The Political Geography of Ohio, Michigan, and Missouri: Battlegrounds in the Heartland

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This is the third in a series of reports on the demographic and political dynamics under way in key "battleground" states, deemed to be crucial in deciding the 2008 election. As part of the Metropolitan Policy Program's *Blueprint for American Prosperity,* this series will provide an electoral component to the initiative's analysis of and prescriptions for bolstering the health and vitality of America's metropolitan areas, the engines of the U.S. economy. This report focuses on three major battleground states in the Midwest—Ohio, Michigan, and Missouri—and finds that:

A. Ohio, Michigan and Missouri all feature eligible voter populations dominated by white working class voters. However, this profile is changing, albeit more slowly than in faster-growing states like Colorado or Arizona, as the white working class declines and white college graduates and minorities, especially Hispanics, increase. The largest effects are in these states' major metropolitan areas—Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati in Ohio: Detroit in Michigan; and St. Louis and Kansas City in Missouri—especially in their suburbs.

B. In Ohio, these trends could have their strongest impact in the fast-growing and Democratic-trending Columbus metro, where Democrats will seek to tip the entire metro in their favor by expanding their margin in Franklin County and reducing their deficit in the suburbs. The trends could also have big impacts in the Cleveland metro (especially its suburbs), in the Cincinnati metro (especially Hamilton County) and in the medium-sized metros of the Northeast (Akron, Canton, and Youngstown). Overall, the GOP will be looking to maintain their support among the declining white working class, especially among whites with some college, who have been trending Democratic. Also critical to their prospects is whether the growing white college-educated group will continue its movement toward the Democrats.

C. In Michigan, these trends will likely determine whether the fast-growing and populous Detroit suburbs continue shifting toward the Democrats, a development which would tip the Detroit metro (44 percent of the statewide vote) even farther in the direction of the Democrats. The trends will also have a big impact on whether the GOP can continue their hold on the conservative and growing Southwest region of the state that includes the Grand Rapids metro. The GOP will seek to increase its support among white college graduates, who gave the GOP relatively strong support in 2004, but have been trending toward the Democrats long term.

D. In Missouri, these trends will have their strongest impact on the two big metros of Democratic-trending St. Louis (38 percent of the vote)—especially its suburbs—and GOP-trending Kansas City (20 percent of the statewide vote). The Democrats need a large increase in their margins out of these two metros to have a chance of taking the state, while the GOP simply needs to hold the line. The trends will also have a significant impact on the conservative and growing Southwest region, the bulwark of GOP support in the state, where the Republicans will look to generate even higher support levels. The GOP will try to maintain its support from the strongly pro-GOP white college graduate group, which has been increasing its share of voters as it has trended Republican.

These large, modestly growing states in the heartland of the United States will play a pivotal roll in November's election. Though experiencing smaller demographic shifts than many other states, they are each changing in ways that underscore the contested status of their combined 48 Electoral College votes in this year's presidential contest.

Introduction

This report on the political demography and geography of three Midwest states—Ohio, Michigan, and Missouri—is part of a series of reports on "purple" states in the 2008 elections. (Previous reports focused on Pennsylvania and Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Arizona in the West. A companion report will focus on Virginia and Florida in the South)

Purple states are states where the current balance of political forces does not decisively favor one party or the other, as it does in the solid red (Republican) and blue (Democratic) states. But demographic and geographic trends are constantly testing the balance in these purple states.

The three states focused on in this report are not only strongly "in play" in 2008, but they have the greatest electoral voting heft in the Midwest (aside from Illinois, the very blue state which is the home state of Democratic nominee Barak Obama). The significance of Ohio is well known, due to George W. Bush's razor thin victory over John Kerry in 2004. But Michigan and Missouri are also seen to be "up for grabs."

While Michigan has "gone blue" in each presidential election since 1988, its 2004 Democratic margin was only 4 percent. The underlying demographics of the state and the modest rate at which these demographics are changing suggest the state will once again be highly contestable.

Missouri voted for George W. Bush in the last two presidential elections and has a reputation for going with a winner. In every election since 1900 with the exception of one (1956 when it supported Adlai Stevenson), it has voted for the national victor. Bush's 2004 victory margin was 7 percent in Missouri and recent statewide senatorial and gubernatorial elections have gone to both parties and by even closer margins.

From a demographic standpoint, these states are less "glamorous" than more dynamic battleground states like Colorado, Nevada, or Florida. In those states, the sheer growth and turnover in the electorate, accompanied Hispanic population gains, can stir up the pot enough to upend past election trends. However, in the slow-growing Midwest states examined in this report, the voting population is changing much more slowly, so any shift from the past will likely be less dramatic.

Table 1. Growth by Race and Migration Components: Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, 2000–2007

	Ohio	Michigan	Missouri
2007 Population (000s)	11,467	10,072	5,878
Growth Rate*			
Total	0.9	1.2	4.9
White**	-0.9	-0.5	2.9
Black**	4.1	0.7	6.1
Asian**	31.7	29.7	34.0
Hispanic	29.5	23.2	48.9
Migration Rate*			
Domestic Migration	-2.6	-3.6	0.7
Immmigration	0.8	1.5	0.9

** rates per 100 populaton*

*** non-Hispanic members of race*

Source: Authors' analysis of US Census estimates

The demographic stagnation, particularly in Ohio and Michigan is evident from **Table 1**. Between 2000 and 2007, these two states grew only at about one percent. Each also exhibited a net loss of domestic migrants to other parts of the country which was not nearly equaled by immigrants from abroad. Missouri grew more briskly than these two states, but also below the national average.

Michigan and Ohio also exhibited declines in their nonfarm employment growth since 2000 by -8.9 percent and -3.6 percent respectively. Missouri showed a relatively modest gain of 1.7 percent

Compared to the nation as a whole, each of the three states varies on a number of attributes (**Table 2**). All three are whiter, older, and have residents who are more likely to be "homegrown". They each have lower shares of college graduates and professionals, than the nation as a whole. They also have lower median household incomes. One area where they do rank above the U.S. total is their share of employees in manufacturing jobs. Here, Michigan and Ohio rank third and fourth nationally.

Table 2. Demographic, Economic, and Political Indicators: U.S. and three states

Indicator	U.S.	Ohio	Michigan	Missouri
Demographic Indicators / *State Rank*				
% White	66.2	82.8 / *16*	77.6 / *24*	82.5 / *18*
% Age 65+	12.4	13.3 / *15*	12.5 / *30*	13.3 / *15*
% Born in Same State#	67.4	77.9 / *5*	80.4 / *3*	68.6 / *21*
Economic Indicators 2006 / *State Rank*				
% College Grads*	27.0	23.0 / *39*	24.5 / *35*	24.3 / *36*
% Professionals**	20.2	19.3 / *28*	20.0 / *22*	18.9 / *33*
% Manufacturing**	11.6	17.0 / *4*	18.9 / *3*	12.5 / *19*
Median HH Income	48,451	44,532 / *33*	47,182 / *24*	42,841 / *37*
% Persons in Poverty	13.3	13.3 / *21*	13.5 / *20*	13.6 / *17*
State Political Indicators				
Dem/Rep House Members		*11R/7D*	*9R/6D*	*5R/4D*
Dem/Rep Senators		*1D, 1R*	*2D*	*1D,1R*
Governor: Dem or Rep		*D*	*D*	*R*
Democratic Margin- 2004 Pres		*-2*	*-3*	*-7*

 # among native born residents

**among persons age 25 and over*

*** among civilian employed population age 16 and over*

Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey and state election results

In sum, these states, especially Ohio and Michigan, maintain their old line industrial base profiles, despite the fact that this has not been a good decade for such economies. Yet in each of the three, there are demographic and political forces at work that are changing the profiles of these states. Growth in large cities, inner suburbs, and industrial regions has been modest at best, typically lagging behind growth in farther-out suburbs and smaller urban areas, with demographic shifts altering the composition of both growing and declining regions.

For each state in this report, we start by delineating our regions of analysis and discussing population growth patterns for the state as whole and each individual region. We then provide demographic and growth profiles for the state and each region, focusing particularly on the key

demographics of minorities, white working-age college graduates, the working-age white working class, and white seniors. We then describe the demographic voting patterns within the state, followed by an extensive discussion of how different regions within the state have trended politically since 1988. We conclude the analysis of each state with an assessment of the key trends and groups to watch as the 2008 campaign unfolds.

Together these analyses will show why these large Midwest states are especially competitive. The results of the 2008 election will reflect the final balance struck in each state between the diverse demographic and geographic trends identified below

Data Sources and Definitions

The demographic, polling, and voting statistics presented in this report are the latest available from authoritative sources. The demographic profiles of states and their regions are drawn from U.S. Decennial Censuses through 2000, U.S. Census population estimates for states and counties through July 2007, and the Public Use Micro Sample of the Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey. Polling data are drawn from the CBS/New York Times (1988) and National Election Pool (2004 and 2006) state exit polls. Presidential and congressional election data are drawn from official county level election returns for the three states.

Our analysis of eligible voters—citizens age 18 and above—draws from the 2006 American Community Survey and the 2000 census. We examine these voters according to several social and demographic attributes. Special emphasis is given to four key demographic segments of eligible voters: (1) *minorities* – all persons stating something other than non-Hispanic white as their race-ethnicity; (2) *white seniors* – non-Hispanic whites ages 65+; (3) *working-age white college graduates* – non-Hispanic whites ages 18-64 with a four year college degree or more; and (4) *working-age white working class* – non-college-educated non-Hispanic whites ages 18–64

The sub-state regional definitions that we employ will be discussed in Part A and displayed on maps in each state-specific section. They are typically based on counties or groups thereof, comprising metropolitan areas or other regions that are strategically important in terms of their recent demographic shifts or voting trends. These regions will be used to identify sub-state trends drawn from U.S. census county population estimates and county level election returns. Regions delineated for the analyses of eligible voter demographics presented in Part B of each state-specific section, and in Appendix tables, will sometimes deviate slightly from the regional definitions presented in Part A. This is due to the geography limitations of data available with the 2006 American Community Survey Public Use Micro-Sample, which is used in these analyses. Details about these slight differences in regional definition are available from the authors.

OHIO

A. The three big metropolitan areas of Ohio comprise almost half of the state's population, but the Cincinnati and, particularly, Columbus metros are growing, while the Cleveland metro is declining. Those parts of the state that lie outside the three big metros are also declining, albeit modestly. These metropolitan areas and regions create a complicated political calculus that will determine the state's political outcome next November

B. Ohio's electorate is dominated by white working class voters, but population shifts are eroding that dominance. White college graduates and minorities are increasing their share of voters throughout the state, while the white working class is declining. These changes are particularly strong in the Columbus metro area.

C. The GOP's razor thin victory in Ohio in the 2004 election can be attributed to solid support among white working class and even stronger support among white college graduate voters. But both groups have been moving toward the Democrats, with the growing white college graduate group exhibiting a particularly sharp pro-Democratic trend.

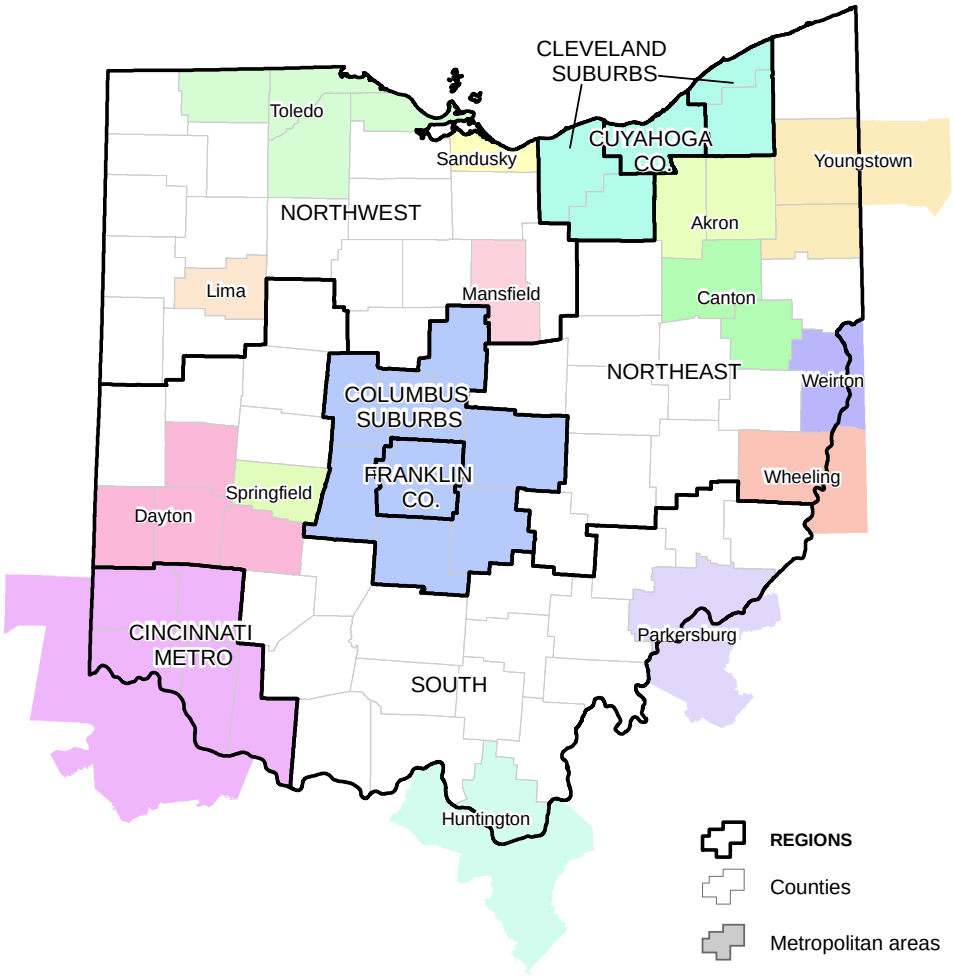
D. Political shifts in Ohio since 1988 have moved all regions toward the Democrats, with the sharpest shifts in Franklin county, Cuyahoga county and the fast-growing Columbus suburbs. Other substantial pro-Democratic shifts have taken place in the Cleveland suburbs, the Cincinnati metro and the South region, especially the Dayton metro.

E. Key trends and groups to watch in 2008 include the white working class, especially whites with some college, where the GOP needs to prevent any erosion of support; white college graduates, who have been increasing their share of voters and moving toward the Democrats; and blacks, whose support for the Democrats might intensify in this election. These trends are likely to have their most significant effects in Ohio's large metros, especially the fast-growing Columbus metro, as well as the medium-sized metros in the Northeast region.

A. The three big metropolitan areas of Ohio comprise almost half of the state's population, but the Cincinnati and, particularly, Columbus metros are growing, while the Cleveland metro is declining. Those parts of the state that lie outside the three big metros are also declining, albeit modestly.

The "Buckeye State" is again destined to have a significant impact on the 2008 election. No Republican has ever been elected president without winning Ohio as Democrats are well-aware.

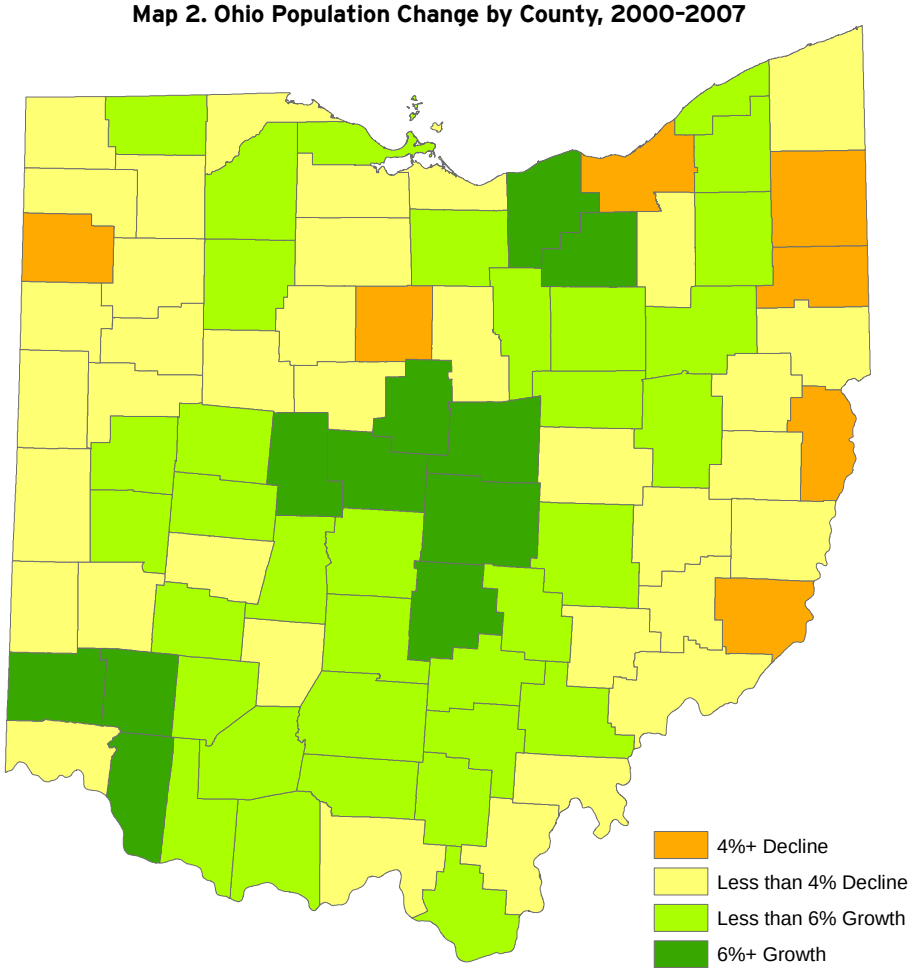
Map 1. Ohio Metropolitan Areas and Regions



Though it lost one vote after the 2000 Census, Ohio still possesses a formidable 20 votes in the Electoral College. Still, the current decade has not been kind to Ohio in terms of demographic and economic growth. It ranks 46th among the 50 states in population growth this decade and 0.9 percent and, since 2000, sustained a net loss of almost 300,000 domestic migrants and experienced an employment decline of 3.6 percent. This led to a statewide unemployment rate which ranged from 5.5 percent to 6.6 percent over the first 6 months of this year, higher than the national average. Much of this decline is centered in the urban industrial parts of the state.

