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DEMOGRAPHIC KEYS TO THE 2008 ELECTION

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TEIXEIRA: Okay, let's get things rolling here. We've got a lot of material to get through. Welcome to the session on Demographic Keys to the 2008 Election. My name is Ruy Teixeira. I'm a Visiting Fellow at Brookings here in the Governance Studies in Metropolitan Policy Programs. I'm also a Fellow at the Center for American Progress at the Century Foundation, maybe a few other places I've forgotten about.

Today we're going to be talking about kind of connecting some work we've done for a new book to the 2008 election. This book, which I urge you all to go out and immediately order from Amazon or perhaps you can even buy it in the back; *Red, Blue, and Purple America: The Future of Election Demographics* which comes out of a Brookings - American Enterprise Institute project that I co-directed with Karlyn Bowman over there.

We had a conference in January and February on all of this stuff and basically what we sought to do was look at seven demographic, geographic trends that are transforming the American electorate. Trace them over time, look at where we are today, project forward to the future in terms of how these changes and these trends are going to reshape our politics in the future.

And I think we came up with a very interesting set of papers which have a lot of implications for the 2008 election and that's exactly what we're going to talk about today, connecting these trends, some of these trends to the 2008 election.

We have a terrific panel here today to go over all of this material. Everyone of them has been involved in one way or another with the production of this book. And so I'm going to introduce them alphabetically and as I introduce them it will serve as an opportunity to talk a little but more about the content that's in the book.

So first on my far left there is Karlyn Bowman. As I said, she co-directed the *Future of Red, Blue, and Purple America* project with me. Karlyn is a Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and I think it's fair to say one of America's leading experts on public opinion, voting behavior, and the demographics thereof.

Right next to Karlyn is William Frey. He's a Senior Fellow in the Metropolitan Policy Program here at Brookings and definitely one of the nation's leading demographers. Bill is the author of the chapter in this book, "Race, Immigration, and America's Changing Electorate."

He's also the co-author of a series of fabulous reports that he did with me; *The Political Geography Series*, *Battleground Dynamic Series* about purple states and swing states in this election and how they're being transformed by a lot of these trends. And I think some of these reports are

available in the back for the taking.

So if you want to know what's going on in Ohio or Florida, Colorado, or Virginia, you might want to check those out.

Bill's chapter deals with a number of things about race and immigration in our politics. He talks about the rapid rate of minority growth, 80 percent of the growth in the U.S. population now is from minorities. He talks about the translation gap between the rising strength of these minorities and how many of them actually show up at the polling booth.

And he talks about the different rates of growth of minority voters in different kinds of states; fast growing purple states for example are different than slow growing purple states and so on. The effects of this minority growth is different, of course he will be talking about race and the 2008 election.

Bill Galston will be talking about religion and the 2008 election. Bill is Senior Fellow here at Brookings in the Governance Studies Program. He has a wide range of expertise to say the least. But one of his areas of expertise he will be drawing on today is religion in American politics. He was an early supporter of this project and helped bring it here to Brookings.

He will be pinch hitting in a sense for John Green and E.J. Dionne who wrote the chapter in the book on religion and politics called

"Religion and American Politics: More Secular, More Evangelical, or Both?" And in that chapter Green and Dionne look at the change in the mix of religious affiliations in the United States between 1944 and 2004. There were some tremendous changes.

A drop from 44 percent to 18 percent in the number of white mainline Protestants, a tripling of the unaffiliated from five to 15 percent, a rise in other faiths, at least doubling from eight percent. A rise, of course, also in white Evangelicals from about 19 to 23 or 24 percent.

And actually, this is a very interesting projection in their chapter where they suggest that by the year 2024 what you might call the Non-Christian Coalition will be almost 45 percent of U.S. adults. That is people who are unaffiliated, plus people of other faiths besides being Protestant or Catholic.

So a lot of changes going on but of course, what's really salient to our politics arguably in the most direct sense has been the rise of this attendance gap. The gap between the voting behavior of people who are more observant than the people who are less observant. The amount of observance, the level of observance has remained about the same. But in the '80s and '90s we've seen this tremendous gap emerge between the more observant and less observant with the more observant being far more republican.

So Bill will be talking about religion in politics.

Scott Keeter on my far right there is the author of the chapter on the "Rise of the Millennials and the Aging of the Boomers." Scott is Director of Survey Research at the Pew Research Center and one of our leading survey researchers, one of my favorite survey researchers. He's going to talk about the distinctive profile of millennials; their incredibly intensive use of technology, their very liberal, relatively speaking, stance on social issues. Their partisan leanings at this point, which appear to be heavily Democratic. No doubt he'll talk about that. And encouragingly, the higher level of civic engagement than we've seen in recent generations. So Scott will address young voters in the 2008 election.

Rob Lang, sitting right next to Scott, is the author of the chapter or co-author of the chapter on "The New Suburban Politics." He wrote it with Tom Sanchez and Alan Berube. Rob is a Professor of geography, I guess?

MR. LANG: Urban planning.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Urban planning at Virginia Tech and leads their Metropolitan Institute and is also a non-resident Senior Fellow here at Brookings.

And his very interesting chapter looks at the spatial distribution of strength between the parties where you basically have the Democratic leaning core increasingly the inner suburbs, urbanizing suburbs, arrayed against the more Republican leaning metropolitan fringe.

And they argue that really a lot what politics is about, if we look at these big metropolitan areas is how far out in the suburbs the line is going to be drawn between Democratic strength and Republican strength. The farther out that line is pushed, like it was in the 2006 election, the better it is for the Democrats. The farther it's pushed in toward the urban core, the better for the Republicans.

And he also has some fascinating things to say about where growth is likely to occur in metropolitan areas in the next several decades. And a lot of that appears to be about the urbanizing suburbs. Maybe he'll have a word to say about that. So Rob will be addressing suburbia in the 2008 election.

There are several other chapters in the book that are worth taking a look at. Bill Bishop and Bob Cushing wrote an extensive discussion called "The Big Sort" about the tendency of like to live with like, increased political homogenate communities. That's very interesting.

And then there's a long and very data-rich chapter by Tom Smith of the University of Chicago's NORC that deals with the changes in family structure and family values in the United States since 1972. And the bottom line there is tremendous shifts in terms of decline of traditional families and concomitantly the decline of traditional family values and those two things tend to reinforce themselves.

Now I also had a chapter in the book on "The Decline of the

White Working Class and the Rise of a Mass Upper-Middle Class" that I wrote with Alan Abramowitz. There's a lot of material in there too, but the bottom line the white working class has declined quite precipitously since 1940 and this shouldn't be a surprise because if you look for example at something like education.

In 1940 three-quarters of American adults were high school dropouts, which was remarkable to think about. We're now in a situation today where the number of high school dropouts is maybe 12, 14 percent and the number of people who have at least some college education is now 54 percent. So we've gone from a situation where the median adult was a high school dropout, in fact never even reached high school, to a situation where the median adult has at least some college education. That's an immense change and it's been reflected in the decline of the white working class if we think of it as whites without a four-year college degree.

There were 86 percent of adults in 1940, that's down to around half. Fifty-one percent I estimated in 2004. It's probably around 49 percent today. It will probably be in the low 40s by the year 2020, so tremendous changes in the white working class as its decline has also changed. It's obviously much more common for people to have at least some college education.

They're very unlikely, despite all of the media accounts,



relatively unlikely to work in blue collar jobs, relatively unlikely to work in manufacturing. Perhaps a sixth of white working class workers are in blue collar or manufacturing jobs. Seven out of ten work in the service sector. This isn't your father's white working class. It's quite different than what we are familiar with from the past and to this day from media stereotypes.

Now what does all of that mean for the 2000 election as a kind of smooth segue into what all of this has to do with where we are today?

Well, one big change that did occur over time among the white working class as it shifted demographically, as it declined, it has become much more pro-Republican and that's a long story and we can get into it in discussion if you want but suffice it to say they became a very reliably Republican voting group.

