


**Orange is the New Blue? Case study of Four  
Orange County Constituencies that were won over  
by the Democrats in 2018**

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**Abstract:**

*The 2018 midterm elections brought many surprises when talking about election results on Congressional level. One of them was definitely Democrats picking up four seats in the Orange County, which for many years was a Republican heartland in California. What happened? Was this just a one-time thing or a sign of blue wave in Donald Trump's era? The four case-studies of Democratic political campaigns will not only try to answer these questions, but also predict how should Republicans respond taking the example of 2020 elections.*

**Keywords:** political campaign, social media, Orange County, Democratic Party

***Introduction: What's so special about Orange County?***

The ongoing development of new interactive campaign strategies transformed the way voters perceive Congressional Elections. In 2018, many Americans and people from all over the world, became very interested in campaigns, also because of the fact that most of them wanted to check how Donald Trump's popularity may influence the outcome. Being such a controversial figure and a political celebrity, Trump not only encouraged his opponents to organize against him, but also fueled the process of political polarization among the US society to the extreme (at least that is what many thought before the elections in 2018, history shows that this was just the beginning of the growth of this trend). The emergence of Trump-as-a-politician persona also meant that the elections and the campaign would deliver entertaining content, which has always been the part of American political culture and which (used in a right way), could make more people interested in political processes in their own country. Politics in the era of social media allow the receiver of the political content to get involved with it, politicians through such platforms look as if they are closer to their voters, by creating virals they can attract wider audience. This all gives political marketers tools to create an interesting campaign and at the same time create a situation in which

a campaign staff's efforts can be damaged by one tweet or one Instagram post.

Political campaigning is also closely related to the subject of political communication, especially when taking into consideration the rather wide subject of media use and media coverage during the campaign. It is also quite important to stress how important during this process is the role of local media, especially during local and congressional elections. Of course, Senate and House of Representatives primary and general races can be covered nationwide if they attract enough attention or when the candidates know how to create buzz through fundraising and social media (Beto O'Rourke, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in 2018), but in most of the cases, academics need to rely on social media presence and local news outlets in order to get a grip of how the candidate's campaign was run.

Why choose Orange County? Mainly because of the fact that the 2018 Congressional Elections results drew attention to this region since it has been a Republican stronghold for many years. Even though California as a state is liberal, Orange County has always been a symbolic place for the Republicans. Richard Nixon was born there, Ronald Reagan once said that O.C. is where the “all good Republicans go to die” (Kilgore, 2018). Anti-communist organization John Birch Society acted fast back in the 1960s in this area, which combined with the suburban migration, used to be a hotbed for right-wing movements in southern California (Mozingo, 2018). Many white middle-and-upper class members of society migrated from Los Angeles or Midwest and South throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century, which led to a self-segregation leading to an extremism. Even in the 90s, the resentment in the O.C. was an answer to liberalization and multiculturalization of the society, that is where the Proposition 187 was authored, anti-immigration legislation which was supported and passed by the 59% of voters, before being ruled unconstitutional (Wisckol, 2016).

What has changed then? The origins of the ethnic diversification of the O.C. society can be found in the 1960s, when the white-collar defense industry professionals started to move to Orange County, which added to the big part of economy in Southern California by the end of the decade. As soldiers were establishing relationships with Asian women overseas when in service, this led to changes in immigration policies starting from the War Bride Act of 1945. According to the last census, 36% of Asian Americans in the O.C. were registered as Republicans and 27% of Democrats with Vietnamese Americans comprising the biggest group of right-wing voters (Reft, 2013). However, this means that almost 40% of them were not party affiliated, as many Asian Americans are not that involved in politics, making them for some pundits „the last undecided

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voters” (Hsu, 2020). On the other hand, Proposition 187 and its repercussions initiated a significant growth of Latinx activists in California, as thousands of young people demonstrated against it in biggest cities in the state. According to Manuel Pastor, “the biggest demographic change in the state happened between 1980 and 2000”, as California “went from 66% of white residents towards 53%” (Marrero, 2019). Political awakening? Gentrification and rapidly changing demographics? Or maybe anti-Trump public sentiment combined with smart use of modern campaign tools? All of these factors could help Democrats during 2018 midterm elections.