Ohio is home to 16 metropolitan areas or parts of metros shared with other states. The largest three are Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus, each with populations over one million. Together these three metros account for 48 percent of the state's population. Their growth patterns differ, however. Cleveland, with a decline centered in its urban core, showed a metropolitan population loss of 2.4 percent over 2000–2007. During same period, metropolitan Columbus gained by 8.3 percent

Map 2. Ohio Population Change by County, 2000-2007



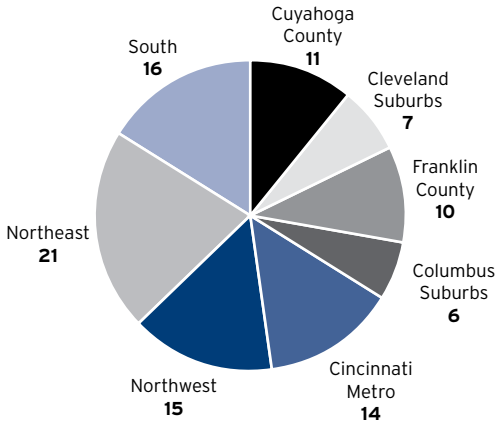
Source: Authors' calculations of U.S. Census estimates

and the Ohio portion of metro Cincinnati grew by 5.3 percent in this decade. Below these big three metropolitan areas are four moderately sized metros, with populations greater than one half million: Dayton, Akron, Toledo, and Youngstown, each located in one of the state's major regions.

Ohio's regional scheme, for this analysis is depicted in **Map 1**, with relative size and growth patterns for regions shown in **Map 2** and **Figures 1 and 2.** These regions are defined as follows:

1. Cuyahoga County – the center of the Cleveland metropolitan area includes the city of Cleveland and its inner suburbs. The county's population is 1.3 million whereas Cleveland's city population is only about a third at 438,000. Cleveland continued its long term population decline, by losing over 8 percent of its population since 2000. This is embedded in Cuyahoga County's overall loss of 6.9 percent over the same period. Still the county comprises a healthy 11 percent of the state's population, and represents more than half of the Cleveland metro area population.

Figure 1. Share of Population in Ohio Regions, 2007 (%)



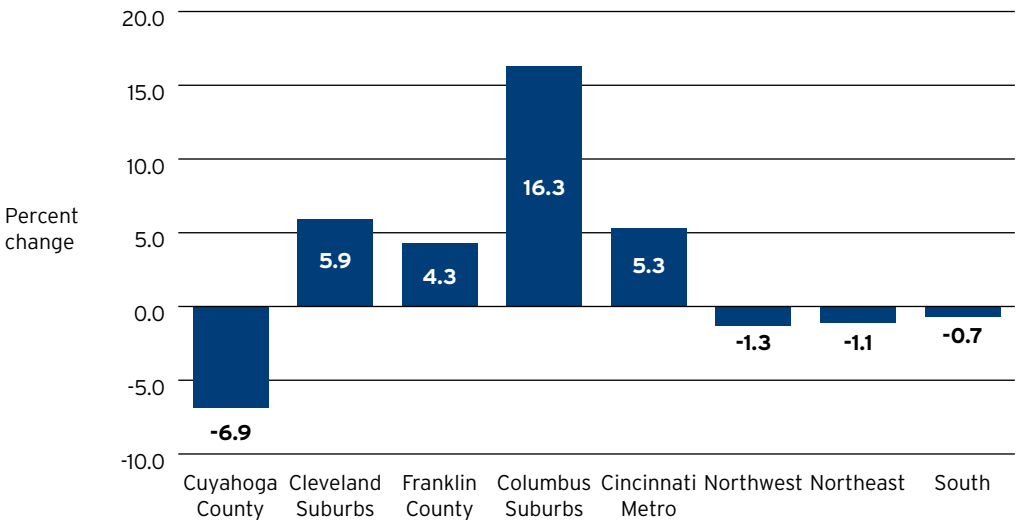
Source: Authors' calculations of U.S. Census estimates

2. Cleveland Suburbs – consists of the remaining counties of the Cleveland metropolitan area; Lorain, Lake, Medina, and Geauga. Led by exurban Medina with a robust growth of nearly 12 percent since 2000, this group of counties grew by nearly 6 percent, in contrast with Cuyahoga's loss

3. Franklin County – with population over 1.1 million is the central county in the Columbus metropolitan area and contains the city of Columbus (population 747,000) This county, which grew 4.2 percent since 2000, will soon surpass Cuyahoga as the largest county in the state.

4. Columbus Suburbs - includes the counties of Delaware, Licking, Fairfield, Pickaway, Union,

Figure 2. Population Growth in Ohio Regions, 2000-2007



Source: Authors' calculations of U.S. Census estimates

Madison, and Morrow. Led by Delaware, the fastest growing county in the state at 44 percent since 2000, Columbus Suburbs is the fastest growing region in this state analysis (16 percent since 2000).

5. Cincinnati metro – is the Ohio portion of the Cincinnati metro area, which includes the counties of Hamilton, Butler, Warren Clermont and Brown. The largest of these is Hamilton, which has a population of 842,000 and contains the city of Cincinnati (332,000 population). Hamilton shows a slight population decline while the remaining suburban counties show gains, led by Warren which grew by 26 percent since 2000.

The Cincinnati metro as a whole contains 14 percent of the state's population.

6. Northwest – encompasses 23 counties in the Northwest part of the state, including the moderately large Toledo metropolitan area and the smaller metros of Mansfield, Lima and Sandusky. Most of the region's largely non-metropolitan counties are declining in population such that the region as a whole registers a 1.3 percent decline since 2000 although it comprises 15 percent of the state's population.

7. Northeast – consists of 19 counties in the northeast part of Ohio. It includes the moderate-sized metropolitan areas of Akron and Youngstown as well as the smaller metropolitan areas of Canton and the Ohio portions of the Wheeling, WV and Weirton, WV metropolitan areas. The Akron and Canton metropolitan areas show modest gains, while the others show population declines since 2000. Overall the region has registered a decline of 1.1 percent over the time period, and comprises 21 percent of the state's population.

8. South – consists of 28 counties to the west and south of the Columbus metropolitan areas. It includes the moderate sized metropolitan area of Dayton and the smaller metropolitan areas of Springfield and the Ohio portions of the Huntington WV and Parkersburg WV metros. The Dayton metro shows a small 2000–2007 decline despite some growth in its suburbs and the other metros and counties show mostly declines or modest gains. The region, which comprises 16 percent of the state's population, has declined a modest 0.7 percent since 2000.

B. Ohio's electorate is dominated by white working class voters, but population shifts are eroding that dominance. White college graduates and minorities are increasing their share of voters throughout the state, while the white working class is declining.

The profile of Ohio's key eligible voter segments, shown in **Table 3**, indicates that fully 54 percent of the state's electorate is comprised of working-age working class whites; 14 percent are minorities and there are as many white seniors as there are working-age white college graduates at 16 percent.

Table 3. Ohio Eligible Voters in Key Demographic Segments, 2006 and Change since 2000

Key Demographic Segments	Share of Total 2006	Percent Change 2000-2006
Minorities	14	7.3
Whites Age 65+	16	0.6
White Working-Age College Grads,	16	9.0
White Working-Age Non College Grads	54	-0.2

Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey and 2000 US Decennial Census

This differs sharply from the total U.S. eligible voter profile where only 42 percent of eligible voters are working age working-class whites, a full 26 percent are minorities, and working-age white college graduates outnumber white seniors by 18 percent to 14 percent.

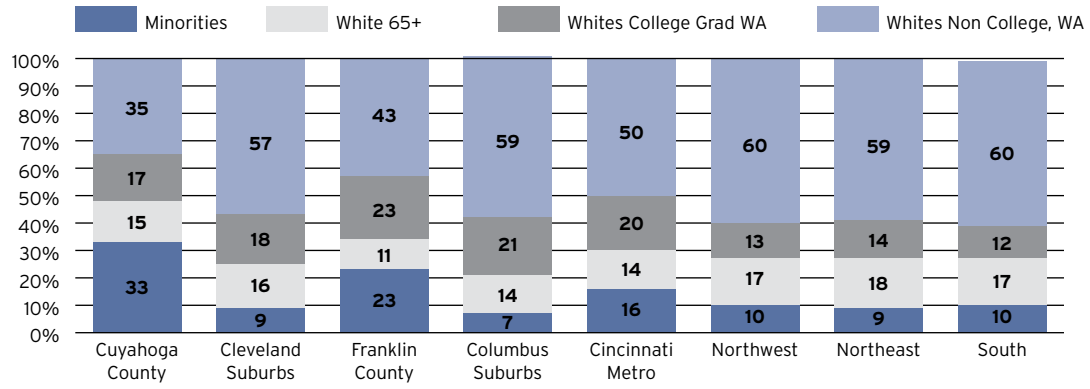
The Appendix data provide additional comparisons between Ohio's eligible voter population and the U.S. as a whole. Compared with the nation as a whole, Ohio's electorate is whiter and less well-educated. Forty-one percent of Ohio's eligible voters do not have more than a high school education, compared with 35 percent for the total U.S. At the other end of the education spectrum, only 20 percent of eligible voters in Ohio have college degrees or higher levels of schooling versus 25 percent for the nation.

Further, Ohio's relatively stable population is reflected in the fact that more than 7 out of 10 of its eligible voters were born in the state, compared with only 56 percent of U.S. voters who were born in their current state of residence.

There are a number of noticeable regional differences in the key demographic profiles of eligible voters (**Figure 3**). The low percentage of white college graduates, shown in the statewide numbers, is less apparent in Franklin County (home of the city of Columbus), the Columbus suburbs, and the Cincinnati metro. Each of these three regions show at least one-fifth of their eligible voters to be white college graduates.

This highly educated slice is least apparent in the Northwest, Northeast, and South regions, which lie outside of the big metropolitan areas. It is in these areas, in addition to the Columbus suburbs, where about six-tenths of eligible voters belong to the white working class. And it is these same non-major metro regions that have the highest percentage of white seniors.

Figure 3. Eligible Voters in Key Demographic Segments, Ohio Regions



Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey and 2000 US Decennial Census

The minority population has its largest share of eligible voters in Cuyahoga County (home of the city of Cleveland) followed by Franklin County and the Cincinnati metropolitan area. In each of these, the minority population is dominated by African Americans (**Table 4**). The regions with the highest white population shares are the Cleveland and Columbus suburbs, where whites comprise more than nine out 10 eligible voters. This indicates a continuing sharp city-suburb divide within these major metros. Still, eligible voter populations in all regions with the exception of Cuyahoga and Franklin counties are at least 84 percent white. Finally, the Cleveland suburbs show the highest eligible voter Hispanic share (3.1 percent) of all Ohio regions.

With respect to age, Columbus and its suburbs and metropolitan Cincinnati have the youngest eligible voters in the state. In both cases, approximately half are under age 45 (**Table 5**).

Figure 4 shows the 2000–2006 region specific shifts on our key demographic eligible voter segments (**Figure 4**). Within the Cleveland metropolitan area all three white demographic segments—seniors, college grads, and working class whites—show declines in absolute numbers in Cuyahoga County, while the suburbs show gains.

This shift is apparent, but to a lesser extent, within the Columbus metropolitan area. Here, there is a decline in the numbers of white working class voters in Franklin County, but a gain in suburban Columbus. Yet both parts of metro Columbus show gains in white college graduates, particularly the suburbs, where these gains represent a 36 percent increase since 2000. Gains in white college graduates can also be seen in Cincinnati as well as the three broad non-large metro regions of the state (though the gains in the South are quite small).

Table 4. 2006 Race-Ethnic Attributes of Eligible Voters for Regions in Ohio

	Share in Race-Ethnic Group, 2006					
Region	**White***	**Black***	**Asian***	**Other***	**Hispanic**	**Total**
State Total	85.7	10.8	0.9	1.1	1.6	100.0
Cuyahoga Co.	67.5	27.1	1.5	1.1	2.8	100.0
Cleveland Suburbs	91.3	4.0	0.6	0.9	3.1	100.0
Franklin Co.	77.2	18.2	1.8	1.2	1.6	100.0
Columbus Suburbs	93.1	4.0	1.0	1.2	0.7	100.0
Cincinnati Metro	83.7	13.1	1.1	1.2	1.0	100.0
Northwest	89.8	6.4	0.4	0.9	2.4	100.0
Northeast	90.7	6.9	0.5	1.0	0.9	100.0
South	89.6	7.8	0.6	1.2	0.8	100.0

Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey

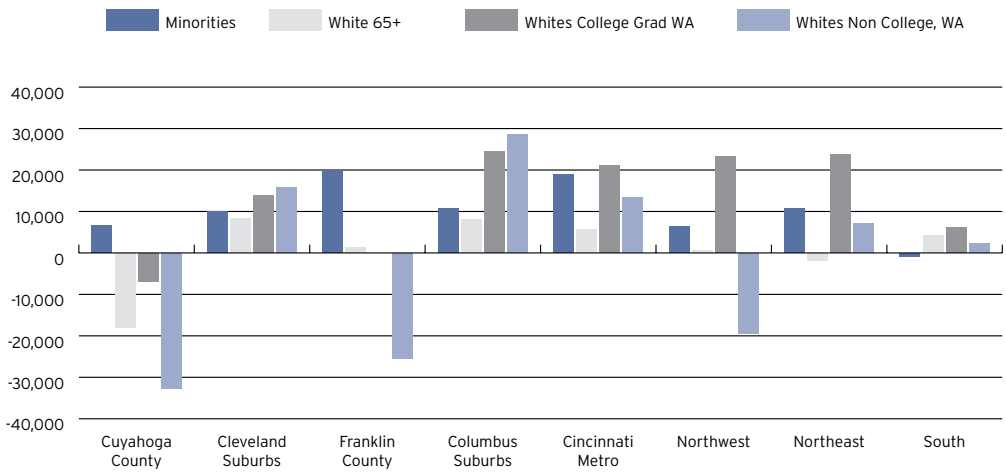
** non-Hispanic members of race group*

Table 5. 2006 Age of Eligible Voters for Regions in Ohio

	Share of Group, 2006				
Region	**18-29**	**30-44**	**45-64**	**65+**	**Total**
State Total	21.0	26.5	34.8	17.8	100.0
Cuyahoga Co.	16.7	26.4	36.6	20.3	100.0
Cleveland Suburbs	20.3	26.8	35.6	17.2	100.0
Franklin Co.	22.7	30.2	33.3	13.7	100.0
Columbus Suburbs	23.8	29.3	32.9	13.9	100.0
Cincinnati Metro	21.2	28.0	34.6	16.2	100.0
Northwest	21.7	25.3	34.7	18.2	100.0
Northeast	20.4	25.1	35.1	19.4	100.0
South	22.2	25.1	34.3	18.4	100.0

Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey

Figure 4. Change in Eligible Voters for Key Demographic Segments, Ohio Regions, 2000-2006



Source: Authors' calculations of U.S. Census estimates

As for minority voters, all regions of the state except the South show gains in this population. Again, gains are greatest in the Columbus suburbs, where the added minority voters represent a 55 percent increase since 2000.

Overall, these patterns of growth are shifting the voter composition of Ohio's regions in significant ways. Since white working class voters are either declining in numbers or growing more slowly than voters as a whole, they are declining as a percentage of voters in all regions. This decline is sharpest in the Columbus metro, where both Franklin County and the Columbus suburbs have seen a 4 point decline in the share of white working class voters since 2000. White college graduate voters, on the other hand, have increased their share of voters in every region, with the highest increase (3 points) in the Columbus suburbs. Minority voters show a similar pattern, increasing their share in every region but the South, with Franklin County showing the biggest shift (3 points).

C. The GOP's razor thin victory in the 2004 election can be attributed to solid support among the white working class and even stronger support among white college graduate voters.

So far we have documented the basic demographic and geographic shifts that are reshaping Ohio and sketched a brief portrait of Ohio's electorate. Now we turn to how Ohioans have been voting in recent elections. The results and analysis illuminate how Ohio arrived at its current political coloration and provide some hints about how Ohio's politics might change in the future as demographic and geographic shifts continue.

