

# Creating a Racially Polarized Electorate: The Political Fallout of Immigration Politics in Arizona and California

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We explore the potential political impact of Arizona's controversial immigration statute, SB 1070, using a parallel event: the 1994 passage of Proposition 187 in California. Both statutes were efforts to respond to the flow of undocumented migrants and were widely seen as anti-Latino, and both became the central theme of their proponents' reelection campaigns. We reexamine and extend the academic literature on the political impact of Proposition 187, applying the effect estimates to Arizona via a Monte Carlo simulation to project its vote in future presidential elections. These projections show that the potential changes in voting behavior brought on by SB 1070, coupled with population trends, give Democrats a discernable and growing advantage in presidential elections as early as 2016. The results of 2012 makes clear that the GOP's best hope to hold the state rests on a strong and enduring move by its white voters toward the Republicans, leaving Arizona with a racially polarized electorate more reminiscent of the American South than its Southwest. We speculate about the potential to create such an electorate where an unusually large percentage of white voters immigrated there as adults from other states.

“If the new conservative coalition is going to be a governing coalition, it's going to have to have a significant number of Hispanics in it, that's dictated by demographics, and you don't get large numbers of Hispanics to support you when you're engaged in anti-Hispanic immigration rhetoric.”

--Dr. Richard D. Land, Southern Baptist Convention, speaking about his opposition to Arizona's SB 1070

“Arizona's historical voting patterns notwithstanding, the (Obama) campaign argues, the state's fast-changing demographics make it a logical — if far from certain — target for a Democratic pickup. Hispanics now constitute almost 20 percent of the voting-age population.”

--Ruth Marcus, “Why Obama is trying to put Arizona in play,” Washington Post, 1/24/2012.

## 1. Introduction

In April of 2010, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed a bill SB 1070, which was aimed at identifying, prosecuting, and deporting undocumented immigrants. Supporters hailed SB 1070 as an overdue response to the large number of immigrants illegally entering the state along its long border with Mexico, a dramatic step deemed necessary by its proponents due to the federal government's lack of action. Opponents decried it, especially a provision mandating that police officers investigate the citizenship status of anyone suspected of being in the country illegally, as deeply offensive and certain to result in the racial profiling of the state's large Latino population, citizen and non-citizen alike. This “show your papers” requirement—which Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles condemned as a “German Nazi and Russian Communist technique”<sup>1</sup>—proved to be a rallying point for the bill's opponents, and led to promises of further political action and economic boycotts. For their part, the law's defenders dismissed these objections as overwrought and insisted on the law's necessity.

Whatever its merits as *policy*, the immediate political ramifications of Arizona's new law seemed clear enough. Illegal immigration has long generated political controversy, and polls taken in the aftermath of the enactment of SB 1070 showed solid support for Arizona's law

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<sup>1</sup> <http://cardinalrogermahonyblogslablogspot.com/2010/04/arizonas-new-anti-immigrant-law.html>

both within the state and nationally.<sup>2</sup> Previous versions of the bill had passed the legislature before, only to be vetoed by the state's Democratic governor, Janet Napolitano. With Napolitano having stepped aside to join the Obama administration, her Republican successor, Lt. Governor Brewer, decided to support the bill and then mount an increasingly vigorous public defense of its provisions as she simultaneously and successfully campaigned for reelection. Brewer's actions, along with national Democrats' criticism of SB 1070 (local Democrats were fairly muted), ensured that even semi-attentive citizens could draw a clear distinction between Governor Brewer and her Democratic opponent in the 2010 gubernatorial election, and possibly between the Republican and Democratic Parties in future contests.

We explore that latter possibility—the prospect that SB 1070's passage will have long-term consequences for Arizona's politics—guided by a roughly similar set of circumstances in California more than a decade earlier: the passage of Proposition 187 in 1994. Like Arizona, California already had a substantial Latino population in 1994, including a large number of undocumented immigrants who had entered the state along its border with Mexico. Like Arizona, conservative Republican activists viewed this situation with alarm and crafted a series of controversial responses, eventually enticing California's incumbent Republican governor, Pete Wilson, into championing Prop 187 as he ran for reelection. California's policy focused on governmental services such as public education and health care that would be denied to undocumented immigrants while Arizona's brought state and local police into the process by requiring them to attempt to check the immigration status of any detainees they have reasonable suspicion that the individual is an undocumented immigrant.<sup>3</sup> As in Arizona, opponents argued that the crackdown would inevitably affect all Latinos, including the healthy majorities who were citizens. Finally, like Arizona, targeting undocumented migrants proved to be very popular as Prop 187 passed with 59 percent of the vote.

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<sup>2</sup> National polls: Gallup Poll. April 27-28, 2010. 51% Support (N=1,013 adults nationwide, interviewed via Gallup Daily tracking. MoE  $\pm$  4) <http://www.pollingreport.com/immigration.htm>; Pew Research Center May 6-9, 2010. 59% Support (N=994 adults nationwide) <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1591/public-support-arizona-immigration-law-poll>

<sup>3</sup> Both laws received a great deal of national publicity as evidenced by mentions in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* in the year following their passage (using the proper nouns and search terms like "Arizona immigration law" with Lexis-Nexis). SB 1070: *Washington Post* = 157 mentions, *New York Times* = 147. Proposition 187: *Washington Post* = 145, *New York Times* = 126.

Both Governors Wilson and Brewer made their immigration policies the centerpiece of their campaigns and both won reelection by comfortable margins (Wilson with 55 percent, Brewer with 54 percent of the vote), albeit in years strongly favorable to Republicans everywhere. In California, Wilson and other Republicans attributed their success in 1994 to the power of the immigration issue and went on to push several other racially/ethnically charged ballot initiatives in the late 1990s.<sup>4</sup> In retrospect, however, Prop 187's legacy has not been so happy for Republicans. The perceived attack on California's Latinos seemed to provoke both a shift in their partisanship away from the Republican Party and a sharp increase in their turnout in subsequent elections *following* its passage. These developments, combined with Latinos' growing share of California's population, helped solidify Democrats' control of politics in the state. Prior to 1994, California was perceived as a partisan battleground. Afterward, it came to be seen as staunchly Democratic thanks to the help of a motivated Latino electorate:

The slide began in 1994, when Republicans rallied around a voter initiative, Proposition 187, which would have made it illegal for the government to provide services for undocumented aliens. That campaign created a political rupture with Hispanics at the very moment when their numbers were exploding. (Nagourney 2012)

Of course, such simplistic accounts may be misleading. Non-Latino white voters in California had been drifting toward the Democratic Party for some time, and Democratic presidential candidates carried the state in 1988 and 1992 (Fiorina and Abrams 2008). But scholars who have examined polling and voter registration data have detected a sharp and durable change in Latinos' affiliations and voting flowing from the passage of Proposition 187. There is little doubt that Latino voters are a key component of the Democratic coalition that has largely dominated California politics since 1994.

The question we ask here is: what would happen to Arizona politics should the state's Latino population follow the path of California's Latino electorate? Beyond the states in question, the answer is of broad significance to political scientists interested in racial politics and American national elections. In both states, the push to punish undocumented immigrants came to be seen as a way to attract white voters and increase their turnout, a prize far

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<sup>4</sup> Prop 209, which eliminated Affirmative Action in California's university system passed in 1996 and Prop 227, which largely eliminated bilingual education in California's public schools, passed in 1998.

offsetting the potential losses among non-whites. As a political strategy, however, this makes sense only if those gains among whites are as enduring as the losses among Latinos. The pattern in California, however, suggests they are not. While it is too early to know whether Arizona is different, the early returns from the 2012 election reveal far greater movement among Latino voters than among white voters. Our projections show how differential rates of decay in that initial effect increases Republicans' need to maintain a historically large share of white voters, thus laying the groundwork for racial polarization in the state.

While our analysis is premised on the precedent established by California, there is no guarantee that it is a valid comparison. SB 1070 was the result of the legislative process while Prop 187 was a ballot proposition that millions of Californians voted on after exposure to propaganda costing millions of dollars. The policies themselves are different, with one focused on services and the other on law enforcement. And, of course, no one would confuse Arizona with California either in topography, population, or political attitudes. Nonetheless, there are some striking similarities between the circumstances in the California circa 1994 and Arizona circa 2010, starting with the presence of a large and rapidly growing Latino population relatively unengaged in politics, and the enormous shock that each law had on that population. Given SB 1070s focus on enforcement, the law has the potential to generate day-to-day effects on the lives of *citizen* Latinos that are even greater than Prop 187 in California. If SB 1070 serves as the sort of galvanizing force for Arizona's Latino population that Proposition 187 was for California's, then Arizona's politics are likely to change in important ways.

We attempt to define the possibilities by returning to the patterns of behavior in California before and after 187, and superimposing those patterns on Arizona in an attempt to project how the key events of 2010 *might* affect the next twenty years (approximately the amount of time that has passed since Proposition 187 passed). Our projections depend upon California's experience in the wake of Proposition 187 as well as Arizona's political history and demographic trends. In the next section, we begin with a brief account of Arizona's recent political history, as a way to set some simple baselines from which to project. Section 3 examines and extends the literature on Proposition 187's effect on California's voters, focusing

specifically on its impact on voter choice and turnout. Section 4 applies these findings—along with a set of population projections—to forecast Arizona’s political trajectory using a range of scenarios. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of our results, the politics of immigration, and the potential for laws like SB 1070 to change the political reality in Arizona and elsewhere.

