

The Anatomy of President Barack Obama's
General Election Victory in Illinois

By: John S. Jackson
Visiting Professor

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Introduction

On November 4, 2008 the junior Senator from Illinois, Barack Obama, was elected the 44th President of the United States. Obama was the first president to be elected from Illinois since the Civil War era. Of course, Abraham Lincoln was the first and the most famous, and the 16th president was also the first Republican ever to be elected president since the party was only born in 1854. Given Lincoln's stature and reputation as one of the greatest, and perhaps the greatest president in American history, it is not surprising that Obama took every opportunity available during his campaign to link himself with Lincoln. This linkage even continued after the election when in preparation for his inauguration in January of 2009 the president-elect announced that he would use the same Bible for the swearing in ceremony that Lincoln used in 1861, an act which was laden with much symbolism. Ulysses S. Grant was considered to be elected from a political base in Illinois where he had lived for part of his adult life although like all professional military men he had moved around a lot. Ronald Reagan was from Dixon and spent his early years in Illinois; however, he moved to Iowa as soon as he graduated from college, and he won his fame as a movie actor in Hollywood and then as Governor of California. So, while Obama, like Lincoln, was born and raised in another state, his political base and adult life were formed and tempered in the crucible of Illinois politics. Clearly Chicago is Obama's political home, and Springfield is where Obama, like Lincoln before him, learned to ply the legislative craft. So, it was not inappropriate at all for Senator Obama to announce the kick off of his presidential run on a frigid day in February of 2007 by invoking Lincoln and while standing on the steps of the Old State Capitol building in downtown Springfield.

At the time of Obama's announcement relatively few Americans knew who he was, and few of the major commentators gave him much of a chance of attaining the Democratic nomination, much less going all the way to the White House. At the time of Senator Obama's announcement Senator Hillary Clinton, a native of Illinois, was the early leader in all the polls as the most likely Democratic nominee. There would ultimately be a total of eight serious Democratic candidates who announced, with Senator Clinton starting out as the strongest and best known of the Democratic candidates. The story of the marathon race through the Democratic primary season and how Senator Obama wrestled the nomination away from Senator Clinton on the very last primary day in June of 2008, against very long odds, has been recounted by the author in an earlier paper in this series (Jackson, July 2008). That primary season was a very useful prologue for the Obama campaign, and it taught them much about

running on a national stage. The fight for the nomination against Hillary and Bill Clinton was a difficult and draining one; however, that protracted series of contests in individual states across the country was a good proving ground for the Obama campaign, and the contest made him a better candidate and a more competitive candidate in the general election. The current paper brings that earlier story up to date and finishes it for the state of Illinois in the general election of 2008.

The Party Strength and Partisan Realignment Literature Review

There is a significant body of literature in the discipline of political science which is relevant to the study of Obama's victory in Illinois. This body of literature provides the theoretical and conceptual foundation for the empirical research presented later in the paper. There are two basic strands of thought which are interwoven here. The first is the very significant literature on party organizations and what defines them, what functions they perform for the political system, and what makes some party organizations weak and others strong and resilient (Cotter, et al, 1984; Schlesinger, 1991; Aldrich, 1995). Much of that literature is centered on state and local characteristics of party organizations and the different characteristics of the states where they are located. This body of literature goes back to the classic work of V. O. Key, Jr. (Key, 1949) Key took state and local parties and politics to be the building blocks of the national parties and political system, and he made analysis of the states the central focus of much of his seminal work. In fact his greatest academic contributions came in the fields of state and local government in general and southern politics in particular (Key, 1956, and 1949).

Key also made lasting early contributions to the field of party transformations and the role of what he termed "critical elections" in defining the prospects for individual parties to change from minority to majority status (and vice versa) and for party systems to undergo long term and fundamental change (Key, 1955). In the ensuing half century since Key's work there has developed a vast literature on critical elections and on the subjects of party de-alignment and party realignment (Burnham, 1975; Shafer, 1991). Some experts in this genre claim that the United States is long overdue for a fundamental political change which would result in the realignment of the constituent groups associated with the major parties and which would result in a new majority party which could govern the nation and dominate its politics for a political generation or more. The election of 2008 could ultimately prove to be the beginning of such a fundamentally realigning era; however, such basic realignments are rare. The most notable case of realignment in recent American history was when Franklin Roosevelt first assembled the New Deal coalition which became the modern Democratic Party. Roosevelt took office in the eye of the economic storm caused by the Great Depression. One of the key factors in the development of the Roosevelt New Deal coalition which dominated American politics for four