Table 6. Ohio Voting by Selected Demographic Groups, 2004 and 2006

	2004 President			2006 Senate		
Group	**Democrat**	**Republican**	**Dem-Rep**	**Democrat**	**Republican**	**Dem-Rep**
White	44	56	-12	52	48	4
Black	84	16	68	85	15	70
Hispanic	65	35	30	53	47	6
Men	47	52	-5	55	45	10
Women	50	50	0	57	43	14
White Men	43	56	-13	51	49	2
White Women	45	55	-10	53	47	6
Single Women	65	35	30	65	35	30
Married Women	40	60	-20	53	47	6
HS Dropout	58	42	16	67	33	34
HS Graduate	51	49	2	60	40	20
Some College	48	52	-4	55	45	10
College Grad	45	55	-10	51	49	2
Postgraduate	49	51	-2	60	40	20
White Noncollege	45	55	-10	53	47	6
White College	42	58	-16	52	48	4
18-29	56	42	14	57	43	14
30-39	51	49	2	56	44	12
40-49	45	55	-10	50	50	0
50-64	48	52	-4	57	43	14
65+	42	58	-16	64	36	28
Total	**49**	**51**	**-2**	**56**	**44**	**12**

Source: Authors' analysis of 2004 and 2006 Ohio exit polls

Table 6 displays some basic exit poll data from the 2004 presidential election and 2006 Senate election in Ohio. In 2004, Ohio voted Republican in the presidential election, just as it did in 2000, but by a smaller margin (2 points in 2004 vs. 3.5 points in 2000). The data in the table show how Bush carried the state. He received 56 percent to 44 percent support from white voters, 86 percent of all voters according to the exit polls. That compensated (just barely) for large deficits among blacks (84 percent Democratic and 10 percent of voters) and Hispanics (65 percent Democratic and 3 percent of voters).

He carried men by 5 points and split women evenly; just about the same gender gap as can be seen when comparing white men and white women, whom he carried by 14 and 10 points, respectively. And Bush carried married women by 20 points but lost single women by a whopping 30 point margin.

By education, Bush carried all groups with some college or more, though his best group was those with a four-year degree only, which he carried by 10 points. Bush lost young (18–29) voters by 14 points and 30–39 year olds by 2 points, but carried all age groups 40 and over, including seniors (65 and over) by 16 points.

The 2006 Senate election was a different story with Democrat Sherrod Brown defeating Republican Mike DeWine by 56-44. Democrats also captured the governor's office and picked up a U.S. House seat while carrying the congressional vote 53-47.

In Brown's 2006 Senate victory, he improved in almost all these demographics relative to Kerry's performance in 2004. Some trends stand out however. First, Brown's improved performance over Kerry was almost entirely attributable to his superior performance among white voters (going from a 12 point deficit to a 4 point advantage). And, while he did not improve at all among single women, he bettered Kerry's performance among married women by 26 points, moving from a 20 point deficit to a 6 point advantage. Finally, he carried seniors by 28 points, a 44 point swing from 2004.

Looking at the white working class vote, which has figured so prominently in discussion of Ohio politics this year, in 2004 this group (defined here as whites without a four-year college degree) supported Bush over Kerry by 10 points. This is quite a bit lower than Kerry's nationwide deficit of 23 points among these voters. In contrast, Kerry lost Ohio's white college graduates by 16 points, actually somewhat worse than Kerry's nationwide performance (an 11 point deficit). Brown did better among both groups in 2006, winning white working class voters by 6 points and white collage graduates by 4 (the latter figure represents a 20 point Democratic swing over 2004).

Kerry's support among white working class voters varied dramatically by region of Ohio. Kerry actually carried white working class voters in Cuyahoga county by 17 points and only lost them by 2 points in the exit poll's Northeast region (roughly equivalent to our Northeast and Cleveland suburbs regions combined) and 3 points in the exit poll's Northwest region (similar to our region of the same name). But he lost these voters in the rest of Ohio by around 25 points. Brown did much better than Kerry among white working class voters throughout Ohio, especially in the Northeast, where he carried them by 30 points.

Looking back to the 1988 election, Bush senior ran 14 points ahead of Dukakis among Ohio's white working class voters, so Kerry's 10 point deficit in 2004 represents a modest swing toward the Democrats among those voters (this shift was driven almost entirely by a pro-Democratic trend among whites with some college). More significantly, Bush beat Dukakis by 35 points among white

college graduates in 1988, meaning that Kerry's 16 point deficit among these voters in 2004 actually represents a sharp 19 point shift toward the Democrats over the time period. This assumes additional significance since white college graduates have increased their share of Ohio's voters by 9 points since 1988, while white working class voters have declined by 13 points.

D. Political shifts in Ohio since 1988 have moved all regions toward the Democrats, with the sharpest shifts in Franklin county, Cuyahoga County, and the fast-growing Columbus suburbs.

Maps 3A–3C show how patterns of Democratic and Republicans support played themselves out geographically in 2004, 1996, and 1988. In each map, counties are color-coded by their margin for the victorious presidential candidate (deep blue for a Democratic victory of 10 points or more, light blue for a Democratic victory of less than 10 points, deep red for a Republican victory of 10 points or more, light red for a Republican victory of less than 10 points).

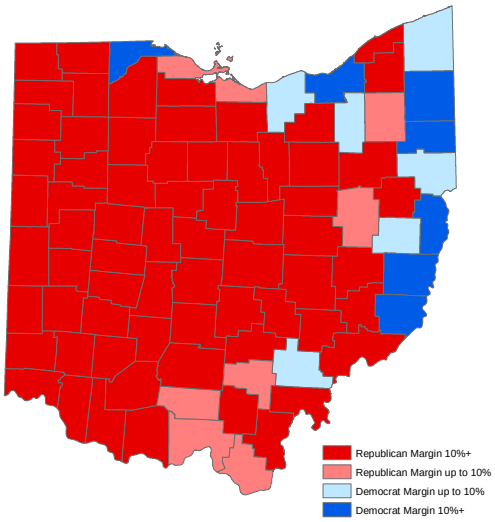
Looking at the 2004 map, most of the light or dark blue indicating counties carried by the Democrats is concentrated in the Cleveland metro and the Northeast region. In the Cleveland metro, this includes Cuyahoga County and Lorain County in the Cleveland suburbs. In the Northeast region, the Democratic counties include Summit and Portage (Akron metro); Stark (Canton metro); Trumbull and Mahoning (Youngstown metro); plus the counties of Ashtabula in the upper right corner of the region; and Jefferson and Belmont in the lower right corner. Outside of the Cleveland metro and the Northeast, Kerry carried only six counties: in the Northwest, Lucas, (Toledo metro) and Erie, just west of the Cleveland suburbs; in the South, Montgomery (Dayton metro), Athens, home of Ohio University, and Monroe, in the upper right corner of the region; and Franklin county.

The rest of the map—the great majority of it—is colored red, including every county in the Cincinnati metro and in the Columbus suburbs. Yet the race was very close, with Bush eking out only a 2 point victory. This is because of the large size of many of the counties carried by the Democrats (they carried 8 of the 10 most populous counties, with the lone exceptions, Hamilton and Butler, both located in the Cincinnati metro). Cuyahoga County, the largest county in Ohio and 12 percent of the statewide vote, went for the Democrats by 34 points (**Table 7**). Franklin County, the second largest county and 9 percent of the statewide vote, supported Kerry by 9 points. Democrats carried the Northeast region, a healthy 21 percent of the statewide vote, by 6 points due to their dominance of big counties in the Akron, Canton, and Youngstown metros. And in the Cleveland suburbs, Kerry's 13 point margin in Lorain County, the largest county in that region, helped keep the Democratic deficit down to 2 points, despite losing the other three counties in that region.

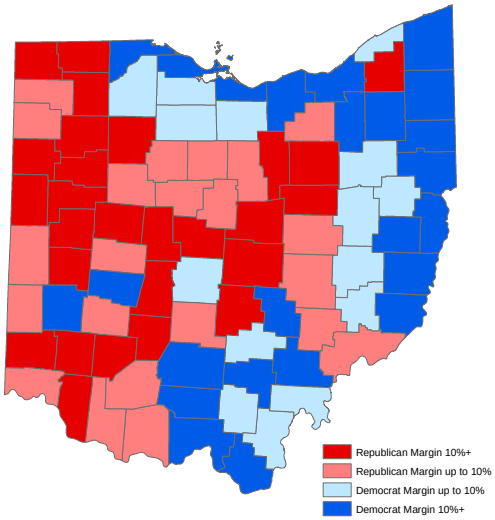
These results counterbalanced their lopsided losses in the Cincinnati metro (14 percent of the statewide vote) by 20 points and in the Columbus suburbs by 28 points, as well as their less lopsided losses in the Northwest and the South (both 12 point deficits). In the latter two regions, Kerry's

Maps 3A-3c. Ohio County Presidential Voting, 1988-2004

1988



1996



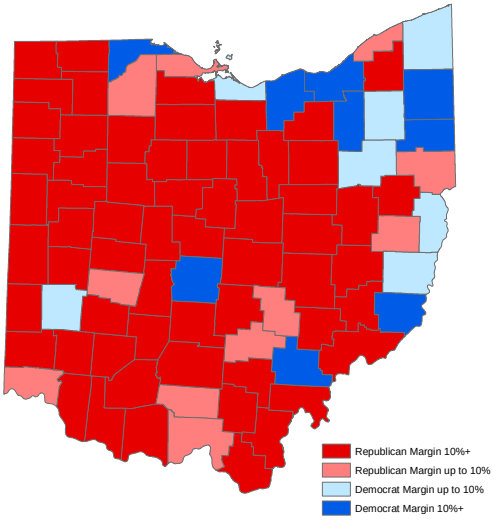
Source: Authors' analysis of Ohio election returns

Table 7. Democratic Margins for Ohio Regions, 1988 and 2004

		Democratic Margins:	
Region	**1988 President**	**2004 President**	**Change, 1988-2004**
Cuyahoga County	18	34	15
Cleveland Suburbs	-10	-2	8
Franklin County	-21	9	30
Columbus Suburbs	-39	-28	11
Cincinnati Metro	-29	-20	9
Northwest	-18	-12	6
Northeast	3	6	3
South	-21	-12	9
Total	**-11**	**-2**	**9**

Source: Authors' analysis of Ohio election returns

2004



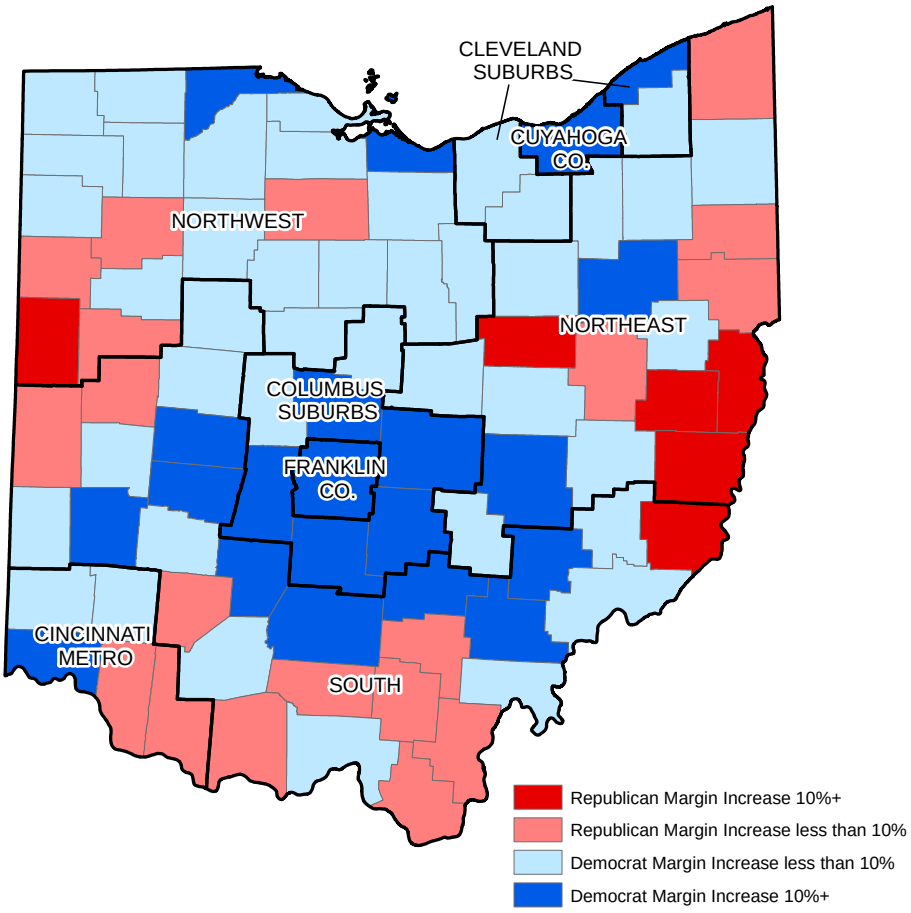
victories in the largest counties in those two regions (Lucas and Montgomery, respectively) helped the Democrats keep their losing margins down.

Another way of looking at the Democrats' dominance of most large metro counties is that this dominance translated into a 2 point lead in metro counties as a whole—82 percent of the statewide vote. But Kerry lost Ohio's 48 non-metro counties—just 18 percent of the statewide vote—by 21 points.

Turning to the 1988 map-when Republicans carried the state by 11 points-the most striking difference is that populous Franklin County, the heart of the Columbus metro, was dark red as opposed to dark blue in 2004. Another key difference is that Lorain County in the Cleveland suburbs was light blue in 1988 but dark blue in 2004, as was also the case with Summit County (Akron metro). And several other important counties were red in 1988 but moved to light blue in 2004 including Portage (Akron metro), Stark (Canton metro), and Montgomery (Dayton metro). Hamilton County, the central county of the Cincinnati metro, was dark red in 1988 but light red in 2004.

In 1996, Clinton won the state by 6 points for the Democrats. In this election, we see the emergence of Democratic strength in Franklin County (light blue) and Montgomery county (dark blue), the spread of Democratic strength in the Northeast, the strengthening of the Democratic hold on Lorain County in the Cleveland suburbs (dark blue) and Democratic dominance of a large cluster of non-metro and small metro counties in the lower South and upper Northwest. By 2004, the Democratic hold on Franklin county has actually intensified, but those Democratic gains in the South and Northwest have mostly subsided (exceptions: the university county of Athens in the South and Montgomery County). In the Northeast, the shift toward Democratic dominance of large metro counties remains intact, but most of the small metro and non-metro counties that Clinton carried in 1996 do not remain in the fold. Finally, Lorain County in the Cleveland suburbs, which moved to dark blue in 1996, retains its dark blue coloration in 2004.

Map 4. Change in Presidential Party Voting by County in Ohio, 1988-2004



Source: Authors' analysis of Ohio election returns

Map 4 provides a visual representation of where political shifts took place over the 1988-2004 time period. Counties that are dark blue had margin shifts toward the Democrats of 10 points or more, light blue counties had margin shifts toward the Democrats of 10 points or less, light red counties had margin shifts toward the Republicans of 10 points or more and dark red counties had margin shifts toward the Republicans of 10 points or less.

The map is colored light or dark blue, indicating a shift toward the Democrats over the time period. The sharpest shifts are indicated by the dark blue color and include Franklin County (a 30 point shift toward the Democrats), Cuyahoga County (15 point shift) and most of the counties of the Columbus suburbs (11 point shift overall). The South also includes a fair amount of dark blue, including Montgomery County (a 17 point shift) and a number of counties bordering the Columbus metro.

These shifts help drive a 9 point shift toward the Democrats in the South region. Interestingly, Hamilton County, the central county in the Cincinnati metro, is colored dark blue (18 point shift) and the two most populous counties in the Cincinnati metro are colored light blue. These changes produced a 9 point pro-Democratic shift in the heavily Republican area. Finally, all counties in the Cleveland suburbs are light or dark blue, which drove an 8 point move toward the Democrats over the time period.

The smallest shifts are in the Northwest, where a 12 point pro-Democratic shift in Lucas County (Toledo) and smaller pro-Democratic shifts in a number of less populous counties were balanced out by a number of red, Republican-trending counties, producing a 6 point Democrat shift in the region as a whole. The same situation can be seen in the Northeast, which contained only one dark blue county (Stark) and good scattering of red counties, including Mahoning (Youngstown). The net result was a modest 3 point shift toward the Democrats.

Comparing the political shifts in Map 4 to the population growth map shows that in the top two-thirds of the map, with some minor exceptions, all of the growing counties are Democratic-trending (Map 2). This includes all of the Cleveland suburbs, including Lorain and every county in the Columbus metro, where a number of fast-growing suburban counties surround the slower-growing central county of Franklin. And pretty much all the GOP-trending counties in the top two-thirds of the state are declining counties (yellow or orange). Less felicitously for the Democrats, there are also many Democratic-trending counties in this part of the state that are declining, including such important ones as Cuyahoga, Lucas, Montgomery, and Summit (Akron).

The situation is more mixed in the bottom third of Ohio. In the Cincinnati metro, for example, Democratic-trending Hamilton County is declining, while the GOP-trending counties of Clermont and Brown and the Democratic-trending counties of Butler and Warren are growing. And in the lower part of the South region, there are a number of growing counties that are also trending Republican, as well as some growing counties that are trending Democratic.

While these patterns are by no means one-sided, on balance they would appear to favor the Democrats. But what of the fact that the fastest growth rates tend to found in the Columbus and Cincinnati suburbs and that even Democratic-trending counties in these areas still remain solidly Republican? Does this tip the balance in the opposite direction? Judging by voting trend data on these metro areas as a whole, the answer is no. Looking at the Columbus metro as a whole shows that, despite the fast growth in Democratic-trending, but still heavily Republican, suburbs like Delaware County (44 percent growth since 2000 and 32 points pro-GOP in 2004), the Columbus metro is now 22 points more Democratic than it was in 1988. And the Cincinnati metro has moved 9 points toward the Democrats over this time period, despite fast growth in heavily Republican counties like Warren (27 percent growth and 44 points pro-Republican) and decline in Hamilton County, the most pro-Democratic county in the metro.