## **2. Politics and demographics in Arizona**

Arizona has been regarded as a Republican stronghold since Barry Goldwater was first elected to the Senate in 1952 (Perlstein 2001). Since that time, Republican presidential candidates have carried the state in every year save 1996, often by large margins. Those margins, however, have shrunk in recent decades. Since 1992, no Republican has won more than 55% of the two-party presidential vote. Particularly in 2004 and 2008, the two elections preceding the passage of SB 1070, the party’s strength relied on a white population slightly more supportive of Republicans than the nation as a whole and a Latino population fairly substantially less supportive of Democrats than Latinos nationwide.<sup>5</sup> However, Latinos in Arizona swung heavily towards the Democrats in 2012 relative to the partisan baseline set in 2004 and 2008. According to VNS exit polling, 77 percent of Latinos voted for Obama in 2012, up from 58 percent in 2008 and 56 percent in 2004. Latinos in Arizona went from being considerably more Republican than Latinos nationwide to considerably more Democratic in one election cycle. As we detail below, this is nearly the exact increase in Democratic support predicted by our simulations, mirroring the change among California Latinos after Proposition 187.

Among whites, the differences between Arizona, California, and the nation as a whole were relatively small until 2008 when white Californians’ support for Obama surged to 50%, well above the national average of 43%. Perhaps surprisingly, given John McCain’s status as a favorite son, he received about the same percentage of the whites’ vote in Arizona in 2008 as George Bush did in 2004. However, after Democratic presidential candidates had held relatively steady at around 40% of Arizona whites’ votes from 1996 to 2008, Barack Obama’s

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<sup>5</sup> In the years prior, it becomes difficult to assess Latino vote choice in Arizona due to the small subsamples in the media’s exit polls.

support among whites in Arizona plummeted to 32% in 2012, among the largest drops among any demographic group that we observe during this period.

Thus, while Latinos in Arizona surged strongly toward the Democrats in the wake of SB 1070, whites went in exactly the opposite direction. While the former seems likely to have been a direct reaction to 1070—one which we show is entirely consistent in magnitude with the observed movement of Latinos in California following Prop 187—the change in whites' behavior is much harder to explain. There is no sign that whites in California became more enthusiastic toward Republicans after 187's passage, despite more ballot measures designed to capitalize on 187's popularity. Bowler, Nicholson and Segura (2006, pg. 153) argue that the opposite occurred; the GOP's support for these measures soured some whites on the party (a claim that is disputed by Dyck *et al* 2011). Arizona may follow this trend in the future, but it clearly has not happened yet. What we do not know is whether the appropriate baseline of white support for future Democratic candidates is closer to the 40% figure observed from 1996 to 2008, or the much lower 32% in 2012. We are more inclined to the former, not wishing to give too much weight to a single election, but in the analysis below, we generate a pair of forecasts using both baselines.

Beyond the voting history of Latinos and whites in Arizona, there is another important baseline: each group's share of the population, especially the voting eligible population. Even if SB 1070 produces no changes in anyone's political behavior in Arizona, Democratic candidates still stand to gain from the demographic change occurring in the state. The non-Latino population in Arizona, a group mostly made up of whites with some American Indians and other minorities, is relatively old, while the Latino population is extremely young; the median age of Arizona's native-born Latino population is just 18, compared to 44 for non-Latino whites. As a result, Latinos make up 47 percent of Arizona citizens under 18 (excluding the fairly small number of foreign-born), and a slight majority of Arizonans less than 6 years of age. Arizona is an extreme example of the demographic trend nationwide driven by the different birthrates of whites and non-whites.

According to the 2010 census, 29.6 percent of Arizona residents were Latinos, almost double their share of the national population (16.3 percent) and their 4th largest presence in any state (following New Mexico, Texas, and California).<sup>6</sup> Approximately 70 percent of Arizona's Latino community was born in the United States and are thus citizens, while an additional 27 percent of the foreign-born population has been naturalized. Latinos thus constituted 24.8 percent of the citizen population in Arizona in 2010. Of course, not all citizens may vote.<sup>7</sup> Given its youth, a significant portion of the Latino citizen population is currently too young to cast a ballot, which means the voting eligible proportion of the Latino citizen population will inevitably increase with time. Assuming that all non-Latinos are citizens and that the naturalization rate of 27 percent applies to foreign-born Latinos irrespective of age, Latinos made up 20.3 percent of the voting-eligible population in 2010, up from 19.3 percent in 2008.

Unfortunately, to our knowledge, neither the Census Bureau nor the State of Arizona has released an estimate of Latinos' share of the voting-eligible population going forward. We can extrapolate from population trends to make some reasonable guesses. According to the Census, Latinos' share of Arizona's population has grown by about five percentage points per decade over the last 20 years—from 18.8 percent in 1990 to 25.3 percent in 2010 to 29.6 percent in 2010. Some of that growth was the result of illegal immigration, but even in 2010, more than 78 percent of the Latinos were citizens. Reducing that growth rate by subtracting undocumented immigrants still leaves the Latino share of Arizona's population increasing by about four percentage points per decade. We note, too, that even were SB 1070 to halt the flow of undocumented migrants entirely it would have little effect on the Latinos percentage of the voting-eligible population for several decades (until the native-born children of these immigrants came of age). Nor is there evidence from California of Latino emigration from the state in the wake of Prop 187. Indeed Pantoja *et al* (2001) suggest just the opposite occurred.

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<sup>6</sup> The Pew Hispanic Center estimates that about 90 percent trace their country of origin to Mexico, versus 65 percent nationwide.

<sup>7</sup> Arizona is one of the states where felons may not vote while serving their sentences. The incarcerated population is not large enough to distort these estimates.



A four percent increase is likely a conservative estimate. The state of Arizona projects births to exceed migration into the state by 2017, leaving the state's growth increasingly fueled by children born there rather than by retirees and others from other parts of the United States relocating there. It is worth noting that the state has consistently *overestimated* migration into the state in previous projections, often by large margins.<sup>8</sup> Taking these observed errors into account suggests something closer to a six-percentage point increase in the percentage of Arizonans who are Latino over the next decade. Thus, we estimate that Latinos' share of the voting-eligible population to rise by four to six percentage points for the next two decades.

### **3. The California experience: assessing the political consequences of Proposition 187**

Given its presumed importance it is somewhat surprising that the passage of Proposition 187 has been the subject of relatively little scholarly attention. There are two key issues relevant to our assessment of 187's impact on California's political landscape that merit inquiry: its effect on the political preferences/vote choice of Latinos and non-Latinos, and its effect on turnout of Latinos and non-Latinos. We deal with each issue in turn, highlighting the main empirical analyses done by other scholars and augmenting the findings in several places to aid our ability to make projections about Arizona.

Some authors have written about political preferences in the wake of 187's passage, starting with Bowler, Nicholson, and Segura (2006) who use survey data (from the Field Poll<sup>9</sup>) to show the erosion of Republican partisanship among Latinos following 187 (Monogan 2010). Their results reveal that Republican partisanship among Latinos, which had been on the upswing prior to 1994, dramatically declined afterward while whites continued their drift toward the Democratic Party. Figure 1 depicts the predicted probability of Latinos and whites identifying with the Republican Party before and after the passage of 187 using Bowler, Nicholson and Segura's results (2006, page 155, also see Korey and Lascher 2006). Latinos go from being 34 percent likely to identify as Republicans in the early 1990s to just 12 percent in

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<sup>8</sup> See, Catherine Reagor. "Arizona's Population Projections Were Off Due to Housing Boom." *The Arizona Republic* June. 15, 2008. <http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/2008/06/15/20080615growthexplain.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> The California/Field Poll is a California-focused series of public opinion surveys that began in the 1940s. These data are housed at UC-Berkeley's UC DATA archive, [http://ucdata.berkeley.edu/data\\_record.php?recid=3](http://ucdata.berkeley.edu/data_record.php?recid=3)

the early 2000s, while Democratic identification goes in the opposite direction (from 38 percent to 63 percent). Whites, on the other hand, were 38 percent likely to be Republican in the early 1990s versus 31 percent in early 2000s.<sup>10</sup> The lack of compensating movement from non-Latinos after 187 undoubtedly came as an unhappy surprise to California's Republicans. It seems clear Proposition 187 simply had a much bigger impact on Latinos than on non-Latinos, which in retrospect hardly seems surprising at all.

*Figure 1 here*

Partisanship, Bowler, Nicholson and Segura's dependent variable (and the subject of Korey and Lascher's analysis), is an attitude or disposition rather than an observed behavior, thus these results do not directly account for voting. This is not a trivial distinction. While partisanship is a key political orientation, elections are ultimately decided by votes. Moreover, there is considerable evidence that different ethnic groups translate their partisan orientations into vote choices in different ways. For example, we establish in the proceeding analysis, Latino independents in California were more likely to support Democratic candidates than white independents, and the magnitude of this difference changed over time. Analyses of the distribution of partisanship in California, such as Bowler, Nicholson, and Segura (2006) or Korey and Lascher (2006), or those of Kaufmann et al. (2012) which examine how demographic changes will alter the distribution of partisanship on the national level), stop short of providing a full-fledged benchmark for evaluating how demographic changes and shifts in partisanship could affect future election outcomes. Thus, further analysis is necessary.