If you look on the handout you will see that the Democratic deficit among white working class voters in 1988 was 20 percentage points. Let me repeat that as Joe Biden would say, 20 percentage points. Then if you look at 2004 when actually most demographic groups shifted toward the Democrats at least a bit over that time period, the Democratic deficit was actually worse in 2004 than it was in 1980 a 23 point deficit.

And this is in contrast, if you look at your handout, the behavior of white college graduates who had an identical 20 point deficit in 1988 for the Democrats and that shifted only an 11 point deficit by 2004.

So the white college grads, moving kind of smartly in the direction of the Democrats but white working class voters resolutely holding firm for the Republicans.

Now if that would continue, those patterns would continue into this election it would make things a bit difficult for Barack Obama. But as far as we can tell from the polling data and it's a bit spotty, but averaging some recent Pew and Gallup data, the Democratic deficit among white working class voters and this was kind of alluded to in the chapter I wrote with Alan, it's now in what I would call a sweet spot for them. You know something like 10, 11, 12 percentage points is a really great deficit for the Democrats given the mathematics of the rest of the electorate.

So they are coming in, in these polls at around an 11 point deficit which is actually quite good because remember they don't have to win them all. They just need to not get clobbered too badly. And just to kind of parenthetically note that they're also in parallel with that white college graduates are continuing to move toward the Democrats and now looks like to a number of polls Barack Obama might actually carry white college graduates in this election.

And before we move onto the other panelists, I can't resist just adding one word about whites with some college an obsession of Karlyn Bowman and myself, a critical group among the white working

class. Very volatile, very big, the only part if the white working class that is growing, the Democrats deficit among whites with some college in 2004 is 25 points. According to recent polling data it may be down to only about eight points. So that's a huge shift and it says this very important group in the white working class may be moving in a different direction.

But enough from me and enough about the white working class we have so very much more to cover. So let me turn if I may to Bill Frey and ask you the pointed question Bill, what about race in the 2008 election? How is that going to figure into the results, do you think?

MR. FREY: Well, is the key question I guess in the 2008 election. It clearly is something that is in front of all of us. I mean, we now have two candidates. One is an old white pre-Boomer candidate running against a younger, I guess you might say post-ethnic, likes to think of himself as a post-Boomer candidate. And in many ways these two candidates are the bookends of the demographic racial transformation that's going on in the United States.

That is most people who are Baby Boomers are older today, grew up in a time when the prime area minority group in the United States were African Americans. There were not as many Asians nor as many Hispanics in this country. And if we look ahead another 10 or 20 years, look at where young people are they are much more multiethnic, post-ethnic, interracial dating, interracial marriage, much more tolerant about

racial attitudes and so forth.

But the election is now and I would say that the race factor is important but it's only important because we are in a transition. And I might put parenthetically, it's not as important as it might have been because of the economy. I think a lot of people from all racial groups are looking at that first rather than voting on the basis of racial identity.

But still, we're dealing with a country that's in racial transformation. It's a slow transformation and one other reasons it's a slow transformation is because the representation of Hispanics and Asians, although they are growing quite rapidly in the total population is not represented in the voting population. Something I call a translation gap.

Of every 100 Hispanics in the United States population, only nineteen are going to show up at the polls. Of every 100 Asians, only 22 are going to show up to the polls. And the reason for that is that many of these two groups are younger than age 18, many of them are non-citizens. And even among the eligible voters of Hispanics and Asians, they have much lower levels of turnout, less than 50 percent turnout. And so you kind of see the translation gap and it means what you see in the bigger picture is not necessarily going to show up at the polls.

And this is going to be especially the case in those states that are kind of new destinations for Hispanics. Places like North

Carolina, Nebraska, places even like Nevada where they are relatively new. Foreign born, still citizen Hispanics are less likely to vote than native born and as a result those kinds of states, and you'll see in the handout that I have, that in Nevada there is 23 percent of the population is Hispanic but only 10 percent of the voting population will be Hispanic. And you'll see similar numbers for other states.

So that's kind of important in slowing the impact of these new racial groups. And of course, we know that Hispanics in terms of their actual voting patterns differ across the board. There are Cubans who have typically voted more Republican. There is Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, typically voted more Democratic. We have found that Protestant Hispanics typically have voted more Republican but are changing a little bit towards Democrats this time according to some of the recent polling that's going on.

And it varies geographically. New Mexico Hispanics are not nearly as Democratic in their voting patterns as Hispanics in some of the other states. So this kind of monolithic idea that Hispanics are going to transform the results of this election probably is going to be less than a lot of people think.

Blacks are a different story, of course. African Americans are coming out in favor of Obama, a huge increase in turnout in the Democratic primaries in lots of states; over 100 percent in most of the

states where this was a hot issue.

And a lot of people are talking about North Carolina becoming an Obama state. Well, you know, people have done surveys. *The Washington Post* has done a study and showed that in states like North Carolina and even Virginia, the black turnout would have to be very large in order to bring those states over to the Democratic camp. Perhaps more in North Carolina, that statement applies than in Virginia. But the idea is that in many states with large black populations, the white margin for Democrats has been minuscule compared to the black population. So to counter that there has to be a huge black turnout. It may or may not be the case in North Carolina, possibly in Virginia.

And the Asian population well not very large and numbers did have an impact in the Nevada primary. People would argue it did have an impact in the senatorial election in Virginia last time, and also has an impact in states like Washington and California and other places. But the Asian population also is not strongly Democratic and its orientation. A study that was done in August and September by a number of universities showed that their Democratic margin is 41 to 24 and it varies. Vietnamese are much more Republican in their voting patterns. Whereas Japanese, Asians, Indians are more likely to vote dramatically for Democrats, so it's also sort of spread around.

So what I'm trying to say is the racial demographics of this

country are changing. We have more minorities, but aside from African Americans were not quite sure exactly the impact they are going to have. The places where they are likely to have the most impact are places that I called fast-growing purple states. You'll see in the handout that I have the growth rates of some of the fast-growing purple states. There are nine of them if you read the chapter in the book. Most of them are Western states but we also include Virginia and Florida.

These fast-growing states, over half of the growth in most of them are coming from minorities especially Hispanics. So a lot of the new voters, the turnover in voters in these areas are likely to have some impact especially in those states that we see as swing states like Colorado or Florida or Virginia. They are going to have big players.

On the other hand we have 12, what I call slow-growing purple states. These are states like Ohio and Michigan and Pennsylvania. And these are states where it if it wouldn't be for the economy and you would have asked me three or four months ago which way they were going to go, I would say they might have gone to McCain. Simply because they have these older, whiter, working class population who may very much may be involved with the kinds of issues McCain normally would try to push.

The economy, I think, has blown those states are the water to a large degree for McCain. And so Obama has a much better chance

in a place like Ohio, certainly in Pennsylvania and Michigan than I would have anticipated a while ago. But in the next four years and in the four years after that those states are still going to be much older and much whiter than the fast growing purple states. So I think we're going to have to look at the difference between these two kinds of swing states in the United States.

What I'm saying, I guess that this point the economy, the polls that show the top issue for all racial groups; Hispanics, blacks, Asians, and whites the economy is number one and I think that is helping to turn them all a little more to the Democratic column than we might have seen six months ago or three months ago.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Okay. We'll let me bring in Bill Galston here to address religion in politics. Bill, E.J. and John in their chapter seemed to argue that we might actually be moving into it a period where we see less of an attendance gap, a kind of diminution in these culture wars. Do we see any sign of this in this election so far from looking at the data? Are we moving into a new era? Or is it more the same?

MR. GALSTON: Broadly speaking it looks like more of the same to me. But before we get there, let me do an Alfred Hitchcock tracking shot and start far back and maybe like Mel Brooks in *High Anxiety* crash through the window at some point.

Let me just put as the authors of this chapter did three a



long-term trends on the table first. Trend number one, as Ruy indicated in his opening remarks, if you take a 40 or 60 year view there has been a very significant movement in American religious demography along three fronts.