E. Key trends and groups to watch in 2008 include the white working class, especially whites with some college, where the GOP needs to prevent any erosion of support; white college graduates, who have been increasing their share of voters and moving toward the Democrats; and blacks, whose support for the Democrats might intensify in this election.

Despite the shifts discussed above, the GOP has managed to win the last two presidential elections in Ohio. Whether the Republicans can keep their victory streak alive—and perhaps expand their margin—or whether the Democrats can add a presidential win to their recent successes in Senate and gubernatorial contests will depend greatly on the demographic groups and trends we have reviewed in this report. Here are some things to watch out for in the 2008 election.

First, will the declining white working class maintain its level of support for the GOP? In 2004, they gave Bush a 10 point margin, not large by the standards of national GOP performance. If this margin shrinks into the single digits—perhaps driven by whites with some college, who have been trending Democratic, it could be difficult for the Republicans to hold the state.

If this margin should decline following the long-range trend—and this is an election where the Democrats are doing relatively well among white college-educated voters—that would provide a substantial boost to Democratic efforts to capture the state.

Just as important, if not more important, is whether the growing white college-educated group will continue its movement toward the Democrats. The GOP's 16 point margin among these voters in 2004 was, unusually, higher than its margin among white working voters. If this margin should decline following the long-range trend—and this is an election where the Democrats are doing relatively well among white college-educated voters—that would provide a substantial boost to Democratic efforts to capture the state.

A third group to watch is black voters. They are not growing—the modest growth in Ohio's minority voters is driven by Hispanics—but Obama's historic candidacy may boost black turnout and support for the Democrats above the 85 percent level of the last two elections.

In terms of regions, there are several areas of interest, starting with the Columbus metro. If Franklin County increases its margin for the Democrats and the rapidly-growing Columbus suburbs reduce their margins for the GOP—consistent with long-range trends—that could easily tip the entire region toward the Democrats.

The Cleveland suburbs are also on the verge of tipping toward the Democrats (there was only a 2 point deficit in 2004) which would strengthen the Democratic hold on the Cleveland metro as whole.

The Cleveland suburbs are also on the verge of tipping toward the Democrats (there was only a 2 point deficit in 2004) which would strengthen the Democratic hold on the Cleveland metro as whole. At the other of the state, the Cincinnati metro could become more closely contested if Hamilton County continues becoming more Democratic (there was only a 5 point deficit in 2004). The GOP will seek to stop this trend, as well as push its support levels up in the populous and conservative suburbs of Butler and Warren.

Another 21 percent of the statewide vote is located in the Northeast region. Here, a battle for voters in the medium metros of Akron, Canton, and Youngstown will likely determine whether Democrats can expand their modest margin in the region or whether the GOP can hold the line or even reduce that margin. If they can, their efforts to hold the state will have a much higher probability of success.

Michigan

A. While the Detroit metropolitan area still dominates the state, new population shifts from the largely Democratic core to the suburbs and Republican leaning southwestern part of the state are complicating the political equation in the state. Also important is the growth of the south central "University Corridor" which now contains a fifth of the state's population.

B. White working class voters remain the dominant element of Michigan's demographic mix, particularly in conservative areas like the Southwest region, thereby counterbalancing heavily Democratic Detroit and keeping the state competitive. But population shifts are reducing that dominance, as white college graduates and minorities increase their share of voters throughout the state and white working class voters decline. These changes are strongest in the Detroit suburbs and University Corridor region.

C. The Democrats' victory in Michigan in 2004 can be attributed to strong minority support plus a relatively modest disadvantage among white working class voters. White college graduate voters were particularly strong for the GOP, though this group is significantly less Republican than it used to be.

D. Political shifts in Michigan since 1988 have moved all regions except the Upper Peninsula toward the Democrats, with the sharpest shifts in Wayne County and the relatively fast-growing Detroit suburbs. Other substantial pro-Democratic shifts have taken place in the University Corridor and, more surprisingly, the conservative Southwest, the other region of Michigan that has shown fairly fast growth in recent years.

E. Key trends and groups to watch in 2008 include the declining white working class, especially whites with some college, who are mostly responsible for the Democrats' improved performance among this voter group; white college graduates, who gave the GOP relatively strong support in 2004, but have been trending toward the Democrats long-term; and minority voters, a growing group whose turnout could be critical. These trends will likely have their largest and most important effects in the growing Detroit suburbs, the key swing region in Michigan.

A. While the Detroit metropolitan area still dominates the state, new population shifts from the largely Democratic core to the suburbs and Republican leaning southwestern part of the state are complicating the political equation in the state.

On the surface Michigan might seem like a dependable blue leaning state, with its current Democratic governor, two Democratic senators and four straight Democratic presidential victories. But the closeness of the last presidential election (3 points) and the underlying—and only slowly-changing—demographics of the state suggest it will very much be in play in this year's election.

The state, famous as the home of the "Reagan Democrats" and symbolized by its large industrial city, Detroit, has been stagnating in population and economic growth. Since the 1980 Census the state has lost four congressional seats, including one after 2000. Still it retains a formidable 17 Electoral College votes which will make it a valuable prize for either party this November.

This decade has been especially harsh on Michigan's population as it has had only 1.2 percent growth since 2000, ranking 45th among the 50 states. During the same period, Michigan lost nearly 400,000 domestic migrants—a trend which accelerated over the last two years. Its employment decline is also accelerating, down 8.7 percent since 2000, and its unemployment rate, which has risen over the decade, has hovered between 7 and 8.5 percent during the first six months of this year.

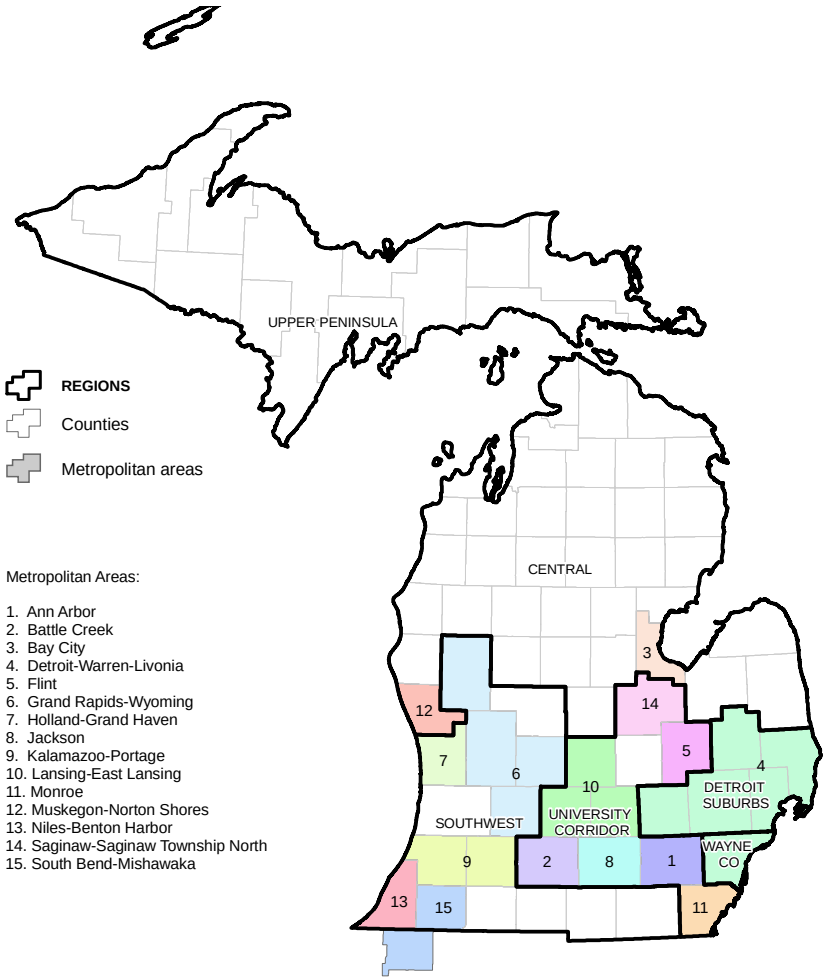
Unlike Ohio, where the population is anchored in three major metro areas, Michigan is largely dominated by one, Detroit, which houses 45 percent of the state's population. At 4.46 million people, Detroit is, after Chicago, the second largest metropolitan area in the Midwest and ranks 11th nationally, ahead of San Francisco and Phoenix. While there are 14 other metropolitan areas in the state, only Grand Rapids is of moderate size (at 776,000) and three others—Lansing, Flint, and Ann Arbor—have populations exceeding a quarter million.

The analysis presented here based on the following regions designated in **Map 7**, along with population and growth statistics shown in **Map 8** and **Figures 5 and 6**.

1. Wayne County - with a population of 1.9 million is the central county of the Detroit metropolitan area and contains the city of Detroit which in 1950 had a population of 1.8 million but has declined since then by almost half (population 916,000). Overall, Wayne County comprises one-fifth of Michigan's total population and has registered a population decline of 3.6 percent since 2000.

2. Detroit Suburbs - consists of the counties, Oakland, Macomb, Livingston, St. Claire, and Lapeer. The largest populations of this group are Oakland at 1.1 million and Macomb with 790,000. The fastest growing at 15.6 percent since 2000 is Livingston, Detroit's exurban county. Each of these

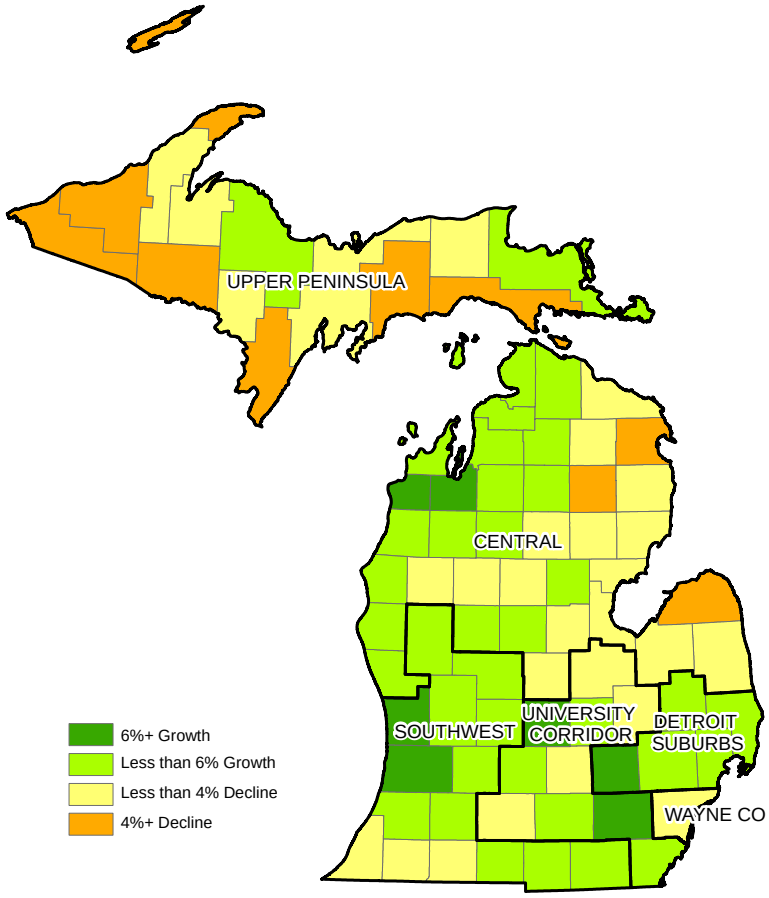
Map 7. Michigan Metropolitan Regions



counties gained population since 2000. The two largest are especially interesting politically as typically Republican Oakland and Macomb, home of the "Reagan democrats", have been very closely split in the last two presidential elections. As a group, the Detroit suburbs comprise a full 25 percent of Michigan's population, and, led by Livingston, grew by 3.5 percent since 2000.

3. University Corridor - consists of 10 counties that are part of seven metropolitan areas and includes the non-metropolitan Shiawassee County. It is called the University Corridor because it contains a slew of state universities and private colleges, most notably the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and Michigan State University in East Lansing. The largest metropolitan area is Lansing-East Lansing which contains the state capitol. The other metro areas are Ann Arbor, Flint, and Saginaw

Map 8. Michigan Population Change by County, 2000–2007

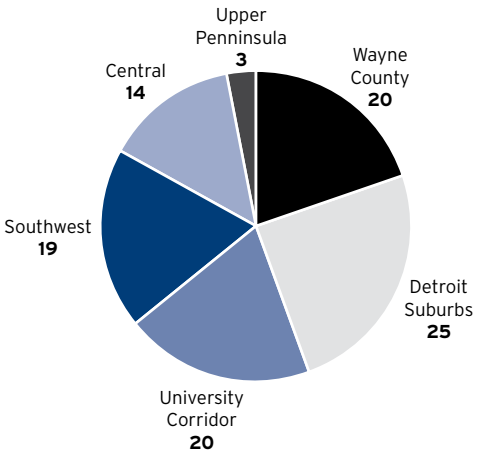


Source: Author's analysis of US Census estimates

and the small metropolitan areas of Jackson and Monroe. The fastest growing metros among these are Ann Arbor and Monroe at rates of 7.8 and 4.9 percent since 2000. Yet, both Flint and Saginaw registered declines, giving the overall University Corridor, which comprises 20 percent of the state's population, a modest 1.7 percent growth

4. Southwest – this region, along with the Detroit suburbs, is the second fastest growing region of the state, at 3.4 percent since 2000. Dominated by the prosperous Grand Rapids metropolitan area, the region consists of 14 counties and the additional metropolitan areas of Kalamazoo, Niles-Benton Harbor and the Michigan portion of the South Bend, IN metro. This Republican-leaning area comprises 19 percent of the state's population and represents a partial counterweight to the declining and Democratic-leaning Wayne County.

Figure 5. Share of 2007 Population in Michigan Regions



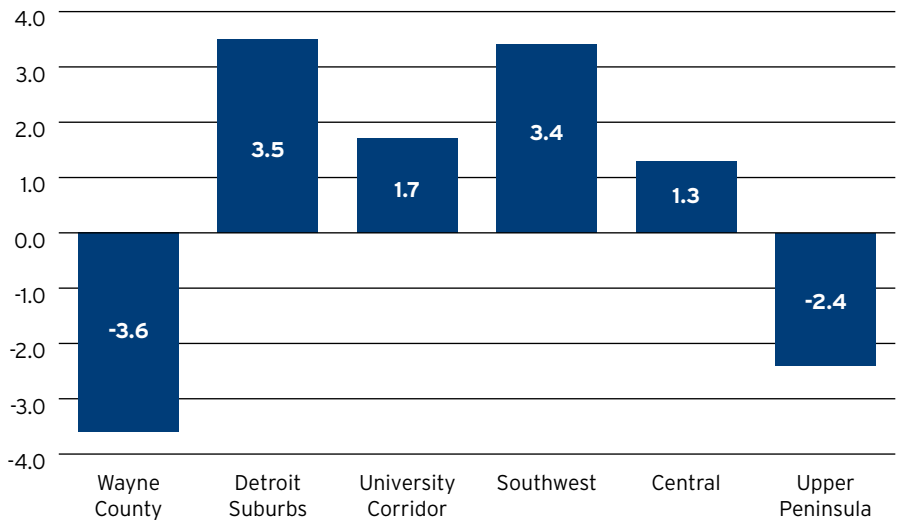
Source: Author's analysis of US Census estimates

5. Central – consists of 38 counties in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan and comprises only 14 percent of the state's population. The largely non-metropolitan region contains only two small metropolitan areas, Muskegon and Bay City and registered a modest 1.3 percent growth since 2000.

6. Upper Peninsula – consists of 15 counties in a totally non-metropolitan portion of the state. Large in area, it comprises a tiny 3 percent of the state's population and registered a 2.4 percent population loss since 2000.

Overall, Michigan's population shifts continue to move people out of Detroit to its suburbs, toward selective growth in its University

Figure 6. Population Growth in Michigan Regions, 2000-2007



Source: Author's analysis of US Census estimates

Corridor, and to the southwest part of the state anchored by the Grand Rapids metropolitan area. Thus, the strongly Democratic part of the state, Wayne County, while it continues to comprise one fifth of the state's population, is increasingly counterbalanced by the Republican-leaning southwest, and by mixed voting patterns in the Detroit suburbs and University Corridor.

B. White working class voters remain the dominant element of Michigan's demographic mix, particularly in conservative areas like the Southwest region, thereby counterbalancing heavily Democratic Detroit and keeping the state competitive. But population shifts are reducing that dominance, as white college graduates and minorities increase their share of voters throughout the state and white working class voters decline.

Looking at Michigan's key eligible voter segments, it is clear that working-age working class whites continue to dominate—comprising half of the state's electorate (**Table 8**). This is considerably larger than the corresponding proportion of the national electorate (42%). In contrast, Michigan's working-age white college grad population is similar to the U.S. a whole. And Michigan has a significantly smaller minority segment—only 18 percent of the total (compared with 26 percent nationally)

Growth rates in the table show that white college graduates are the fastest growing demographic segment. Although the white working class is modestly declining, it still remains a formidable voting bloc.