We address the vote choice question by estimating a version of Bowler and Segura's model using the same data source (the Field Poll) with presidential vote as the dependent variable, and party identification as an independent variable. These results are shown in Table 1, which includes both a series of dummy variables for year (to allow us to see the immediate as well as long term effect of 187) as well as an interaction between year and Latino. The

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<sup>10</sup> We attempted to confirm these trends by examining voter registration data using the California Redistricting Database: <http://statewidedatabase.org/> Indeed the number of Latinos registered as Democrats jumped from 1.08 million in 1992 to 2.08 million in 2010, while the number of Latinos registered as Republicans grew from 353,000 in 1992 to 717,000 in 2010. The number of Latinos registering as independents also grew rapidly, growing from a scant 145,000 in 1992 to 718,000 in 2010, surpassing the number of Latinos registered as Republicans.

interaction term improves the fit of the model and shows the dramatic change in the behavior of Latino voters following 1994. Again, we estimate Latinos' probability of voting for the Democratic presidential candidate by setting each of the variables to their sample means (or modes, in the case of dichotomous variables) as shown in Figure 2 and then plotting the predicted probability (along with bars representing the 95 percent confidence intervals) using Gary King's Clarify STATA package. The results suggest that Latinos were between thirteen and eighteen percentage points more likely to vote for the Democratic presidential candidate in 1996 than in 1992, depending upon their party identification.<sup>11</sup> These higher levels of support persist into later elections.<sup>12</sup>

*Table 1 and Figure 2 here*

Beyond changes in party identification and vote choice, analysts have also pointed to a surge in Latino turnout following 1994. That is, even though Proposition 187 was passed by referendum in which Latino voters could participate, the largest increases in Latino registration and turnout appeared *after* its passage. Barreto and Woods (2005) examine voter registration rolls in Los Angeles County, the state's largest, and conclude that virtually all of the new registrants between 1994 and 1996 were Latinos. This increase in registrants played out on Election Day; Barreto and Woods find that Latino turnout grew from 241,364 in 1994 (40.2 percent of Latinos registered) to 358,442 (42.6 percent) in 1998. The increase in registration and turnout was especially pronounced among newly naturalized Latinos in California (Pantoja *et al* 2001; Pantoja and Segura 2003).

We confirmed and elaborated on these findings by examining California Redistricting Database (see fn. 10), which breaks down the number of registrants and voters to census blocks from the 1990s to the present. Despite some holes in the data in early years and difficulty

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<sup>11</sup>The voting behavior of Latinos who identified as Democrats and independents shifted more heavily in favor of Democratic candidates than Latino Republicans (a roughly 18 percentage point increase for Democrats and independents, but only a 13 percentage point increase for Latino Republicans) but all Latino partisan groups shifted towards the Democratic Party in the years following Prop 187.

<sup>12</sup>These higher levels of support are also evident in gubernatorial elections. We have replicated the analysis shown in table 1 using gubernatorial vote choice data opposed to presidential vote data and the results are substantively similar, both in terms of the direction and magnitude.

linking all census blocks between decades, we observe striking growth in the number of Latino registrants and voters in the state as a whole. The Database shows that Latino registration statewide grew by half a million from 1992 to 1996, an almost 25 percent jump from 1.64 million to 2.16 million in 1996; by 2008, the total number of registered Latinos reached 3.66 million. These increases are reflected in turnout, with the sharpest increase observed between 1992 when Latinos cast 11.1 percent of the ballots in California and 1996 when they cast 13.9 percent. Given all of the moving pieces and data issues, calculating a turnout effect similar to the change in voting behavior is problematic (see below). Nonetheless, as Figure 3 makes clear, Latinos have been a rising force in California politics in subsequent elections.

*Figure 3 here*

#### **Section 4: Projecting the Future of Arizona Politics**

Having discussed political and demographic trends in Arizona and examined the political effect of Proposition 187 in California, we now turn to extending these findings to Arizona by forecasting future presidential results in that state. We cannot, of course, determine categorically which party will prevail in any given election. Rather, we assume that the evolving demographic make-up of the electorate and the implied partisan leanings of important subgroups combine to give one side a more or less pronounced advantage. This is exactly how analysts routinely think of presidential elections, using past election results to create the expectation, for instance, that California is a Democratic state, Texas a Republican one, and Iowa a toss-up.

Our approach is more explicit and transparent, focusing on four moving parts: 1) the Democratic voting patterns of white Arizonans, 2) the Democratic voting patterns of Latino Arizonans, 3) Latinos' share of the Arizona voting-eligible population, and 4) Latino turnout in Arizona. We use these components to generate a series of Monte Carlo simulations to assess three distinct scenarios. The first assumes continued demographic shifts with no behavioral changes among whites or Latinos using the 2008 election as the baseline for both groups. The second combines demographic shifts with an increase in Latino Democratic support and turnout consistent with the effects observed in California. Finally, the third combines

demographic shifts with changes in the political behavior of Latino voters and white voters, but this time using the 2012 election as the starting point. We summarize each of these scenarios and the underlying empirical assumptions about demographic and group voting behavior in Table 2.

*Table 2 Here*

Monte Carlo simulations are an ideal tool for assessing the Democrats' probability of carrying Arizona in each of these scenarios (projected out to the 2032 election). A Monte Carlo simulation randomly generates multiple samples of data from a defined population with an assumed data generating process (Carsey and Harden 2014, 4). In our simulations, the defined population is the voters in the electorate. We allow the ratio of groups in the population to change in order to simulate the effects of future demographic changes and introduce parameters to shape each group's political behavior. In all cases, we assume appropriate levels of error in both demographic changes and political behavior. We use these assumptions to generate 10,000 simulated elections per election cycle, drawing conclusions based on the patterns that emerge across the entire sample.<sup>13</sup> The key metric is the percentage of those simulations won by each party, or each side's probability of winning Arizona in a given year under a given scenario (see also Silver 2012).<sup>14</sup>

We begin by assessing how the future of Arizona politics will be affected by future demographic changes alone. To do this, we hold Latino and non-Latino support for the Democratic presidential candidate at 2008 levels (prior to SB 1070's passage) and assume that Latino and white turnout rates will remain at 2008 levels (where eligible Latinos were 83

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<sup>13</sup> Our simulations, depicted in Figures 5 through 7, introduce random noise (using STATA's `rnormal()` routine) roughly equivalent to the uncertainty of our estimates from the California experience and to the uncertainty of our 2008 vote estimates and our demographic projections for Arizona. This allows us to entertain extreme scenarios across demographic, turnout, and preference change (both high and low) commensurate with their chance of occurring.

<sup>14</sup> We assume that white and non-white voting behavior is characterized by a mean level of support for the Democratic candidate (which we derive from exit poll results in past elections) and some variance which we use to account for the stochastic process that drives party performance at any given place and time (such as good or bad economic times, a particularly compelling candidate, or the relative quality and intensity of the campaigns being waged). The precise method can be found in the STATA code provided in Appendix A.

percent as likely to vote as eligible non-Latinos).<sup>15</sup> Figure 5 shows the impact of this demographic change alone in a series of histograms. One advantage of this approach is that it allows us to calculate the probability of a Democratic victory directly using the number of scenarios in which their vote exceeds 50 percent. As expected, increasing the share of a constituency that leans Democratic improves the party's prospects in the state—as seen in the slow shift of the Democratic vote along the X-axis from one election to the next. Nonetheless, Figure 5 clearly shows the limited impact of this demographic change by itself, without factoring in any changes in behavior. We calculate the Democrats had a 1.7 percent chance of winning the state in 2012 and will have just a 5.9 percent chance in 2032 if Latino and non-Latino voting behavior and turnout continue to follow the same pattern as in 2008.

*Figure 5 Here*

Thus, Latinos' increasing share of the voting-eligible population on its own poses little threat to Republican dominance of presidential elections in Arizona. However, what if demographic changes were accompanied by changes in political behavior consistent with those experienced by California following the passage of Proposition 187? To answer that, we augment the demographic model with two additional changes in Latino behavior:

- An immediate 14-point jump in support for the Democratic presidential candidate with a 95% confidence interval of +/- 5, which are based on the projections from Table 1, which analyzed changes in the voting behavior of Latinos in response to Prop 187.
- An immediate boost in Latinos' turnout from 83% as likely as whites to 88% ( $\pm 4$  percent, 95% confidence interval).<sup>16</sup>

Both effects come directly from analysis of California voting patterns. Indeed, both are relatively modest in the context of observed changes from 2008 to 2012.<sup>17</sup> VNS exit polls show

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<sup>15</sup> We introduce error ( $\pm 2$  percent, 95% CI) around this figure as well as to Latino and non-Latino voting behavior as described in Footnote 18.

<sup>16</sup> 88 percent is the mean estimate in these simulations. When we actually run the simulation, there is a 95% CI of  $\pm 4$  percentage points around this mean value. Thus, 95% of the scenarios depict Latinos voting at a rate between approx. 84 and 92 percent that of whites.

