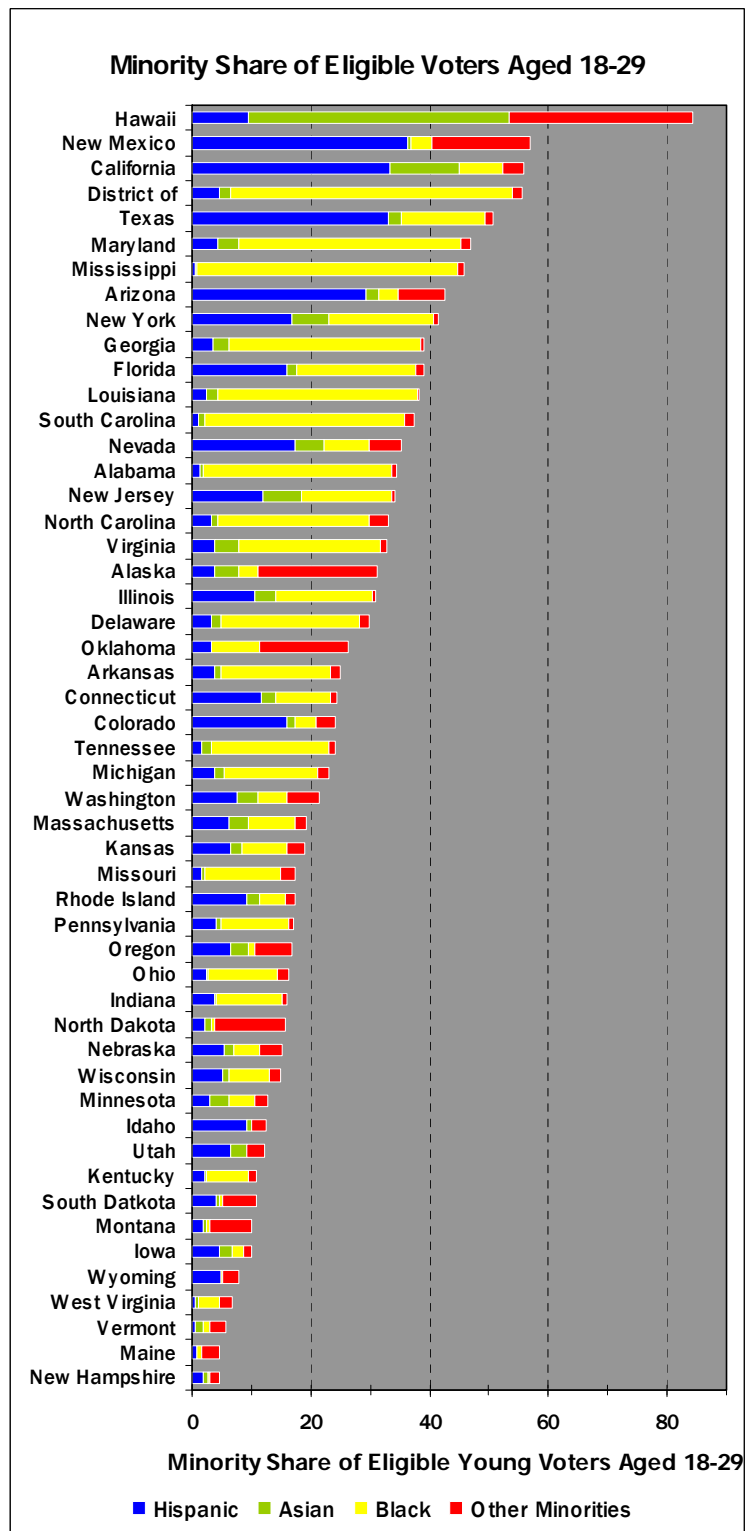
Thus, it is not too soon to begin building the groundwork for these new race and ethnic constituencies and coalitions across the country.

As for the here and now, we are still a balkanized nation in terms of our race and ethnic makeup. Much attention has correctly been paid to the political dividends that can be reaped in Fast-Growing Purple states such as Nevada, New Mexico, and Colorado whose large Hispanic and other minority populations could very well tip what were Republican Bush states in 2004 to the Democratic presidential column in 2008. Yet, in the zeal to focus on these culturally vibrant demographically changing parts of the country, political analysts should not lose focus of the still powerful electoral vote heft that lies in the Slow-Growing Purple states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, or Missouri. The 2004 presidential election also showed the outsized influence that their aging Boomer senior and ‘old minority’ African American populations played in affecting the final outcome.