Actually, the last factor seemed to be the most predictable. How is that possible? Midterm elections tend to “reflect the approval ratings of the president in charge” (Tomaszewski, 2019, p. 37). What is interesting is that this trend is especially emerging during president's second tenure with examples from midterms in 1938, 1966, 1986 or 2006, when the party of an incumbent president faced congressional losses. These types of landslide losses were also observed during first terms: in 2010, Democrats lost sixty-three House seats, six Senate seats and six Governors (Kilgore, 2015, p. 3).

***Political entertainment: how new media shape modern campaigns***

Just like in the previous articles that explored the specifics of 2018 voter shift in the United States, the most important part of the methodology, was comparing the sources from traditional media to social media and the analysis of profiles on popular internet platforms. Since none of the four elections in the presented case studies gained nationwide traction, the analysis of local media was crucial to find information about the campaign trail. The article tries to answer the question, whether four Congressional flips were the beginning of a wider trend in the Orange County, or just a smart one-time event that was possible because of the level of political polarization.

The aim of the research is to try finding patterns, whether the candidates from the Democratic Parties tended to use new ways of political campaigning to attract voters, especially social media tools. Study focuses on how the candidates looked for ways to reach out to the voters and create more buzz around them in order to become more recognizable, especially around young people, who tend to obtain political news from the internet. Although each of the campaigns is a separate story, since each of the constituencies has its own specifics, some comparisons can be drawn from these campaigns to find out which ones may have been the most

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effective, media friendly or allowed to attract wider interest. It would be hard to assume that a campaign for House of Representatives was successful only thanks to the increased use of social media, but presidential campaigns in the United States and the Senate campaigns have proven that they help to attract the attention of internet users and mobilize them to get out the vote. Additionally, it would be interesting to check how does the voter segmentation work in the world of social media campaigning, especially in areas that are more ethnically diverse.

Modern political campaign strategies are closely connected to the development of new media, described by Logan as “those digital media that are interactive, incorporate two-way communication and involve some form of computing” (2010). Their main advantage is that they allowed its recipients to engage in content and create it by sharing, commenting on it and evaluating it. From that moment, marketing staffs started to play less important role in campaigns, on contrary to the role of voters, who could engage more in this process. Because of that fact and thanks to the development of social media platforms, politicians could use less money and time to generate more content and reach wider base of potential voters (Tomaszewski, 2017, p. 137-138). Web 2.0 tools transformed politics by allowing internet users to get to know more information about the candidates and meet their more personal side. Further theories focusing on these aspects of political campaigning also recognise the importance of online imagesharing, which allows user to “perform, feel emotions and engage with each other” (Serafinelli, 2018, p. 4). Elisa Serafinelli argues that modern social marketing strategies tend to rely on “users’ voyeuristic interests in watching and being watched and it is that which motivates the practice of photo sharing” (2018, p. 6) That is especially interesting when the political marketing campaigns are involved, as such visual practices are becoming nowadays a hot trend. Finally, new media allow grassroots organising to thrive, as citizens want to be more politically empowered and finally have tools to do that. Because of that fact, politicians can create long term communication with the citizens, since new technology allows to encourage civil engagement and political participation (Lees-Marshment, 2013).

### ***Is running on a progressive ticket really this risky? CA-49***

The analysis starts with the CA-49 constituency, mainly because of the fact that Democrats won a Congressional seat there, while running on a quite progressive platform. Although for many years, this district leaned Republican, since redistricting in 2010 it was becoming more and more competitive. According to the official census data, between 2000 and 2010, in the northern parts

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of CA-49, where a part of Orange County is located, population increased by 5,000-10,000. (2010 census) The elections in 2016 have proven that it is more and more likely for the Democrats to win this seat from the Republicans, as the incumbent Darrell Issa won only by over 1,600 votes. ([ballotpedia.org](http://ballotpedia.org), 2020)

Mike Levin's campaign gathered nationwide attention since the very beginning. Issa was an easy target, as during his tenure he was the richest member of the Congress. Since the narrow win, locals were pressuring him to attend a town hall meeting, by raising \$6,000 on GoFundMe to buy a full-page ad in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* ([Schatz, 2017](#)). As a matter of fact, Levin, after announcing his candidacy via e-mail and on Twitter on March 8 2017, went viral by crashing the Town Hall meeting. The video was shared by *NowThis Politics* fanpage on Facebook and up to date received over 13,000 reactions. Being an Orange County raised attorney focusing on clean energy, Levin “trolled” Issa during his speech by mentioning that he sent a book called *Climate Change for Beginners* to the Congressman, as over his numerous tenures he denied the climate change claims ([NowThis Politics, 2017](#)). Week later, on March 26 2017, Democratic candidate visited MSNBC's AM Joy in order to talk about his campaign and talk about Issa's relationship with Trump ([Levin, 2017](#)).