Number one, the rise of secularism -- and it's really quite dramatic if you look at pre-Boomers, John McCain's generation and older. About five percent are religiously unaffiliated; for Boomers it's 11 percent, for Gen Xers it's 14 percent, and for Gen Yers 19 percent. So a quadrupling in this generational transition and one of the most dramatic things about those figures is that patterns that are established when these cohorts are young persist almost completely unchanged as they proceed through life.

So it is extremely unlikely that these higher unaffiliated and secular figures that we are seeing in the data are somehow going to disappear as these young cohorts age. A great shift among white Protestants, all of the organizational energy during the past 40 or 50 years has been on the Evangelical side and as Ruy indicated mainline Protestants have lost market share quite significantly. And then largely because of the historic re-opening of the immigration gates in the mid-1960s. There has been a dramatic diversification of religion in the United States.

So that's the first macro trend. Here's a second. Religious

sociologists are fond of distinguishing three dimensions of religious demography, which they call for short belonging, believing, and behaving.

And 40 years ago belonging was the principal factor in religion. It was almost tribal. Think of Boston where you had this multi generation tribal split between the Protestant Yankees on the one hand in the Irish Catholics on the other. You know who you were in where you stood but just by virtue of your membership in the Protestant group or in the Catholic group.

Since then the shift has been much more to the dimensions of believing. How do you stand on issues such as abortion, gay marriage, family structure, things of that sort? And also behaving, namely do you tend to be very observant? Do you go to church frequently, less frequently, or not at all?

And this shift has given rise to the observance gap. And very simply the more you go to church the more likely you are to vote Republican. That is one of the factors that became established in the past generation and there's no evidence in 2008 that brought correlation between observance and Republican leaning, less observance and Democratic leaning has been disrupted at all.

The third big macro trend that I would like to call your attention to is the fact is that when I cast my first vote more than 40 years ago the most reliable Republican group was made up of mainline

Protestants. The most reliable Democratic group was made up of white Catholics. In what you have seen over the past 40 years is that both, the Catholic line has headed down. The mainline Protestant line has headed up and that has generated a situation in which white Catholics and mainline Protestants are the two most important swing groups and electorate.

Which brings me to 2008. How much time do I have left?

MR. TEIXEIRA: You're fine.

MR. GALSTON: And I would make of the following points very briefly about religion in 2008.

Number one. The agenda the shift, the economic 9/11 and its consequences has radically diminished the salience of cultural issues in 2008, particularly among the most persuadable voters. We can also see signs that the massive enthusiasm gap that existed between white Evangelical voters and other religious groups in 2004 has closed significantly.

Despite a massive Democratic outreach effort there is little sign of Democratic progress among white Evangelicals or mainline Protestants. Those numbers look remarkably similar to what they looked like in 2004 and in 2000.

On the other hand, Senator Obama has clearly achieved overwhelming support among black Protestants, even more than usual,

and equally overwhelming support among the secular voters. And there are signs of a shift in the composition of the likely electorate towards those two groups.

Which brings me two white Catholics, the most important swing group in the country and in this election. Why is that? Because white Catholics are disproportionately concentrated in the classic Midwestern swing states. I have come to believe over the past decade that as white Catholics go, so the lectionary likely to go.

I can report to you as we speak and I've consulted with these two eminent pollsters to my far left and to my far right, that what we have now is chaos in polling among white Catholics. You have surveys in the past week by very reputable organizations that have generated diametrically opposed results. I believe that the weighted evidence is that there has been a substantial shift towards Senator Obama among white Catholics in the past month.

Why is that? This will be my concluding remark. Because white Catholics are classically cross-pressured as we political scientists say. They tend to be quite staunchly patriotic and strong on national defense. They are more likely than other voters to embrace, at least in the declaratory sense, traditional values but they also believe strongly in a government role in the economy. There is a Catholic social justice tradition and many white Catholics are members of the economic groups

that have been hardest hit by the downturn especially in manufacturing during the past decade.

So as the salience of the economic issue has risen, particularly in the past month, I believe that that has reconsidered the electoral the calculus among white Catholic voters to the advantage of Senator Obama and to the disadvantage of what otherwise would have been quite strong appeal by Senator McCain on patriotism, on military service, and on traditional values among that group.

Stay tuned.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Stay tuned indeed. Well let's bring in Scott Keeter here. Scott what about these young voters I've been hearing so much about? Just how distinctive are they? And what role do you think you're actually going to play in this election? Are they even going to show up?

MR. KEETER: You betcha.

MR. TEIXEIRA: All right.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think we've just called the election folks.

MR. KEETER: Let me dial that back slightly. I am very confident that young voters are going to deliver another very significant increase in turnout relative to the baselines that we have from 1996 or 2000 and maybe even relative to 2004, which itself was a very high

turnout year for young voters.

If they do then they will play an important role either in a close election, perhaps giving Barack Obama the victory or an election where Obama is putting together a majority and other groups turning it into something of a landslide. I'm pretty confident that young voters are going to go heavily for Obama and I am confident that they are going to turnout at a relatively high rate.

And let me tell you what evidence I base that on. I mean, isn't it the case that young voters always disappoint? Well, the answer is yes they do always disappoint if the standard is do they turnout at the same rate as older voters. But we know that never happens and it really shouldn't be expected to happen.

Young voters much more than older voters need to be asked to vote. They need to be mobilized. They don't have habits built up of participating because for many in the cohort it will be the first or second chance that they have had to participate.

And American elections, although it may seem like they're very easy to navigate to those of us who have been doing it for a long time are actually pretty daunting especially for a very highly mobile population like young voters and so just mastering the registration, dealing with absentee ballots if you are living away from home at a college in another state, present much more of an impediment to their voting than to people

a mine generation.

So in the elections that we have seen in the past couple of decades that have been very high stimulus elections, young voters have closed the gap significantly. The two that I would point to most dramatically for evidence about what might happen this time would be 1992, which was a very high stimulus election fought under conditions that in some ways are parallel to those today. And 2004, which although the circumstances were not similar the level of engagement and interest were very comparable to 1992.

In 2004, young voter turnout rose from 40 percent of eligible young people to 49 percent. A nine point increase. Among people 30 and older turnout also increased but only from 65 percent of eligible to 68. So much of the increase in turnout from 2000 to 2004 was driven by the youngest cohort of voters. And we know that in that election not only was there a tremendous amount of interest just generally in the outcome and by people on both sides a very polarized election, feeling very strongly about it. But we also know that there was a lot of effort and outreach both by nonpartisan groups and by the political parties themselves.

We are seeing a similar set of circumstances this year with lots of nonpartisan efforts to mobilize, Rock the Vote and other groups like that but also a very strong effort on the part of the parties, especially on the Democratic side where Barack Obama built a very strong network of

young people early on in the primaries. Had the benefit, although it might have seemed like a disadvantage at the time of having to compete vigorously through virtually the entire country for the nomination and in so doing built a massive file of contact information of young voters as well as older voters.

We also have a little other evidence about turnout from the 2006 election where in a much lower stimulus circumstance youth voter turnout was much lower, but it was still higher than it had been for years before the best comparable election.

And then in 2008 as one of the graphics on my handout shows, young voters as a percentage of the electorate was higher in virtually every state where a fair comparison exists between 2008 Democratic primaries and 2004 or 2000 in some cases. And so young voters increased in numbers as did most age groups, but they also increased as a proportion of the electorate which means that their voter rate went up more than a one up among other groups.

Now to the question of how they are going to vote. We have a lot of evidence of that young voters are extremely Democratic in their orientation and becoming more so.

A few months ago the Pew Research Center did an analysis. We put out a release called "Gen Dem". Fifty-eight percent of young people 18 to 29 said they were Democrats or leaned Democratic, 33



percent Republican. That was the largest gap among any age group. We know that young voters were the best age group in 2004 for Kerry. They were the best age group for congressional Democrats in 2004 and 2006. In the polling today is showing a massive margin for Obama, our latest showed a 65 to 33 advantage Obama over McCain among voters 18 to 29.

Let me conclude by just saying a little bit about why I think we're seeing such a strong Democratic surge among young voters.