It is within this balkanized political geography that today’s politicians must tread carefully when focusing on racially charged issues like immigration, affirmative action, and the competing demands of voters in young culturally vibrant states on issues like education and homeownership versus those of older constituencies in slow growing parts of the country, who care about health care and social security. It might be said that a possible presidential match up between white, pre-Baby Boomer John McCain and post-ethnic, post-Baby Boomer Barack Obama represent bookends to the transformation America’s electorate is going through. The problem for these candidates, and others in the near term, is that they will have to deal with a country that is still balkanized, with states and regions changing in different ways and at different speeds, as part of the continued transformation of our racial demography.

Figure 14. Minority Shares of Age 18-29 year old Eligible Voters, compared with All Estimated Voters*

| State | Minority Shares | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| | Age 18-29 Eligible Voters | All Estimated Voters | Difference |
| Hawaii | 84 | 71 | 13 |
| New Mexico | 57 | 44 | 13 |
| California | 56 | 36 | 20 |
| DC | 56 | 58 | -2 |
| Texas | 51 | 33 | 17 |
| Maryland | 47 | 31 | 16 |
| Mississippi | 46 | 40 | 6 |
| Arizona | 42 | 23 | 20 |
| New York | 41 | 26 | 15 |
| Georgia | 39 | 33 | 6 |
| Florida | 39 | 25 | 14 |
| Louisiana | 38 | 30 | 8 |
| South Carolina | 37 | 29 | 8 |
| Nevada | 35 | 24 | 12 |
| Alabama | 35 | 28 | 6 |
| New Jersey | 34 | 27 | 7 |
| North Carolina | 33 | 26 | 7 |
| Virginia | 33 | 20 | 13 |
| Alaska | 31 | 21 | 10 |
| Illinois | 31 | 24 | 7 |
| Delaware | 30 | 20 | 9 |
| Oklahoma | 26 | 22 | 4 |
| Arkansas | 25 | 16 | 9 |
| Connecticut | 24 | 15 | 10 |
| Colorado | 24 | 13 | 11 |
| Tennessee | 24 | 18 | 6 |
| Michigan | 23 | 17 | 6 |
| Washington | 21 | 13 | 9 |
| Massachusetts | 19 | 10 | 10 |
| Kansas | 19 | 10 | 9 |
| Missouri | 17 | 15 | 3 |
| Rhode Island | 17 | 10 | 8 |
| Pennsylvania | 17 | 11 | 6 |
| Oregon | 17 | 9 | 8 |
| Ohio | 16 | 13 | 3 |
| Indiana | 16 | 10 | 6 |
| North Dakota | 16 | 9 | 7 |
| Nebraska | 15 | 8 | 8 |
| Wisconsin | 15 | 8 | 7 |
| Minnesota | 13 | 7 | 6 |
| Idaho | 13 | 4 | 8 |
| Utah | 12 | 8 | 4 |
| Kentucky | 11 | 9 | 2 |
| South Dakota | 11 | 6 | 5 |
| Montana | 10 | 7 | 3 |
| Iowa | 10 | 6 | 4 |
| Wyoming | 8 | 7 | 1 |
| West Virginia | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| Vermont | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| Maine | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| New Hampshire | 5 | 3 | 1 |



* based on estimates of population as of March

Source: William H. Frey, and 2007 Current Population Survey

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Endnotes

¹ Statistics presented in this report are the most recent available at the time of its writing. Statistics on the total population, the eligible voting population, and estimated population of voters are drawn from the US Census Bureau's *2007 Current Population Survey*, and *2006 American Community Survey* and polling information drawn from the following sources: 2006 General Social Survey (National Opinion Research Corporation); Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, Democracy Core survey of likely voters November 29-December 3, 2007; and Peter D. Hart Research Associates, immigration survey of likely voters, January 7-10, 2008. Also, the author has analyzed US Census Bureau estimates and projections by race-ethnicity and has utilized information from the US Census Bureau, 2006. 'Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2004' *Current Population Reports* P20-556

² In this report, our practice will be to collapse the categories of Hispanic ethnicity and race to form a single specification of race-ethnicity which includes: Hispanic, non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic Asian, non-Hispanic other races. This is consistent with earlier research (Frey, 2006) and polling practices. For use of the term 'other races' includes: American Indian, Alaskan Native, and 'all other races.' In the census survey tabulations we have grouped 'Hawaiian Natives and Other Pacific Islanders' along with the 'Asian' category.



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