In order to tackle a rich candidate, Levin took to grassroots campaigning to distinguish himself and position as an underdog with support from ordinary folks. This tactic was crucial, as from the very beginning he started to receive quite impressive donations. Since Bernie Sanders's presidential bid back in 2016 it seemed quite clear that small donations can be an ideal weapon in hands of progressive candidates. Between March 7 2017 and March 31 2017 Levin managed to raise both eyebrows and over \$275,000 from individual donors with over 87% of the contributions \$100 or below ([Levin, 2017a](#)). In second quarter of 2017 Levin raised \$333,902, showing a really good level of grassroots support ([Levin, 2017b](#)). Actually, when analyzing the materials from the campaign trail tracking back to the end of 2017, media news outlets were surprised how eager the citizens were to flip this seat for the Democrats. An article on KPBS San Diego Public Radio & TV from December 19, 2017 mentions the fact that it was (at that time) very rare to organize on such level having slightly less than one year to elections. *Flip the 49<sup>th</sup> Neighbors in Action* Super PAC at that time had already 200 neighborhood leaders trained across the 49<sup>th</sup> and began contacting voters by door-to-door campaigning and phone banks ([St John, 2017](#)). What is also interesting is the trend that began in Silicon Valley shortly after Donald Trump's win in 2016. Many engineers and data analysts started to engage in political campaigns,

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by sharing their technological knowledge. *Tech for Campaigns* organization, which brought together volunteers with such experience, helped Levin set up a campaign website, donation portal and social media accounts ahead of the start of his campaign (Thadani, 2017). The project lasted four weeks and the volunteers created a digital identity kit for use on various channels, mobile-optimized website with event calendar and social media targeting framework (apart from the tools mentioned in previous material) (Tech For Campaigns, 2018).

There is also one thing that helped Levin unseat his opponent. According to the 2010 census, 26% of CA-49 residents were of Latinx descent. Levin himself is a grandson of immigrants from Mexico and because of this, he very quickly earned the endorsement from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, which shows how important his candidacy was when talking about bouncing back the House of Representatives from Republicans (Levin, 2017). He also managed to distinguish himself from his biggest opponent on the Democratic side, Doug Applegate (who ran against Issa back in 2016), even though they both had rather progressive policies. Levin ended 2017 having raised \$1.225 million from 11,000 contributions, having the best results among the Democratic candidates (Levin, 2018).

Then 2018 came and it began with shocking news that Issa would not seek re-election (SCTimes, 2018). This meant much easier job for the Democrats and Levin seemed to be leading in the party polls. Although his Instagram profile and campaign may not seem impressive, it is interesting how he tried to unify the content from the three most important platforms (meaning Twitter, Facebook and Instagram), by sharing screenshots of Facebook events or tweets there. The analysis of social media activity also shows that his profile tended to share images depicting endorsements, campaign rallies and calls for volunteers. There is a really good work by Jacob R. Ausubel related to this subject, which analysed the Twitter posts of House of Representatives candidates back in 2018. Levin appears as one of the most active Twitter users among candidates (at least the one that knew how to use keywords in order to attract buzz). For example, word “Trump” appears in over five hundred tweets of Levin; what is more, “gun violence” term also appears in his tweets more than the median (2019: 59).

Levin also got endorsements from Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters, or Ironworkers Local 229, which shows why attracting the votes of key local labor organizations is important in order to win he votes (Levin, 2018a). The fundraising numbers were still showing that Levin is the only candidate, who ran a grassroots campaign, with Applegate's numbers getting worse and Sara Jacobs being dependent on her money and \$250,000, which her

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grandfather transferred to her SuperPAC (Levin, 2018b).

