

America's Changing Political

Geography

Welcome to the ideopolis. These fast growing metropolitan areas with postindustrial economies are the breeding ground for a new Democratic majority.

Where Democrats Can Build a Majority...

|| by **John B. Judis** and **Ruy Teixeira**

■ AFTER THE 2000 ELECTION, political commentators began referring to the Democrats as the “blues” and the Republicans as the “reds”—terms corresponding to the colors used on electoral maps to denote which states each party’s presidential ticket carried. So the question of America’s political future has become: Who will dominate, the blues or the reds?

The Republicans think it’ll be the reds. They look at the 2000 electoral map and see good things. For one thing, there’s more red than blue, reflecting the fact that Republican states tend to be physically larger. More important, they figure that if they just hold the states they carried in 2000—which basically means the Solid South, the Mountain States, the Border States, and the more conservative

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...But Only With the Right Agenda

|| by **Mark J. Penn**

■ AMERICA IS UNDERGOING profound lifestyle and demographic changes—the kind that materially affect voters’ outlook and potentially the nation’s political alignment. These changes represent an opportunity for Democrats, but not a fixed destiny. As the electorate changes, the party that does not change accordingly will fail to connect with the most dynamic elements in the electorate.

As John Judis and Ruy Teixeira show in their optimistically titled book, *The Emerging Democratic Majority*, Democrats made great gains in dynamic elements of the electorate during the 1990s, most notably in upscale suburban families and Hispanics. But these gains are already in danger of receding. Republicans are making substantial inroads among Hispanic voters by appealing to their strong entre

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preneurial spirit. And while Democrats were successful during the 1990s at increasing their appeal among suburban women, their appeal among suburban men is notably weaker and shows signs of becoming weaker still.

Moreover, by looking only at voting trends rather than at party identification, Judis and Teixeira inherently overstate the durability of Democratic gains. The overriding reality of politics today is that Americans are increasingly not members of any party. Self-described Independents are 37 percent

turing a much larger percentage of suburban men—all in a politically sensitive context of changing issue priorities, ever-greater voter independence, and aggressive competition from Republicans.

The key to the development of this successful message and policy agenda is to understand the two big cross-cutting changes under way in American society—and their political implications. The first is the country's growing diversity, which is generating a equally impressive growth in social tolerance; the second is the dramatic spread of higher education and affluence.

Rapidly increasing national diversity

Today, 51 percent of Americans say they feel that homosexuality should be considered an acceptable alternative lifestyle. This is a dramatic increase from 34 percent in 1977. Similarly, while 56 percent of Americans in 1977 said that homosexuals should have equal rights in terms of job opportunities (33 percent opposed), by 2002 the number had risen to 86 percent (11 percent opposed). And it's no accident that the religious right is rapidly declining in political importance. Increasingly, Americans are gravitating toward leaders who unite Americans—not toward those who divide them along demographic or cultural lines.

The second big trend is the spread of higher education and affluence and a corresponding increase in voters who demand a government that is focused on creating private-sector economic opportunity.

In the past two decades alone, there has been a dramatic rise in college entrance and graduation, which in turn produces higher income. In 1980, 33 percent of all Americans had a complete college education, and 61 percent had at least some college. By 2000, 42 percent had a full college education and three-fourths (74 percent) of Americans had at least some college.

These changes correspond with an increase in affluence in America and a rise in stock ownership. The median income for a family of four has risen from \$41,451 in 1990 to \$62,228 in the year 2000. In our polling more people now say they own stock than have a full-time job—66 percent own stock while 53 percent have a full-time job. Most Americans now have a personal stake in the success of the stock market and in the growth of the U.S. economy.

Americans no longer believe government is the answer to their problems. In December 2001, 54 percent said their thinking about the proper role of government is that "government should help people equip themselves to solve their own problems," while 23 percent said that government should stay out of people's lives so they can solve their problems

Q. Now I am going to read a list of issues. For each, please tell me who you trust to handle that issue, Republicans in Congress or Democrats in Congress. (Dem/GOP) All

	ALL	DEM MARGIN	OFFICE PARK DADS
Making corporate executives play by the rules	54/28	+26	+8
Preparing all Americans for the new economy	45/35	+10	+22
Getting the economy growing again	38/46	-12	-17
Maintaining fiscal discipline	40/43	-3	-5

of the American electorate and these voters, not the party faithful, decide who wins America's elections. Between 1950 and 2001, Democratic Party identification fell from 47 percent to 38 percent, while the number of self-described Independents rose from 25 percent to 37 percent (Republican identification has been more stable—it was 28 percent in 1950 and 26 percent in 2001). With "no party" becoming the plurality party, Democrats must earn a majority in each election and can only build a majority by gaining voter loyalty among emerging segments of the electorate over time.