Among other attributes of the state's electorate, Michigan's eligible voters are whiter than the U.S. (**See Appendix**). The Appendix table also shows that, more so than Ohio, Michigan's electorate is close to the total U.S. on education attainment: 23 percent of Michigan's eligible voters have bachelor's degrees or more educational, compared with 25 percent for the nation as a whole. Michigan's electorate also mirrors the national percentage of males who are professionals. Also, more so than Ohio, Michigan's 2000–2006 growth in the highly educated is similar to the national gain in this group. Thus, although working class whites still comprise a substantial share of Michigan's electorate, there is a clear trend toward more educated population segments.

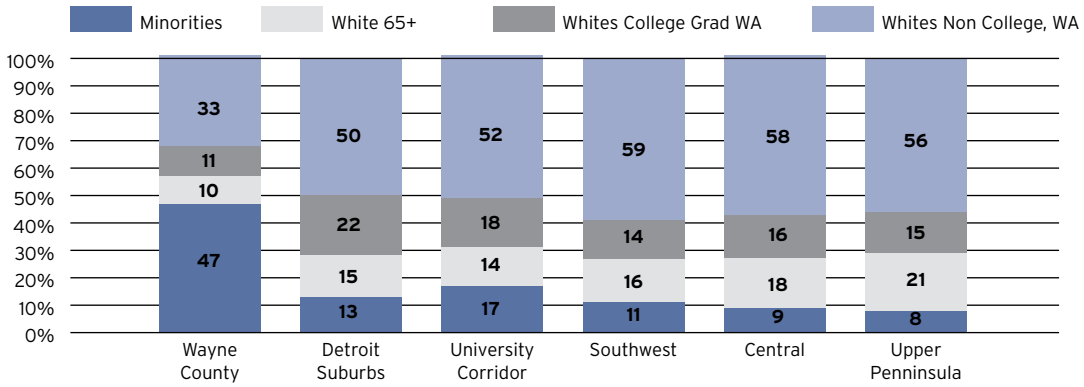
The statewide profile of key demographic groups is not uniform across the different regions. There are a number of interesting variations, often accompanying the population shifts discussed above (**Figures 7 and 8**). Focusing specifically on the white working class, this group has its largest shares of eligible voters in the sparsely populated Central and Upper Peninsula portions of the state and in the relatively fast-growing Southwest region. In fact the latter is one of only two regions showing a gain in the absolute numbers of working class whites. This area, which has voted Republican in previous elections, could continue to provide strong support for the GOP.

Table 8. Michigan Eligible Voters in Key Demographic Segments, 2006 and Change since 2000

Key Demographic Segments	Share of Total 2006	Percent Change 2000-2006
Minorities	18	5.8
Whites Age 65+	15	3.1
White Working-Age College Grads,	17	14.0
White Working-Age Non College Grads	50	-0.4

Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey and 2000 US Decennial Census

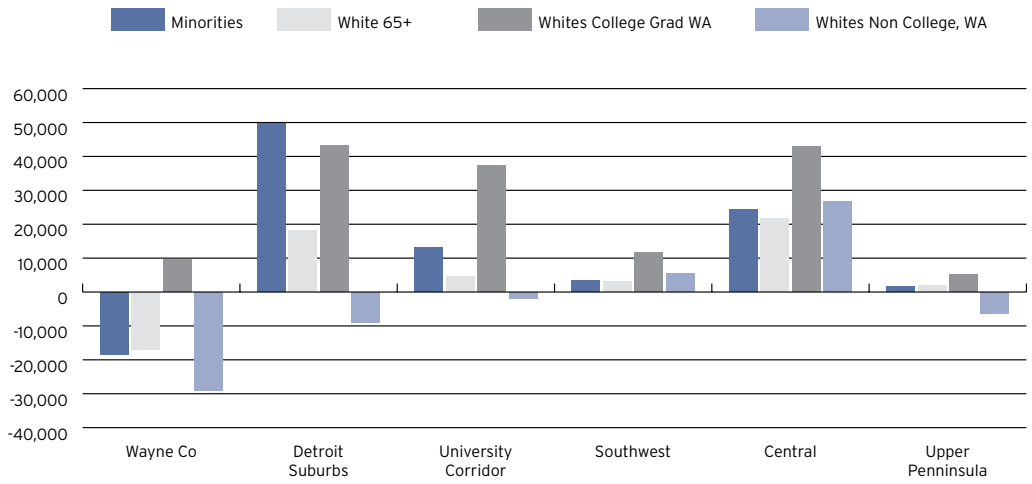
Figure 7. Eligible Voters in Key Demographic Segments, Michigan Regions



Source: Author's analysis of US Census estimates

In contrast to working class whites, white college graduates show gains in all regions of the state. These gains are especially large in the suburbs of Detroit and the University Corridor, two areas where this group already comprises a high share of voters. Since both of these areas are more "on the fence" politically than the Southwest or, of course, Wayne county, these gains may help to shift voting patterns in ways that will be discussed below.

Figure 8. Change in Eligible Voters for Key Demographic Setmants, Michigan Regions, 2000-2006



Source: Author's analysis of US Census estimates

Looking at minority voters, only one region, Wayne County, shows them as a plurality (47 percent). The University Corridor shows a smaller but still substantial 17 percent share. But note that suburban Detroit showed a large gain in minorities between 2000 and 2006 reflecting a continued black suburbanization. These numbers translate into a 28 percent growth in minority voters in the Detroit suburbs over the time period.

The primary minority population in all of the Michigan regions is African Americans. (**Table 9**). In Wayne County, blacks comprise 40 percent of the electorate whereas Hispanics comprise only 3.2 percent. Suburban Detroit, where blacks comprise 7.5 percent of eligible voters, has the metro's highest share of Asians, at 2.3 percent.

With respect to age, the oldest of Michigan's regions are the sparsely populated Central and Upper Peninsula regions, where 18 to 21 percent of their eligible voters are over age 65 (**Table 10**). The University Corridor contains the largest share of young adult (18–29 year old) eligible voters, nearly 24 percent.

These patterns of growth are shifting the voter composition of Michigan's regions in significant ways. Since white working class voters are either declining in numbers or growing more slowly than voters as a whole, they are declining as a percentage of voters in all regions. This decline is sharpest in the Detroit suburbs, which has seen a 4 point decline in the share of white working class voters since 2000. White college graduate voters, in contrast, have increased their share of voters in every region, with the highest increase (2 points) in the University Corridor. Minority voters show the same pattern, increasing their share in every region, with the biggest gain in the Detroit suburbs (2 points).

Table 9. Race-Ethnic Attributes of Eligible Voters for Regions in Michigan, 2006

	Share in Race-Ethnic Group, 2006					
Region	**White***	**Black***	**Asian***	**Other***	**Hispanic**	**Total**
State Total	81.5	12.9	1.4	1.6	2.5	100.0
Wayne County	53.3	40.6	1.6	1.2	3.2	100.0
Detroit Suburbs	87.5	7.5	2.3	1.2	1.6	100.0
University Corridor	83.4	10.6	1.6	1.7	2.8	100.0
Southwest	89.2	6.0	0.6	1.9	2.3	100.0
Central	91.2	3.3	0.8	1.6	3.0	100.0
Upper Peninsula	91.6	2.5	0.3	4.3	1.2	100.0

Source: Authors' analysis of US Census 2006 American Community Survey

** non-Hispanic members of race group*

Table 10. 2006 Age of Eligible Voters for Regions in Michigan

	Share of Group, 2006				
Region	**18-29**	**30-44**	**45-64**	**65+**	**Total**
State Total	21.0	26.9	35.2	16.9	100.0
Wayne County	19.6	28.7	35.1	16.6	100.0
Detroit Suburbs	17.8	28.6	37.2	16.3	100.0
University Corridor	23.9	26.4	34.6	15.2	100.0
Southwest	22.9	25.2	35.0	16.9	100.0
Central	22.3	25.5	33.9	18.3	100.0
Upper Peninsula	20.7	22.7	34.9	21.7	100.0

Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey

C. The Democrats' victory in Michigan in 2004 can be attributed to strong minority support plus a relatively modest disadvantage among white working class voters.

We now turn to how Michiganders have been voting in recent elections. The results and analysis show how Michigan arrived at its current political coloration and provide some insight into how Michigan's politics might change in the future as demographic and geographic shifts continue.

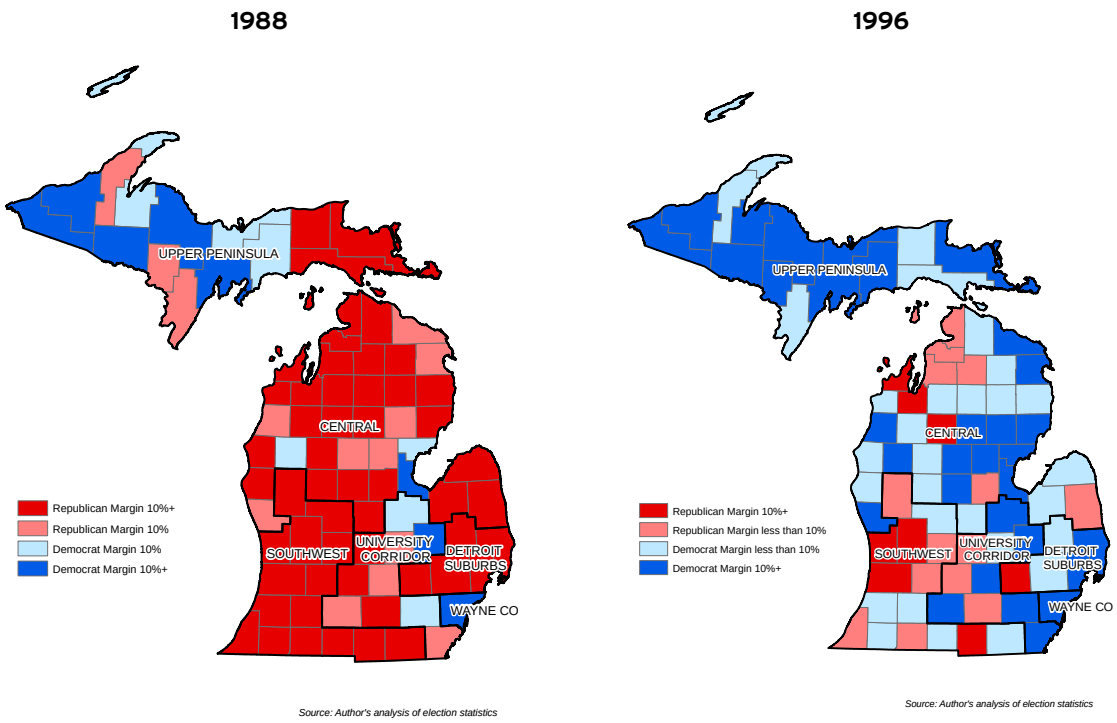
Table 11. Michigan Voting by Selected Demographic Groups, 2004

	2004 President		
Group	**Democrat**	**Republican**	**Dem-Rep**
White	44	54	-10
Black	89	10	79
Hispanic	62	36	26
Men	48	50	-2
Women	53	46	7
White Men	41	57	-16
White Women	47	52	-5
Single Women	64	34	30
Married Women	45	55	-10
HS Dropout	53	47	6
HS Graduate	59	39	20
Some College	51	47	4
College Grad	42	56	-14
Postgraduate	51	48	3
White Noncollege	47	52	-5
White College	41	58	-17
18-29	55	45	10
30-39	46	51	-5
40-49	48	51	-3
50-64	53	47	6
65+	51	48	3
Total	**51**	**48**	**3**

Source: Authors' analysis of 2004 Michigan exit poll

Table 11 displays some basic exit poll data from the 2004 presidential election. In 2004, Michigan voted Democratic in the presidential election, just as it has in every presidential election since 1988, but by a smaller margin than the last election (3 points in 2004 vs. 5 points in 2000). The data in the table show how Kerry carried the state. He received 44 percent to 54 percent support from white voters, 82 percent of all voters according to the exit polls. But he compensated for this deficit with large margins among blacks (89 percent Democratic and 13 percent of voters) and Hispanics (62 percent Democratic and 3 percent of voters).

Maps 5A–5c. Michigan County Presidential Voting, 1988–2004



Source: Author's analysis of election statistics

Source: Author's analysis of election statistics

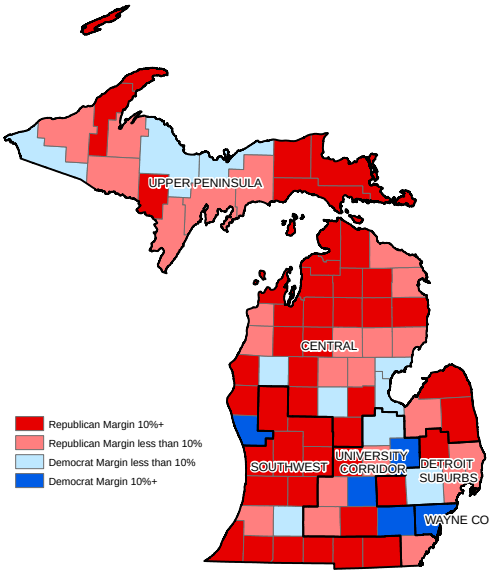
He lost men by 2 points and carried women by 7 points; a slightly larger gender gap can be seen when comparing white men and white women, whom he lost by 16 and 5 points, respectively. And Kerry lost married women by 10 points but carried single women by lost single women by an impressive 30 point margin.

By education, Kerry won all groups except, interestingly, those with a four year degree only, whom he lost by 14 points. He won young (18–29) voters by 10 points and voters 50 and over but lost voters between 30 and 50.

Looking at the white working class vote, which has figured so prominently in discussions of Midwest swing states, in 2004 this group (defined here as whites without a four year college degree) supported Bush over Kerry by 5 points. This modest Democratic deficit is far better than Kerry's nationwide deficit of 23 points among these voters. In contrast, Kerry lost Michigan's white college graduates by 17 points, actually worse than Kerry's nationwide performance (an 11 point deficit).

Kerry's support among Michigan's white working class voters varied substantially by region. Kerry's best performance was in Wayne County where he actually carried this group by 10 points and his worst was in the exit poll's Southwest region (very close to our Southwest region) where he lost them by 15 points. Variation in his support among white college graduate voters followed a different pattern. His deficit among these voters varied only modestly in the 6 to 11 point range in all regions but one, the Southwest, where he lost by a whopping 42 points.

2004



Source: Author's analysis of election statistics

Looking back to 1988, in that election Bush senior ran 16 points ahead of Dukakis among Michigan's white working class voters, so Kerry's 5 point deficit in 2004 represents a considerable swing toward the Democrats among those voters, with the largest contribution from a very strong pro-Democratic trend among whites with some college. The biggest regional shift since 1988 has been among white working class voters in the Detroit suburbs, who have moved Democratic by 17 points. This particular shift was also driven by a big swing among whites with some college (42 points).

A smaller but still significant swing took place among white college graduates. In 1988, Bush beat Dukakis by 25 points among white college graduates in Michigan, so Kerry's 17 point deficit among these voters in 2004 represents an 8 point shift toward the Democrats over the time period. The biggest regional shift here was the 34 point pro-Democratic swing among the Detroit suburbs' white college graduates. Since 1988, white college graduates have increased their share of Michigan's voters by 3 points, while white working class voters have declined by 7 points.

D. Political shifts in Michigan since 1988 have moved all regions except the Upper Peninsula toward the Democrats, with the sharpest shifts in Wayne County and the relatively fast-growing Detroit suburbs.

Maps 5A-5C show how patterns of Democratic and Republicans support played themselves out geographically in 2004, 1996 and 1988. In each map, counties are color-coded by their margin for the victorious presidential candidate (deep blue for a Democratic victory of 10 points or more, light blue for a Democratic victory of less than 10 points, deep red for a Republican victory of 10 points or more, light red for a Republican victory of less than 10 points). In addition, our six Michigan regions are shown on each map by heavy black lines.

Looking at the 2004 map, there is relatively little light or dark blue, indicating counties carried by the Democrats. These counties include Wayne (dark blue), Oakland in the Detroit suburbs, several counties in the University Corridor, including dark blue Washtenaw (Ann Arbor metro and the University of Michigan), Ingham (Lansing metro and Michigan State University) and Genesee (Flint), Kalamazoo (Western Michigan University) in the Southwest region, Muskegon and Bay (Bay City) in

Table 12. Democratic Margins for Michigan Regions, 1988 and 2004

	Democratic Margins:		
Region	**1988 President**	**2004 President**	**Change, 1988-2004**
Wayne County	21	40	18
Detroit Suburbs	-23	-3	20
University Corridor	0	10	10
Southwest	-26	-16	9
Central	-15	-10	5
Upper Peninsula	4	-4	-8
Total	**-8**	**3**	**11**

Source: Authors' analysis of Michigan election returns

the Central region and a scattering of counties in the Upper Peninsula region.

Against this modest array of blue counties is much larger array of red counties, as the map shows. Yet Kerry did manage to carry the state, albeit narrowly. This reflects, first and foremost, Democratic dominance of Wayne County, by far the largest county in the state and 18 percent of the statewide vote, which went for the Democrats by 40 points (**Table 12**). Democrats also carried the University Corridor region, 20 percent of the statewide vote, by 10 points due to their dominance of relatively large counties like Washtenaw (28 point margin), Ingham (17 points) and Genesee (21 points). And in the Detroit suburbs, 26 percent of the statewide vote, the Democrats kept their deficit down to 3 points, thanks to their narrow win (by less than a percentage point) in the mega suburban county of Oakland (13 percent of the statewide vote) and narrow loss (by a percentage point) in neighboring Macomb county (8 percent of the vote).

These results counterbalanced their lopsided loss in the conservative Southwest region (21 percent of the statewide vote) by 16 points, as well as their less lop-sided losses in the sparsely-populated Central and Upper Peninsula regions (10 and 4 points, respectively).

