

The End of the Democratic Blue Wall?

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Abstract

Heading into the 2016 presidential election, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton had multiple paths to secure the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the presidency. In contrast, Republican nominee Donald Trump's path to the White House necessitated winning a number of large swing states and securing victories in states that had been reliably Democratic. Building from a prior Brookings Mountain West brief (Damore and Lang 2016), we consider how the Trump campaign, despite being vastly outspent, was able to use targeted online messages to activate "white identify politics"—long a staple of Republican politics in the South—in the non-metro areas of the upper Midwest. This messaging, coupled with Hillary Clinton's unpopularity among white working class and rural voters in the region, interacted with the winner-take-all allocation of Electoral College votes to deliver the presidency for Trump. In the brief's conclusion, we consider the implications that the 2016 election has for Electoral College politics moving forward.

Introduction

In 1992, after Bill Clinton became the first Democrat to win the presidency since 1976, his chief strategist, James Carville, was asked how his team won. He was specifically asked if the Democrats had stolen the key to the Republican lock on the Electoral

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College. Carville's answer, typical of his style, was: "we didn't find the key to the [Republicans'] electoral lock, we just picked it" (Baltimore Sun 1992).

Fast-forwarding to 2016 and Republicans could be asked the same question about the so-called Democratic "Blue Wall;" a cluster of states in the Northeast, Upper Midwest, and West Coast that provide the Democrats with multiple paths to secure the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the presidency. On November 8, 2016, the Republicans breached a key portion of the Blue Wall as presidential candidate Donald Trump narrowly carried Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, while also cutting the margin in the once solid Democratic state of Minnesota.

Trump won these three Rust Belt states and their decisive 46 Electoral College votes by just 77,759 total votes; an amount that is significantly less than the number of visitors to Las Vegas on a typical midweek day.¹ Had this section of the Blue Wall held, Hillary Clinton would have won the presidency with 278 Electoral College votes despite losing swing states such as Florida, Iowa, North Carolina, and Ohio.

In winning 306 Electoral College votes, Trump becomes the first Republican presidential candidate to exceed 300 Electoral College votes since George H.W. Bush's landslide victory over Democrat Michael Dukakis in 1988. However, he does so while losing the popular vote by 2,846,978 votes and 2.1 percentage points. To put the figure in perspective, John Kennedy in 1960 (+ 0.2) and Richard Nixon in 1968 (+ 0.7) won their respective elections with a much smaller popular vote margin.

Trump now has the distinction of winning the presidency with the third largest deficit in the popular vote in history.² Trump even failed to win Mitt Romney's 47% of the total vote, winning just 45.97%, and is now the sixth Republican presidential candidate in the last seven elections who failed to win at least a plurality of the popular vote. For her part, Hillary Clinton is poised to win the eighth highest share of the popular vote for a losing presidential candidate. Her popular vote total, with 65,844,594 ballots, was just 72,201 short of Obama's win in 2012 (Wasserman 2016).

The effects of the country's political geography, so strongly imbued in the Electoral College, also extend to Congress and are institutionally why come January there will be Republicans controlling the legislative and executive branches of the federal government. In the House, the inefficient distribution of Democratic voters coupled with the post-2010 GOP gerrymanders in a number of states means that Republicans will

represent 55% of the seats in the House despite winning half of the aggregate House vote. In the Senate, Republicans will maintain their majority even though Democratic Senate candidates received roughly six million more votes in 2016 than did their Republican counterparts and collectively, Democratic U.S. senators represent significantly more Americans than do Republican senators owing to the population discrepancies between the blue and red states. Thus, the Democrats received more votes for the President and Senate and were not far behind in the U.S. House of Representatives, but will not control one of these branches of government. Gerrymandering, the two senators per state provision in the U.S. Constitution, and the Electoral College combine to make the Republican voting minority the governing party.

While the forces underlying the Republicans' control of Congress are straightforward, the factors that facilitated Trump's narrow wins in the upper Midwest are more complex. In this brief we seek to untangle some of this complexity by examining how the Trump campaign's use of sophisticated data analytics facilitated the emergence of “white identify politics”—once the provenance of the South—in the North. This targeted messaging, coupled with underwhelming support for Hillary Clinton in the region, interacted with the vagaries of the Electoral College to deliver the presidency for Trump. In the brief's conclusion we consider the implications our analysis has for Electoral College politics moving forward.