After nonpartisan primary for CA-49 on June 5, 2018, it became clear that Mike Levin will be running against Diane Harkey, who emerged as the strongest Republican opponent. It is worth mentioning that Levin only won with Jacobs by 3,000 votes and Applegate's result was only 8,000 votes worse, which shows how divided Democratic voters were (Ballotpedia, 2018). Although there was only one survey ran by Public Opinion Strategies that shown Harkey winning in the polls, Levin's campaign was still getting nationwide traction because of the number of small donors and in-district volunteers. Furthermore, it became one of the symbols of upcoming competitive midterms, which were supposed to show the level of support for Trump's administration (Levin, 2018c). By the near end of campaign, 93% of Levin's funds came from individual donors and he has consistently been refusing the support from corporate PACs. Levin outraised Harkey by \$3.1 million over the campaign trail, having earned \$4.3 million for the campaign. What is more, independent groups spent 500,000 on campaign materials supporting him (Castellano, 2018).

NBC 7 San Diego ran a debate between the candidates on October 2, 2018, which perfectly presents Levin's policies and how he managed to present Harkey as a congresswoman with strong links to Trump even though over the campaign trail she tended to distance herself from Trump's most controversial stances. Over the 56-minute material, Levin stressed environment and immigration issues as the most important for the district, also highlighting his ability for bipartisan work on legislation (C-Span, 2018). Eventually, Levin won by nearly 13% margin.

***CA-39: funding political campaign with money from the lottery***

What did CA-49 and CA-39 have in common in 2018? The retiring incumbents and Hillary Clinton carrying these districts during presidential elections in 2016. This district consists of parts of Orange, Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties and has 32.6% Hispanic population. Incumbent Ed Royce announced his retirement via Twitter on January 8, 2018, which increased the Democratic chances to flip the seat. This was quickly confirmed by The Cook Political Report, which changed the status of the race from Lean Republican to Lean Democratic (CPR, 2018). Cisneros's campaign was not as interesting as Levin's, but it shows both similar and different approach to campaign financing. On one hand, he refused the help from Super PACs and focused on small donations, but on the other hand self-financed his campaign with over

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\$9,000,000 (Bowman & Pathé, 2018). How would that be possible? In 2010, Cisneros won in a lottery, which allowed him to engage in politics and establish scholarships for Latinx students at GWU and the University of Southern California. Along with his wife, he also established a Generation First Degree Pico Rivera organization, which's goal was to earn at least one college degree in each household in Pico Rivera (Cisneros, 2019). Cisneros announced his candidacy on July 17, 2017 and stressed that Royce's vote to repeal 2010 health care law was the main reason for him to run (Garcia, 2017).

Just like in CA-49, some of the Democrats were afraid that the number of Democratic candidates in the open primary may be too large, which would result in two Republican candidates going into the final battle for the Congressional seat. This was especially worrying, as Cisneros and his main rival – Andy Thorburn (also a millionaire!) focused on negative campaign ads aiming at each other. Candidates focused on TV ads and flyers, taking rather aggressive approach (Schneider, 2018). Cisneros also got endorsements from labor unions and organizations, such as Orange County Labor Federation or California Labor Federation. The materials from his official website depict mostly the endorsements earned by the candidate. It is worth noticing that the website has Spanish and Chinese version and is integrated with candidate's profile on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Flickr (!), on which he has 0 followers and follows 0 accounts. With Latinx and Asians being nearly half of the voters in the district, it is crucial to deliver the message in as many ways as possible.

Cisneros managed to create one campaign ad that can be coined as “viral” as up to date it has 147,530 views. It is a negative campaign ad aimed at his Republican rival Young Kim, showing that she has taken over \$223,000 from insurance companies. It also links Kim to Donald Trump's policies (Gil Cisneros For Congress, 2018). It is worth noting that Cisneros's Instagram campaign account, although not very popular (slightly over 1,400 followers by the end of 2020 campaign trail), has been posting consequently campaign material such as endorsements, photos from rallies and graphics encouraging voters to register. Since September 2018 the account started to get little traction, as the posts started to receive more than 40 reactions (Cisneros, 2018).

