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ON THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The Magnitude of the 2008 Democratic Victory: By the Numbers

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The Magnitude of the 2008 Democratic Victory: By the Numbers

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Abstract

This essay explores the scope of the Democratic Party's victory in the 2008 elections by comparing it to other U.S. elections since 1896. Three conclusions are drawn from the analysis: (1) that Obama's personal victory, though significant, was far from being massive, or even unusual, by historical standards; (2) that the Democratic congressional victory of 2008, relative to the midterm election of 2006, falls in the upper range of congressional victories in a presidential year; (3) that the Democrats' victory becomes more impressive in light of its reversal of the 2004 election, which represented the high-water mark for Republicans since 1928. The essay also briefly considers whether and in what sense the Democrats' victory might have inaugurated a party realignment.

KEYWORDS: 2008 presidential election

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People commonly exaggerate the magnitude of events that take place in their day, probably to flatter themselves about the significance of their own lives and times. Journalists, keen to feed the public what it wants, contribute mightily to this amplification. This tendency to inflate was on vivid display in many interpretations of the Democrats' 2008 electoral victory, which ranged from claims that it was "unprecedented" and "historic" to unqualified assertions that it was "a genuinely realigning election." *Time* magazine went so far as to suggest a likeness to Franklin Roosevelt's victory of 1932, printing a cover that morphed Barack Obama's head onto a iconic photo of FDR sporting his thirties style "lid" and driving a convertible.¹

The 2008 Democratic triumph was no doubt impressive—how much so will be seen in a moment—but it was far from being massive, or even unusual, by historical standards. Looking at the record, even if that can prove tedious, provides some perspective. There have been twenty-nine presidential contests since 1896, a year many scholars use as the starting point of "modern politics." Barack Obama won the presidency with a share of the popular vote of just under 53 percent, which ranks fourteenth, or at the median (Table 1). His margin of victory over his rival (6.9 percent) ranks as the nineteenth largest, or slightly below the median. Finally, his electoral vote percentage (a figure almost always magnified relative to the popular vote) was 67.8, or seventeenth among the twenty-nine contests.

The most helpful figure in determining the magnitude of a presidential victory is the popular vote margin because it "controls" for the problem of third-party candidacies. On the basis of this figure, presidential elections can be sorted into five different categories: (1) those near to dead heats (a margin of less than two percent), which must include George W. Bush's election of 2000, when he lost the national popular vote; (2) the squeakers (a margin of 3 to 5 percent), of which George W. Bush's 2004 victory was the squeakiest; (3) the moderately competitive races (6 to 9 percent); (4) the big wins (10 to 12 percent), with Ronald Reagan's 1980 victory over Jimmy Carter being the most recent; and (5) the landslides (more than 13 percent), the largest and also the least memorable of which was Warren G. Harding's 26-point thumping of James M. Cox in 1920.²

Obama's victory fits squarely into the moderately competitive category, which happens to correspond to the "feel" of the race as experienced by the American public. As the election neared, all the major polls had Obama ahead, but a few were at or near the margin of error. A last-minute swing of only two or three points, in just the right places, could have produced an upset.³ This outside possibility gave the last weeks of the 2008 election an air of expectation that kept many riveted to the press coverage and the blogosphere. Some appear to be suffering symptoms of withdrawal to this day.