Facebooking the Vote

Throughout the Republican nomination campaign a reoccurring criticism of the Trump campaign noted that he was failing to build the infrastructure needed to contest the General Election even as he was winning the requisite delegates to secure his party's nomination. During the fall, the Trump campaign's decision to eschew spending substantial sums on the tools of modern presidential campaigning (e.g., a large, seasoned staff, extensive polling and focus groups, building GOTV networks, and wall to wall television advertising in the swing states) was an ongoing source of derision.

For instance, two days before the election, the *New York Times* ran a front page story entitled “Inside Donald Trump's Last Stand: An Anxious Nominee Seeks Assurance” reporting that Trump aides were using the website 270towin.com to plot the campaign's closing strategy; a revelation that fed a stream of snarky tweets from many including Clinton staffers. Claims by surrogates that the volume of Trump yard signs and rally attenders indicated a groundswell of support that would carry the businessman to

victory were dismissed as the wishful thinking of amateurs unschooled in the metrics of election forecasting.

So how did Trump break through the seemingly solid Democratic Rust Belt Blue Wall? After all, Republican presidential candidates have been pining for these states for years and despite substantial spending in these states by both John McCain in 2008 and Romney in 2012, the GOP fell short. Even in 2004, the only instance in the last seven presidential elections when the Republican candidate received the majority of the popular vote, George Bush lost Michigan by over four points, Pennsylvania by two and a half, and Wisconsin by just over 10,000 votes and of course, had Democrat John Kerry squeezed 120,000 more votes out of Ohio, he, not Bush, would have won the presidency.

While Trump famously lacked strong campaign infrastructure, the Republican National Committee (RNC) maintained numerous field operations in Rust Belt states. The RNC Chairman, Reince Preibus, grew up in Green Bay, WI, and Preibus rose to lead the RNC largely because of his role in helping to swing Wisconsin—with help from the Koch Brothers' network—to the Republicans in 2010; just two years after Barack Obama defeated McCain by nearly 14 points in the state.

Preibus maintained good relations with Donald Trump and even joined him at numerous events at the close of the race. Preibus, along with Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, were key players inside the presidential campaign. Kushner, who owns the *New York Observer*, at various points served as chief operating officer and oversaw Trump's social media outreach. Kushner's contribution was so significant that *Forbes* ran a cover story immediately after the election entitled "How Jared Kushner Won Trump the White House."

Perhaps the most significant advantage that Preibus and Kushner provided the Trump campaign was combining social media, RNC field infrastructure, and big data/polling into a strategy to flip Democratic-leaning swing states Republican. Cambridge Analytica, a private data-mining firm, modeled the electorate in 17 key states to provide strategic insight. The company is backed in part by Robert Mercer, a hedge fund billionaire who supported Trump's candidacy.

Cambridge Analytica first worked for Senator Ted Cruz during the Republican nomination campaign. As part of its effort, Cambridge Analytica developed a mobile app

called “Cruz Crew” that tracked movements and extracted personal data contacts to construct a perusable voter network. The app was highly effective and helped Cruz win the 2016 Iowa Caucus, but many saw the app invading privacy and the now defunct Gawker website characterized it as “creepy as hell.”

In December, the German magazine *Das* profiled Cambridge Analytica's Michael Kosinski, a Stanford faculty member and Cambridge Ph.D. who is an expert in mining psycho-demographic data from Facebook and modeling behavior (including political behavior) from information people have on their Facebook pages (Krogerus and Grasseger 2016). From the *Das* article:

Kosinski and his team refine the models unceasingly. In 2012, Kosinski proved that it is possible to predict from an average of 68 Facebook-Likes a skin color (95% accuracy) whether a person is homosexual (88% probability) whether they are a Democrat or Republican (85%). But it goes even further: Intelligence, religious affiliation, alcohol, cigarette and drug consumption can be calculated. Even if the parents of a person have remained together until their 21st year of age...Soon his model can estimate a person better than an average work colleague by means of ten Facebook “Likes”—70 Likes are enough to surpass the friendliness of a friend, 150 of the parents, with 300 Likes, the machine can predict the behavior of a person more clearly than their partner. And with even more Likes can even surpass what people believe of themselves to know (Krogerus and Grasseger 2016).

Das goes on to explain how Kosinski’s data analytics shaped and micro-targeted Trump’s political message via social media.