Being previously a member of the Republican Party (until 2008), Cisneros stressed that he is an independent and first-time politician. At that time, the Democratic Party decided to target Asian voters in Orange and Los Angeles Counties, which usually tended to split the votes rather evenly between the Democrats and Republicans. Some might even say that they are the “last

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undecided voters” in the US. Nic Jordan, who worked for Cisneros as a campaign manager was one of the few Asian Americans having such position in a congressional race. Cisneros targeted Asian American voters both through digital campaigning and ground campaigning, for instance, his staffers contacted voters on social media platforms popular among described communities: Chinese staffers used WeChat or Line and Korean staffers contacted potential voters via KakaoTalk, which is popular among Korean diaspora (Hsu, 2020). Asian American staffers also kept him company during canvassing in order to reach out as many people as possible, also those who may previously have felt excluded.

***CA-48: country clubs and big donations from uncle Bloomberg***

The third case study in this article is Harley Rouda's 2018 campaign to unseat Dana Rohrabacher in CA-48 district. What's impressive is that Rohrabacher was a 15-term incumbent, however, just like in previous districts won over by the Democrats, a wind of change started to blow in 2016, when Hillary Clinton won in this district by 1.7%. The *National Commitee for an Effective Congress* (2018) deemed CA-48 as a pick-up opportunity because of the quite high level of Hispanic and Asian voters in the district: proportionally 13.9% and 18.0%. This district lies along the coastal strip of Orange County and is full of marinas, housing estates and country clubs (Gumbel, 2018). This seemed like a perfect environment for the Republicans, but it appears that the combination of the demographic shifts and Trump's policies started to have affect on the decision-making patterns of the voters.

Rouda did not have any exceptional campaign and no medium mentions that, but being a Republican-turned-Democrat (he supported Kasich's presidential bid in 2016), it was easier for him to reach out to moderate Republicans and Independents. Without a doubt it helped that Rohrabacher himself has quite many controversial stances, such as supporting Putin's work or endorsing the idea of property sellers refusing to sell houses to homosexual buyers. The number of registered Republicans has also been decreasing in this district from around 44% in 2014 to near 40% in 2018 (Gumbel, 2018).

Before the primaries, Democrats were worried that they could miss out the general elections, once again due to the fact that California law organizes nonpartisan primary in which top-two candidates reach the general election. Rouda's main opponent, Dr. Hans Keirstead, lost narrowly to him, receiving only 125 votes less and securing the third place (Lemieux, 2018). It is worth noting though, that Rouda has also stressed the importance of grassroots organizing and

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refused the support of corporate organizations, he got the endorsement of Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (on contrary to state party structures, which supported Keirstead) (Lemieux, 2018). In May 2018, Rouda was helped by DCCC with an ad buy on TV; the organization has poured \$1.7 million into the race in order to support him (Golshan, 2018).

During the nonpartisan primary, Rohrabacher got 30% of the vote, which was the lowest share of any incumbent in California. What is more, he got around 52,000 votes, similar number to the 2014 midterm primary, even though the turnout in 2018 was doubled (Mai-Duc, 2018). Rouda in his political programme adapted quite liberal stances such as Medicare for All, free tuition in public colleges and \$15 federal minimum wage, however, instead of framing it as a progressive agenda, he was trying to convince the voters that such moves are fiscally responsible (Medina, 2018). During the final stage of the campaign, Michael Bloomberg helped Rouda by fueling his bid with \$4.4 million spent on ads targeting Rohrabacher. Millionaire also helped Katie Porter with her bid, which will be studied in next subchapter (Finnegan, 2018). Eventually, Rouda won by a 7.2% margin.

His Instagram account was posting plenty of campaign material, especially photos from rallies, along with some videos on which Rouda was tackling policies he wanted to take care of once winning the elections. Pictures of him speaking to the crowd received the biggest amount of reactions, but it is also worth noting that there was a picture of an Australian Shepherd posing with Rouda's banner, which received quite a lot likes (161, compared to usual rate of 80-100) (Rouda, 2018).