The easiest explanation is that young people are more sensitive to the zeitgeist even than the rest of us. They have less of a ballast, they are less informed – I'm not knocking them, but they are less informed about the full sweep of history. And so they are learning about politics as they form their political identities. And what's going on in the country at the time they do that has an enormous impact on the impressions that they make and the habits that they establish.

And so if you look back through history you see that young people who came of age during the Nixon years for example, are much more Democratic and their orientation than they are Republican. Similar to young people who came of age during the Reagan, especially the latter Reagan years, are at least as Republican as Democratic. That's the bulk of Generation X for example.

So young people today have two presidents that they can

remember in their adulthood and that was Bill Clinton especially in his second term and George W. Bush through most of his two terms in office. So this has been very good for the Democratic brand with this age group.

Two other things that are related that are also reinforcing this political reaction among young people. One of them is the point that Bill made about young voters being more secular. Using a different kind of religion question that is now are standard, we are actually showing 23 to 25 percent of young people explicitly saying that they are either atheist, agnostic, or nothing in particular.

And as Bill said that's likely to, that percentage, even if not all those individuals are likely to persist going forward. And secularism is a very strong predictor of voting Democratic.

It's also correlated with liberal attitudes on social issues and issues related to things like race. And so this group of voters is much more receptive to the Democratic party's messages which tend to be more liberal or tolerant, however you want to characterize them on social issues and much more open to the idea or perhaps even welcoming the idea of a president who is multiracial himself.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Great. Thanks Scott. That's kind of take a trip out to suburbia now and hear from Rob Lang who is sitting next to Scott.

So what's going on out there in the 'burbs, Rob? What about

Patio Man? Is he still out there?

MR. LANG: He's till kicking.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Flipping hamburgers and stuff.

MR. LANG: Well, I want to start off by saying I was fifteen when Nixon resigned so you can guess my politics. It was quite traumatic that summer as I recall.

I wanted to go back in time also just to give you a sense of how different the suburbs are. You know, the old fight was city versus suburb. And I grew up in a suburb in Bergen County, New Jersey just over the George Washington Bridge.

And I remember the 1976 election, which I was two young to vote in I was a senior in high school. But I watch closely as a kid and I recall that the county I was in, Bergen County, New Jersey was solidly Republican. The state went for Ford, the county was Republican. Everyone around me was a Republican; it was kind of an odd thing.

That town and that place now are very transformed I must say. Also that same year we went on a trip to San Francisco and I remember we went over the Golden Gate Bridge and we went into Sausalito in Mill Valley. And Marin County, California in that year, which at that point in 1976 people were writing books like Serial, about the New Age Movement in Marin County.

That year when I checked, when I was a kid, how did Marin

go? They seemed like my people. They went Republican. Not as much as Orange County went Republican but Marin County, California which is now not part of real America anymore, last I checked. It's some other America.

Marin was rock solid one of the most Republican Counties in all of California, with Orange being the top county. Even at this election the interesting thing I'm looking for is Orange County with over three million residents, Orange County where you know, B-1 Bob Dorn lost his seat a while back in the 90s to Sanchez. You know, the Northern part of the county has been transformed.

The center part of Orange County now is in the process of transformation, becoming more urban. Is that going to be a county that now finally flips because, again, I remember also being around Los Angeles as a kid and the reference was beyond the Orange Curtain, you know that Orange County was some forbidden zone of which Democrats didn't wander for fear of a John Birch Society assault.

And at this point, you know, if that county goes, that's symbolic of everything. If they lose Orange County, of course, the State of California, is long since gone but if they lose Orange County. I mean it's symbolic of counties around the rest of the country.

So there is a divide. The main divide now is really suburb to suburb. That's the split in the metropolis. And it's the older suburbs

versus the newer suburbs. It's the closer in versus the further out suburbs. It's more diverse suburbs, closer in versus the mostly white suburbs at the fringe of the metropolis.

With half of the U.S. population, there's no way you could say what a typical suburbanite is because a typical suburbanite, you have 50 percent of the U.S. population is basically everybody.

But there is a kind of general pattern which is higher density places tend to attract, and the key word here is attract, Democrats. And I think it is a self selection. I don't think there is a quality of environment that is miraculously transformative. On certain issues it may be. I think in things that are like support for infrastructure investment like metro systems, if you're a Republican leaning on a series of cultural issues you might be inclined nonetheless to agree that government expenditure of fixing the metro system is something you'll support. But living in a city doesn't mean you transform your views on foreign policy or abortion rights.

It's that the kinds of households attracted to denser dwellings tend to be Democratic households. Just consider women. Married women are of course more Republican and much less likely to live in multi-family housing closer into, you know, the center of a metropolitan area. So there's not the, you know, again the transformation. It's far more about what is the kind of housing that these places feature.

Also we looked recently at the swing states and we identified 12 of them. And we looked at their most contested counties. Like what were the counties over the last several election cycles that were within the closest range of the vote?

We found these places to be overwhelmingly Democratic counties. You know, almost completely Democratic, I mean pardon me. Overwhelmingly I should say suburban counties, although most of them are trending Democratic counties. And the kinds of places I'm talking about, for example in Virginia are like Loudoun County, Virginia or Prince William, Virginia.

And these are places where in 1980 they were obviously suburban and obviously more remote at that point than they are now, less urban and were solidly Republican. All the way until 2000 you have George Bush winning these places strongly. Winning the states strongly and you know, even Fairfax in 2000. Finally Kerry wins Fairfax County which is much closer in, a much more urban county, a lot of it inside the Washington Beltway. Well what happens in '04, '06 is places like Loudoun start to shift away.

And in this election it's starting to trend Democratic where it might even have instead of in the case of Webb's victory in 2006 or the gubernatorial race Kaine's victory in 2005. The counties were even-stein. And if you get those counties evened up and you win big margins

in Arlington, Alexandria, and Fairfax and you do well in the Center of Richmond and Tidewater, you win the state. Well in this round it looks, the way things are tracking, and this is why you see Barack Obama seven, eight, ten points up in the Virginia polls. That's the numbers he's winning out of places like these, what were fringe counties.

And you get those kinds of numbers around the country. You see them changing in Arapahoe which is a peer to these place in Denver. I think the bottom line here may be that the exurban voter, the angry exurbanite. How's the State of Patio Man? Patio Man is not happy.

Patio Man's house is worth a lot less than it used to be. Patio Man's job looks imperiled. So the suburban voter who in 2000 was quite content, even in '04, you look at where the economy was. You look at the kinds of growth in house value, you look at their position in the world. There wasn't much cause for anxiety. You had to take a leap of faith to switch during a war to somebody like Kerry.

Well in this go around, you know, the story may be when some of the meta narratives emerge at the end of the election, one of the meta narratives might be that the angry version of Patio Man is a kind of a volatile voter who created a tidal wave of change in all kinds of states from, you know, the ring of suburbs around Columbus, Ohio to you know, suburban places like Denver and Arapahoe County, Virginia, you know, Missouri. You name the state and there's a version of that same scenario

that plays out.

And finally, I'd like to make one last point and this is actually about Sarah Palin who was picked in a way to appeal to a kind of suburban female voter. Well, when you pick somebody from a small town, I would in the future consider the nature of that small town in relative terms to the cultural context of America at-large.

And I'll say thing in a very specific way. There is a divide between, and this divide goes back to Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis, the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is a difference between a place that is heartland and a place that is frontier. Now the old heartland used to be Ohio in Frederick Jackson Turner's day. There was a string of presidents that came out of Ohio because it was the center point; it was between West and East. It wasn't East, East was already differentiating. In 1900 people were railing against the East. It's not a new thing. But in that year that was the kind of swing point in the country.

I argue there is a new heartland and I think it's the Intermountain West. I think it's around places like Phoenix. It's telling that Peoria, Illinois is now smaller than Peoria, Arizona. Will it play in Peoria? Which Peoria? I'd rather play in Peoria, Arizona; that kind of exurb, the booming suburbs, more of the center part of the country.