<sup>17</sup> According to VNS, Latinos constituted 16 percent of voters while constituting an estimated 19.3 percent of the population eligible to vote in 2008. In 2012, we estimate Latinos to have been 21.3 percent of Arizona's voting eligible population while estimates of Latino share of turnout in 2012 range from 19% to nearly 24%. While there is reason to suspect that the 19% estimate provided by media exit polls is on the low side (part of a long-term

an 18-point increase in support for Obama among Arizona’s Latinos, catapulting them from well below to somewhat above the national average of Democratic support. There is anecdotal evidence of a sizable surge in Latino registration and voting in Arizona for the 2012 election.<sup>18</sup>

Figure 6 depicts the vote for the Democratic presidential candidate in the wake of demographic and behavioral assumptions starting from the 2008 election. The combination of effects gives the Democratic candidate a solid 53 percent chance of carrying Arizona as early as 2016 with improved odds going forward for the foreseeable future. Of the two behavioral components, change in Democratic support and change in propensity to vote, the former is clearly most consequential. Even without the bump in turnout, the Democratic mean vote in the state would have risen to 48.9 percent in 2012 and slowly grows over the course of our simulations to 51 percent by 2032. Increased turnout alone of the sort seen in California, however, is much less important if Arizona Latinos remain only a marginally Democratic group.

*Figure 6 Here*

Of course, Obama did substantially worse in Arizona in 2012 than we would have projected, even though Latino support for his candidacy and turnout surged slightly beyond levels suggested by parallel developments in California. The reason for this is that, unlike what occurred in California after its experience with Prop 187, Arizona’s white population moved strongly against the Democratic candidate from 2008 to 2012 in the wake of SB 1070—falling from 40 percent to 32 percent. If that level of white support represents a new baseline expectation for Democratic candidates, their hopes of winning Arizona even by 2032 essentially vanish. That is, repeating the analysis of Figure 6 using 32 percent Democratic support among whites rather than 40 percent undoes any advantage the Democrats gain from their increased popularity and the greater turnout among Latinos. Table 3 lists the proportion of scenarios won by the future Democratic presidential candidates across all three scenarios.

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tendency to under-sample Latinos) we err on the conservative side in picking this baseline for the post-SB 1070 surge in mobilization.

<sup>18</sup> For instance, see Julie Pace (AP), September 25, 2012. “Obama’s campaign has momentum - and a big case of nerves.” [http://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2012/09/25/obama-campaign-has-momentum-\\_-and-a-case-of-nerves](http://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2012/09/25/obama-campaign-has-momentum-_-and-a-case-of-nerves)

*Figure 7 and Table 3 Here*

The obvious question is this: which level of support from white voters should the Democrats count on going forward, the 40 percent they garnered in 2008 or the 32 percent from 2012? The former has the advantage of hewing very closely to the longer-term average among this group: since 1992 the Democratic presidential candidate has won 42% (1992), 50% (1996), 40% (2000), 41% (2004) and 40% percent (2008) of the two-party white vote according to the VNS. In this context, the crash to just 32 percent in 2012 looks like a potential statistical outlier. On the other hand, if the steep decline in support for Obama was largely fueled by concerns over immigration, then there is potential for the GOP to hold onto these votes in future elections. As we discuss below, we are skeptical that immigration will remain a constantly salient issue among white voters; especially the loosely affiliated swing voters whom Republicans will need to maintain their margins, in the coming decades.

A more reasonable approach, we believe, is to treat 2012 results in Arizona as reflecting a combination of long- and short-term shocks, a sort of semi-deviating election. Obama lost two points of support nationwide from white voters from 2008 to 2012, part of the party's slow decline among whites since the 1960s. If we treat that loss as permanent, that leaves the remaining six points of the Democrats' deficit among white Arizonans as potentially reversible over time (potentially moving from the observed 32 percent in 2012 back towards 38 percent, which is closer to the historical average). This is inevitably arbitrary, but in our defense, it places Arizona within its historical position in the framework of national politics, where its white population tends to be 0-3 points lower than the nation in its support for Democratic candidates. We take roughly the same position for Latino voters; rather than the observed level of support for the Democrat in 2012 (74 percent), we assume that the state's Latinos will support the Democratic Party at a level commensurate with the national Latino average over the past two election cycles (68 percent).

In our final set of projections, we posit a scenario in Arizona where we project the state's partisan balance among white voters to settle at a level slightly above the 2012 level of Democratic support (38 percent, up from 32 percent in 2012) while Arizona Latinos are



projected to support the Democratic Party at the level of Latinos nationwide (roughly 68 percent over the past 2 election cycles).<sup>19</sup>

The remaining issue is how quickly the short-term disturbances of 2012 will lose relevance for whites and Latinos. In Figure 8, we depict an array of decay functions, allowing for whites and Latinos to revert to previously established patterns of voting behavior to occur at various speeds (25, 50, and 75 percent per election). We present the results of these simulations in *Table 4*, which contains the percent of the 10,000 Monte Carlo simulations won by the Democrats in each scenario. The results show, unsurprisingly, a slightly less positive future for the Democrats than did Figure 6, but still show Arizona being reasonably competitive by 2024 and increasingly favorable for the Democrats thereafter. In retrospect, the trade-off between the immediate political prospects of Governor Brewer and the legislators who passed SB 1070 and the future prospects of statewide Republican candidates hoping to continue the party's easy dominance of the statewide vote is clear. The only way in which Republicans maintain their hold on the state relies on a historically disproportionate share of white voters like they won in 2012. Even intermediate scenarios show the party losing ground given the perception of an attack aimed directly at the state's growing Latino population.

*Figure 8 Here*

*Table 4 Here*

## **5. The Future of Arizona Politics and its National Implications**

Beyond its relevance to current politics, there are several broader lessons to be drawn from this analysis. The first is that Latinos *may* respond politically to policies perceived as discriminatory by voting in greater numbers and penalizing the offending side with their ballots. The backlash against the GOP among Arizona's Latinos from 2008 to 2012 almost exactly

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<sup>19</sup> Given the unpopularity and salience of SB 1070 among Latinos, it is difficult to imagine Latinos returning to their 2008 levels of Republican support. Therefore, we have chosen the nationwide average level of Latino Democratic support as our reversion point—as Latinos in Arizona were roughly 4 points more Democratic than Latinos nationwide in 2012.

parallels the movement of California's Latinos from 1992 to 1996. This is important confirmation that earlier studies of California were correct in characterizing its Latino population as alienated by Republicans in the wake of Prop 187, an estrangement that has endured and helped shape California politics for the last twenty years.

While Latinos' reaction to SB 1070 may seem obvious in retrospect, it was by no means universally recognized at the time. Republican legislators in Arizona had passed versions of the bill in previous sessions without prompting a backlash. Many Arizona Democrats viewed the immigration issue as a loser for them—certain to appeal to whites while far less than certain to prompt a reaction among Latinos. These doubts about Latinos were deepened by the perception that they had not turned out heavily against Gov. Brewer in the 2010 election. This delayed reaction is consistent with the experience in California where the surge in Latino voting and support for Democrats occurred several years *after* Prop 187 passed. Clearly, registering and turning out first-time voters, both the newly eligible and adults with no prior experience casting a ballot, is a process that takes time and effort.

Where Arizona circa 2012 and California circa 1996 diverge, however, is in the behavior of white voters. Whites in California voted for Bill Clinton at about the same clip in 1992 and 1996 (43 and 46 percent of the two-party vote), while whites' support for Barack Obama fell ten percentage points between 2008 and 2012. Of course, Clinton ran for reelection amid high levels of economic satisfaction, and Obama amid low ones. The disparity in economic circumstances certainly helps explain Clinton's increase in support among whites nationally (from 39 to 43% of the two-party vote) and Obama's decline (from 43 to 39%). But Arizona was among the states where Obama's support among whites dropped most. His association with the immigration issue may have cost him support among whites even as he gained with Latinos. Thus, in some ways the political implications of Arizona's immigration battle are a microcosm of national-level politics. A steadily increasing proportion of Democratic Party's coalition has been composed of ethnic and racial minorities. In the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, nearly half of the Democratic Party's votes came from non-whites. The Democratic Party's increasing reliance on the votes of ethnic and racial minorities has coincided with the steady erosion of

white support for the Democratic Party. Obama managed to capture only 39 percent of the white vote in 2012 and performed only marginally better in 2008. While some of Obama's struggle among whites can be attributed to racial resentment (Piston 2010), white support for Democratic candidates had been declining well before Barack Obama emerged on the national political scene. The Democratic Party's struggle to build a pan-ethnic coalition in Arizona highlights the Democratic Party's national-level challenge of substantively representing ethnic and racial minorities while managing to attract a sufficient number of white voters.

The question, both in Arizona as well as nationally, is whether these recent gains and losses are sustainable in the near and far term. The history from California suggests that Latinos' movement toward the Democrats is likely to persist, with whites likely to return to their previous voting patterns. Time will tell whether Arizona follows the same pattern, but there is ample reason to expect so. Most important is the age and political experience of each group. The huge influx of young people coming of age, coupled with the relatively low participation rates of adult citizens, means that a large percentage of Latino voters are entering the electorate by voting for Democrats (or against Republicans). It is well established that initial experiences loom large in influencing voters' subsequent views and behavior (Jennings and Markus 1984; Ramakrishnan 2001).

On the other hand, the vast majority of white residents in Arizona are adults, usually with many years of voting behind them. It is far more likely that 2012 was a "deviating election" (Campbell *et al.* 1960) from which these experienced voters will return to their previous allegiances than a "critical election" (Key 1955) triggering a lasting change in behavior. In Arizona, as in other states, young whites were far more supportive of Obama than were older whites. The entrance of new white voters into the electorate did not cause the precipitous decline in Democratic support from 2008 to 2012 (although it is plausible that white retirees who moved to the state between 2008 and 2012 were overwhelmingly Republican).