For Democrats to build a true majority coalition, they must develop a message and policy agenda that consolidates earlier gains among suburban women and minority voters while cap-

is driven by immigration and birth rates. Between the 1990 and 2000 census, the African-American portion of the population remained steady at just over 12 percent of all Americans while the Hispanic population grew from 9 percent to 12.5 percent. By 2050, the Hispanic population is expected to reach 24 percent of all Americans and by that year the Census Bureau estimates that Asian-Americans, who were 3.6 percent of Americans in the 2000 census, will represent 9 percent of all Americans.

With the rise in diversity has come a rise in tolerance. Seven in 10 Americans (70 percent) believe there should be harsher penalties for "crimes motivated by hate of certain groups," while just 25 percent oppose such as law.

and 20 percent said the proper role is to “solve problems and protect people from adversity.”

Even Hispanic and African-American voters strongly support an opportunity-oriented approach to solving problems. Among African-Americans, 50 percent said the proper role of government is to help people to solve their own problems. Only 27 percent said they believe the government should solve problems, while 23 percent said that government should stay out of people’s lives. In a recent survey of Hispanic voters, 39 percent preferred opportunity-oriented solutions while 36 percent preferred government-based solutions.

Democrats have won steadily increasing support from voters primarily motivated by the first big trend—diversity and tolerance. But they have been losing support since 2000 among voters primarily concerned with economic opportunity. While Democrats are seen as the party better equipped to make corporate executives play by the rules, Republicans still receive equal if not higher performance ratings—especially from swing voters—than do Democrats on the issue of getting the economy growing again. This is especially true of the large voter category we call “office park dads”—suburban men between the ages of 25-64—who are otherwise attracted to the Democratic message of cultural tolerance.

Office park dads are not the down-scale conservative men that unions have been pursuing. They are socially tolerant but entrepreneurially-minded and oriented to economic opportunity. On social tolerance, 58 percent of office park dads in a recent survey said they are either strictly pro-choice (36 percent) or pro-choice but opposed to “the partial birth procedure” (22 percent). In the same survey, 51 percent of rural men consider themselves strictly pro-life.

Office park dads currently prefer

the Republicans to the Democrats in a generic test of congressional strength by 42 percent to 31 percent, even while suburban women support Democrats by 46 percent to 29 percent. Rural middle-aged men prefer Republicans to Democrats by an even higher margin—42 percent to 26 percent. Despite their current Republican preference, these voters can be won by Democrats with the right message.

Democrats made inroads in the 1990s with suburban women by developing an agenda that spoke to their socially moderate inclinations on issues such as abortion and spoke to the challenges these voters face in their daily lives. President Clinton offered a series of policies that appealed to women who were struggling to take time off of work for a health emergency or parent-teacher conference, shield children from unwanted media influences while working a second job, and protect

66 The two big **crosscutting changes** in American society are the country’s growing diversity and the **dramatic spread** of higher **education** and affluence.

children from school and gun violence. As a result, suburban women moved from an initially unfavorable (lukewarm) voter group into a reliable Democratic support group.

What To Do. To keep their current levels of support among suburban women and success-oriented Hispanics while winning a majority of office park dads, Democrats need to move beyond their traditional safety net agenda to offer voters an opportunity agenda. It should express an understanding of the changes taking place in America and stress the need for growth and fiscal discipline to expand opportunity. While voters demand accountability from corporate America, in the long run the Democrats’ challenge is to make sure voters understand that their priority is to stand on the side of families, not to stand against the businesses that

employ them.

This pro-growth, pro-fiscal-discipline message is especially critical during the current tax debate in Washington and around the country. Voters generally are much more likely to fear that Democrats want to raise taxes than that Republicans want to slash funding for popular social programs.

In a recent national survey we read voters a series of statements to see which one represents the most compelling portrait of the Democratic Party (see chart, page 28). In overall terms, the profile that most successfully appeals to the American electorate is one that stresses that Democrats “understand the future” and that in a rapidly changing world, Democrats offer new approaches to the problems we face. This message was the only one tested that had strong overall appeal and that appealed to both suburban and rural

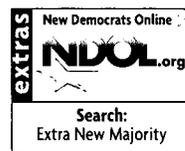
men. After hearing that message, suburban men said they favored that type of Democratic congressional candidate 52 percent to 36 percent over Republicans.