But that's not true of Wasilla. Wasilla is frontier. And Wasilla is culturally alien quite frankly. And I think one of the more



effective 527 ads that's been played is when they shoot those cute little wolves that look like huskies out of planes and then they return their bloody paw for \$150. You show that to a kind of suburban dog loving, dog park type and that kind of ruggedness of the treatment of nature in the frontier is something quite alien tot them.

I think if Sarah Palin were a soccer mom and she came out of suburban Phoenix and she didn't have quite that accent, but had this sort of blandish center point American accent and she reflected that value structure, which is she wasn't opposed to guns but she didn't fire them often. If she had a different view of nature and of treatment of nature, but was the whole galaxy of the rest of the values and structure that makes up mega-churches and religions and the like, I think she would be a far more effective Vice President.

And I think that that misread on the part of the Republicans of not understanding the difference between heartland, between reaching to a Phoenix which a generation ago may not have been heartland. And instead going to a place called The Last Frontier, and imagining that person has identity with all these swing voters, I think might be one of the bigger cataclysmic mistakes of the election.

MR. TEIXEIRA: So in other words Patio Man as in Davy Crockett?

MR. LANG: Patio Man's subduing of nature involves yard

work or hiring somebody for yard work, you know. The generation of flame is for a barbeque and they don't kill huskies. They own them and they take them to dog parks and they treat them better than their children.

MR. TEIXEIRA: All right. It's a dog paradigm.

Anyway, let's turn to Karlyn Bowman here to get some general comments on the presentations you've heard a lot, I mean, interesting what might strike you in particular from the presentations. Certainly it sounds a bit different than what we typically get in the media I think where the kind of, it's a bit more stereotypical. It's not fleshed out in this way. Tell us what you think.

MS. BOWMAN: Thank you Ruy.

I'd like to begin this morning by congratulating you. Ruy came up with the idea for a Brookings-AI joint conference on election demographics in the early Spring of 2007. Both of use were eager to try to get beyond some of the misleading electoral clichés. The soccer moms, the Wal-Mart dads, and dare I say Joe the Plumber who hasn't yet been mentioned.

But Ruy recruited I think as you can tell from the panel some of the countries best demographers, survey researchers, and geographers to provide a detailed picture of the remarkable demographic changes transforming the country and the electorate.

In February we held the conference and now eight months

later in what must be a record for a think tank press. We have this fine new Brookings Institution Press book.

Ruy was remarkably, oh yes. And Ruy was remarkably prescient, I think, in identifying the groups that you've heard the most about in this cycle and we'll be hearing the most about on Election Night as the exit pollsters slice and dice the data. I think all of you should read *Red, Blue, and Purple America* in preparation for Election Day.

This election campaign as all of the panelists have suggested has been extraordinary in many ways and it appears poised to alter the familiar demographic patterns in unfamiliar ways. There has been oppressive continuity in the Democratic and Republican coalitions in the past 20 years. A third of the states in the United States have voted the same way in the past four elections. Yet, this election if the polls are to be believed could break that mold in key areas. Many of which are related to demographic changes that we've been discussing this morning.

It's important to remember and this is one caution that I have about all the data we've talked about thus far that election demographics are not destiny. Issues matter, candidates matter, and the mood matters.

Within an electorate that is as deeply dissatisfied as this one, I think we should be careful not to over interpret the results that we see on Election Night. Still the changes that the authors have identified and described are the ones that political strategists will be discussing for years

to come and ones that both parties will have to understand if they're going to be successful in the future.

Rob Lang just pointed out to the fact that density seemed to equal Democrats these days, he also wisely notes that although structural forces shape elections the quality of the candidates also factors in. And he talked about Sarah Palin, but at one point in this cycle I think it was reasonable to assume that a moderate like John McCain would perform much better than would have been predicted based on party affiliation alone in some of the swing districts.

He notes that the greater density and diversity in metropolitan America would seem to favor the Democrats, but that both parties would have to adapt their messages to reflect the new realities.

Can Barack Obama if victorious cement a generational allegiance among the young like FDR into lesser extent Ronald Reagan did? How will the changing beliefs of the millennials that Scott Keeter discussed, their extraordinary diversity and their non-traditional upbringings affect them as they age? And what happens when they have to start paying the bills for the programs for the Baby Boomers?

As Bill Frey notes, white pre-Baby Boomer John McCain and post-ethnic, post-Baby Boomer Barack Obama represent the demographic bookends to the broad changes that are occurring in the electorate.

In his chapter he noted that in the first eight years of this

decade Hispanics and Asian each increased their populations by nearly a third and blacks grew by nine percent compared to a modest two percent growth for whites.

The white population share will be reduced from about 70 percent of U.S. residents to 60 percent in 2016. Still the translation as he pointed out, of demographic representation into electoral representation has been very slow. The implications of the changes for the electorate for politicians and for policymakers are just beginning to be felt.

As Ruy points out, the voting proclivities of the white working class could well determine the next president. Bush carried this group as he mentioned by 23 percentage points in 2004. And he suggested that the Democrats are now bringing this deficit down to around 10 to 12 points and that means that could portend to solid election victory for them. They're making impressive progress in the particular group.

But what lesson should the Republicans draw if the results mirror today's polls? If white men, a group that's been especially skeptical of the Democrats give Barack Obama a significantly larger share of their votes, does it say more about the Democratic candidates ideas or dissatisfaction with the way things are going in the country?

And to further a theme that Ruy has been talking about for quite awhile is the growing number of singles, those with higher levels of formal education, and Hispanics that Ruy wrote about in , pull the country

inexorably in the Democratic direction.

John Green and E.J. write, and Bill emphasized this in his presentations, that you have growth in both the unaffiliated population and also in the observant white Evangelical Protestant population. They've become more numerous over time and they have shifted their partisan preferences in the Democratic and Republican directions respectively.

They reminded us in their chapter and Bill's underscored that religion and faith-based politics can change substantially over the span of decades and there's no reason to suppose that their relationship will remain static in the next several decades.

America still remains a deeply religious country. In a question that Gallup has been asking since 1937 about willingness vote for candidates of different racial and ethnic make up, there's only one group for whom a majority still would not vote. Americans would not vote for an atheist for president. So the changes are coming, but they're coming very slowly overall.

And finally, just one other observation that perhaps ties together some of the things that have been said. I think it's hard to imagine a country as polarized as this one is today and the new CBS poll, just five percent of Democrats approve of the job that George W. Bush was doing and among Republicans that number was much larger overall indicating significant polarization.

And I guess I wonder whether or not these demographic changes will reduce that level of poisonous partisanship that's characterized our politics for so long.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Well thanks Karlyn. That's an excellent question about polarization and we'll definitely have to stay tuned on that one.

Before we turn it over to the audience, I just wanted to bring in the panel one last time here. I'm sort of curious, let's say it's the day after the election, a couple days after the election. You're sifting through the data; the exit poll data, the county data. What would you look at to tell you, like what kind of an election this was?

We're going to know who won at that point, but what kind of an election was it? And you know, is there a signal there about where we're going? So Bill is there any particular data point you'd look for, almost like a margin in a particular group? Or something like that that people could look at say, whoa, okay, that really tells us something?

MR. GALSTON: Well, off of the top of my head I'm going to be looking at three things.

Number one, just to what extent has the anxiety and enthusiasm that is so manifested in the electorate been translated into a massive surge in turnout? Historically massive increases in turnout tend to be correlated with significant changes. So that's number one.

Number two, I'll be looking for changes in the composition of the electorate which I think may be at least as significant as changes in the voting patterns in any subgroup in the electorate. I would not be at all surprised, as a matter of fact; I would be disappointed not to see the sort surge in young adult voting. That's what I used to do, track young adults, their civil and political life.

And as Scott said there have been signs going back for a number of electoral cycles now that this was building. This could be the year in which it comes to fruition. It could also be the year in which African American enthusiasm is translated into a massive surge in turnout. I think it's fair to say that Obama is to African American as John Kennedy was to Catholics.

And speaking of Catholics, as I indicated earlier, I will be looking very hard at how white Catholics vote in this election. I do believe I can name half a dozen states in which, at least, in which their voting propensities are going to turnout to be decisive.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Rob. Any benchmarks you'll be looking for as you shift through the data?