On the day of the third presidential debate between Trump and Clinton, Trump's Team sent 175,000 different variations of its arguments, mainly via Facebook. The messages differ only in microscopic details, in order to suit the recipients psychologically optimally: different titles, colors, subtitles, with photo or with video...in Miami's Little Haiti district, Cambridge Analytica provided residents with news of the Clinton Foundation's failure after the earthquake in Haiti to stop them from choosing Clinton (Krogerus and Grasseger 2016).

Both Trump and Clinton sought experts in Silicon Valley to provide the analytics needed to micro-target persuadable voters. In particular, Clinton targeted moderate, college-educated Republican suburban voters with media showing Trump as demeaning and

sexually aggressive towards women. Her campaign advertised during football games to fathers who worried that their own daughters could be victims of reprehensible sexual behavior Trump himself admitted to during the *Access Hollywood* video.

However, Clinton's messaging failed to move enough of these voters to her column in the right states. Meanwhile, analysis from Cambridge Analytica allowed the Trump campaign to target and dissuade potential Clinton voters with specific messages and to energize white working class rural and small town voters with economic populist appeals. Such voters exist in abundance in Midwestern swing states such as Ohio and Iowa, which Trump also won. Yet, to win the 2016 presidential election, Trump had to win not only the large swings states of Florida, North Carolina, and Ohio, but he also had to flip at least one of the Midwest Blue Wall states given that Colorado, Nevada, and Virginia were trending towards the Democrats.³

In the end, Trump won Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin with perhaps Wisconsin being the biggest surprise. Even on Election Day, the Real Clear Politics average showed a six and a half point lead for Clinton in the state and she led in every publicly released poll in Wisconsin since the party conventions. Were there signs Clinton was in trouble in Wisconsin—some, including a big drop in support for Democratic Senate candidate Russ Feingold, but not enough to prompt her to visit the state during the summer or fall. It was not until late October that her campaign advertised in the state.

In the end, virtually no analysts saw Clinton's collapse in Wisconsin. Even the Republican National Committee, in an embargoed briefing to *Politico* just before Election Day, showed the Republicans losing Wisconsin and the entire presidential race to Hillary Clinton.

White Identity Politics Move North

Is the Midwest portion of the Democratic Blue Wall now gone? Nothing in politics is permanent and Trump's slim margins in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin certainly mean that much of the upper Midwest will continue to be contested in future elections.

Still, the once Solid Democratic South that lasted from the post-Civil War era to the mid-20th century had by the 1980s become the Solid Republican South and continues to be a Republican stronghold (although, as we discuss below, with its own vulnerabilities). After voting for Republican candidates in every presidential election between 1952 and

1988 but one, no subsequent Republican presidential candidate has won as much as 45% of the vote in California and only twice has the GOP broken 40% (2000 and 2004) in the Golden State; a swing that corresponds with the GOP's tack to the right on immigration and the explosive growth of the state's Latino and Asian American populations (Damore and Pantoja 2013). Does Trump's successes in the once solidly blue Rust Belt lay the foundation for a similar shift?

In a previous Brookings Mountain West policy brief (Damore and Lang 2016), we speculated that working class and other whites in Northern states could further abandon the Democratic Party and vote Republican in response to the emergence of "white identity politics." Specifically, the brief asserted that given the demographic shifts in the United States that will result in a majority-minority populous by the mid-21st century, whites could view themselves as yet another minority group, and act as many minorities do by voting in a bloc for one party to protect their collective political interests.

We noted that Rust Belt States in particular were potential pick up targets for the Republicans based on an emerging white identity politics. Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin, all states with below average shares of college-educated adults, are cited as specific states where these politics could emerge.

White identity politics has a long history in the United States. It was part of a Nativist rejection of mid and late 19th century immigration from Ireland and Germany. By the early 20th century, Nativist hostility focused on immigrants from mostly Southern and Eastern Europe. From its origins, the American South has seen a highly polarized politics based strictly on race. White Southerners since the Civil War have voted in a political bloc—first as Democrats (opposing the party of Lincoln) and then in response to the Civil Rights Movement as Republicans opposing integration, diversification, and equality.

Yet, over the past several decades, Northern whites, such as those living in the Midwest, New England, and Pacific Northwest have not voted in a discernable white bloc. Consider that Barack Obama, the first African American President, twice won largely rural and mostly white states such as Iowa, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. One could argue that Obama may owe his presidency to Iowa in particular. It was the 2008 Iowa caucuses where Obama shocked the political world by beating the heavily favored Hillary Clinton.