Table 1
The Magnitude of Presidential Victories

Margin	Election	Winning Candidate	Losing Candidate	Winners %	Electoral College %	Senate midterm	House midterm	Senate -4 yrs	House -4 yrs
Dead Heats									
-0.5	2000	G. W. Bush (R)	Gore (D)	47.9	50.4	-5	-2	-5	-7
0.2	1960	Kennedy (D)	Nixon (R)	49.7	56.4	-1	-20	13	29
0.7	1968	Nixon (R)	Humphrey (D)	43.4	55.9	7	4	11	52
2.1	1976	Carter (D)	Ford (R)*	50.1	55.2	1	1	5	50
Squeakers									
2.5	2004	G. W. Bush (R)	Kerry (D)	50.7	53.2	4	3	5	11
3.1	1916	Wilson (D)	Hughes (R)	49.2	52.2	-2	-16	3	-77
4.3	1896	McKinley (R)	Bryan (D)	51	60.6	5	-48	9	-12
4.5	1948	Truman (D)	Dewey (R)	49.6	57.1	9	75	-3	21
Moderately Competitive									
5.6	1992	Clinton (D)	Bush (R)	43	68.8	1	-9	2	-2
6.1	1900	McKinley (R)	Bryan (D)	51.7	65.3	0	13	7	-6
6.9	2008	OBAMA (D)	McCain (R)	52.9	67.8	7	23	12	54
7.5	1944	F. Roosevelt D	Dewey (R)	53.4	81.4	0	20	-9	-25
7.7	1988	G. Bush (R)	Dukakis (D)	53.4	79.2	0	-2	-8	-7
8.5	1908	Taft (R)	Bryan (D)	51.6	66.5	-1	-4	2	-32
8.5	1996	Clinton (D)	Dole	49.2	70.4	-3	2	-12	-52
Big Wins									
9.7	1980	Reagan (R)	Carter (D)	50.8	90.9	12	34	15	49
10	1940	F. Roosevelt (D)	Willkie (R)	54.7	84.6	-3	5	-10	-67
10.8	1952	Eisenhower (R)	Stevenson (D)	55.2	83.2	1	22	6	50

Landslides									
14.4	1912	Wilson (D)	Taft (R)**	41.8	82.0	7	61	19	119
15.4	1956	Eisenhower (R)	Stevenson (D)	57.4	86.1	0	-2	-1	-20
17.5	1928	Hoover (R)	Smith (D)	58.2	83.6	8	32	2	23
17.7	1984	Reagan (R)	Mondale (D)	58.8	97.6	-1	16	0	-10
17.8	1932	F. Roosevelt (D)	Hoover (R)	57.4	88.9	12	97	20	149
18.8	1904	T. Roosevelt (R)	Parker (D)	56.4	70.6	1	44	2	51
22.6	1964	Johnson (D)	Goldwater (R)	61.1	90.3	2	36	4	32
23.2	1972	Nixon (R)	McGovern (D)	60.7	96.7	-2	12	-1	0
24.3	1936	F. Roosevelt D	Landon (R)	60.8	98.5	7	12	17	21
25.2	1924	Coolidge (R)	Davis (D)	54	71.9	1	22	-5	-55
26.2	1920	Harding (R)	Cox (D)	60.3	76.1	10	62	17	88

*Incumbents are in **Bold**.

** In 1912, although Taft was the incumbent, Theodore Roosevelt actually came in second to Woodrow Wilson. Wilson's margin of victory is thus calculated for the differences between him and Roosevelt.

Sources: Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections, <http://www.uselectionatlas.org/>; Changes in Senate party strength were calculated from the official U.S. Senate website, http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/history/one_item_and_teasers/partydiv.htm; Changes in House party strength were calculated from: <http://www.emailthecongress.com/party-strength-house.html>; *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*; Congressional Research Service; Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/partyDiv.html

The actual outcome was in no way surprising. When the television networks reported early on election eve that Obama won Pennsylvania, a state that John McCain needed in order to pull off his improbable inside straight, it was clear the race was over. Unlike 2004 (or 2000), there would be no waiting until the wee hours of the morning (or for five weeks) to learn who had won. Better still, there was no talk of recounts or of litigation; the armies of lawyers that were at the ready, their briefs fixed like bayonets, were demobilized and sent back to their barracks. Something that Americans who had come of political age since 1996 had never seen came to pass: the election of a president without accusations of perfidy or ballot manipulation.

To take a more fine-grained measure of Barack Obama's victory, it is helpful to look at the subset of elections of *first-term* presidential victories (Table 2). Not surprisingly, the larger victory margins have tended to occur in cases where a popular incumbent is re-elected, such as Ronald Reagan in 1984 or Franklin Roosevelt in 1936, while more of the narrower margins, including all of the "dead heats," take place in elections involving candidates ascending to the office for the first time. In this more limited group, Obama fares slightly better, ranking tenth among the sixteen first-term presidents. His victory was not as large as Ronald Reagan's in 1980 or George H.W. Bush's in 1988, but it was greater than Jimmy Carter's in 1976, Bill Clinton's in 1992, and, of course, George W. Bush's in 2000. Indeed, Obama had the largest margin of victory of any incoming *Democratic* president since FDR in 1932.