Even if concerns about immigration did drive whites to abandon Obama in 2012, it is by no means clear that those concerns will remain salient into the future. Immigration is an issue closely linked to the state of the economy (e.g. Citrin, Green, Muste, and Wong 1997; Hopkins

2010). If and when the economy recovers fully, immigration is likely to recede in importance to whites, even in a state like Arizona with such a large Latino population. This is exactly what Republicans in California discovered in the 1990s when they continued to support ballot initiatives containing new restrictions on undocumented migrants in subsequent elections in an effort to gin up white support.

Our analysis shows how important the persistence of 2012's level of white support is to Republican prospects in Arizona. The political transformation of the state's Latino community from slightly too strongly Democratic, coupled with increased participation and population growth, poses a severe threat to Republican dominance. Republicans' best chance—perhaps their only chance—to maintain their long string of victories lies with continuing to win a huge percentage of white voters.<sup>20</sup> If the party's presidential candidates can carry 65% or more of white voters, Republicans are likely to win each election for the next two decades no matter their losses among Latinos. As that margin recedes toward 60%, their odds of winning decline quickly. Thus, SB 1070 lays the foundation for continuing polarization in the Arizona electorate, for the more polarized are the white and Latino electorates, the better Republicans' chances.

These lessons are especially important given the popularity of Arizona's law in other states. Immediately after its passage, Republican legislators in eight other states passed their own versions of the "show-your-papers" law.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, in the period between Prop 187 and SB 1070, other state legislatures passed an array of bills that were characterized as discriminating against Latinos. None of these measures garnered the publicity of Prop 187 and SB 1070, and none appeared to prompt such a strong political reaction from Latinos. One explanation is that none of these measures were as noxious to Latinos or as well-known as the

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<sup>20</sup> We note that many Republicans in the state have tried to undo some of this damage. Voters in Sen. Russell Pierce's overwhelmingly Republican district recalled SB 1070's author and replaced him with another Republican amid a series of accusations of Pierce's arguably racist associations. It was a stunning fall from grace for Pierce, who was also Majority Leader of the State Senate. Other Republicans, including U.S. Senators McCain and Flake, have come out in favor of immigration reform partially in an effort to win back some Latino voters. Unfortunately for them, other Republicans have not fallen in line behind them. The experience of California suggests that the SB 1070 will remain an ongoing grievance for Latinos, a deeply shocking incident, no matter what comes next.

<sup>21</sup> The state legislature in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Utah all passed similar bills in the last several bills. Source: National Council of State Legislatures. (2013). *Immigration Enactments Database*. Retrieved February, 2014, from <http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?TabId=19209>

laws in California and Arizona. Another is that none of these laws came in states where more than 15% of the population was Latino (Zingher, 2014). For instance, the states mimicking SB 1070 included Alabama (1.21% Latino CVAP), Oklahoma (3.21), South Carolina (1.51), Georgia (2.34) and Indiana (2.39). Perhaps further examination will show a surge in Latino turnout and support for Democrats in those states. If it does not, we suspect that the small size of their Latino populations may have discouraged efforts by Latino groups and political campaigns to mobilize them. This missing ingredient is important, for we know from California and Arizona that mobilization does not occur instantly or easily.

Thus, Arizona's Republicans appear to have created a dilemma for themselves similar to, but more immediate than, the one facing the problem facing the party nationwide. Championing SB 1070 has firmly branded the party as unacceptable for a fair number of Latinos in the state. They can survive Latinos' hostility only by doing far better with white voters than they have managed in five of the last six presidential elections. Given their immediate prospects (in the wake of 1070) and the sincere preferences of many Republican leaders and voters in the state, we suspect that they will double down on their bet on white voters. Thus, it seems to serve the party's interest to do its best to create a polarized electorate. However skeptical we are that this will succeed in prolonging the GOP's political dominance or not, it is clear that SB 1070 will have a lasting impact on Arizona's politics, just as Prop 187 had more than a decade ago in California. Divisive immigration politics, at least in states with a substantial number of immigrants, can be quite perilous to those who practice them.

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Table 1: Estimated Probability of California Latinos Voting for the Democratic Presidential Candidates from 1992-2006 (Data from California Field Poll)

<i>Model 1: Presidential Vote</i>	
Ideology (7 Point)	0.45*** (0.02)
Registered Democrat	2.42*** (0.05)
Registered Independent	0.96*** (0.07)
Female	0.09* (0.05)
Age	0.0006 (0.0004)
Latino	0.08 (0.14)
Black	1.18*** (0.12)
Asian	0.4*** (0.11)
1996	0.23*** (0.07)
2000	0.03 (0.07)
2004	0.19** (0.07)
Latino*1996	0.49*** (0.18)
Latino*2000	0.69*** (0.19)
Latino*2004	0.5** (0.2)
Income Quintile	-0.037** (0.02)
Education Quartile	0.04 (0.03)
Constant	-3.31*** (0.14)
Observations	13,196

Standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1



Table 2: Simulations—Three Different Scenarios

<i>Scenario</i>	<i>Assumptions</i>
1.) Demographic Change Only	Non-Latino and Latino partisan splits will remain at 2008 levels in every election (59% and 44% respectively). Latinos are projected to make up 18% of the electorate in 2012 and two-additional percentage points in every subsequent election (20, 22, and so on).
2.) Demographic Change and Shift in Latino Partisan Vote Split to 2012 levels	Non-Latino’s vote split will remain at the 2008 level (44%) while the Latino vote split will remain at 2012 level (74%). Latinos are projected to make up 18% of the electorate in 2012 and two-additional percentage points in every subsequent election
3.) Racial Polarization	Non-Latino and Latino partisan splits will remain at 2012 levels in every election (74% and 36% respectively). Latinos are projected to make up 18% of the electorate in 2012 and two-additional percentage points in every subsequent election.

*Table 3: The Proportion of Simulated Elections Won by the Democrats Under Three Different Scenarios*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Demographics Only (From Figure 5)</i>	<i>Demographics + Preferences (From Figure 6)</i>	<i>Racial Polarization (From Figure 7)</i>
2012	0	.256	0
2016	.001	.501	0
2020	.011	.702	0
2024	.035	.842	.0004
2028	.073	.912	.003
2032	.125	.952	.021

Table 4: Percentage of Simulations Won by the Democratic Candidate

<i>Reversion Speed</i>	2012	2016	2020	2024	2028	2032
.25	0	0	.001	.34	4.48	16.48
.5	0	0	.29	5.03	18.19	33.72
.75	0	0	2.19	10.23	23.55	37.46

Figure 1: Predicted Probability of Identifying as a Republican or as a Democrat – From Bowler, Nicholson and Segura 2006

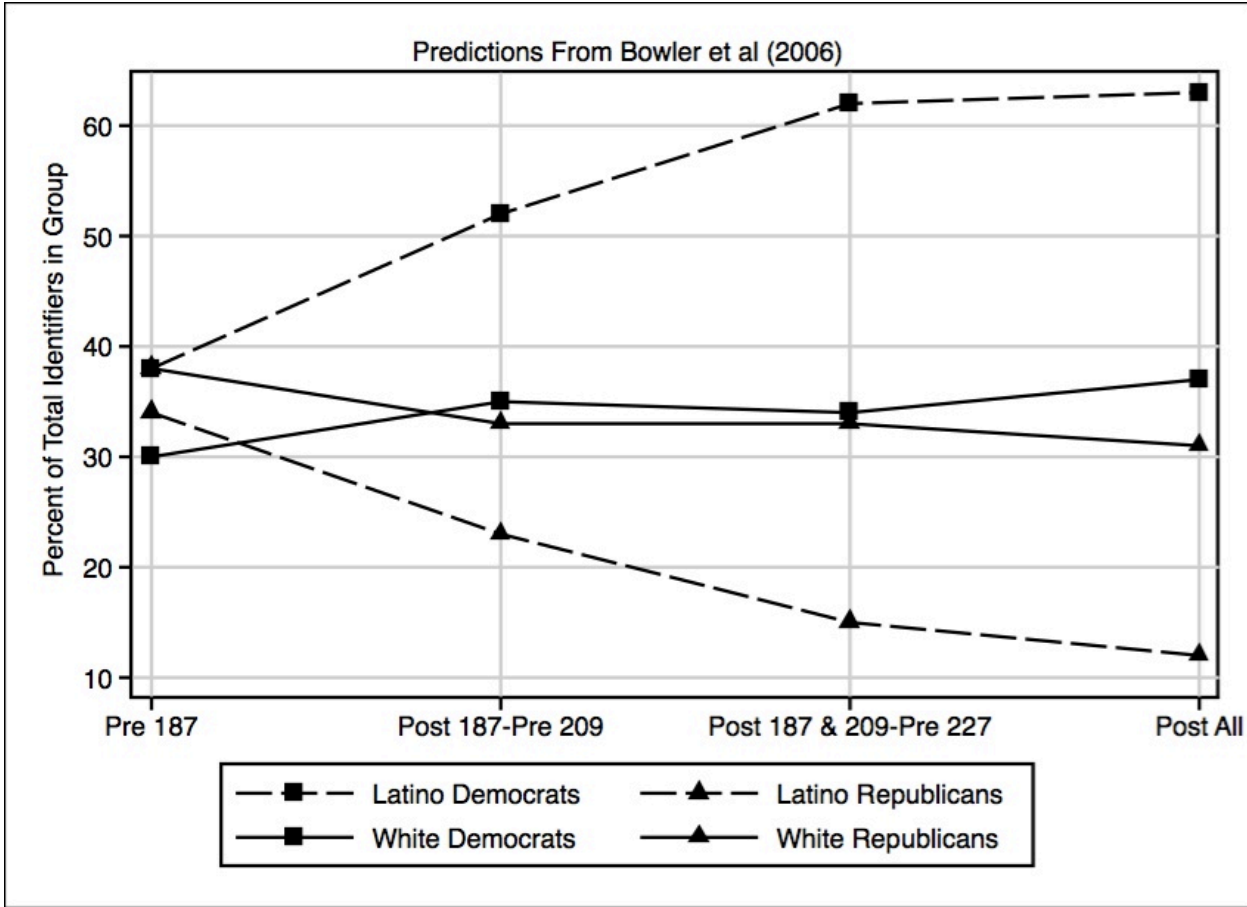


Figure 2: Predicted Latino Democratic Vote in California  
(The graph was generated using the Clarify STATA package and the Coefficients from the logit model in Table 1)