But in 2016, whites in the Midwest who lived outside of major metropolitan areas voted

in a racially driven bloc to elect Donald Trump president. Trump's Midwest appeals blended economic populism with racial-grievance politics presented under the guise of challenging political correctness and the fecklessness of the country's leadership.

In our earlier analysis (Damore and Lang 2016), we saw these new politics emerging, but underestimated the speed by which they would arrive. Indeed, Donald Trump may have accelerated white Northern racial-identity politics by a decade, while simultaneously mobilizing minority voters, particularly Latinos, in further support of the Democrats.⁴ However, outside of Nevada and to a lesser extent Arizona and Colorado, the geographic concentration of Latino voters, coupled with lower African American turnout in states such as Florida and North Carolina, undercut the effects of increased Latino participation.

The unknown, of course, is how much of what occurred in 2016 is indicative of a lasting partisan realignment among white rural Midwesterners and how much is attributable to the Trump-Clinton dyad. To be sure, Republicans have long hinted at many of the themes that Trump embraced, but in a less overt and less caustic manner. At the same time, for many, it seems that the coarseness of Trump's messaging was why they supported him.

Moreover, from a policy perspective, it will be difficult if not impossible for Trump to make good on many of the promises related to immigration, healthcare, trade and most saliently, renewal of the manufacturing sector that he made to his supporters in the region. To wit, Nobel Prize winning economist and *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman tweeted in response to the much-ballyhooed post-election Carrier deal in Indiana, "If Trump did a Carrier-style deal every week for the next 4 years, he could bring back 4% of the manufacturing jobs lost since 2000." And of course, far from embracing the GOP's free market ethos, the Carrier deal is the type of economic intervention that was a constant source of Republican criticism of the Obama presidency. Picking winners and engaging in "crony capitalism" may play to working class, rural voters in the Midwest, but such policy is an anathema to conservative orthodoxy.

Regardless, any additional hardening of the urban/rural split along racial and ethnic differences in the Midwest means that in the coming years the voting patterns of urban and rural whites in the North may look more and more like they do in the South. Specifically, we can expect to see working class white, rural voters in both regions aligning with the GOP, while urban whites in larger metros from Atlanta and Charlotte to

Cleveland and Milwaukee voting often in coalitions with minorities for Democrats. The relative balance of power and engagement in the political process between these blocs in the swing states of the upper Midwest and the emerging swing states in the South will determine statewide outcomes and by extension, future presidential elections.

Going Forward—A New Blue Wall?

What effect does the shift in northern rural voting have on the Democratic Blue Wall or on the prospects for Republican dominance in presidential politics? Iowa is unlikely to be a swing state in future elections and instead, will become reliably Republican. Along with Iowa, much of the Rust Belt is now a more contested space and—except for Illinois—no longer part of any reliable Blue Wall for the Democrats. The more rural and white a Rust Belt state, the more likely it is to vote Republican in future elections. Illinois is safe for the Democrats because Chicago and its extended suburbs make up such a large share of the state. Conversely, greater Detroit, Milwaukee, and Cleveland do not exhibit the same demographic grip on Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ohio respectively.

With the once reliable Democratic Blue Wall finally breached, what prospects do the Democrats have in winning the Electoral College? Election 2016 may signal a new and more fluid Electoral College politics. As the Midwest Blue Wall weakens, emerging and future Blue Walls rise in states with demographics that are increasingly favorable to the Democrats.

Table 1
Solid, Fading, Emerging, and Future Blue Wall States

Category	Status	States	Electoral College Votes
Solid	Won by Democrats 1988-2016	CA (55), CT (7), D.C. (3), DE (3), IL (20), HI (4), MA (11), ME (4), MD (10), NJ (14), NY (29), RI (4), VT (3), OR (7), WA (12)	186
Fading	Within two points in 2016	MI (16), MN (10), PA (20), WI (10)	56
Emerging	Won by Democrats 2008-2016	CO (9), NV (6), NM (5), VA (13)	33
Future	Within six points in 2016	AZ (11), FL (29), GA, (16), NC (15)	71

Assume that Democrats make some modest effort to address the needs of working class voters in the Midwest, but continue to run on a model of coalition politics that blends the interests of urban and educated whites along with African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans. Table 1 shows that all states in the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic region (except New Hampshire) and the Pacific Coast remain within the Blue Wall. Add to the list Illinois and Hawaii as isolated states within the wall. The Democrats have won all these states in every election since 1988. Clinton won the same group of states again by safe margins in 2016—with the exception of Maine. The Northeast/Mid-Atlantic and Pacific States provide the Democrats with a solid base of 186 Electoral College votes.