decades was the perception that Roosevelt successfully addressed the challenges of the Great Depression and that the economy slowly healed under his direction. It is perhaps more than coincidence that the nation's current economic crisis is frequently compared to the stresses and dislocations of the 1930s, and Obama's current economic plans for containing the economic chaos in the housing, banking, and automotive industries are being called by some, "The New New Deal". It is arguable as to whether the current economic crisis is really comparable to the Great Depression of the 1930s, and clearly the level of unemployment, for example, is not nearly as extreme as it was in the 1930s. What is clear and unarguable is the fact that the election of Barack Obama in 2008, coupled with the very significant gains made by the Democrats in the United States House and Senate in both 2006 and 2008 give the Democrats an opportunity to govern for at least the next two to four years. And if they govern successfully, if they are seen to meet successfully the challenges presented by the economic crisis of 2008, and if they can manage to wind down the two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan which they inherited from the Bush Administration, the Democrats will reap much political benefit, and they will potentially have an opportunity to fashion a new governing majority party coalition. It is from such moments of perceived crisis that the party realignments of the past have been fashioned.

There have been numerous previous predictions that a new party system is about to be formed and that new majority parties were about to emerge from the cauldron of the very volatile American political scene in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries. The first and one of the most famous modern manifestations of this genre of literature came from Kevin Phillips and his classic work published in 1969. There Phillips predicted the development of a new conservative Republican majority to be fashioned by Richard Nixon, a majority which would be comparable to Roosevelt's New Deal coalition and one which would dominate American politics for a generation or more (Phillips, 1969). Phillips predicted that the center of gravity of this new Republican coalition would be in the realignment of the white South which would emerge from Nixon's "Southern Strategy". This new Republican appeal in the South would cause the white South to give up its seventy five year allegiance to the Democratic Party and form a new attachment to the Republican party, a party loyalty which would be based on the wedge issues associated with race and reaction to the Civil Rights Movement in the South and reinforced by the South's predominantly conservative views and religious values in general. In retrospect Phillips certainly got right the part about the emergence of the South as the central element in the Republican Party's new coalition. Republican presidential candidates have handily carried most southern states since Ronald Reagan's election in 1980. The three instances when the Republicans have failed to carry all of the states of the South, Carter in 1976 and Clinton in 1992 and 1996, are the only recent era cases when the Republican had lost the White House up until 2008. Outside the central cities of the South, most members of the House of Representatives from the South are now conservative Republicans. The U. S. Senate count

from the South also has come to be heavily composed of Republicans. Just before the 2006 elections there were only four Democrats in the U. S. Senate from the South, and two of those were from Arkansas. The election of Republican Governors has become a routine event in many southern states, and many formerly one party state legislative bodies in the South now have Republican majorities or near-majorities. The realignment of the South into the Republican Party, along with its corollary, the realignment of much of the Northeast, and some of the Midwest and the West into the Democratic Party, is the biggest story in American politics for the last four decades of the 20th Century. The elections of 2000 and 2004 show just how advanced that realignment has become. In the two elections of George W. Bush, the Republicans carried every state of the former Confederacy. It was only in 2008 that Barack Obama managed to break that hold by carrying three southern states, North Carolina, Virginia, and Florida breaking the bastion the Republicans had established in presidential politics in that region. That fundamental realignment driven by the South, and the Republican resurgence there, culminated with the election of significant Republican majorities in the U. S. House and Senate in the 1994 mid-term elections. This was the first time in forty years the Republicans had controlled both houses of Congress simultaneously although they had won the Senate in the Regan era between 1981 and 1986. However, the long predicted conservative-Republican realignment was not complete in 1994 with Bill Clinton already in the White House, and Clinton won re-election over Bob Dole handily in 1996. So, the era of divided government, with the White House under control of one party and the legislative branch under control of the other, rather than the unified government that realignment theory requires, continued until the end of the 20th Century.