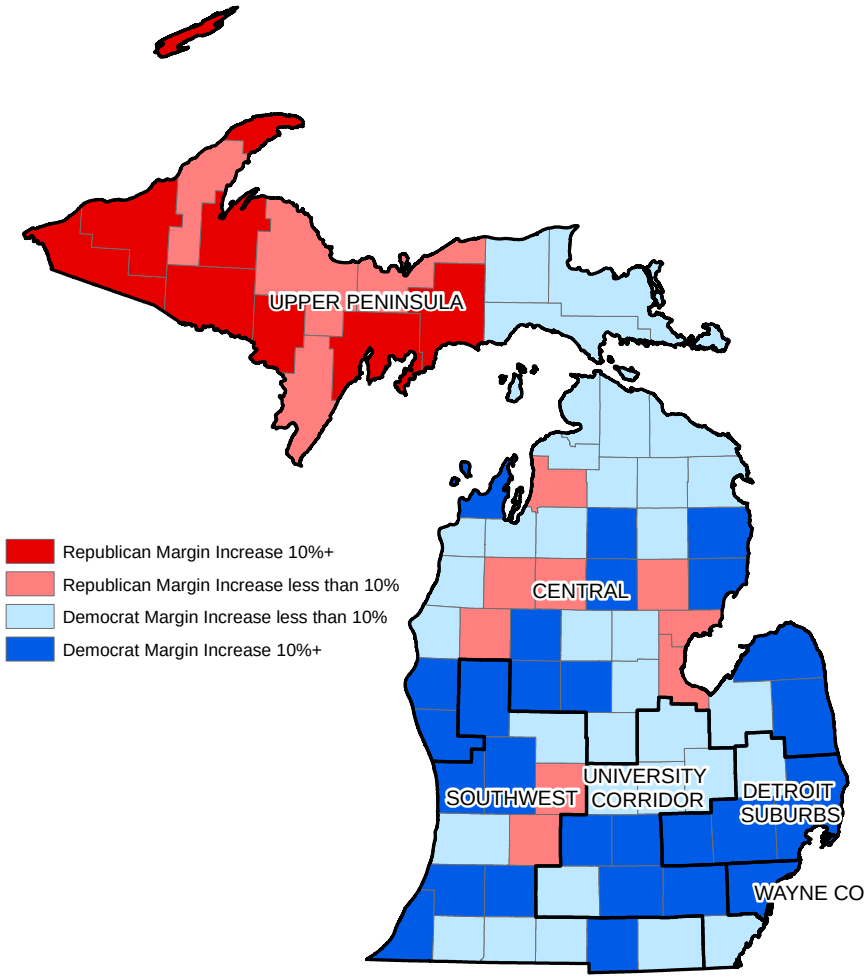
Another way to look at these data is to note that the Democrats carried the Detroit metro as a whole (combining Wayne County and the Detroit suburbs) by 14 points and that is 44 percent of the statewide vote. Indeed, looking at all 26 metro counties (81 percent of the statewide vote), the Democrats won them by 7 points. But Kerry lost Michigan's 57 non-metro counties—which, despite their large numbers, only represent 19 percent of the statewide vote—by 12 points, which considerably narrowed his victory margin.

Turning to the 1988 map—when Republicans carried the state by 8 points—the most obvious visual difference is that there is a lot more and darker blue in the Upper Peninsula. But this is relatively unimportant, since the Upper Peninsula region is so sparsely populated (just 3 percent of the statewide vote). Far more important, but less visually striking, are shifts in key counties in the Detroit suburbs and the University Corridor region. In the Detroit suburbs, massive Oakland County flipped from dark red to light blue and Macomb County changed from dark to light red. In the University Corridor, Ingham County (Lansing) flipped from light red to dark blue and Washtenaw (Ann Arbor) went from light to dark blue. It's also worth mentioning that Kalamazoo County in the Southwest flipped from dark red to light blue and that Muskegon County in the Central region went from light red to dark blue.

In 1996, Clinton won Michigan by 13 points. In that election, the Democrats carried those key counties in the Detroit suburbs and University Corridor, as well as Kalamazoo in the Southwest and Muskegon in the Central. But Clinton also carried a fairly wide range of other, smaller counties (mostly non-metro) in these regions that turned back to the Republicans by 2004. Clinton also carried every single county in the Upper Peninsula, but most of these sparsely-populated counties had also moved back to the GOP by 2004.

Map 6 provides a visual representation of where political shifts took place over the 1988–2004 time period. Counties that are dark blue had margin shifts toward the Democrats of 10 points or more, light blue counties had margin shifts toward the Democrats of 10 points or less, light red counties had margin shifts toward the Republicans of 10 points or more and dark red counties had margin shifts toward the Republicans of 10 points or less.

Map 6. 1988-2004 Change in Party Voting by County in Michigan



Source: Author's analysis of election statistics

Most of the map, with the exception of the Upper Peninsula, is colored light or dark blue indicating a shift toward the Democrats over time period. The sharpest regional shifts were in the all-blue Detroit suburbs, where a 24 point shift in Oakland and a 20 point shift in Macomb drove a 20 point overall shift in the region, and in dark blue Wayne County which saw an 18 shift. All the counties in the University Corridor are also blue, including dark blue Ingham (19 point shift), Washtenaw, Jackson and Calhoun (Battle Creek metro). This region had an overall 10 point Democratic shift. Perhaps more surprisingly, the conservative Southwest region also had a substantial 9 point Democratic shift. Indeed, every county but two, Barry and Ionia in the Grand Rapids metro, is colored blue,

including dark blue Kalamazoo (16 point shift), dark blue Kent County, the central county of the conservative Grand Rapids metro and by far the most populous county in the Southwest, which had a 10 point shift toward the Democrats and even ultra-conservative Ottawa County (9 point shift).

The Central region is mostly blue, including dark blue Muskegon, but also has seven light red counties, including relatively populous Bay County. This region had a more modest 5 point pro-Democratic shift. And the lightly-populated Upper Peninsula, the only region that is mostly red, experienced an 8 point pro-GOP shift.

Comparing the political shifts in Map 4 to the population growth map shows that Michigan is a modestly-growing state and parts of it are declining (**Map 2**). The region that shows the most declining counties and is actually declining overall—the Upper Peninsula—is also the region that has the heaviest concentration of GOP-trending counties. The Central region has the second-largest concentration of declining counties and it too has the second largest concentration of GOP-trending counties.

On the other hand, the key county for the Democrats, Wayne, is a declining county (down 4 percent in population just since 2000). But all counties in the Detroit suburbs, the most strongly Democratic-trending region, are growing counties. In fact, this region is growing at a 4 percent clip since 2000, the fastest of any of our regions. The net result of decline in Wayne, growth in the suburbs, and Democratic trends in both areas has been a 17 point Democratic shift in the Detroit metro since 1988.

In the University Corridor, the key, heavily Democratic-trending county of Washtenaw is growing relatively fast (up 8 percent since 2000), as is Monroe (up 5 percent). On the other hand, the relatively large and Democratic-trending counties of Ingham and Genesee (Flint) are declining, albeit by half a percent or less, while Saginaw is declining faster (down 4 percent).

In the Southwest region, the two GOP-trending counties are growing but so are all the Democratic-trending counties in the rest of the region (except for three small counties in the bottom left corner). The growing, Democratic-trending counties include the population centers of Kalamazoo, Kent and Ottawa. Growth is particularly fast in dark green Ottawa (up 8 percent since 2000) which, while Democratic-trending, is far more conservative than the other two counties.

Though most Democratic-trending areas are experiencing some growth, important exceptions like declining Wayne county damp down the impact, as does the fact that some of the strongest growth is in conservative Southwest counties, which, though Democratic-trending, remain staunchly Republican.

E. Key trends and groups to watch in 2008 include the declining white working class, especially whites with some college, who are mostly responsible for the Democrats' improved performance among this voter group; white college graduates, who gave the GOP relatively strong support in 2004, but have been trending toward the Democrats long-term; and minority voters, a growing group whose turnout could be critical.

The Democrats have managed to win the last four presidential elections in Michigan. Whether the Democrats can make it five straight or whether the Republicans can win for the first time since 1988 will be determined, in large part, by the demographic groups and trends we have reviewed in this report. Here are some things to watch out for in the 2008 election.

First, will the declining white working class maintain its relatively high level of support for the Democrats? A modest five point deficit (or smaller) among this group, as the Democrats had in 2004, makes it fairly easy for them to put together a majority coalition in the state. But if this deficit grows into double digits in this election, the GOP has a good chance of taking the state.

The key group to watch within the white working class is whites with some college, whose trend toward the Democrats has been largely responsible for shrinking their deficit among these voters.

The key group to watch within the white working class is whites with some college, whose trend toward the Democrats has been largely responsible for shrinking their deficit among these voters. If the GOP reverses that trend, that could be the key to driving up the Democrats' white working class deficit. Conversely, if whites with some college continue moving toward the Democrats, that could put the Democrats in the driver's seat.

Another critical question is whether the white college-educated group will continue its relatively strong support for the GOP (a 17 point margin in 2004). This growing group has moved toward the Democrats over time, so preventing further movement in that direction is a key challenge for the GOP. If their margin among this group should shrink down toward single digits, their ability to take back the state from the Democrats would be severely compromised.

The key issue with the minority vote is likely to be turnout. This growing constituency is already providing high support levels to the Democrats, so the big issue will be how many of these voters show up on Election Day.

In terms of regions, perhaps the key area is the Detroit suburbs (26 percent of the statewide vote). The Detroit suburbs have experienced sharp swings toward the Democrats among both whites with some college and white college graduates and have had fairly strong growth among both minority and white college graduate voters. Given these trends, the area could well tip toward the Democrats in this election (there was only a 3 point overall deficit in 2004), which, combined with the Democrats' likely huge margins in Wayne county (18 percent of the vote), would make it very hard for the GOP to put together a statewide majority.

The University Corridor, a fifth of the statewide vote, is another critical region. Here, a battle for voters in the relatively populous metros of Ann Arbor, Lansing and Flint will likely determine whether Democrats can expand their modest margin in the region, in line with long term trends, or whether the GOP can drive that margin down. If they can do the latter, Republican chances of taking the state will be much better.

The GOP's ace in the hole could be the Southwest region (21 percent of the vote). Despite a trend toward the Democrats since 1988, the relatively fast-growing area remains solidly Republican, due to strong support among white working class voters and astronomically high support among white college graduates. The GOP will seek to drive up its support even higher among these groups, particularly in conservative counties like Kent (Grand Rapids metro) and Ottawa.

Missouri

A. Missouri's population profile reflects a dichotomy between its large metropolitan areas, St. Louis and Kansas City, on the one hand, and its more rural areas, some of which are growing fast. In particular, the Republican-leaning Southwest region of the state, including metropolitan Springfield and Branson, has exhibited strong growth since 2000. This pushes the state in a far different direction than population gains in the St. Louis suburbs and Kansas City metro.

B. Missouri's eligible voter demographic profile shows a divide between urban St. Louis and metro Kansas City with relatively large proportions of minorities and white college graduates and the more rural Southwest and North and East regions with much larger populations of working class whites and white seniors The St. Louis suburbs occupy an intermediate position, with a large population of working class whites that is declining rapidly and a white college graduate group that is relatively large and fast-growing.

C. The GOP's solid victory in the 2004 election can be attributed to very strong support among the burgeoning white college graduate group, with substantial support as well from the declining white working class. Both groups have been moving toward the Republicans over time, with the strongest shifts in the rural Southwest and North and East regions.

D. Political shifts in Missouri since 1988 have moved the North and East, Southwest, and Kansas City metro regions toward the GOP, with the sharpest shifts in the North and East and fast-growing Southwest regions. But the St. Louis suburbs, the fastest-growth area in the state, have moved Democratic over the time period, with an even stronger pro-Democratic trend in populous, but declining, St. Louis.

E. Key trends and groups to watch in 2008 include white college graduates, who have been increasing their share of voters as they have trended Republican; the declining white working class, which remains the dominant voter group in the state; and blacks, whose turnout might increase in this election. These trends will have large effects in the two big metros of St. Louis and Kansas City, with the fast-growing St. Louis suburbs a particularly important area to watch, and in the conservative Southwest region, the bulwark of GOP support in the state.

A. Missouri's population profile reflects a dichotomy between its large metropolitan areas, St. Louis and Kansas City, on the one hand, and its more rural areas, some of which are growing fast. In particular, the Republican-leaning Southwest region of the state, including metropolitan Springfield and Branson, has exhibited strong growth since 2000.

In presidential politics, Missouri is seen as a "bellwether state" having supported every winning presidential candidate in each election since 1900 save one (1956). In comparison to the Midwest battlegrounds of Ohio and Michigan, the "Show Me" state has seen more robust population growth in the last two decades, especially in the prosperous Kansas City metropolitan area, the suburbs of metro St. Louis, and the tourist attraction areas of Branson and the Ozarks in the southwest part of the state.

Missouri, which did not lose any congressional seats after the 2000 census, maintains, along with Indiana, the fourth largest number of Electoral College votes in the Midwest at 11. Its 4.9 percent population growth since 2000 ranks it 27th among the 50 states. Missouri gained both domestic migrants from within the U.S. and immigrants from abroad and since 2000 has sustained an employment growth of 1.67 percent. The unemployment rate for first six months of this year ranged from 5.5 and 6 percent—lower than either Michigan or Ohio.

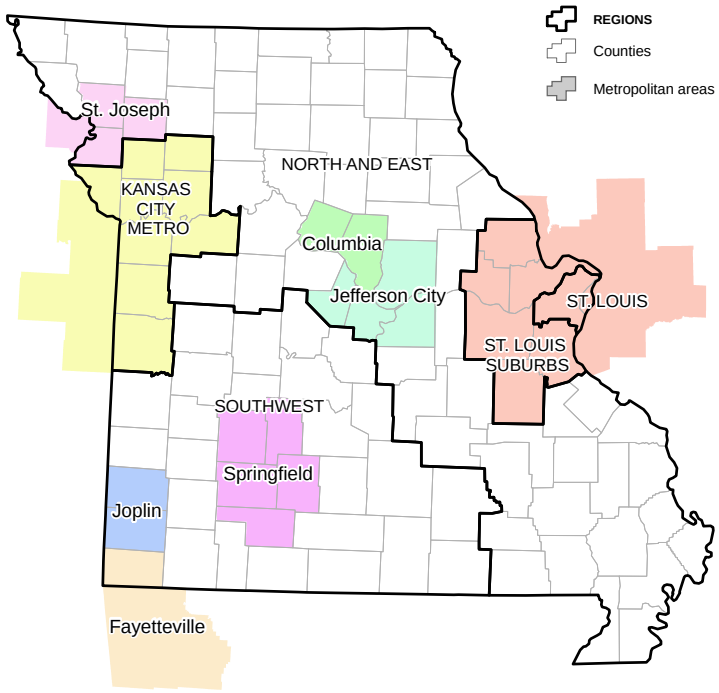
Missouri's population is dominated by two metropolitan areas, St. Louis and Kansas City, both of which spill over into surrounding states. Together they comprise 56 percent of the state's population. In addition, the state contains the metropolitan areas of Springfield, Joplin, Columbia, Jefferson City, and the Missouri portions of the St. Joseph and Fayetteville, AR metros.

The regions for Missouri are displayed in **Map 7**, with supporting information about their population size and growth in **Map 8** and **Figures 9 and 10**.

1. St. Louis – combines the city of St. Louis and the county of St. Louis. The city's 2007 population is 350,000, up 1.1 percent since 2000. The much larger county has 995,000 showing a 2.1 percent decline since 2000. Together these areas comprise 23 percent of the state's population, and declined by a modest 1.3 percent since the beginning of the decade

2. St. Louis Suburbs – consists of six counties in the Missouri portion of the St. Louis metropolitan area. St. Charles and Jefferson are the two largest with populations of 343,000 and 216,000, and the greatest growth is shown for exurban Lincoln county: 31 percent since 2000. As a group, these suburban counties comprise 13 percent of the state's population and have grown by a robust 15 percent since 2000.

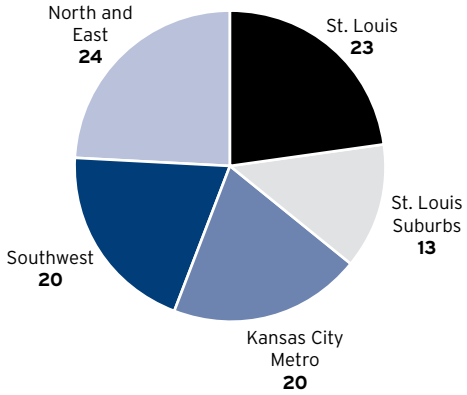
Map 7. Missouri Metropolitan Areas and Regions



3. Kansas City metro – consists of nine counties in the Missouri portion of the Kansas City metropolitan area. The largest of these is Jackson, County (population 666,000) which contains Kansas City, Mo. (population 450,000) and registered a small 1.7 percent gain since 2000. Other large counties are Clay, Cass, and Platte with populations of 211,000, 97,000, and 84,000, respectively. Of those in this region, Cass grew the fastest since 2000, 17.6 percent. Overall the region grew by 6 percent over the 2000-2007 period, and it comprises 20 percent of Missouri's population.