Analyzing the scope of congressional victories in a historical perspective is trickier, as much depends on the position from which a party begins:⁴ it is harder to pick up seats when a party already has many of them than when it is starting from a low base. In addition, more has changed in the system of congressional elections across time, including the direct election of senators, which began in 1914, and the rules and practices governing the drawing of district boundaries for House seats. For what it suggests, however, the Democratic congressional victory of 2008, relative to the midterm election of 2006, falls in the upper range of congressional victories in a presidential year (see Table 1). The pickup of seats in the Senate (now at 7, with the Minnesota seat still undeclared) is the sixth largest since 1896 (although tied with five other elections), and the tenth largest for the House (23 seats with one seat still being decided).⁵ Looking at the results of the Senate and the House together, there have been only six presidential election years in which a party has either held its own or gained more seats in both the Senate and the House (1948, 1980, 1912, 1928, 1932 and 1920).

Table 2
First Term Presidential Victories Ranked By Margin of Victory

Rank	Election	Winner	Loser	Winners Percentage	Margin of Victory	Electoral College Percentage
1.	1920	Harding (R)	Cox (D)	60.3	26.2	76.1
2.	1924	Coolidge (R)	Davis (D)	54	25.2	73.8
3.	1932	F. Roosevelt (D)	Hoover (R)	57.4	17.8	88.9
4.	1928	Hoover (R)	Smith (D)	58.2	17.7	83.6
5.	1912	Wilson (R)	Taft (R)	41.8	14.5	82.0
6.	1952	Eisenhower (R)	Stevenson (D)	55.2	10.8	83.2
7.	1980	Reagan (R)	Carter (D)	50.8	9.7	90.9
8.	1908	Taft (R)	Bryan (D)	51.6	8.5	66.5
9.	1988	G. Bush (R)	Dukakis (D)	53.4	7.7	79.2
10.	2008	Obama (D)	McCain (R)	52.9	6.9	67.8
11	1992	Clinton (D)	Bush (R)	43	5.6	68.8
12.	1896	McKinley (R)	Bryan (D)	51	4.3	60.6
13	1976	Carter (D)	Ford (R)	50.1	2.1	55.2
14.	1968	Nixon (R)	Humphrey (D)	43.4	0.7	55.9
15	1960	Kennedy (D)	Nixon (R)	49.7	0.2	56.4
16.	2000	G. W. Bush (R)	Gore (D)	47.8	-0.5	50.5

The Bigger Story

The statistical portrait just provided depicts what is on its own terms a substantial Democratic victory in 2008. Yet to grasp the full significance of the election, it needs to be looked at in light of what happened since the previous presidential contest. The combined impact of 2008 with the 2006 midterm election dramatically transformed the political scene in America, turning a red nation into a blue one. Yet this reversal of party fortunes is all the more important because of what the 2004 election meant for the Republican Party. That election represented the high-water mark for the GOP since 1952, when Dwight Eisenhower was chosen (and arguably since 1928, when Herbert Hoover won).

Granted, the Republicans since 1952 had won the presidency by much greater margins, including three landslides (Eisenhower in 1956, Nixon in 1972, and Reagan in 1984). But unless one counts 2000, when the Republicans limped into control of all three institutions while losing the popular vote for the

presidency and managing only a tie in the Senate, 2004 was the only election since 1952 in which Republicans emerged holding a majority in all three branches. (By contrast, Democrats had majorities in all institutions following the elections of 1960, 1964, 1976, 1992, and now, of course, 2008.) And 2004 was the only time since 1952 that Republicans won each branch and gained ground in each institution. With 55 senators, Republicans equaled their largest number in that chamber since 1929 (the GOP had achieved that number on three other occasions, from 1987-89, 1997-1999 and 1999 to 2001), and they secured their largest majority in the House since 1929.

The Republican victory in 2004 fulfilled at long last one of the hopes of the “new” Republican Party that had been born under Ronald Reagan in 1980. Beginning in 1980, the Republicans achieved some notable victories: Reagan’s own election along with a Republican Senate (but still a Democratic House), and the stunning 1994 GOP congressional victory in both the House and Senate during Bill Clinton’s first presidential term. Yet they had never attained a majority across the board. Many Republicans, and not just Republicans, looked at 2004 as a plateau on which the GOP would consolidate and begin a climb to a more commanding majority status. The titles of some of the books published after the election, including *One Party Country* and *Building Red America*, were indicative of this assessment.⁶ There was much speculation that the GOP could win that most coveted and elusive of prizes in American politics (if it exists at all): the holy grail of a favorable partisan realignment.