### ***CA-45: single mom against the establishment***

The final district that resides in Orange County and was won over by the Democrats is CA-45, in which Katie Porter has made an upset by winning with the incumbent Mimi Walters. CA-45 covered south-central Orange County and was won by Hillary Clinton during presidential elections in 2016 by 5% of votes. According to the 2010 census, 21% of citizens living in this district were Asian and 18.7% of Hispanic descent (Ballotpedia, 2018). Inarguably, of all the politicians presented in this research, Porter is the most progressive one: she ran on a platform of ending the corruption in Washington, by getting big money out of politics, limiting outside spending and implementing full disclosure and making the Congress and Representatives available and accessible to people. What is more, she has been a protegee of Elizabeth Warren and Kamala Harris, who both appeared in her first TV ad called *Two Senators* on May 2, 2018

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(Porter, 2018). By the end of 2017, Porter managed to raise \$740,000 in donations, outnumbering Mimi Walters (Kwiatkowski, 2018). Erica Kwiatkowski, her campaign manager stated that traditional ways of campaigning were a key aspect of winning the votes, as people in CA-45 were not really used to door-to-door campaigning or phone calls. Technology was the leading factor allowing the volunteers to be met with greet during such visits, as people working on Porter's campaign were asked to install the app that had maps showing on which door should the volunteers knock on (mostly Democratic and Independent). What is more, the app was collecting data on the degree of support for the candidate (Gonzalez, 2018). Porter has also raised the biggest amount of money from small donors, when compared to other three cases, as she received \$1.17 million, making them 23% of fundraisers (Burns et al., 2018).

Although many Democrats believed that in order to unseat the Republicans in Orange County, the candidate needs to run on a rather moderate ticket that would appeal to undecided voters, Porter was openly supporting Medicare-for-all, which shows a dramatic change in how the Democratic Party started to perceive the healthcare system. This would not be possible if it was not for Bernie Sanders's presidential bid in 2016, who was the first progressive candidate, who was this close of winning the presidential primaries. Porter's main opponent, Dave Min was the only Democratic candidate from this district to be not on board with single-payer healthcare system (Scott, 2018). Min, who ran a negative campaign on Porter and got the state party's support, lost to Porter during the nonpartisan primaries by slightly over 5,000 votes (Ballotpedia, 2018). Democratic candidate could easily play with the anti-Trump sentiment that more moderate voters may have had, as Walters had almost a 100% track record of voting with him and supported the Republican health care replacement (Cadelago, 2017). This was crucial, as many women (as a response), started to engage in politics when the Trump era began. Female candidates in Democratic primaries were surging in 2018; in primaries that featured at least one woman and man (not incumbent), women were winning in 71% of cases (Ball, 2018). Being a single mother with three kids, Porter could appeal to suburban women and her voice was much more heard.

Her Instagram posts from 2018 campaign are quite interesting, considering the fact that on most of the posts, Porter is posing with women endorsing her, to underline the empowering message and show which group would she be representing. Barack Obama is the first man to be posing with her and it is the sixty-third post on this profile (along with the copy informing about the endorsement from a former POTUS). In April, 2018, the account started to post *I'm with Katie*

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graphics, which shows various women and organization (such as Moms Demand Action or Emily's List) endorsing the Democratic candidate (Porter, 2018).

What also attracted my attention regarding this campaign, was the use of celebrity endorsement power in order to get out the vote. It is not that common in lesser media-covered Congressional districts to have one's campaign events attended by the celebrities – however, Porter had the Olympic figure skater Michelle Kwan appearing at the Ballot Drop Off Rally on October 30, 2018. It is especially interesting taking into consideration that this can be perceived as aim at attracting the attention of Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders, who are leaning Democratic, but are not really representing this at the polls (Goodyear, 2018). It is also worth noting that Katie Porter was the first candidate supported by EMILY's List, the political action committee supporting pro-choice female candidates (EMILY, 2017). Eventually, Porter won the elections with Walters by 4.2% of the vote.

### ***How to tackle Republicans during future elections? How can Republicans respond?***

What lessons can be learned from these four cases? Without a doubt each of them should be treated separately, but there are some patterns that can be seen, especially if one compares it to the 2020 Congressional elections. Out of four freshmen, only Mike Levin and Katie Porter successfully defended their seats during the 2020 campaign trail. Although 2020 meant a brand-new campaign, it is quite easy to connect the dots having analysed this material, as both of them really looked as if they are running for Congress to make a change; this helped them to organize grassroots movements and fundraisers consisting of small single-donor payments. Of course, Cisneros and Rouda were also focusing on such campaigning tactics, but their bids were also largely financed from their own wallet.

