

Chapter 17

The Future of American Politics: The “Immigrant” Election 2050

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ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a future scenario of how climate challenges, changing demographics, and new technologies will shape the political landscape by 2050. Smart voting, migration from climate change, rising immigration, and world politics will provide major opportunities as well as challenges in every segment of society internationally. The world as we know it today will have dramatically changed; the question is, will journalists be prepared to clearly report on the issues to the public?

IMAGINE . . .

Lydia Verity knew that Election 2050 would be challenging, and as a first-time voter, the choices required much study. Her family immigrated from Poland nearly a decade ago. Poland had since risen in dominance during that time. Her family rarely visited the home country, given the constant pandemics and instability of Eastern Europe. Now 18, she looked forward to this election. She had to choose among four top contenders, whose politics spanned from liberal, conservative, independent to socialist ways of thinking. The most interesting candidate, more of a gimmick, was Clarence Intelligence III. Clarence had been upgraded three times and was promoted as the most agile cyber-human on earth. He was once an eccentric billionaire whose mind faded from dementia. His body was fairly frail and had been diagnosed with a terminal illness. He had made an agreement with a commercial research lab upon his impending death to keep him alive by any means, and to restore his mind, and for that he would donate the majority of his estate to the firm. His mind and body were restored, and yet it was difficult to assess how much he truly resembled the original Clarence. The firm decided that it would endorse Clarence as a candidate, with little expectation that he would actually win. The idea was to promote his abilities, knowing that he would do quite well during the candidates’ public debates. His sharp wit challenged his opponents, but few people were ready to acknowledge his legitimacy as a candidate. In fact, it opened a world-wide ethical debate on the role of science in redesigning humans, already in the headlines were

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news stories on genius designer babies, with the first in Asia in 2049. There had been some who had their legs and arms replaced with bionic limbs, after devastating accidents. Cloning organs to help heart and kidney patients was possible for those who could afford it. However, the U.S. had refrained from genetic human engineering and bionic surgeries, but the original Clarence's wealth and status had appeared to let this research company cross ethical lines, with few restrictions. The firm wanted to distinguish cyber-humans from synthetic humans, with the latter being completely non-human, and the former positioned as an evolution of the human species.

Aside from Clarence's candidacy, the political issues driving the race were rooted in the recent onslaught of global pandemics, cyber-terrorist attacks, catastrophic effects of global warming, and the birth of a new species, called synth-humans. The nation, as well as the world, faced many ethical and economic issues, as the world struggled to survive and thrive in a digital world, in which privacy diminished and democracy appeared threatened. So far, leading in the polls was a fairly charismatic young man who would only be 35 by the time that he took office. Born on October 1, 2015, in Mexico City, Mexico, Eduardo Iglesias had natural-born citizenship status after that Constitutional criterion was amended earlier, meaning Eduardo Iglesias was eligible for the highest office in America. Young people loved him; he was a stark contrast to the outgoing president, who was in his late 60s, and fairly representative of most of the aging population in the nation. Iglesias was particularly good at engaging young people to become involved and sought consensus on various issues. He was an advocate of new energy sources, new technologies, and used the latest forms of social media effectively. Although he did not have a lot of executive or political experience, he knew what the voters were worried about.

For years, outside migration to the West and Southwest had taken its toll on the regional and national economy. Resources were already limited due to escalating temperatures and extreme flooding. A series of disastrous storms had displaced millions of residents. Robot drones were sent into the regions to help with the clean-up; residents were forced to relocate to other states. However, shifting people from one populated area to another only shifts the problem, not offers a solution. Many minority groups struggled to be heard, especially those migrating from China and Korea. One prominent party endorsed Louise Chen, an older, well-educated woman who appeared the most moderate of all the candidates. She had a long history as a successful Senator and was prepared for a larger leadership role.

Yet younger voters saw Eduardo as the person who best represented them. Another candidate in the running was Latino-Russian, Vladamir Martinez, the charismatic voice of the Socialist Party. He brought to the election a solid understanding of Eastern European-Asian politics. Martinez was third in the latest polls with Louise coming in second. Actually, voters wishing to be informed could follow a long data-trail of each candidate from birth to ballot box. The media spent hours discussing the significance and relevance of the data with leading experts and data analysts. In the end, it seemed to come down to how a candidate responded consistently and pleasantly via social media. The issues took a backseat to the leading candidate's natural smile and age.

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