By 2006 these GOP hopes had been dashed, and entering 2008 Republicans were fighting just to hang on. The explanation for the decline and fall of the Republican empire, short-lived as it was, is to be found largely on the streets of Baghdad and New Orleans. George W. Bush lost the mandate of heaven sometime in the period between 2005 and 2006, and the Republicans in Congress never mastered the art of being a responsible governing party. The magnitude of the partisan change that occurred in the consecutive elections of 2006 and 2008 is the conclusion to this story. Democrats gained 12 Senate seats and 49 House seats, moving in the process—in 2006—from minority to majority status in both chambers. After the 2008 elections, the Democratic congressional majorities surpassed by a significant margin the Republican majorities after 2004 (Table 3). Since 1932, Republicans have barely had a moment in the sun.

There are many ways to assess congressional gains made since the last presidential election (see the final two columns of Table 1, or Table 3). But however one looks at it, the 2008 Democratic “surge” for consecutive elections (with gains in both elections) is striking. It would be ranked about fifth, on a rough par with what Republicans achieved with Reagan’s victory in 1980, but well short of the party gains that occurred at the time of FDR’s triumphs in 1932 or 1936, Harding’s in 1920, and Wilson’s in 1912.

Table 3
Changes in Congressional Party Strength: 2000-2008
 Republicans-Democrats-Independents

Year	Senate	House
2000	50 R – 50 D	221 R – 212 D – 2 I
2002	51 R – 48 D – 1 I	229 R – 204 D – 1 I
2004	55 R – 44 D – 1 I	232 R – 201 D – 1 I
2006	49 R – 50 D 1 I	198 R – 234 D
2008	41 R – 58 D 1 I (1 TBA)	178 R – 256 D (1 TBA)

As is well-known, the domestic policymaking process in the U.S. is normally characterized by slow action, a result that derives from the structural requirement of consent by three power centers (the presidency, the Senate, and the House). There are occasional exceptions, such as Wilson's New Freedom, FDR's New Deal, and LBJ's Great Society, when the policy process temporarily resembles parliamentary governments and huge new legislative programs are enacted. These periods are associated with some of the surge elections noted above. Of course, the incoming president must be one who wants an active agenda, which excludes Harding and Eisenhower, as well as one who controls a solid majority in both houses, a factor that slowed Reagan in 1980. Add a crisis (or at least talk of one) and the conditions that favor a major policy shift are enhanced still further. Obama will enter the White House with some of these conditions fulfilled, but with nothing approaching the size and scope of the personal victory of these other presidents.

It is a sobering lesson to some of those who experienced these surges to discover how quickly they can be reduced or overturned. The Eisenhower government elected in 1952 won control of all three national electoral institutions by picking up one seat in the Senate and 22 in the House. Two years later, the Republicans were in the minority in both chambers, losing 18 seats in the House and 1 in the Senate. In 1982, two years after Reagan won the White House and Republicans gained 12 seats (and the majority) in the Senate plus 34 in House, the GOP gained 1 seat in the Senate but gave back 26 seats in the House. In 1920, Harding's landslide brought in its wake 10 new Republican Senators and 62 House members, only to see the party lose 6 seats in the Senate two years later and a whopping 77 in the House (though still enough in both cases to keep the majority).

Democrats in comparable circumstances have had more luck, or shown better skill. In 1912, Wilson's coattails brought in 7 new Senators and 61 Representatives. The 1914 election produced mixed results, as Democrats picked up 4 more seats in the Senate but slipped back in the House to where they were before 1912, losing 61 seats but still controlling the chamber. The elections of the 1930s were so overwhelmingly favorable to one party as to set this period apart from all others. In 1934, Democrats continued their rout of the GOP, winning 9 more seats in the House and 10 seats in the Senate. Just when it looked like the Democrats could go no higher, Roosevelt's second landslide of 1936 led to a gain of 12 more seats in the House, reducing the GOP to a paltry 88 members, and 7 more seats in the Senate, shrinking Republican Conference meetings to the size of a modest dinner party (at 16 members).⁷