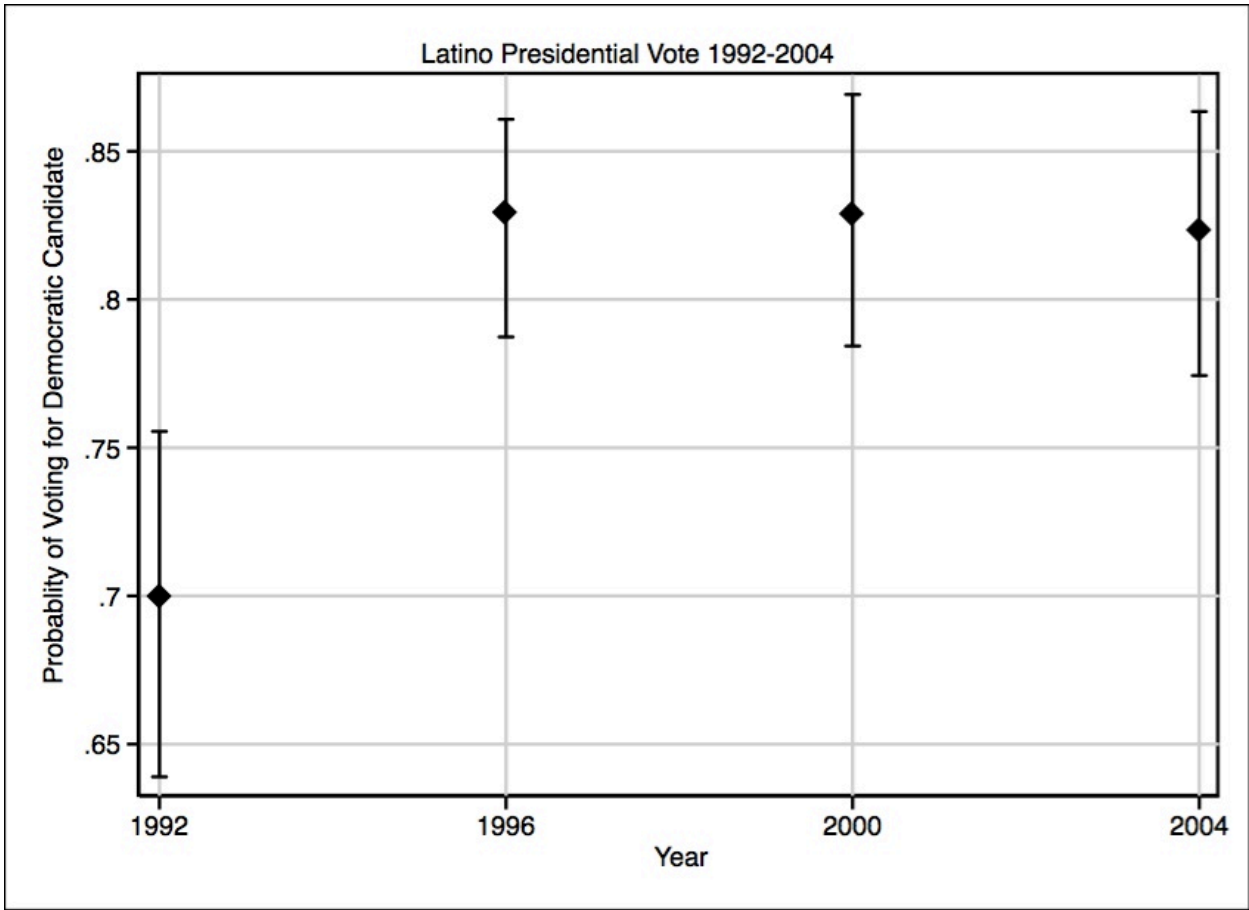


Figure 3: Total Number of Latino Registered Voters in California 1992-2010

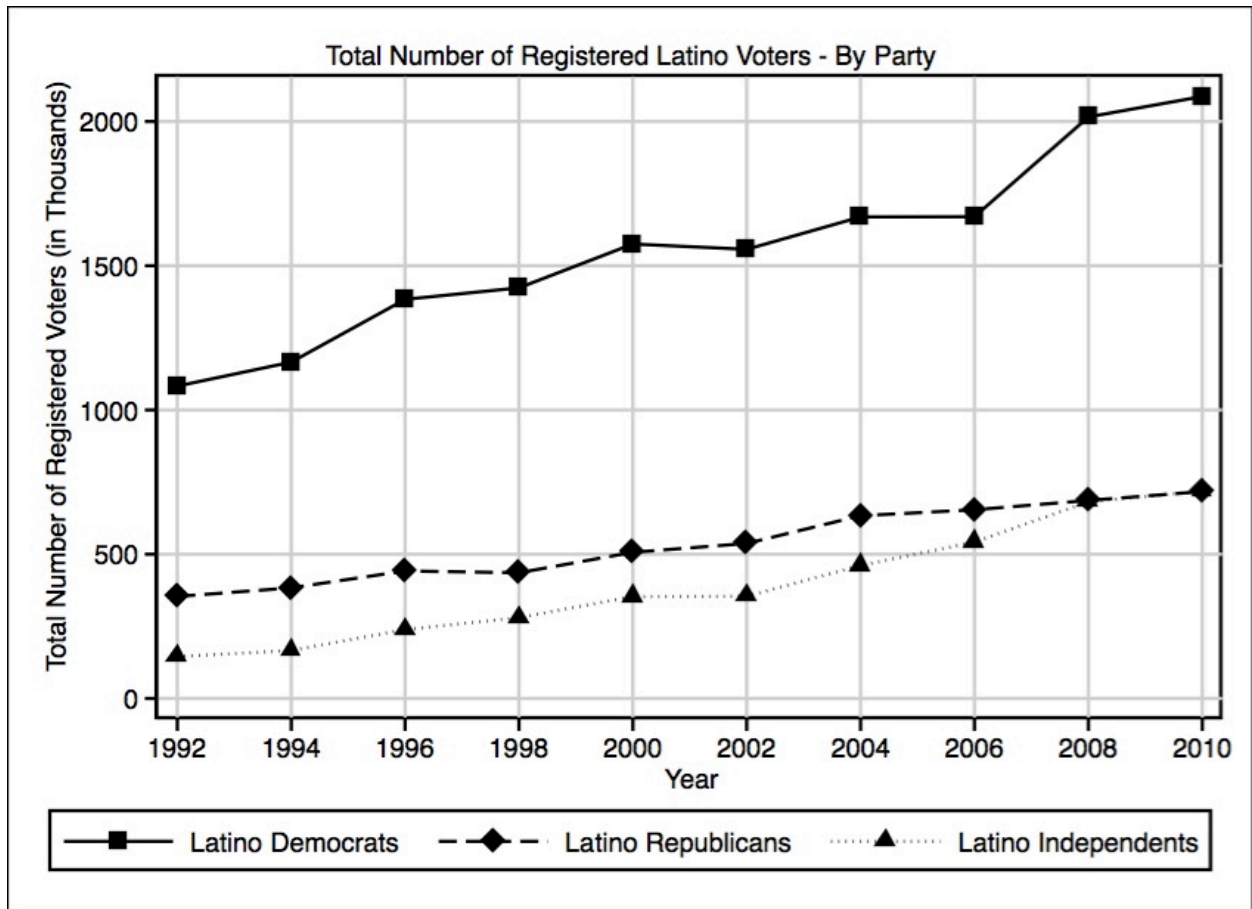


Figure 4: California and Arizona Latino Two Party Vote

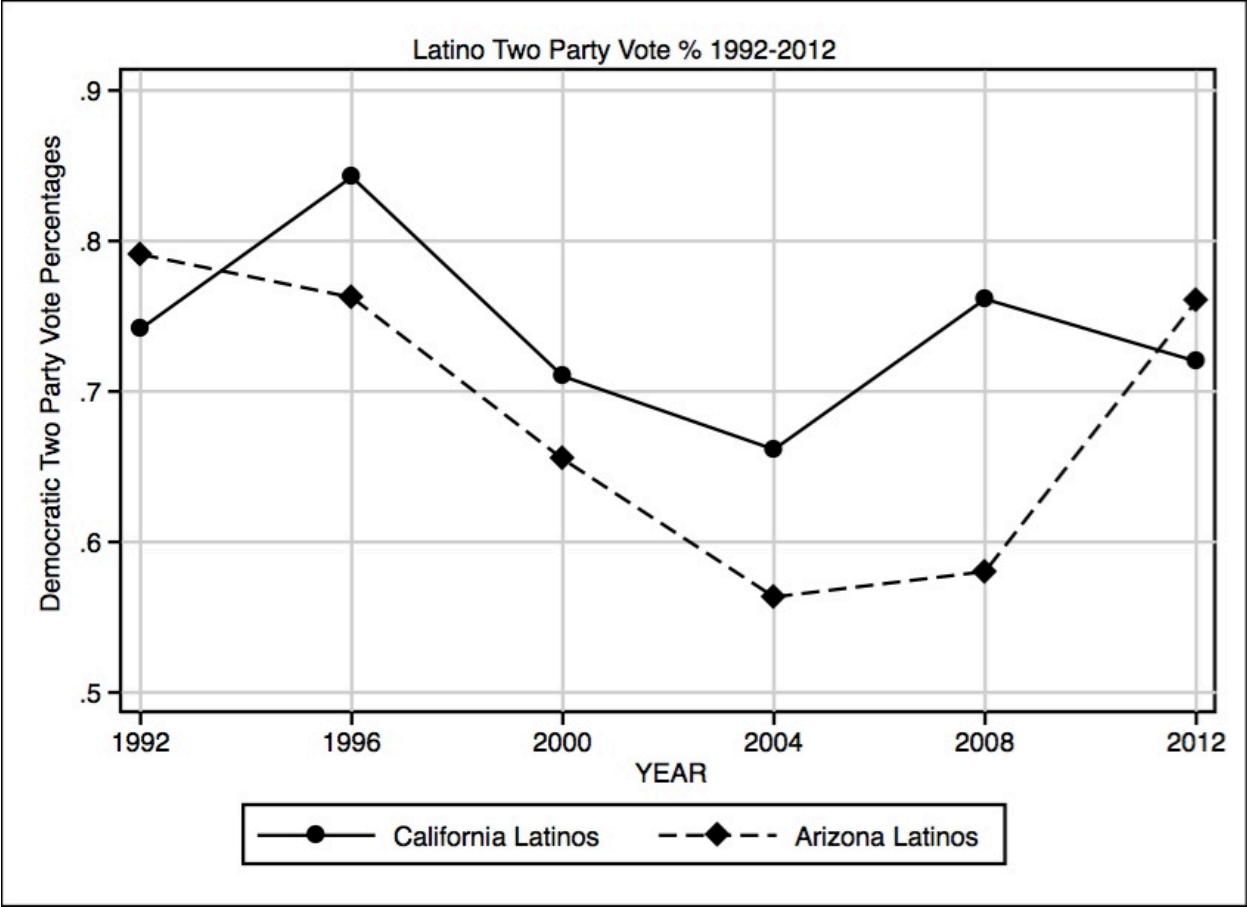