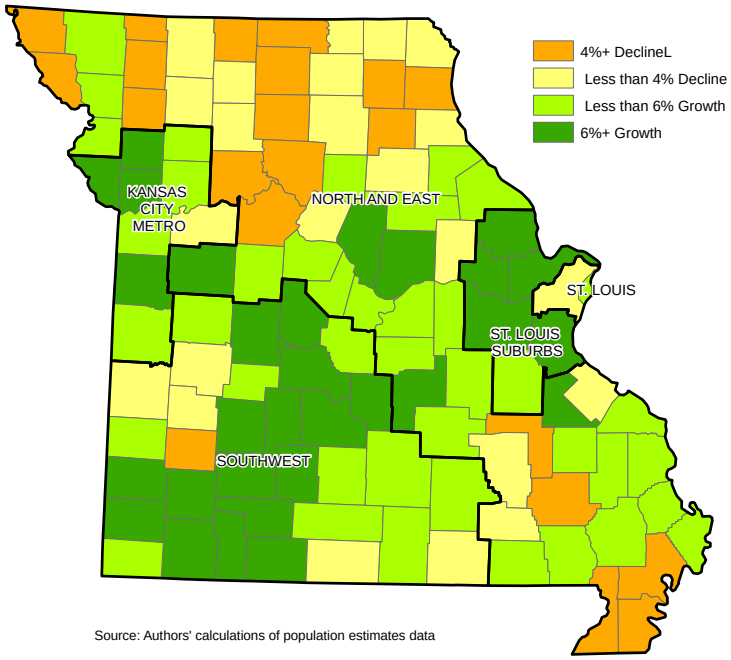
4. Southwest – consists of 32 counties in the southwestern part of Missouri, including the Springfield metropolitan area, Missouri's third

Figure 9. Share of 2007 Population in Missouri Regions



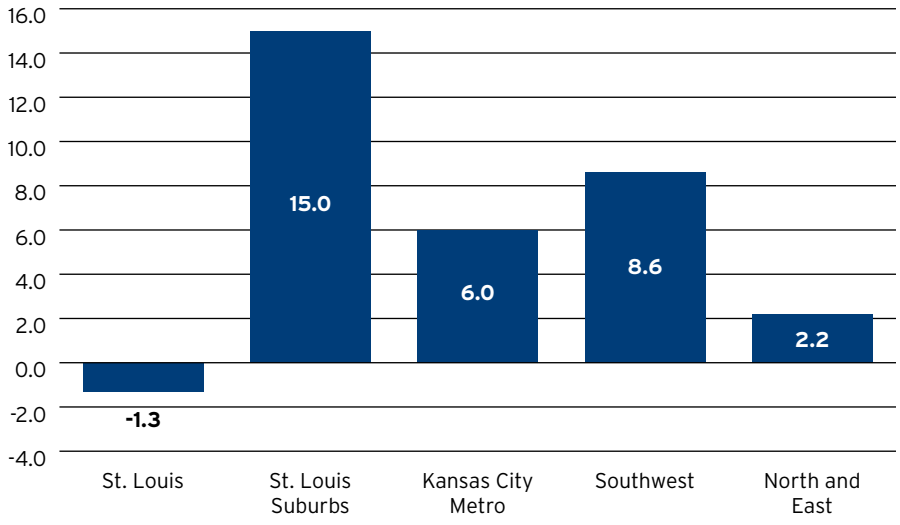
Source: Authors' calculations of U.S. Census estimates

Map 8. Population Change by County in Missouri, 2000-2007



Source: Authors' calculations of population estimates data

Figure 10. Figure 10 2000-2007 Population Growth in Missouri Regions



Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey and 2000 US Decennial Census

largest (population 420,000), and the smaller Joplin metropolitan area and the Missouri portion of the Fayetteville AR metropolitan area. This county also traverses the Ozarks. The largest county in this region is Greene County (population 263,000) which contains the city of Springfield, and the fastest growing county is Christian in the Springfield metro suburbs, which grew by one third between 2000 and 2007. Another fast growing county outside of the Springfield metro, Taney County, grew by 14.5 percent and contains Branson, the popular tourist attraction. On the whole, the Southwest is a fast growing region of the state, where 17 counties grew by greater than 5 percent since 2000 and where the overall growth rate was 8.6 percent. This Republican leaning region comprises 20 percent of Missouri's population.

5. North and East – consists of 66 counties in the north and east part of the state. It includes the Jefferson City metropolitan area, where the state capital of Jefferson City is located; the Columbia metropolitan area which contains the University of Missouri; and the Missouri portion of the St. Joseph metropolitan area. The region's largest county is Boone County, with a population of 152,000, which contains the University. It grew by 12.2 percent since 2000. Overall, both the Columbia and Jefferson City metropolitan areas showed healthy growth thus far this decade, growing by 11.2 percent and 3.8 percent respectively. Yet most of the counties in this region are non-metropolitan and more than half of them lost population since 2000. Given this non-metropolitan area dominance, the region, which comprises 24 percent of the state, showed a modest 2.7 percent growth since 2000.

B. Missouri's eligible voter demographic profile shows a divide between urban St. Louis and metro Kansas City with relatively large proportions of minorities and white college graduates and the more rural Southwest and North and East regions with much larger populations of working class whites and white seniors.

Missouri's statewide eligible voter population features a majority of working-age working class whites (52 percent) (**See Table 13**) This is far greater than the working class white share of the total U.S. population (42 percent) Conversely, the minority share of Missouri's eligible voter population (14 percent) is much smaller than its share of the national eligible voter population (26 percent). Unlike Ohio or Michigan, Missouri shows a 2000–2006 increase, albeit slight, in the absolute numbers of white working class.

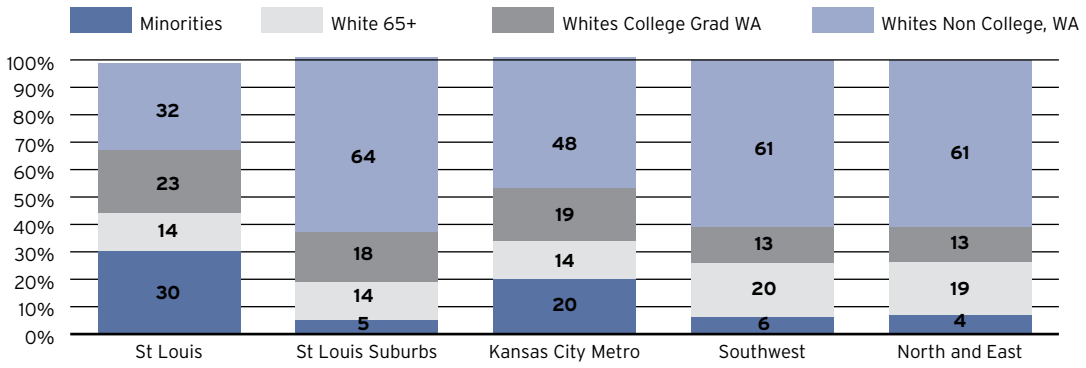
A profile of Missouri's eligible voters on other attributes can be seen in the **Appendix**.
Compared with the U.S. as a whole, the state's eligible voters are whiter, somewhat less highly educated, and less likely to be professionals (among males in the labor force). Missouri's eligible voters are also more likely to have been born in the same state than the national population, but somewhat more transient than residents of Ohio and Michigan. Yet, as with Michigan, and to a lesser extent, Ohio, there is a recent surge in their college graduate and postgraduate educated eligible voters, as is also the case with Hispanic eligible voters. Still the Hispanic share of the state's electorate is a tiny 1.6 percent, despite this recent growth.

Table 13. Missouri Eligible Voters in Key Demographic Segments, 2006 and Change since 2000

Key Demographic Segments	Share of Total 2006	Percent Change 2000-2006
Minorities	14	10.1
Whites Age 65+	16	2.5
White Working-Age College Grads,	17	13.5
White Working-Age Non College Grads	52	2.9

Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey and 2000 US Decennial Census

Figure 11. Eligible Voters in Key Demographic Segments, Missouri Regions



Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey

An examination of growth trajectories in key eligible voter demographic segments across regions of the state reveals some interesting differences in the shares of white working-age working class voters in each region (**See Figures 11 and 12**). About six out of 10 eligible voters are working class whites in the growing Southwest region, but also in the St. Louis suburbs and the more modestly growing North and East region. And in the fastest gaining areas, suburban St. Louis and the Southwest, 2000–2006 gains in the absolute numbers of working class whites outdistance gains in any other group. However, because white working class voters start from such a large base in these regions, these relatively large absolute gains actually translate into slower growth rates than other demographic segments and, therefore, to a fall in share in those regions.

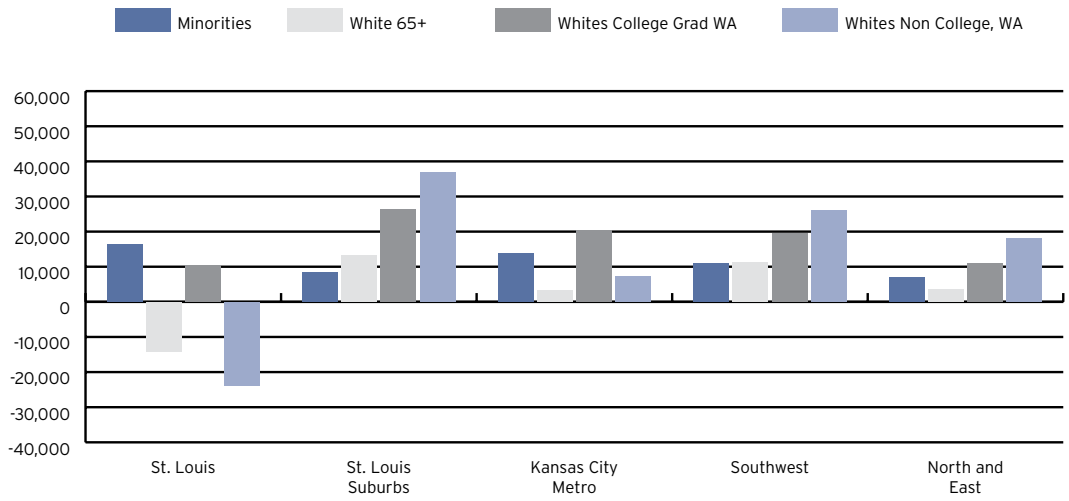
Table 14. 2006 Race-Ethnic Attributes of Eligible Voters for Regions in Missouri

	Share in Race-Ethnic Group, 2006					
Region	**White***	**Black***	**Asian***	**Other***	**Hispanic**	**Total**
State Total	85.7	10.3	0.9	1.4	1.6	100.0
St. Louis Co and City	69.6	26.3	1.6	1.1	1.4	100.0
St. Louis Suburbs	95.1	2.2	0.8	0.9	1.0	100.0
Kansas City Metro	80.5	13.8	1.1	1.4	3.2	100.0
Southwest	94.1	1.2	0.5	2.3	1.9	100.0
North and East	92.6	4.6	0.6	1.3	0.8	100.0

Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey

** non-Hispanic members of race group*

Figure 12. Change in Eligible Voters for Key Demographic Setmants, Missouri Regions, 2000-2006



Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey and 2000 US Decennial Census

While all areas showed gains in white college graduate voters, St. Louis and metropolitan Kansas City are the only areas where these gains were greater than those for white working class voters. Moreover, the shares of all eligible voters who are white college graduates in these two regions are higher than in any other regions.

Table 15. Age of Eligible Voters for Regions in Missouri

	Share of Group, 2006				
Region	**18-29**	**30-44**	**45-64**	**65+**	**Total**
State Total	21.8	26.4	33.7	18.1	100.0
St. Louis Co and City	18.6	26.4	36.7	18.3	100.0
St Louis Suburbs	22.9	29.2	33.7	14.3	100.0
Kansas City Metro	20.9	28.2	34.8	16.2	100.0
Southwest	23.2	24.6	32.1	20.2	100.0
North and East	23.6	25.2	31.7	19.5	100.0

Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey

The education gap among eligible voters is largest between the two large metropolitan areas (including both St. Louis and St. Louis suburbs), on the one hand, and the other regions of the state. The latter, more rural, Southwest and North and East regions also exhibit higher shares of white seniors than the St. Louis and Kansas City metro regions

The race-ethnic breakdowns of each region show that, as with the other Midwest battlegrounds, Missouri's minority population is predominantly black (**Table 14**). An exception is the largely white Southwest region which exhibits a slightly higher share of Hispanics than blacks, 1.9 percent versus 1.2 percent. The greatest share of Hispanics (3.2 percent) exists in the Kansas City metro.

The oldest populations (shares of voters ages 65+) tend to be in the Southwest and North and East regions (**Table 15**). These areas also have reasonably large shares of young adult potential voters, aged 18-29—perhaps reflecting an outmigration of middle-aged workers.

These patterns of growth are shifting the voter composition of Missouri's regions. Since white working class voters are either declining in numbers or growing more slowly than voters as a whole, they are declining as a percentage of voters in all regions, especially, interestingly enough, in the St. Louis suburbs, where there has been a 4 point decline since 2000. This is despite the fact that this region added more of these voters in absolute numbers than any other region. White college graduate voters, on the other hand, have increased their share of voters in every region, with the highest increase (3 points) also in the St. Louis suburbs. Minority voters show the same pattern of uniform share increase, though the changes are relatively small (under a percentage point) in all regions except St. Louis, where there was a 2 point gain.

Table 16. Missouri Voting by Selected Demographic Groups, 2004 and 2006

	2004 President			2006 Senate		
Group	**Democrat**	**Republican**	**Dem-Rep**	**Democrat**	**Republican**	**Dem-Rep**
White	42	57	-15	42	55	-13
Black	90	10	80	91	8	83
Hispanic	56	42	14	60	40	20
Men	47	52	-5	47	51	-4
Women	45	54	-9	51	45	6
White Men	44	55	-11	40	57	-17
White Women	40	59	-19	44	52	-8
Single Women	54	46	8	61	36	25
Married Women	40	59	-19	45	52	-7
HS Dropout	51	49	2	68	29	39
HS Graduate	48	51	-3	49	47	2
Some College	48	51	-3	49	48	1
College Grad	38	61	-23	43	53	-10
Postgraduate	49	50	-1	53	46	7
White Noncollege	44	56	-12	43	53	-10
White College	39	60	-21	42	56	-14
18-29	51	48	3	49	48	1
30-39	42	57	-15	49	47	2
40-49	44	55	-11	47	50	-3
50-64	45	54	-9	52	46	6
65+	52	48	4	47	50	-3
Total	**46**	**53**	**-7**	**50**	**47**	**2**

Source: Authors' analysis of 2004 and 2006 Missouri exit polls

C. The GOP's solid victory in the 2004 election can be attributed to very strong support among the burgeoning white college graduate group, with substantial support as well from the declining white working class.

We turn to how Missourians have been voting in recent elections. The results and analysis show how Missouri arrived at its current political landscape and provide some indications about how Missouri's politics might change in the future as demographic and geographic shifts continue.

Table 16 displays some basic exit poll data from the 2004 presidential election and 2006 Senate

election in Missouri. In 2004, Missouri voted Republican in the presidential election, just as it did in 2000, and by a larger margin (7 points in 2004 vs. 3 points in 2000). The data in the table show how Bush carried the state. He received 57 percent to 42 percent support from white voters, representing 89 percent of all voters according to the exit polls. That more than compensated Bush's large deficit among blacks (90 percent Democratic and 8 percent of voters) and modest deficit among Hispanics (56 percent Democratic and 1 percent of voters).

He carried men by 5 points and, interestingly, women by 9 points: a reverse gender gap; the same reverse same gender gap as can be seen when comparing white men and white women, whom he carried by 11 and 19 points, respectively. And Bush carried married women by 19 points but lost single women by 8 points.

By education, Bush carried all groups except high school dropouts, with his best group by far being those with a four year degree only, whom he carried by 23 points. Bush lost young (18–29) voters by 3 points but carried all other age groups but seniors by wide margins.

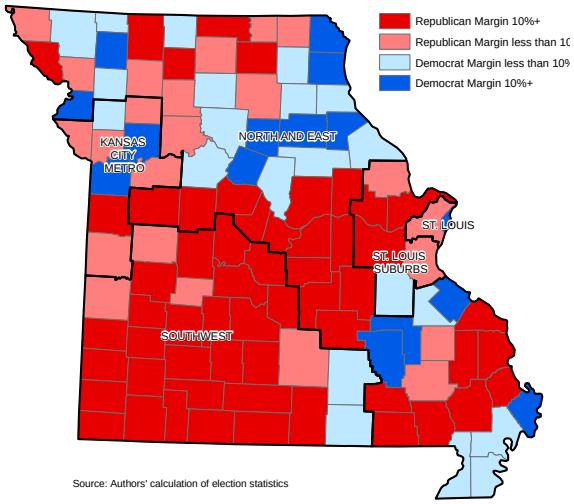
The 2006 Senate election was a different story with Democrat Claire McCaskill defeating Republican Jim Talent by 50-47. In McCaskill's 2006 Senate victory, she improved in almost all these demographic groups relative to Kerry's performance in 2004. The biggest swings were among women and various subgroups of women: these reversed the reverse gender gap we saw in 2004 presidential results, turning it back into the normal one, where women are more Democratic than men. However, these shifts fall short of explaining the 9 point margin shift to McCaskill that produced her 2006 victory. For that, a dramatic increase in minority, especially black, turnout must be factored in. According to exit polls, white voters fell from 89 to 83 percent of vote from 2004 to 2006, while minority voters rose from 11 to 17 percent of voters, driven by a 5 point increase in the share of black voters.