MR. LANG: Well, I have plans after this election immediately to take it through three different geographic filters. One is the suburban typology that we developed that's in that book which shows different, you know, intensities of suburbia, whether or not you're more



rural in character, more exurban, or more urban in character. Just to see where the dividing line is in the country, whether not that shifted out, I mean, there's piece of information if I knew right now. If I knew where the breakpoint of 50/50 was in the State of Virginia, if you told me it was west of Dulles Airport I would say that Barack Obama would likely win the state in the election. Just on that single piece of evidence alone.

So we'll look for the break points in the country, because if you take up too much of the metropolitan vote there's not enough rural voters left. There's not enough of the Shenandoah Valley left to offset that gain.

I mean, the way the Republican model has been working is that they win strongly 60/40 or plus 60/40; the rural areas, in the small towns, the micropolitan votes is something else I will look at.

And then they don't lose the exurbs that badly or I mean, they don't lose the suburbs that badly or the metro vote that badly because they win the exurbs. They throw away the cities; they often toss away the inner suburbs. And they are so competitive in those and suburbs that they take the metropolitan vote that would have been something like 55/45 and a knock it down to 52/48 against them. That plus the rural voter had you win Virginia, and you win Missouri, and all of these states where there's that kind of urban rural split.

The other thing I'd look at is even the swing counties that we

have, because they have been very consistently predicting the kind of contested space over the last several election cycles. If they dramatically shifted it could be the, you know, the idiosyncrasies of the event, you know, leading in especially this sort of anger about the economy. But it could signal something more fundamental.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Scott.

MR. KEETER: In addition to looking at the groups that I've talked about and that we've heard about, Evangelicals and white Catholics in particular. I'm going to be interested in looking on the next day to see if this election is more like 1996 or more like 1994.

Now let's say that Barack Obama wins the election and wins by the margin that is say the current average of the national polls right now, six points, seven points something like that. That's not too different from Bill Clinton's re-election.

Bill Clinton won re-election without very much in the way of coattails down ballot. I mean there were some Democratic victories but on the whole it was a pretty good year for the Congressional incumbent. 1994, of course, was a very different story. Now that wasn't a Presidential year but it was a big victory for the Republicans and what sometimes people forget is that not only was it a very big victory for the Republicans in the House and the Senate, but the roots of that victory were extremely deep. I mean literally down to the dog catcher elections if there were dog

catcher candidates who had D and R by their names.

Democrats almost without exception got wiped out in that election because the mobilization that occurred. The kind of people that came to vote in that election were very, very conservative, very Republican oriented and mad as Hell and wanted to make a change. And that had an effect and every Democrat who was exposed ran the risk of being turned out, including lots of them who thought they weren't going to.

So the day after the election we saw a lot, we will see a lot of discussion of the President race and certainly there's a lot of interest in whether the Democrats have any hope of getting to 60 votes in the Senate and so there will be a lot of discussion of that. But I think it will behoove us to look deeper and to see if this was an election that had a strongly partisan ideological caste to it or if it is a more mixed bag below the national level.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Great point. Bill any benchmarks you'll be looking for?

MR. FREY: Well since I was writing about race I think I'm going to focus on the older white population in two kinds of places.

One the fast growing purple states and most of these fast growing purple states have gone Republican in the past. The Democrats have placed a bet that they can take Colorado, that they can take Virginia, that they can take Florida, and Nevada.

And will do it for them is certainly the young minorities and the young folks. But they're going to have to lower the Republican margin for white Baby Boomers and I'm going to check if those white Baby Boomers are swaying less toward republican than they did in the past or even more toward Democrat than they did in the past.

I'm also going to look at the older white population in the slow growing battleground states; Pennsylvania, in Ohio, in Michigan. At least in Ohio these are the folks who helped bring George Bush into office in 2000 and 2004. Are they now going to be so swayed by the economic issues this year? Or perhaps even Barack Obama's transformative message? Not only look at the results but look at the reasons why they voted.

The Democrats have the opportunity to make big waves in these fast growing battlegrounds where they never had before. But they also need to try to keep hold of the ones they've had in the slower growing parts of the country. And I think the white older population is going to have a lot to say in both.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Okay. Old white guys who can take hope here, you're going to get a lot of attention after the election.

Karlyn?

MS. BOWMAN: I'll watch the groups that I watch most closely because they have almost a perfect record of prediction in

elections and I'll watch white Catholics as Bill's talked about a great deal, Independents in the group that we call some college in the polls.

I will also be interested in the uniformity of the swing among groups and finally whether Hispanics are going to turnout in significant numbers and what that indicates about future allegiance to the Democratic Party.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Thanks Karlyn. I will say just a very brief word because I want to turn it over to the audience.

I'll be looking at the things really that are on your handout. The white working class, white college graduates, if you get that white working class margin like around 10 or 11 or in single digits, that tells you a lot about what's happening with the Republicans quarry of strength.

Did Democrats carry white college graduates which I think at this point is quite probable. That tells you a lot about where the country's going because white college graduates are growing. The white working class is declining. And they are critical in a lot of these fast growing purple states that Bill was talking about. So that will be a big signal to us about what's going on.

But let me turn it now over to the audience. You've heard a lot from us about what's going on with this great country of ours and this election. Let's hear from you a little bit.

SPEAKER: Thanks. Gary Mitchell from the *The Mitchell*

*Report.*

One of the ways that I would characterize what we've heard this morning and that may be my first error, but I'll say it is that it looks as if groups that have predictably preformed voted in a certain way, may not. White Catholics being a classic example and others that you've cited.

So if that is a correct reading of what we're hearing, my question is if you're and it looks as though they are leaning towards Democrats and toward Obama, so if you are Obama. The good news is that for a variety of reasons, some of which you've talked about today, these groups are migrating in your direction.

The question that it raises for me and I don't know whether it's something that comes out of this group of people, but I want to frame it is, does that, is that good for him and Democrats on more than November 4<sup>th</sup>? Or does that raise the possibility of becoming a liability as he inevitably? As he takes office and inevitably deals with issues that made Patio Man mad, white Catholics think about shifting their allegiance, et cetera.

Is it likely that these people are early to turn? Does it make, in other words does it make, does it set up the possibility that governing is tougher because so much of his support came from people who traditionally did not support Democrats?

So another way of saying this I suppose is, is this election,

Obama in particular situational or is it transformational?

MR. TEIXEIRA: Bill?

MR. FREY: Well, let me answer that by underscoring a point that Karlyn very wisely made in her opening remarks and I'll put it in my own terms.

If Obama wins, he will have a chance not a mandate. And to put it slightly differently, the most important election in the 1930s was not 1932, it was 1936.

In 1932 people were so desperate that they repudiated what Arthur Schlesinger called the Old Order in the hope that something better would replace it. Those hopes were requited and Roosevelt won an overwhelming election in 1936.

In my judgment, although I don't think we're in the kind of shape now that we were in, in 1936. An Obama victory will be a repudiation of the Old Order and a hope that a new order will replace it that works better for average families.

If that happens, then the choice made this year will be ratified. If it doesn't you could see the sorts of reverses that Bill Clinton experienced as early as 1994. So I think the pressure will be on if Obama is elected.

I think the pressure will be on to deliver some early results. I don't think it will be, which is not to say that if he doesn't that he's toast in

2012 anymore than 1994 predicted 1996, but it certainly is the case that without early results the sort of Democratic surge that we're going to see in the House and the Senate will be very likely to recede in 2010 which will then make governing much more difficult.

So the first two years in my judgment will be quite important, perhaps decisive in determining the course of an Obama presidency if there is one.

MR. LANG: Can I raise a point too?

The mirror of that question is what's the Republican opportunity? It depends on the outcome of the election in part.

Their model has been run hard to the rural base, stoked them up. Win enough in the metropolis to tip the balance. That's how they got the last two elections. They were both close elections.

If you see an outcome like, the rural voters stayed with them and their position within metropolitan areas deteriorated then they're in trouble. And the reason is, if it's universal they're in less trouble in a way. If everybody turned on them it would indicate a situational constraint of theirs, a situational problem.