Alternately, a more “populist” message may take advantage of corporate misconduct, but it also focuses on a negative view of the U.S. economy rather than a positive agenda for growth and opportunity. It identifies with the needs of those who consider themselves victims of the economy,

not people who count themselves among its beneficiaries.

A populist message—or even a “kitchen table” message that promotes specific economic proposals rather than a broad agenda for opportunity—has strong appeal among voters who believe the economy is headed in the wrong direction and among rural middle-aged men. But it does not appeal to voters

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Midwestern states—their electoral vote margin of four (271-267) will go up to 18 (278-260), due to reapportionment. Then, for a safety margin, all they have to do is pick off a few of the states they lost by less than 5 percent—Oregon, New Mexico, Iowa, Wisconsin, Washington, Minnesota, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Maine—and they're home free.

That was Bush political guru Karl Rove's essential message in his now infamous lost-and-accidentally-found PowerPoint presentation to a group of California Republicans this past June. Stick with us, allow us to do a little judicious pandering to workers in states like Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, and the GOP's Reagan coalition—albeit a bit slimmed down—will rise again. And, he might have added, we don't even need California, that current bastion of blue America; we can build our red America without it.

Republicans don't just rest their case on reapportionment. They think that below the state level, the trends favor the GOP. They argue that the pattern of growth within states favors the Republicans since formerly rural counties on the fringes of metropolitan areas are growing the fastest and these counties lean strongly Republican. Political analyst Michael Barone called these fringe areas "edge counties" in his influential "49 percent nation" article in *The Almanac of American Politics 2002*. David Brooks referred to these "fast-growing suburbs mostly in the South and West" as "sprinkler cities" in his recent cover article in *The Weekly Standard*, "Patio Man and the Sprawl People," but his argument is basically the same as Barone's: Demographic trends favor the Republicans.

Fortunately for the Democrats, these arguments don't hold up to scrutiny. The Solid South is unlikely to remain solid; some of the mountain and Midwestern states that are red are likely

to go blue; and the blue states that Al Gore carried by small margins in 2000 are likely to get harder, not easier, for the Republicans to pick off. Moreover, and crucially, growth trends *within* states favor the Democrats, not the Republicans.

As we argue in our new book, *The Emerging Democratic Majority*, the reason for these trends is the emergence of a new American political geography—a geography intimately linked to the spread of a postindustrial economy. Rove, Barone, and Brooks are missing the contours of this new geography as they attempt to resuscitate a California-less Reagan coalition. They're living in the past; they don't see that the same changes that have moved California into the Democratic column over the last decade are moving most of the rest of the country in the same direction. Here's how:

Democrats have been gaining strength in areas where the production of ideas and services has either redefined or replaced an economy dependent on manufacturing, agriculture, and resource extraction. Many of these areas are in the North and West, but they are also in states like Florida and Virginia. Republicans are strongest in areas where the transition to postindustrial society has lagged. Many of these are in the Deep South and Prairie States. As

Democratic politics has evolved over the last decade, it has increasingly reflected the socially liberal, fiscally moderate priorities of these new areas—what we call a politics of progressive centrism. Republicans have continued to espouse an anti-government credo closely identified with business and the religious right—a politics that plays well in parts of the Deep South but not in a new postindustrial America.

This new postindustrial politics is not defined by states but by metropolitan regions within states. These postindustrial metropolises, which we call "ideopolises," are the breeding ground for the new Democratic majority. Insofar as these areas are not

confined to the Northeast, far West, and upper Midwest but are found also in the South and Southwest, the Democrats have a chance to build a large majority and to rewrite today's political map. By 2008, Democrats could enjoy an electoral base of 332 electoral votes, many more than they need for a majority, while holding a competitive position in a number of additional states that might swell that majority.

The role of ideopolises. The transition to a postindustrial society has transformed the economic geography of the country. After World War II, industrial society was divided into three domains: the cities of offices and manufacturing plants, where white ethnics, minorities, and immigrants lived; suburbs, where many of the white middle class were moving; and rural areas of farms, mines, and forests. Postindustrial society is organized around metropolitan areas that include both suburbs and central cities. The production of goods has moved out of the central city into the suburbs, or even into semi-rural areas. And many ethnics and minorities have migrated from the city to the suburbs. The sharpest contrast now is not between city and suburb, but between the new metropolitan areas, taken as a whole, and the rural countryside. The suburbs themselves have become extensions of the city—demarcated artificially on maps—rather than extensions of the countryside housing city workers.