Looking at the white working class vote, in 2004 this group (defined here as whites without a four year college degree) supported Bush over Kerry by 12 points. This is substantially less than Kerry's nationwide deficit of 23 points among these voters. In contrast, Kerry lost Missouri's white college graduates by 21 points, a larger gap than Kerry's nationwide performance (an 11 point deficit). McCaskill improved among both groups in 2006, losing white working class voters by 10 points and white collage graduates by 14 (the latter figure represents a 7 point pro-Democratic swing over 2004).

Kerry's support among white working class voters varied substantially by region of Missouri. In the St. Louis metro (the exit poll regions do not allow us to distinguish between St. Louis and the St. Louis suburbs as in our regional scheme), Kerry actually got a slight majority (53 percent) of white working class voters, while losing these voters in the exit poll Southwest region (close to our region of the same name) by 46 points and in the exit poll North/Southeast region (close to our North and

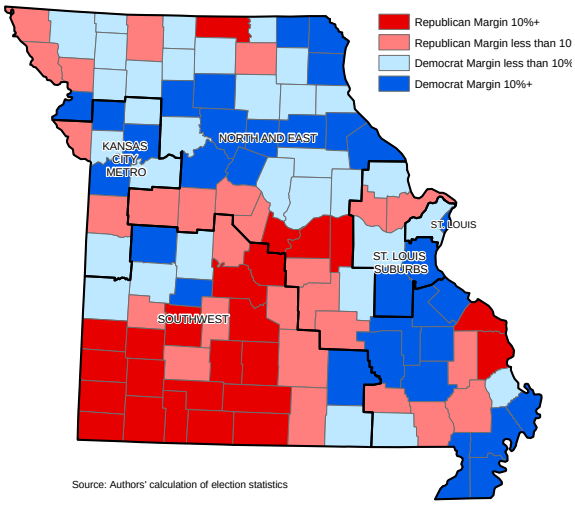
Maps 9A-9c. Missouri County Presidential Voting, 1988-2004

1988



Source: Authors' calculation of election statistics

1996



Source: Authors' calculation of election statistics

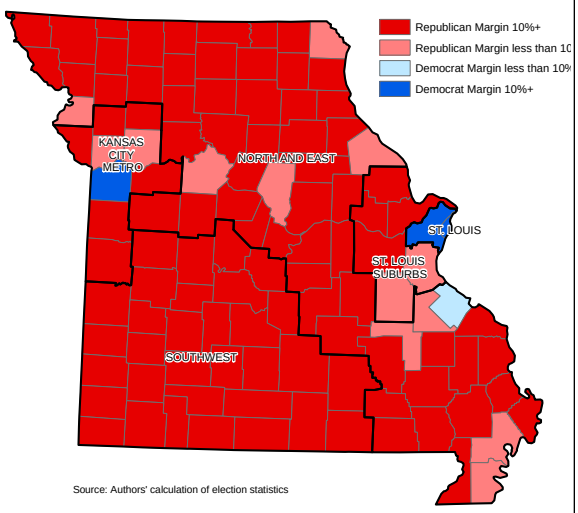
East region) by 17 points. He also did best in the St. Louis metro among white college graduate voters, losing them by 11 points. His worst region among this voter group was in the North/Southeast, where he lost by 42 points.

Looking back to 1988, in that election Bush senior ran 10 points ahead of Dukakis among Missouri's white working class voters, so Kerry's 12 point deficit in 2004 represents a modest swing toward the GOP among those voters (mostly driven by whites with some college). The greatest regional shift since 1988 has been in Southwest region, where white working class voters have moved toward the GOP by 22 points, a shift, however, that was mostly counterbalanced by pro-Democratic shifts in the St. Louis and Kansas City metros.

There was a greater swing among white college graduate voters: Bush beat Dukakis by 15 points among white college graduates in 1988, meaning that Kerry's 21 point deficit among these voters in 2004 represents a 6 point shift toward the GOP over the time period. The largest regional shift here was in the exit poll North/Southeast region, where white college graduates increased their pro-GOP margin by 30 points. The overall trend toward the GOP among this demographic assumes particular importance since white college graduates have increased their share of Missouri's voters by 10 points since 1988, while white working class voters have declined by the same amount.

D. Political shifts in Missouri since 1988 have moved the North and East, Southwest and Kansas City metro regions toward the GOP, with the sharpest shifts in the North and East and fast-growing Southwest regions.

2004



Maps 9A–9C show how patterns of Democratic and Republicans support played themselves out geographically in 2004, 1996 and 1988. In each map, counties are color-coded by their margin for the victorious presidential candidate (deep blue for a Democratic victory of 10 points or more, light blue for a Democratic victory of less than 10 points, deep red for a Republican victory of 10 points or more, light red for a Republican victory of less than 10 points).

Looking at the 2004 map, it is not only overwhelmingly red, but overwhelming dark red, indicating a GOP margin of 10 points or more. The only blue counties on the map are dark blue St. Louis county and city in the St. Louis region, light blue rural Ste. Genevieve just outside the St. Louis metro and dark blue Jackson county, the central county of the Kansas City metro. There isn't even very much light red—a couple of counties in the St. Louis suburbs, a couple of suburban counties in the Kansas City metro, and a sparse scattering of counties in the North and East (including Boone county, home of the University of Missouri). The Southwest region does not have a single county that is not dark red.

Looking at the map, one might wonder how Kerry managed to lose by only 7 points. This is because the few counties he carried counted for a lot. St. Louis County is the largest county in the state and, together with St. Louis, forms an area (our St. Louis region), which, while tiny on the map, accounts for a quarter of the statewide vote. Kerry carried this area by 20 points (**Table 17**). This allowed him to carry the St. Louis metro as a whole by 9 points, even though he lost the St. Louis suburbs (13 percent of the statewide vote) by 12 points.

He also carried Jackson county, the second largest county in the state (12 percent of the statewide vote by itself), by 17 points, allowing him to carry the Kansas City metro as a whole by 4 points. Since the Kansas City metro is 20 percent of the statewide vote and the St. Louis metro as a whole is 38 percent, that makes 58 percent of the statewide vote just from these two metros that leaned Democratic in aggregate.

Outside of these two metros, it's quite a different story of course. Kerry lost the uniformly dark red Southwest region by a whopping 35 points. He did slightly better in the North and East region, buoyed by a relatively good performance in Boone County (less than one point deficit) and a handful of other smaller counties, but he still lost the region as a whole by 22 points.

Table 17. Democratic Margins for Missouri Regions, 1988 and 2004

	Democratic Margins:		
Region	**1988 President**	**2004 President**	**Change, 1988-2004**
St Louis	4	20	17
St Louis Suburbs	-15	-12	3
Kansas City Metro	9	4	-5
Southwest	-22	-35	-13
North and East	-7	-22	-14
Total	**-4**	**-7**	**-3**

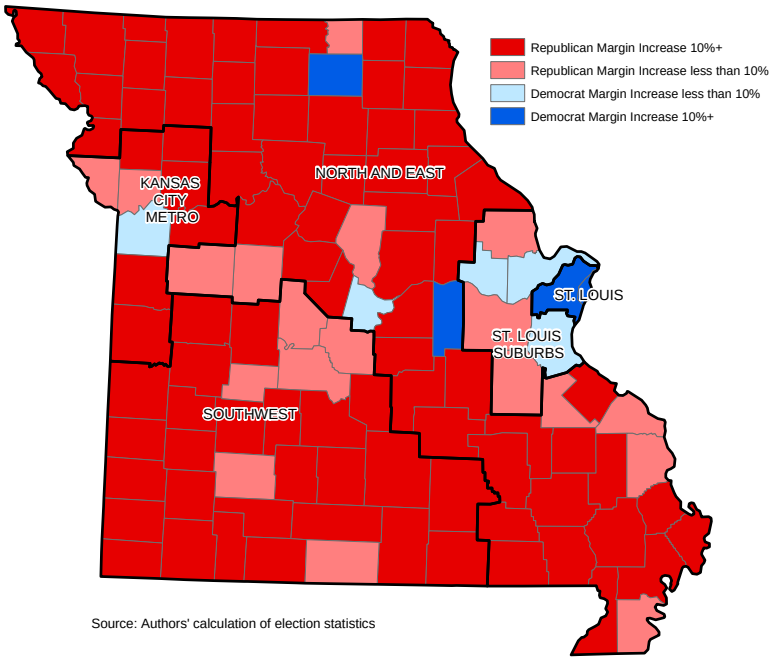
Source: Authors' analysis of Missouri election returns

Turning to the 1988 map—when Republicans carried the state by a more modest 4 point margin—the most obvious difference is that the North and East region has a wide range of blue counties, including in the northern tier of the state, just south of the St. Louis metro and in the far southeast corner. Even the Southwest region has two light blue and four light red counties. In addition, the Kansas City metro has two additional blue counties, dark blue Ray and light blue Clinton. Interestingly, the St. Louis region shows a difference in the other direction, since it is colored light red in 1988 but dark blue in 2004.

In 1996, Clinton won the state by 6 points for the Democrats. In this election, we see even more blue counties in the North and East region and the emergence of a blue cluster of counties in the top left corner of the Southwest region. We also see an additional four counties in the Kansas City metro turning blue, making seven of the nine counties in the metro blue. In the St. Louis suburbs, four of the six counties are blue and St. Louis County in our St. Louis region flips from light red to light blue. By 2004, essentially all of these Democratic gains had evaporated with the important exception of St. Louis County, which actually intensified its Democratic support and moved from light blue to dark blue.

Map 10 provides a visual representation of where political shifts took place over the 1988-2004 time period. Counties that are dark blue had margin shifts toward the Democrats of 10 points or more, light blue counties had margin shifts toward the Democrats of 10 points or less, light red counties had margin shifts toward the Republicans of 10 points or more and dark red counties had margin shifts toward the Republicans of 10 points or less.

Map 10. Change in Presidential Party Voting by County in Missouri, 1988–2004



Source: Authors' calculation of election statistics

The striking thing about this map is that it is almost all red, indicating movement toward the GOP over the time period. The sharpest shifts are indicated by the dark red color which dominates several regions, including the Southwest (13 point overall shift toward the GOP) and the North and East (14 point pro-GOP shift). The Kansas City metro also has mostly dark red, plus two light red counties and one county, Jackson, where there was actually a small pro-Democratic shift. The metro as a whole has shifted Republican by 5 points since 1988.

The real exception to these trends is in the St. Louis metro. In the St. Louis suburbs, three counties, light blue Jefferson, St. Charles and Warren, shifted Democratic and the rest of the counties are light red, indicating a moderate pro-GOP shift. These changes netted out to a 3 point pro-Democratic shift in the area. In St. Louis, both St. Louis city and county are dark blue, indicating a strong pro-Democratic shift; this area moved Democratic by 17 points. Together, these changes in St. Louis and the St. Louis suburbs moved the St. Louis metro toward the democrats by 10 points over the time period.

Comparing the political shifts in Map 10 to the population growth map (Map 8), the news is almost all favorable for the GOP. By and large, growing (dark or light green) counties are also GOP-trending counties. In the Southwest region, all counties in the conservative, strongly GOP-trending Springfield and Joplin metros are colored dark green, indicating relatively fast growth of 6 percent or more since 2000. The GOP-trending region as a whole, in fact, is mostly dark or light green, with only six

declining counties. The GOP-trending North and East region shows a somewhat different pattern, with most counties in the northern tier declining and most in the bottom two-thirds of the region showing moderate or strong growth.

In the Kansas City metro, Democratic-trending Jackson County shows moderate growth, one of the few exceptions to the pattern that links growth to trends toward the GOP. The other—all GOP-trending—counties in the metro, however, are also growing (with one exception) and they are growing faster than Jackson. Over in the St. Louis metro, the news is a bit better for Democrats. The entire St. Louis suburbs—the fastest-growing region overall—is dark green and several of those counties, as well as the area as a whole, has been trending Democratic. But in strongly Democratic-trending St. Louis, St. Louis county is declining (down 2 percent), which is only partially compensated for by a one percent gain in much smaller St. Louis city (the St. Louis area overall is down 1 percent since 2000).

On balance, these trends appear to favor the GOP. There are some countervailing factors, particularly in the St. Louis suburbs, but the current relationship between growth and political trends seems a felicitous one for the GOP in Missouri.

E. Key trends and groups to watch in 2008 include white college graduates, who have been increasing their share of voters as they have trended Republican; the declining white working class, which remains the dominant voter group in the state; and blacks, whose turnout might spike in this election.

The GOP has managed to win the last two presidential elections in Missouri. Whether the Republicans can keep their victory streak alive—and perhaps expand their margin—or whether the Democrats can add a presidential win to their recent senatorial success will be determined, in large part, by the demographic groups and trends we have reviewed in this report. Here are some things to watch out for in the 2008 election.

First, will white college-educated voters, who have been growing fairly rapidly and have been trending Republican, continue to support the GOP at the same high level as 2004? The GOP's 21 point margin among these voters in 2004 was quite a bit higher than its margin among white working voters. If they keep the margin this high, it creates a very big hole for the Democrats to dig themselves out of, thereby setting the table for a third straight GOP win in the state. But if that margin compresses substantially, as it did in the McCaskill Senate election, the GOP could be in trouble.

The white working class is also critical, of course. While declining as a share of voters, they remain the dominant group in the state. In 2004, they gave Bush a 12 point margin, modest by the standards of national GOP performance and significantly less than his margin among white college graduate voters. Keeping this margin steady or growing will be a great help to GOP efforts to hold the state, while a margin that shrinks into single digits opens the door for the Democrats.

A third group to watch is black voters. They drove a big surge of minority turnout in 2006 and that was a huge boost for McCaskill. In this election, the candidacy of Barack Obama creates the potential for a surge that could match or exceed the one in 2006.

In terms of regions, the St. Louis suburbs deserve very close attention. While still leaning Republican, this area is much less so than the Southwest and North/East region, and it has been trending Democratic. If this dynamic area, where white college graduates loom particularly large, should move significantly toward the Democrats in this election, it would swell the margin the Democrats have coming out of the St. Louis metro (38 percent of the statewide vote) and put them in a good position to compete for the state. Conversely, if the GOP keeps its hold on the St. Louis suburbs that, combined with the big margins they are likely to get in the Southwest and North/East, makes a Republican victory likely.

The Kansas City metro is another area where the GOP will seek to hold the line. This now only mildly pro-Democratic area has been trending Republican and providing a big boost to Republican statewide performance. If this area reverts to its Democratic pattern of the 1990s, that would give the Democrats a strong hold on the two biggest metros in the state, which have 58 percent of the vote between them.

Finally, the growing Southwest region is worth watching. The area is the GOP bulwark of the state with an especially large and pro-GOP white working class. Keeping Republican margins in this area very high is central to their efforts to hold the state.

Appendix. Demographic Attributes and Change of Eligible Voters for Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, and Total US, 2000-2006

	Share of Eligible Voters 2006				Percent Change, 2000-2006			
Share of Total	**Ohio**	**Michigan**	**Missouri**	**Total U.S.**	**Ohio**	**Michigan**	**Missouri**	**Total U.S.**
Race-Ethnicity								
White*	85.7	81.5	85.7	74.1	1.6	2.9	4.8	3.5
Black*	10.8	12.9	10.3	11.9	6.2	1.8	7.3	9.6
Asian*	0.9	1.4	0.9	3.3	34.4	61.7	37.3	41.6
Other*	1.1	1.6	1.4	2.0	-7.9	-12.0	-2.4	-2.9
Hispanic	1.6	2.5	1.6	8.7	15.6	20.9	31.9	25.8
Age								
18-29	21.0	21.0	21.8	21.5	2.4	2.6	8.0	8.6
30-44	26.5	26.9	26.4	26.8	-11.0	-11.2	-7.6	-7.6
45-64	34.8	35.2	33.7	34.3	16.3	18.9	18.4	20.6
65+	17.8	16.9	18.1	17.5	1.0	3.4	3.1	5.8
Education								
Less than HS	13.9	12.9	15.2	14.0	-19.4	-21.4	-15.3	-18.0
HS grad	37.1	32.5	33.9	31.2	6.1	7.7	10.2	13.1
Some College	28.4	32.6	29.1	29.8	5.3	4.2	6.9	6.7
Bachelors Degree	13.6	14.2	14.2	16.3	9.8	15.6	14.2	17.5
PostGraduate	7.0	7.8	7.5	8.7	13.6	19.2	19.2	19.9
Occupation (males)								
Managers	11.0	10.4	11.8	11.9	3.5	-0.1	6.7	10.1
Professionals	18.1	20.2	17.8	21.0	-2.6	0.2	1.8	6.0
Service	12.1	12.4	12.1	12.2	18.4	22.7	17.7	18.7
Sales	17.4	17.0	17.2	18.6	4.5	2.7	2.2	9.7
Blue Collar	41.4	40.1	41.1	36.3	-4.6	-9.9	2.2	1.7
Birthplace								
Same State	72.7	74.2	62.9	56.7	4.1	4.3	3.7	5.8
Different US State	25.1	22.0	35.3	35.9	-3.1	-2.5	7.9	4.8
Abroad	2.2	3.8	1.8	7.3	12.9	25.6	29.3	26.5

** non-Hispanic members of race*

Source: Authors' analysis of 2006 American Community Survey and 2000 US Decennial Census

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Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful to Alan Berube, Amy Liu, and Mark Muro for their helpful suggestions, to David Jackson for editing, to Jill Wilson for assistance with maps, and to Cathy Sun of the University of Michigan Population Studies Center for programming and analysis assistance.

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