Figure 5: Simulating Demographic Change Assuming No Change in Each Group's Partisan Split

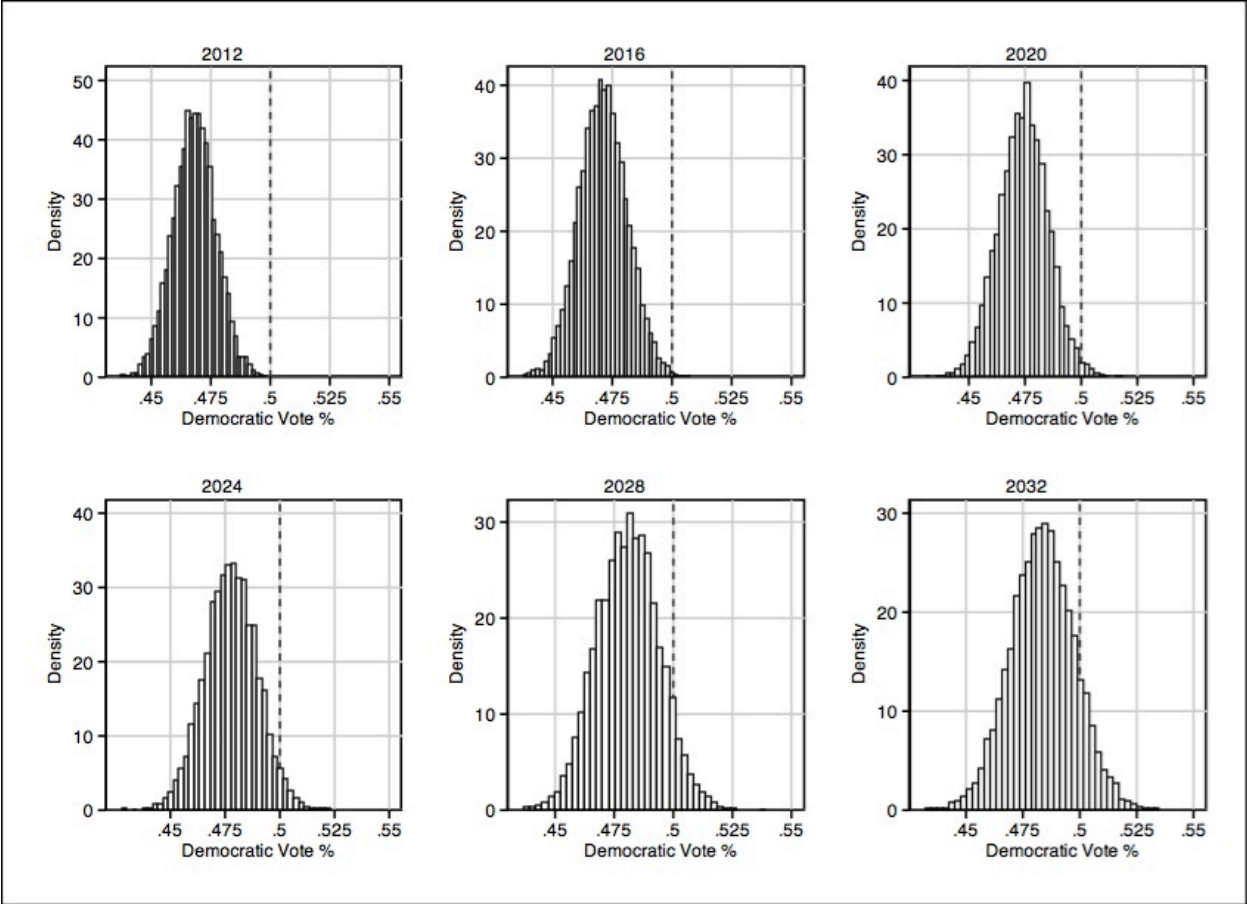




Figure 6: Simulating Demographic Change Combined with a Change of Latino's Partisan Split in Favor of the Democratic Party