Of all the candidates, Mike Levin can be argued as the one, who knew best how to present himself in the social media during the campaign. From the very beginning his goal was to generate buzz, so he would be recognizable; what is more, he used the help of social media specialists to create a key visual of the campaign and to target the voters. However, the analysis of these four campaigns shows that all of the candidates focused on traditional ways of canvassing, which seems to be more effective when talking about local elections. Without a doubt, the way that Gil Cisneros's campaign reached out to the voters through messengers typical for their surroundings should be set up as an example on how to diversify the digital communication with voters. Of course, it needs to be taken into consideration that this is a US

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campaign, where ethnic diversity plays an important part in the analysis of voting patterns.

What is interesting is the fact that two candidates that managed to defend their seats in 2020 were the ones, who were running for a rather progressive agenda, which, having in mind, specifics of Orange County politics show how grassroots organizing is especially working with more liberal program. Katie Porter is currently one of the most recognizable congresswomen, working closely with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and one may assume that progressive organizations will push for her expanded role in California politics, especially having considered the fact that there would be an available Senate seat after Kamala Harris' becoming a vice-president. A conclusion can be derived from these four cases, suggesting that the candidates that have more clear political views, can energize the political base in much better way. This of course depends on the constituency and its specifics plus demographic determinants, as in conservative states like Wyoming or Louisiana, moderate ticket would be more efficient. Furthermore, Cisneros and Rouda are millionaires and ex-Republicans, so it would be much harder for them to position themselves as progressives. Even though they managed to run on a grassroots platform and got really impressive share of small donations from voters, they mostly used their own money to fund their campaigns.

Obviously, this study mainly focused on the use of new media during political campaigns and when analysing the whole effect the campaign may have on the electoral outcome, one needs to consider political climate, demographic tendencies, economy and local issues that may be of bigger importance than in other constituencies. Nevertheless, from most of the cases, one can extract some fruitful conclusions, as candidates tried to reach out to different groups with different tools. It should be strongly advised to future campaigns to have a look at these cases, as on one hand, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook may be the easiest platforms to share political content and engage with the followers, but among some communities, different message sharing platforms may be the key to reaching out to the voter.

Where does the Democratic Party in the Orange County stand in 2021? Efforts to turn Orange County blue, once quite possible to imagine, two years later provided Democrats with not-so-much optimistic views. Of course, O.C. can be perceived as “purple” and California is going to be more and more diverse, but Republicans already learned their lesson and knew how to respond to this trend. That is why Cisneros's and Rouda's seat was picked up by two Korean-American GOP-affiliated women, who became the first Korean-American women in the history of Congress. This turn of events may be for some surprising, but let's not forget the fact that

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being an ethnic minority does not mean voting for the Democratic Party. Plenty of factors need to be taken into consideration when counting on either Asian-American, Hispanic-American or African-American vote, but it is important to stress that these groups should not be perceived as one organism and its voting patterns can only be tracked after a broader study is conducted.

Actually, Young Kim's and Michelle Steel's success in CA-39 and CA-48 show how the Republicans should be responding to the party's crisis. They reached out to Democrats and Independents and targeted Asian-American voters through messages, mails and e-mails in Korean, Chinese or Vietnamese (Sragow, 2020). Without a doubt, Orange County will still be competitive for both of the parties, having considered both changing demographics and the issue that Republican candidates did not have Donald Trump on their ticket in 2020 and (most probably will not have) in 2024, which in some purple districts may have been a kiss of death in 2018 and 2020.

Overall, although there are signs that competitive races for the seat in the House of Representatives may gather at least statewide attention, the modern interest in American politics is not that decentralized yet. Only three years ago in 2018, national news outlets and media from abroad started to get interested in Senate toss-up races, thanks to the growing role of internet and image as a part of politician's campaign. Incoming midterm elections in 2022 should keep up with this trend with Governor races in Georgia and Texas being predicted as the most interesting ones, as Stacey Abrams and Beto O'Rourke will definitely want to establish themselves as not only one of the most recognizable and media-oriented members of the Democratic Party, but also the ones that can set an example how to win in states that are not particularly easy for the Democrats. This may be especially hard having considered rather weak ratings of Biden's administration, but changing demography and modern migration patterns within the United States can have the influence on the eventual results.

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