If it's differential and then you look at where the country's going as it adds its next 100 million people by 2039 and you consider that the vast majority of that is to metropolitan areas, then Republicans have to have one of these summits where they rethink completely their whole



message. They probably can get away, increasingly they're going to have this difficulty.

If you run against minorities, if you run with this old guard and with this idea of, you know sort of white anger and rural white anger specifically, then you're working off a dying business model basically.

And if the whites stay with him and the white anger, you know, if the whites stay with him and Palin really helped out in the rural areas and they just get killed in the cities then they're going to have figure out Patio Man. They're going to have to return to the suburban fringe and work backwards from this loss.

And again, it's situational. If Barack Obama turns around you know, screws something up like the way Clinton did with health care say in '92, '93 in the beginning of his term. They've got an opportunity, but here's what I'd say to then as a final note. Don't count on that. Then tell me what your model is.

In other words, assume that this remains competitive and this person is competent and even due to the way business cycle works things perked up a little by, you know, 2012 and that you're going to have to run for the long term and my argument for them would be you should reach out to the emerging minority populations and say, we offer you inclusion of another type. We offer you a kind of inclusion born of opportunity, not of a handout and work their and tweak their model that

way and hope that, you know, that they don't engender a lot of resentment from the white rural voters who are going to think you're opening up the country to anyone who wants in.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Right over there.

SPEAKER: My name is Sam Brown and I have a couple of questions that are related to each other and they're sort of is demographics destiny I guess would be the top line of it.

If you've heard David Plouffe's presentation, he talks about Florida. Nine hundred thousand under voted registered young people in 2004, 500,000 registered not voted African Americans in 2004.

The question is in his mind or at least in the campaign's mind seems to be okay, we lose the I-4 corridor. We lose everybody that Kerry lost. We turnout 1,400,000 extra voters that go for us 65/35. Thank you game over, Florida won.

Can a campaign on the ground turn around the demographics? I understand the demographics are also headed in the right direction for Obama this year. But even if they weren't is that a realistic model of a way to think about a campaign?

And the related issue is frankly a fight I have with my kids who are both traveling with Rock the Vote on the bus someplace and they say to me look, Dad. First time registered voters turnout the first time. That's the history.

Yeah they may not vote the second or third time, but first time out when they're registered they're excited they turnout and therefore the 1,300,000 new young voters registered this year are going to turnout and they're going to turnout in numbers that are going to be 70/30 Obama, 80/20 something like that.

Is that true or does it get bogged down in the issue of you can't vote because you don't live where you, whatever? What's the reality of the first time registered younger voter and does that huge surge this year shift the equation for the overall composition of the voting population?

MR. TEIXEIRA: The turnout of new registrants is always lower than current registrants, so that just does not appear to be correct, that assertion.

And in general the idea that, take the case of Florida that you could just sort of like lose as John Kerry did in the various areas of Florida including the I-4 corridor and still win the state because you bring in all of these new registrants and people who weren't voting before. I think that's probably wrong.

I think that, in fact, Barack does have to do better in the I-4 corridor and I think will probably do better. You know the Tampa and Orlando metros, if he is able to do substantially better than Kerry did in those metros alone it will do a lot for him to carry the state. And it certainly his margin, whatever it will be in Florida, will be helped by these new

registrants and higher turnout among black voters for example.

But I think it would be foolish to rely on that and frankly, I doubt that is what they're relying on.

So in the interest of getting in some more questions why don't we move quickly to, why don't we take three questions here in a row and then we can try to respond to them.

Did you have a question there? I thought I saw your hand up earlier. And then we'll take a couple more, so go ahead.

SPEAKER: There seems to be a big reliance on looking at white Catholic men as a predictor and I was wondering if they act as a monolithic group or is there more nuances among the subgroups, like say among Italian white Catholics or like Irish Catholic men?

MR. TEIXEIRA: Okay. A couple more questions here. Way in the back, Jo.

SPEAKER: My name is Jo Freeman, I'm a Senior Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center.

I didn't hear much discussion of gender as a variable although I heard the word men thrown around a lot. I would appreciate some discussion on that and I would particularly like to know how it interacts with three other variables; namely state, class, and religious observance.

State because when I looked at the returns on the Senatorial

racess in 2006 I noted that the gender gap ranged from zero to 10 percent. It was not uniform. And since there are clearly some states that are more important than others, I would think that is important to see what's going on there.

Religious observance, we have a contradiction. The religiously observant are more likely to vote Republican. Women are more likely to be religiously observant. Women are more likely to vote Democratic. How do those two variables interact if you control for one what does it do to the other?

And as for class, well we've already been talking about working class men. I believe working class women have held onto their Democratic allegiances a bit longer and stronger than men, but perhaps you could clarify that.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Okay. One more question. How about right there? Yes, sir.

SPEAKER: Just a question not related. Colin Powell's endorsement, I just wonder whether that would shift any demographics?

MR. TEIXEIRA: Okay. Who wants to take any one of these questions?

MR. GALSTON: Well, since I've been banging away on white Catholics, let me just take the first question.

Number one, I was not just talking about white Catholic man.

All right. I was talking across the board.

Secondly, they are certainly are not monolithic and what they are is a swing group. You saw Bill Clinton do increasingly well among them in '92 and '96. You saw Al Gore do less well in 2000, you saw George Bush carry them in 2004.

And so I do think that how they respond to what I called the cross-pressure that they are now experiencing will be absolutely decisive. To what extent will the economic hardship that the country is experiencing, their states are experiencing and they themselves may well be experience; to what extent will that trump the historic commitment they have to the sort of defense and foreign policy stances that John McCain is espousing?

And to what extent will those economic concerns trump the concern for traditional values, which at least in a declaratory sense is something that distinguishes these voters?

Stay tuned.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Scott.

MR. KEETER: -- Colin Powell.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Okay.

MR. KEETER: We've looked at endorsements in the past and generally have the opinion that they don't make a lot of difference. We did, however, find that Oprah Winfrey's endorsement of Obama

seemed to help him.

But I think it helped him in not only in terms of good buzz at the time, but also in boosting his organizational efforts. I mean she was a big draw in some of the primary states where having 75,000 people come to a stadium translates into real votes and of course, the Obama campaign has proven itself to be very nimble in using these in-person events to collect information, cell phone numbers for text messaging and so forth.

None of that is really going to be present with Colin Powell's endorsement because as far as I understand he's not going to campaign with Obama. So there won't be the opportunity at the big events where he draws in a lot of people. I think in any event Obama has shown with his rallies in Missouri yesterday that he actually doesn't need anybody to help him draw a big crowd.

But one thing that it potentially can do is that our polling indicates that there remain a fairly large number of persuadable voters. That's not unusual in an election where you have non-incumbents running against each other. Whether it's as high as some of our swing voter estimates have been, which is close to one and four or more like 10 or 15 percent. There's still enough voters out there who if they change their minds in one direction would tilt the election away from, you know, one candidate and towards the other.

And Powell's endorsement, while not necessarily determinative in any other respect helps to continue the positive news balance that Obama has been enjoying over the past week or so and everyday in an election that has two weeks to go that the balance of the news is more favorable to one candidate is, you know, is a good thing from that candidate's perspective.

MR. TEIXEIRA: On gender, of course, this is vast topic just a couple words.

Single women have been, you know, have been a very important and growing group of women voters and you know, there was a big margin for John Kerry among single women in 2004. Winning by 32 points or something. And it's looking like it's going to be that way in this election, maybe even a little higher.

Another sort of wrinkle on the, sort putting the gender lens on some of these trends is that white working class men are pretty different than white working class women. White working class men have been amazingly resolute in their support for Republicans over time. There is some evidence that it's diminishing some in this election but the bigger movement may be seen among white working class women.

In fact, if you looked at white working class women between 2000 and 2004 you could pretty much account for most of the shift toward Bush between those two elections just by looking at white working class



women. So I think we're now seeing, you know, the white working class women moving in the direction of Barack Obama and maybe he'll be even better among them than Al Gore did in 2000.