It is no wonder, then, that some of President-elect Obama's enthusiasts in the media have him riding in FDR's convertible. Even if more frequent historical patterns hold, and Democrats should slip in the 2010 congressional elections, they would have to suffer a huge reversal to lose control of either chamber. The most likely scenario at the moment is that Democrats will probably lose some House seats but hold or improve their position in the Senate. The House GOP has nowhere to go but up, as there is a fairly large quotient of Democrats holding seats in districts that voted for Bush and McCain. It is also hard to see how the number of Republicans in the House can get much smaller, as there are only five members that won seats in districts that voted for Kerry and Obama. The 2010 Senate elections look much more favorable to the Democrats, as some older Republicans are likely to retire and very few of the Democrats up for reelection appear (for now at least) to be vulnerable.⁸ In this respect, although Obama's victory was less impressive than Wilson's, 2008 appears structurally to be closest to 1912 in terms of the large Democratic congressional majorities that can sustain some losses and still be workable governing entities.

Is 2008 a Realignment Election?

Party realignment is currently among the most contested concepts in political science, with some arguing that the idea should be retired altogether, and others holding that, shorn of certain outsized connotations, it remains helpful.⁹ Whatever the state of the academic debate, journalists and pundits have not retreated from hauling the bounty of political science theorizing into the political arena. Many liberal commentators, not surprisingly, were quick to declare the Obama victory a realignment. According to *Washington Post* columnist Harold Meyerson, Obama's margins "among decisive and growing constituencies make clear that this was a genuinely realigning election."¹⁰ For John Judis of *The New Republic*, the election "is the culmination of a Democratic realignment that began

in the 1990s, was delayed by September 11, and resumed with the 2006 election.”¹¹

Dispensing with the more fantastic notions that some of the originators of the concept ascribed to it, a realignment can be conceived as a major electoral shift in the relative strength of the political parties (and therefore likely to endure for awhile), accompanied or sealed by a shift in the reigning political ideas that set government’s agenda, plus a major change in the direction of public policy. By this definition, it is clear that a “realigning election” can only be determined well after the fact: it is something projected backward in light of an assessment of the performance of an administration following an election like 1932.

Yet even if there are such things as realignments, their significance for electoral outcomes can be greatly exaggerated. They are only part of the story. A realignment is not a guarantee—nowhere close to it—that the favored party will win future elections. American presidential elections are influenced both by an alignment (meaning the tendency of partisans to vote their party preference) *and* by a relatively freestanding assessment by many voters at each election of the performance of the incumbent and the incumbent party, weighed against the merits of an alternative. With the exception of one or two periods in American history, when the alignment may have provided one party with a truly commanding lead over the other, the aligned portion of the electorate is too small relative to the assessing portion to determine the outcome.

What an alignment in a party’s favor provides, therefore, is an advantage, all things being equal. But all things are almost never equal in politics. And since the alignment itself is influenced by ongoing assessments, it too may not endure for very long. The advantage is even countered slightly by the apparent political law that after a certain point, holding power means accumulating grievances more than winning plaudits. If one were to apply, albeit prematurely, the elements of a partisan realignment to the 2008 Democratic victory, then, a case *for* and *against* the claim can be made.

In favor is the argument that Obama’s 7 percent margin has greater significance than usual, since it occurred on the first truly “open” presidential election (one in which no sitting president or vice-president was running) since 1952; since it was accompanied by expanded Democratic congressional majorities; since it comes amidst survey evidence of fall-off in Republican party identification; and finally, since the coalition that helped elect Obama portends longer-term Democratic dominance, because the constituencies that comprise it are growing segments of the electorate. Those constituencies are Latinos, youth, and professionals. According to exit polls, Obama won 66 percent of the Latino vote, a group that is growing, and which was a key to his victories in states like New Mexico, Colorado, and Florida. Obama won 66 percent of voters between the ages of 18-29, which some believe signals their allegiance to the Democratic

party for the longer-term. Obama also appealed enormously to the highly educated (or well-schooled), doing extremely well among voters with advanced degrees.¹²

On the flip side, it has been said that while Obama won in an “open” election, the unpopularity of the incumbent was in fact a huge factor pulling against John McCain; that, as noted, a 7-percent victory in the popular vote was hardly a rout and that but for the (contingent) financial crisis which struck in mid-September, McCain had a good shot; that Obama enjoyed a massive advantage in campaign funds; and that the electoral map did not change all that decisively. Although Obama won striking victories in three states that were not competitive in 2000 or 2004 (Virginia, North Carolina, and Indiana), most of the states (Florida, Ohio, New Hampshire, and New Mexico) that were competitive in the prior two elections remained battlegrounds this year.