Some of the new postindustrial metropolitan areas like Silicon Valley or the Boulder, Colo., metro area contain significant manufacturing facilities, but it is manufacturing—whether of pharmaceuticals or semiconductors—that consists in the application of complex ideas to physical objects. And some of these metro areas specialize in producing what Joel Kotkin and Ross C. DeVol call "soft technology"—entertainment, media, fashion, design, and advertising—and in providing databases, legal counsel, and other business services. New York City and Los Angeles



are both premier postindustrial metropolises that specialize in soft technology.

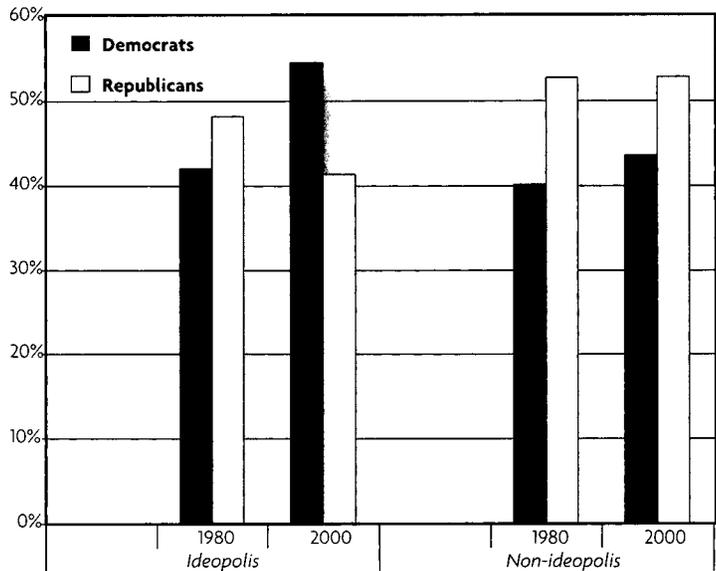
Most of these postindustrial metropolises also include a major university or several major universities that funnel ideas and, more important, people into the hard or soft technology industries. Boston's Route 128 feeds off Harvard and MIT. Silicon Valley is closely linked to Stanford and the University of California at Berkeley. Dane County's biomedical research is tied to the University of Wisconsin at Madison. And all of them have a flourishing service sector, with ethnic and vegetarian restaurants, multimedia shopping malls, children's museums, book store-coffee shops, and health clubs.

Professionals and technicians are heavily concentrated in the workforces of these postindustrial metropolises. A quarter or so of the jobs in Austin, Texas, Boston, San Francisco, or North Carolina's Research Triangle are held by professionals and technicians. Plentiful, too, are low-level service and information workers, including waiters, hospital orderlies, sales clerks, janitors, and teachers' aides. Many of these jobs have been filled by Hispanics and African-Americans, just as many of the high-professional jobs have been filled by Asian immigrants. It's one reason that the workforces in these areas we call ideopolises tend to be ethnically diverse and more complex in their stratification (various combinations of employers, employees, contract workers, temps, consultants, and the self-employed) than the workforce of the older industrial city.

The ethos and mores of many of these new metropolitan areas tend to be libertarian and bohemian because of the people they attract. Economists Richard Florida and Gary Gates found a close correlation between the concentration of gays and of the foreign-born and the concentration of high technology and information technology within a metropolitan area. They also found a high percentage of people who identified themselves as artists, musicians, and craftspeople. Concluded Florida, "Diversity is a powerful force in the

■ The Presidential Vote in Ideopolis and Non-ideopolis Counties, 1980 v. 2000

The greatest Democratic gains from 1980 to 2000 came in areas the authors call ideopolises, fast-growing metropolitan areas with Information Age economies.



SOURCE: *The Emerging Democratic Majority*.

■ Democratic Margin in the Five Largest-Growth Florida Counties

The chart illustrates how much each county grew in population from 1990 to 2000 and how the Democratic margin in presidential elections improved.