I think that's where we were going to see most of the movement.

Rob.

MR. LANG: Can I make a quick comment on the gender gap as well?

MR. TEIXEIRA: Sure.

MR. LANG: Yeah, state difference in gender is interesting to me and when I was looking at, you know, when Sarah Palin began to be damaged right after the RNC. The first group that abandoned her were educated women.

And I look at the concentrations of those women and you look at states like Virginia and the status of educated women in like Northern Virginia say what's the median point of education or suburban Denver. I think those are the kinds of suburban swing districts where Palin did some damage. That a married woman living in an exurban fringe suburb of Virginia or Denver, you know, Washington or Denver was naturally leaning towards the Republicans and the inclusion of someone on the ticket who struck them as not speaking to some of their issues I suspect may have made some of those households slip.

You know, it may have produced a husband voting one way

and a wife voting the other way and probably is the basis of a lot of kitchen table discussions.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Great. Thanks Rob. Maybe let's just take a whole bunch more questions.

SPEAKER: I asked about three things.

MR. FREY: Religious observance as well.

MR. TEIXEIRA: And gender. I haven't looked at that recently. Does anyone have –

MR. KEETER: I can't speak to the gender gap part. Religious observance is interesting in its own way in that it looks like there has been, well Bill said the secular vote was very important to the Democrats in 2006. And they picked up almost all of their margin over 2004 in the Congressional races among secular voters.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Okay. Let's see. Right over there.

SPEAKER: This may be a really dumb question, but I really can't understand why the economic downturn and especially the absolute rage at the bailout by most people has been an advantage to Democrats.

Can you explain that?

MR. TEIXEIRA: Why it has been an advantage to Democrats? Okay. Next question. Over there, sir.

SPEAKER: When you put all of these factors together could each of the panelists say how many electoral college votes they think

Obama will win?

MR. TEIXEIRA: How many, okay. Other questions? I guess right in back there. Yeah, take those two questions there.

SPEAKER: In which six states will the Catholic vote be decisive and also what would you say white Catholics are concerned with besides the economy?

MR. TEIXEIRA: Okay and right next to you there was another question. Same question? Okay.

Are there anymore questions? Let's just take whatever we got left here and we'll do the best we can.

Yes, right over there.

SPEAKER: Very quickly. I'm wondering what the post-ethnic, post-racial candidate who might be our next president would think of this conversation in terms of splicing and dicing the electorate? And I believe Karyln Bowman mentioned that issues and candidates are also important, not just demographics.

I wonder if we could put a percentage on figure on how important will demographics be in this election beyond issues and candidates?

MR. TEIXEIRA: Okay. Maybe right over there and we may have to cut it off actually at this point. So that will be the last question.

SPEAKER: I was just wondering if you are aware of any

plans to study the demographics of donors in this election? Which strikes me as something that's very different from previous elections, I think back in 2000 Clyde Wilcox did a study and found donors were over 70 percent male almost 96 percent white. And I'm guessing that it's going to be a little bit different this time.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Okay. All right. So that's a boatload of questions. Let's try to address them and maybe as people do as they wish they can shoehorn in any final comments they might have for our audience. So who wants to tackle one of these or any of these questions.

MR. FREY: I'll take the demographics beyond the specific issues.

I mean, I think what we're really, I think it's pretty clear that the economy has sort of affected all of, mostly all of these demographic groups in one way or another. And so it interacts perhaps, but especially with working class whites and many of these other groups that's going to be an overriding concern.

But I think what we're seeing also here and what we see in the chapters of this book are mega-trends that really are sort of reshaping what's going on in our electorate. The idea, of course, of the Hispanic growth in the United States and as more generations of Hispanics become citizens and vote and disperse to other parts of the country, the secularism of the younger generation that we've been talking about here are just two

of them.

But in lots of ways I think that what we're talking about are yes, I think the key question is are the issues and the very economic issues somehow going to shape things more than the demographics and they're certainly going to have a big effect. But we also need to keep an eye out on these mega-trends as we see them in the election. And not be to blinded by the issue aspect and try to understand what they show as well for the next election.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Any other panelists. Karyln.

MS. BOWMAN: Your question about what would Barack Obama think about this discussion? I agree with what Bill has said, we've got to be aware of these trends and he certainly will recognize if he is victorious that they propelled him in a significant measure to the White House. But he also has talked about so much about being post-partisan and wanting to united the country so I don't think he's going to be talking very much about the demographic differences.

As to the question about Catholic voters, I really don't think there are any other issues in this election except the economy for almost any group of voters. I mean everything else ranks so far down in the single digits with the economy at 65, 68 percent in terms of the most important issue and everything else sort of below six or seven percent so for no group of voters can I think of a specific other issue that's really an

important one overall.

And I don't think in this chapter of the book but if you look at the Pew website you can look at the particular states in terms of the size of the Catholic population. I don't know the answer to that question.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Bill, do you have something on Catholics for us?

MR. GALSTON: Well, I said half a dozen and here off the top of my head are half a dozen and you will notice a certain similarity among them. Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, and if Obama carries Indiana it will be because among other things because he does very well among white Catholic voters who have been disproportionately hurt by the downturn in manufacturing in Indiana, which is bigger than I believed six months ago. Which is why –

SPEAKER: Could you say the six again?

MR. GALSTON: Yes. Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, and Indiana and I could go on, but those are the big ones or some of the big ones.

As for a concluding thought, is demography destiny? No, but it sure gives destiny a nudge. And you know, so for example we have been talking for a generation now about not only the surge of the Evangelical Protestants into American politics but also they're increasing market share. And we were right to talk about that.

A question that Ruy and his co-author John Judis put on the table a few years ago when they were perhaps, prophets a little bit ahead of their time. A serious question is whether the next 30 years will be equally dominated by the rise of secular voters?

Let us remember that even in 2004 George Bush got about 20 percent of his total support from white Evangelical Protestants, but John Kerry got about 20 percent of his support from secular voters. And we focused on the former, I think and have ignored the latter and it may be time to turn our attention to the growth sectors of the American electorate.

MR. LANG: On the electoral college question. The key issue is not really the proportion of whatever landslide you might think Obama would get, but what are the opportunities for the republicans to win a narrow victory or even get to 269, 269 would throw it into a Democratic House of Representatives.

You look currently at the map and you think of one, the chance that Barack Obama would win back the Kerry states and you're looking at high 90s probabilities.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Right.

MR. LANG: You look then at just adding back in the Gore states and then throwing in a state like Colorado or Virginia and you could win that narrow in an Electoral College victory and you win. The chances of it going above 300 are decent. I think there is less of a chance for

states like in the end North Carolina, in my heart I think will trend back to the Republicans in the final analysis.

But my sense is it would be above 300, above 300 would be a high probability. I think as the firewall for the Barack Obama point of view it would be maybe the Gore states plus Virginia and Colorado, but it could be in a sort of sweep of history one of these realigning elections. And I'm sure if you see numbers at 375 or above the Democrats are going to claim and that the national media is going to focus on.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Scott any final words?

MR. KEETER: A lot was made about the role of race in this election and one of the most persistent questions that we get at the Pew Research Center is whether or not there is a hidden Republican vote that would bring back the very bad memories of we pollsters have of the so-called Bradley Effect.

Our view is that if there is a Bradley Effect it's going to be significantly smaller than it was back in the 1980s and early 1990s. It's still possible that it's out there, but the experience in 2006 when you had five statewide elections that involved black and white candidates opposing one another was that the pre-election polling was perfectly accurate.

And in 2008 while we can all point to very stunning and embarrassing polling failure in New Hampshire in which Obama was the consensus choice of the pollsters and ended up losing to Hilary Clinton.



The rest of the contest provide a very mixed picture of the accuracy of polling in the Democratic primaries and in fact, on the whole the most consistent thing that we saw was that in states with large black populations the polls understated how well Obama was going to do.

MR. TEIXEIRA: Well, thanks Scott. I think that about wraps it up. I want to thank everyone for coming and you've got a lot to look at when the election results come in and I hope you do.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

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