In terms of new governing ideas, it appears less that the Democratic Party has anything particularly new on tap than that it is more self-confident in asserting its traditional liberal agenda. One of the striking things about the Obama campaign was that he did not propose a new programmatic direction, such as claiming to be a “New Democrat.” His appeal was largely based on valence issues and themes (like change and post-partisanship) rather than on clearly stated positions. This leaves much to be filled in, which is what is happening as this is written. What cannot be said at this point is that there is evidence of a decisive ideological shift in Americans’ thinking. Exit polls did show that 51 percent of Americans believed government “should do more”—a reversal of the Reagan-era majorities that thought government should do less. But the proportion of voters describing themselves as liberal, moderate and conservative stayed roughly the same compared with four years ago. Andrew Kohut of the Pew Research Center argues that: “This was an election where the middle asserted itself,” and that there was “no sign” of a “movement to the left.”¹³

Events are often more important than elections in shaping the strategies of presidents once they are in office. The current economic crisis has opened the door for an activist agenda far wider than anyone earlier might have imagined. Already, Obama’s newly appointed Chief of Staff, Rahm Emanuel, has claimed: “You never want a serious crisis to go to waste.” To avoid any misunderstanding, he went on, “What I mean by that is an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before.”¹⁴ With an extended honeymoon period about to begin, all await what the marriage between Barack Obama and the American public will beget.

Endnotes

¹ *Time Magazine*, Vol. 172, No. 24, November 24, 2008; Ryan Lizza, “How Obama Won,” *The New Yorker*, November 17, 2008.

² For a categorization of presidential elections on a similar basis, see, Lee Sigelman and Emmet Buell, *Attack Politics: Negative Campaigning in Presidential Elections Since 1960* (Lawrence: Kansas University Press, 2007).

³ None of the major polls had McCain ahead, but a few of them had him within or just beyond the margin of error. For those interested in the polling industry, solace could be found in the fact that an average of the polls, taken by RealClearPolitics, reflected almost exactly the election result. But individual polls were spread out widely.

⁴ Such determinations are also complicated by the fact that during some periods, especially the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a fair number of candidates ran on party tickets other than the Republicans and Democrats. To avoid methodological complications, our calculations are based solely on the gains or losses for Republicans and Democrats.

⁵ The number for the comparisons between 2006 and 2008 are derived from the CNN Election Center. <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2006/> and <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/main.results/#val=H>.

⁶ Tom Hamburger and Peter Wallsten, *One Party Country: The Republican Plan for Dominance in the 21st Century* (New York: Wiley, 2007); Thomas Edsall, *Building Red America: The New Conservative Coalition and the Drive for Permanent Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

⁷ As in Table 1, changes in Senate party strength were calculated from the official U.S. Senate website, http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/history/one_item_and_teasers/partydiv.htm. Changes in House party strength were calculated from <http://www.emailthecongress.com/party-strength-house.html>; *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*; Congressional Research Service; Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/partyDiv.html. Candidates who ran under other labels than Republican or Democrats were left out of the calculations.

⁸ Thomas Schaller, “The Republican Comeback of 2010,” *Salon.com*, December 8, 2008. Accessed at:

<http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2008/12/08/2010/print.html>; Amy Walter, “Is the Democrats’ Momentum Already Sagging?” *National Journal.com*, December 9, 2008.

⁹ David Mayhew, *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of An American Genre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); James W. Ceaser and Andrew Busch, *Red Over Blue: The 2008 Elections in American Politics* (Lanham: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

¹⁰ Harold Meyerson, “A Real Realignment,” *Washington Post*, November 7, 2008, A19.

¹¹ John B. Judis, “America the Liberal,” *The New Republic*, November 5, 2008.

¹² Exit polls accessed at:

<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/polls/#USP00p1>.

¹³ Remarks on The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer, November 5, 2008. See also, Andrew Kohut, “Post-Election Perspectives,” 2nd Annual Warren J. Mitofsky Award Dinner on Behalf of the Roper Center Newseum, Washington DC, November 13, 2008.

¹⁴ Quoted in Gerald F. Seib, “In Crisis, Opportunity for Obama,” *The Wall Street Journal*, November 21, 2008. A video of the interview with Emanuel can be accessed at:

http://www.realclearpolitics.com/video_log/2008/11/emanuel_says_crisis_is_an_oppo.html.