Next, consider the Emerging Blue Wall as shown in Table 1. The Southern Mountain West is home to an increasingly diverse population. Nevada added minority eligible voters faster than any other state in the country. New Mexico—along with Hawaii—have been majority-minority states since their founding. Colorado is growing more diverse and has one of the largest shares of another reliable Democratic demographic—the college-educated white voter. The Blue Wall held for the Democrats in the three Southern Mountain West states in 2016. That makes three elections in a row that these states have voted for the Democrats and along with Virginia are an Emerging Blue Wall.

Until recently, Virginia (now essentially a Mid-Atlantic State in socio-cultural dynamics) voted like the rest of the once-Solid South for the Republicans. The massive growth of the mostly liberal Washington D.C. metropolitan area has transformed the state. Demographic and growth trends in Northern Virginia, Southern Nevada, and the Front Range of the Rockies should keep Virginia, Nevada, New Mexico, and Colorado in the Democratic column in the future. These states add 33 Electoral College votes to the Blue Wall.

Within a few election cycles, the Blue Wall could include a group of states in the Southern Atlantic region, along with Arizona in the West. Currently, North Carolina and Florida appear to be the largest swing states (assuming Ohio is trending Republican). Before the 2016 election, Florida and North Carolina had the closest margins in the previous two elections. Trump targeted white voters in the panhandle of Florida and eastern North Carolina to secure these states. But the longer demographic term trends in both states favor the Democrats.

North Carolina looks like Virginia a decade ago where the rapidly urbanizing Piedmont Region is moving the state in the blue direction, just as the D.C. suburbs secured Virginia

for the Democrats. Former Yankees, both white and African American, are moving to places such as metro Raleigh and Charlotte in numbers that make North Carolina a competitive state in the Electoral College. New waves of Latino and Asian immigrants also shifted its politics. Migration and demographic trends should continue in the future and by perhaps 2024 add North Carolina to a Future Blue Wall.

Florida, now the largest swing state, is further along the path to Blue Wall status than North Carolina. Clinton came within a point of winning the state in 2016. The Interstate-4 Corridor in the center of the state, long Florida's swing region, is now trending to the Democrats due in part to a wave of recent liberal-leaning Puerto Rican migrants. Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens and thus, eligible to vote upon arriving in Florida. Were it not for Trump's exceptional strength in Florida's conservative Panhandle counties, Clinton would have won in 2016. Even the solid Cuban vote is wavering as Millennial Cubans increasingly vote in higher numbers for the Democrats.

Georgia is also a future Democratic target. The massive Atlanta metropolitan area, which accounts for nearly two thirds of the state's population, voted Democratic in three presidential elections in a row. The problem for Democrats has been that the margins in metro Atlanta are not large enough to offset the monolithic Republican vote in the rest of the state. But as Atlanta keeps growing, becoming more diverse, and more educated, it will likely push Georgia past a tipping point and make it a Democratic-voting state by the mid-to-late 2020s.

Finally, there is Arizona—once the home to the legendary Republican Senator, Barry Goldwater. Goldwater is the grandfather to the pre-Trump Movement Conservatism, and until just recently, Arizona was a Western version of a reliably conservative Southern state. In fact, Arizona's political habits and minority voter suppression made it the only Western state subject to federal election oversight under the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But much has change in Arizona. The state is now far more urban and is the third-ranked state for the percentage of residents living in metropolitan areas. Arizona is also on track to be majority Latino in its two biggest metros, Phoenix and Tucson, before the end of this decade. Clinton campaigned heavily in Arizona and nearly won the state—coming within four points. Expect every future Democratic candidate to target the state.

In total, Future Blue Wall states offer an enormous bounty of 71 Electoral College votes. Reapportionment of House of Representative seats after the 2020 Census should add at least three, and perhaps five, new Electoral College votes to the mix. Conversely, Fading

Blue Wall states such as Pennsylvania and Michigan will certainly lose House seats and by extension, Electoral College votes starting with the 2024 election.