County (increase in population)	1988	1992	1996	2000
Broward (368,000)	0	+21	+35	+36
Miami-Dade (316,000)	-11	+4	+19	+6
Palm Beach (268,000)	-11	+12	+25	+27
Orange (219,000)	-37	-11	0	+2
Hillsborough (165,000)	-20	-6	+2	-3

SOURCE: *The Emerging Democratic Majority*.

value systems and choices of the new workforce, whose members want to work for companies and live in communities that reflect their openness and tolerance. The number one factor in choosing a place to live and work, they say, is diversity. Talented people will not move to a place that ostracizes

certain groups."

The politics of these ideopolises emphasizes tolerance and openness. It is defined by the professionals, many of whom were deeply shaped by the social movements of the '60s. They worry about clean air and water, and when the

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market fails to provide them, they call on government. They favor civil rights and liberties and good government. They disdain the intolerance and fundamentalism of the religious right. But they are also leery of the old Democratic politics of "big government" and large-scale social engineering. Some backed Ronald Reagan in 1980 and 1984, but since then, they and the places they have lived have moved steadily into the Democratic column—and in the meantime, they have reshaped the Democratic Party in their own postindustrial image.

Metropolitan areas come in different stages and configurations. In the San Francisco Bay area or the Chicago metro area, the work and culture of the ideopolis pervades the entire metropolitan area. Many of the same people, the same businesses, and the same coffee shops or book stores can be found in the central city and in the suburbs. These are the most advanced and integrated ideopolises. Many of these areas were once Republican but have become extremely Democratic in their politics. Gore won Portland's Multnomah County 64 percent to 28 percent. Princeton University's Mercer County went for Gore 61 percent to 34 percent. Seattle's King County was 60 percent to 34 percent for Gore. Other metropolitan areas like Fresno, Calif., or Muncie, Ind., have not yet made the transition to a postindustrial economy. They lag in telecommunications, computers, and high-tech jobs. In some of these areas, which are not yet ideopolises, Republicans continue to have a strong following.

The Democrats' vote in the integrated ideopolises has included three groups that loom large in the emerging Democratic majority: professionals, women (especially single, working, and highly educated women), and minorities. But it has also included relatively strong support from the white working class—white workers who

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Independent Streak

The GOP may be losing independent suburban voters, but Democrats haven't won them yet. || by **Marshall Wittmann**

■ **KARL ROVE CAN** only read *The Emerging Democratic Majority* and weep. All of his plans for a massive Republican realignment may have been just a false hope of our modern Mark Hanna. While this unreconstructed Bull Mooser is deeply impressed by Judis' and Teixeira's insightful work, there are some potential limits to consider before the donkey succumbs to a bout of premature celebration.

Back in the Gilded Age, Hanna remarked, "Politics are one form of business, and must be treated as a business." Judis and Teixeira suggest that if the GOP is a business, it is a '90s dot-com whose speculative bubble is about to burst.

You really have to hand it to Judis and Teixeira for braving the conventional wisdom and questioning the dominance of the Bush Restoration. They wrote this book when the president and his party were already preparing for several decades of "red state" dominance. Their words are even more meaningful now that the Great Barbecue of '80s and '90s free market and deregulatory fundamentalism seems to be coming to an end.

Yet, just as the Bushies saw a potential dominance based upon a red state/blue state dichotomy, Judis and Teixeira may rely too heavily on demographic determinism. A lot can happen in politics that defy the best political demographer. Issues, events, and candidates matter.

The authors are clearly right on the mark on one big thing. They write, "If support for laissez-faire and regulatory capitalism goes in cycles, we are, if anything, at the end of a period in

which laissez-faire has reigned, and at the beginning of a new period in which greater government intervention will occur."

A clear victim of the corporate crime wave is the Republican/conservative agenda of the past 20 years. More tax cuts for the rich? Social Security privatization? Deregulation?

Let it go. Move on. It's over. Kaput. Bye-bye. So long. It's been good to know you. See ya later.

However, just because the Republican/conservative agenda of the last 20 years has largely assumed room temperature, that does not necessarily mean that Democrats have arrived in the Promised Land. Here are four factors that mitigate against Democratic dominance:

1. *Political cross-dressing.* Do not overestimate the ability of this Gummy administration and Republican Party to accommodate to the political Zeitgeist. Although the only animating principle of the Republican Party is comforting the comfortable, the GOP also has a deep survival instinct. So, even though the tide is turning against limited government and deregulation, the GOP and the Bush administration have an ability to blur the distinctions between the two parties.

This has been the m.o. of the Bush presidency, with the exception of the tax cut. In that case, the donors had to be reimbursed. The adaptation of the Democratic agenda applies to the congressional Republicans as well.

Every time that the Republicans

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