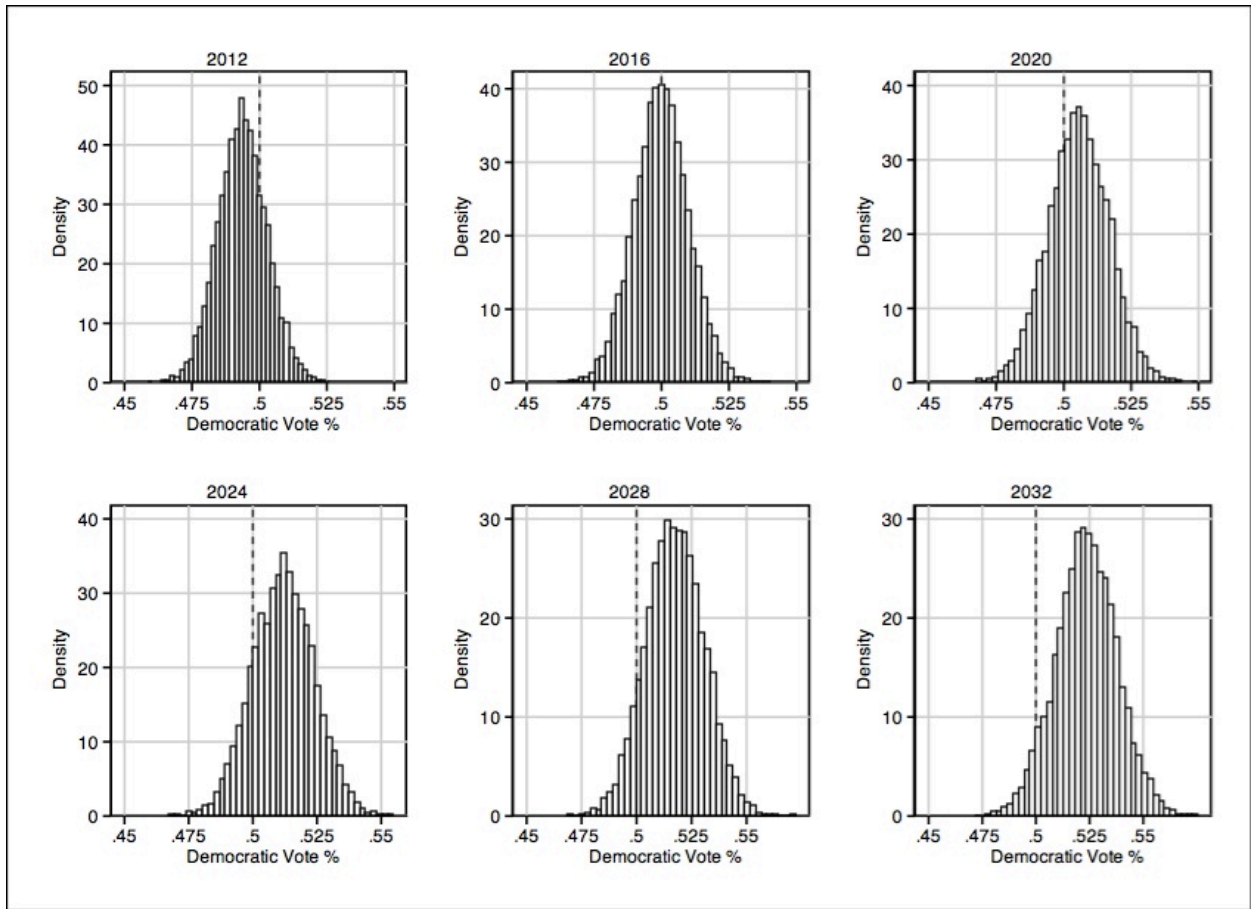


Figure 7: Simulating Future Election Outcomes Assuming the Continuance of the 2012 Level of White-Latino Polarization

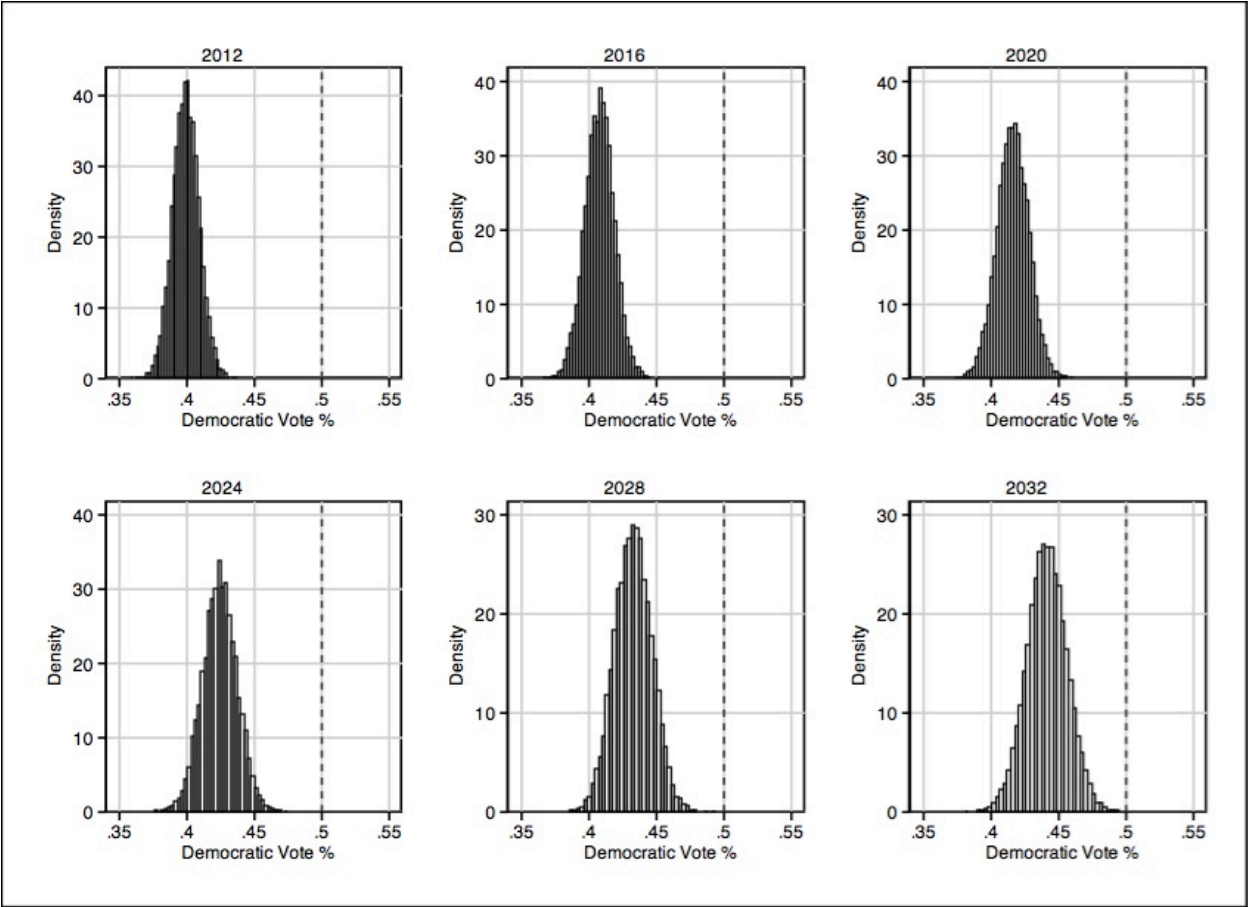


Figure 8: Simulating the Likelihood of a Democratic Victory Assuming a Regression Back to Pre-SB 1070 Group Partisan Splits

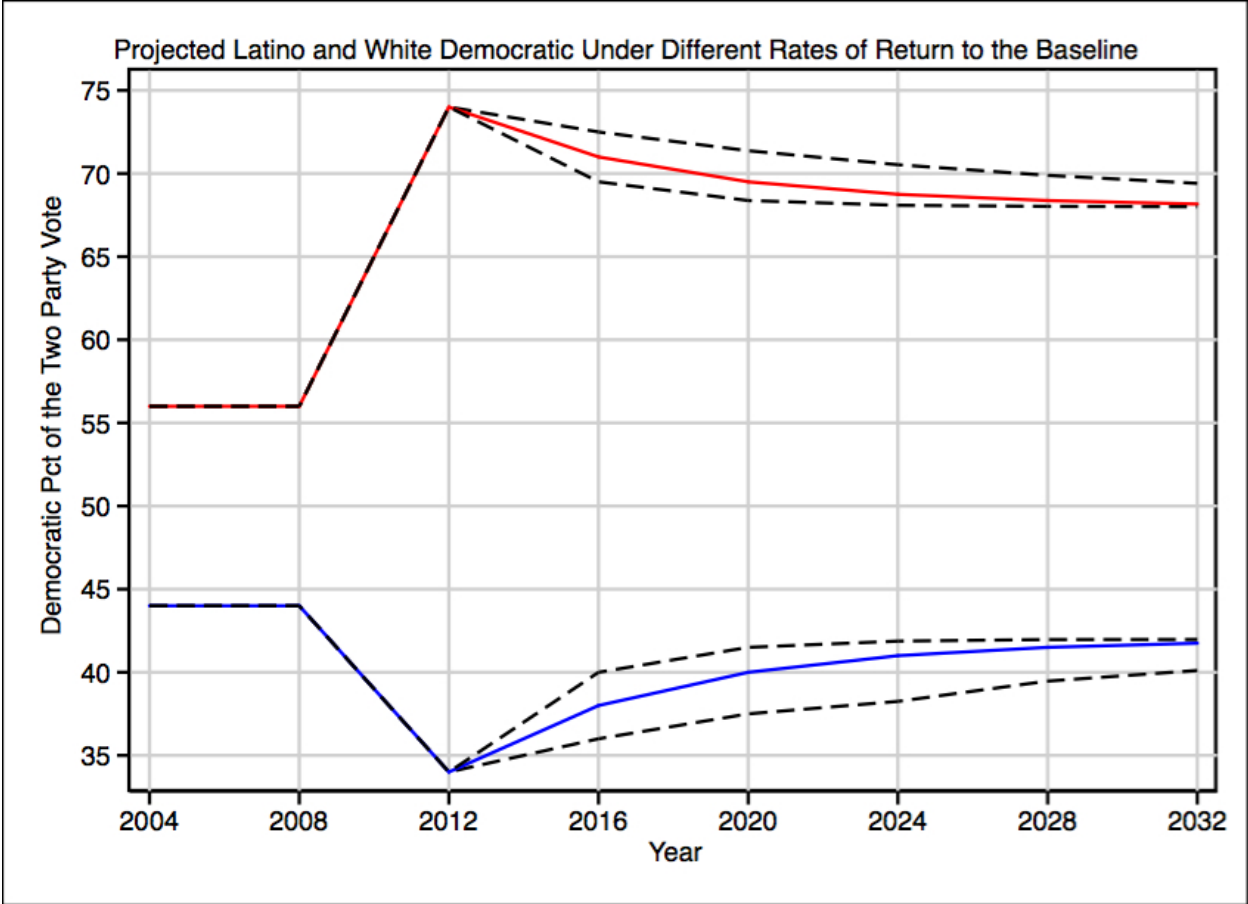


Figure Note: The red line represents the projected Latino Democratic vote share while the blue line represents the projected non-Latino Democratic (assuming whites revert to 38 percent Democratic and all other non-Latino groups, primarily African Americans, support the Democrats at a rate of 80 percent) vote share assuming each group’s voting patterns return to the estimated baseline at a rate of 50 percent per election cycle. The dashed black lines represent rates of return of 75 and 25 percent per election cycle respectively.