Conclusion

After Mitt Romney's 2012 loss, the RNC commissioned the "Growth & Opportunity Project," assessing the GOP's standing with emerging voting blocs such as Latinos, Asian Americans, and millennials that were seen as decisive to President Obama's reelection. The report also made strategic recommendations about how the party should approach these voters to better position Republican candidates in the face of demographic changes threatening the party's long-term viability.

The party then nominated a candidate who was victorious despite running a campaign that was the antithesis of the report's vision for the Republican Party. Instead of expanding the party's appeal and cutting its margins with the growth parts of the electorate, Trump narrowed it by extending the Southern Strategy into the north. This, coupled with Clinton's losses in Florida, Iowa, North Carolina, and Ohio, led to a breach in the upper Midwest portion of the Democrats' Blue Wall that provided Trump with the Electoral College votes to win the presidency, despite soundly losing the popular vote.

To be sure, Hillary Clinton benefited, at least in the aggregate, from increased support from Latinos, Asian Americans, and college educated whites. However, the geographic concentration of these voters in either Solid Blue Wall states or in Future Blue Wall states had little payoff in the Electoral College.

In this regard, the further sorting of voters by geography, race, ethnicity, and to a lesser extent, education trapped Clinton between a Fading and Future Blue Wall (Brownstein 2016). To paraphrase James Carville, the Republicans did not tear down the Democratic Blue Wall as much as they shifted it to a new group of states. Indeed, while the outcome of the 2016 election and the implications it has for governing are a crushing defeat for Democrats, particularly given the narrowness of Clinton's defeat, as we detail above, 2016 also is suggestive of the emergence of a new Blue Wall.

Still, the growing chasm between the country's booming population and economic centers—Clinton won the counties where nearly two-thirds of the country's GDP is produced (Muro and Liu 2016)—and the nation's shrinking homogenous, rural spaces and how these differences interact with the Electoral College are more than just a quirk

of institutional design. Under present arrangements, these dynamics mean that the voters who are the least connected and most antagonistic to the country's economic and demographic future are best positioned to play an outsized role in determining who will lead the country.

Moreover, 2016 marks the second time in the last five presidential elections—with 2004 being very close to a third instance—when the presidential candidate who received the most votes did not win the presidency. Prior to 2000, this had occurred only three times in the country's history and not since 1888. An outcome that was a historical anomaly is now a feature of the country's politics. Thinking ahead to 2020, if the Democrats are unable to rebound in the upper Midwest or secure the future Blue Wall states identified above, the next presidential election could very well provide the same outcome with the Democrats piling up more and more of the popular vote, and the Republicans winning the Electoral College.

Endnotes

¹ The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority reports that over 42 million people visited Las Vegas in 2015; which equates to a daily average of more than 115,000 people.

² Only Republicans John Quincy Adams (-10.44) in 1824 and Rutherford Hayes (-3) in 1876 won the presidency with a larger popular vote deficit than Trump. The 1824 election is one of two presidential elections to be decided in the House of Representatives.

³ A Trump win in Wisconsin, coupled with his victory in Maine's second congressional district, would have garnered Trump 270 Electoral College votes; the minimum needed to secure the presidency.

⁴ The National Exit Poll reported that Trump won 29% of the Latino vote nationally. However, the Latino Decisions Election Eve Poll, which sampled 5,600 Latino voters in the days before the election, found that Trump won 18% of the Latino vote nationally; a finding that is consistent with a number of other large sample pre-election polls, as well as post-election precinct level analyses in Arizona (Nuno and Wilcox-Archuleta 2016) and Texas (Pedraza and Wilcox-Archuleta 2016). The inability of the Exit Poll to accurately gauge the vote choice of Latino voters has been a long running failure (e.g., Barreto et. al 2006; Barreto 2010; Teixeira 2004) and stems from how Edison Research, the firm contracted by national media outlets to conduct the Exit Poll, selects the precincts that are included in the poll. Specifically, the Exit Poll selects precincts that are predictive of statewide outcomes and given the geographic clustering of many minorities, these precincts do not have representative cross sections of such subgroups. As a consequence, Latinos who are included in the Exit Poll typically are better educated, wealthier, and English dominant as compared to the Latino electorate in general (see Segura and Barreto 2016).

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Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful for the input of Brookings Mountain West UNLV Director, William E. Brown, Jr. The authors also acknowledge Caitlin Saladino, Brookings Mountain West, who provided valuable editing and design expertise in the final production of this report.

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