The election of George W. Bush in 2000, even though it was hotly disputed and not based on a plurality of the popular vote, refueled the discussion of an emerging Republican majority since both houses of Congress were already controlled by the Republicans. This talk of a semi-permanent conservative majority intensified in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the Bush Administration's successful handling of its aftermath. In partial appreciation for that handling, and in a graphic display of the "rally round the flag" syndrome, the American people gave the Republicans a striking victory in the 2002 mid-term congressional elections. The Republican majority in the Senate had been lost temporarily when they lost the vote and allegiance of Senator James Jeffords of Vermont in 2001; however, their Senate majority was restored and augmented and their House majority was increased by the 2002 election results. Based on the 9/11 fallout George W. Bush had the government unified under his party's control after 2002, and he had the opportunity to fashion the policies he wanted, particularly with regard to the most compelling issue of the day, the war in Iraq. In addition, he and his political advisor, Karl Rove, created a very successful strategy for Bush's re-election run in 2004 against the Democrats and against John Kerry. Bush's fifty-one percent popular vote majority in 2004, coupled with the Republicans' continued dominance of the Congressional

majority started renewed public discussion of their ambition for fashioning the long predicted Phillips theory of a new conservative Republican majority that could govern for generations.

The academic and political debate over partisan realignment and which party and which ideology was the most likely to prevail as the new dominant majority has waxed and waned. Some critics have charged that the terms have been overused and that one can only recognize a realigning era in retrospect (Niemi and Weisberg, 1993, 321-332; Shafer, 1991). There is certainly justification to the critique of the retrospective, rather than predictive, nature of the theory. Nevertheless, the concepts continue to have currency in both the academic literature and in journalism and political activist circles. In 2002 two political scientists, John Judis and Ruy Teixeira, weighed into the debate with a prediction that the country was ripe for the emergence of a new majority party, and they contended that the new majority was most likely to be liberal and Democratic (Judis and Teixeira, 2002). This was clearly a contrarian view posited against the classic Kevin Phillips thesis. Judis and Teixeira pointed to population trends like the increasingly heterogeneous immigrant groups coming to the United States from Mexico, Central and South America, and South East Asia and Asia as favoring the Democrats. These population trends are complemented by changes in the economy which increasingly emphasize the importance of higher education, knowledge based jobs and a service based economy. Such jobs are usually located in the large central cities or in the suburban rings around the cities, or in the smaller cities, especially those with major universities located in them. Judis and Teixeira maintained that those essentially urban and metropolitan locations held the keys to the futures of both major parties. They claimed that the Democrats were better positioned to appeal to the voters in such areas than were the Republicans who had become increasingly parochial and narrow in their emphasis on the cultural conservatives who had come to be the dominant wing of the party. Judis and Teixeira termed such areas “the ideopolis” to emphasize their economic dependence on the knowledge and service based industries. They contended that the Democrats were better positioned to make the transition to a majority party and to organize governments for the future because of these demographic and economic trends. In their view, the Republicans had become too focused on their core constituency, and their base had a particular tilt to the South and to the more narrow and intolerant “values voters” endemic to the South and some parts of the Southwest and West. In the case of Illinois specifically, Judis and Teixeira provided the following assessment of the future of the Illinois politics:

“Democrats have gained ground in the ideopolis around Champaign and in Chicago’s outlying ‘collar’ counties, but where Illinois has become irretrievably Democratic is in Chicago and its immediate Cook county suburbs....The greatest increases in population during the 1990s came (in this order) in the four ideopolis counties of Cook, Du Page, Lake, and Will. If this continues, the Democrats’ hold over

bellwether Illinois looks secure for the early twenty-first century” (Judis and Teixeria, 2002, 97 and 103).

Their prediction proved to be prescient for the first decade in Illinois; however, for the nation as a whole, their predictions did not seem to be supported by subsequent events. The results of the mid-term elections of 2002 and the presidential and congressional elections of 2004 heavily favored the Republicans and certainly did not support the Judis and Teixeria predictions. In the aftermath of these Republican victories, there was renewed talk about a new conservative Republican majority that closely resembled the Phillips thesis from over three decades before. However, when the Democrats won both houses of Congress in 2006 and seemed to be facing even more positive prospects for 2008, new interest in the Judis and Teixeria thesis developed. In 2008 the Democrats strengthened their hold on both houses of Congress and Barack Obama won a very substantial popular vote and Electoral College victory. After the 2008 elections, the Democrats had a 59 to 41 seat advantage in the U. S. Senate, counting the two Independents who voted with them, and a 256 to 178 advantage in the House (with one vacancy). Based on these lopsided results the possibility of a long term national Democratic majority coalition became relevant again (Judis, 2008).

Slightly one month after the Democrats’ national election victory, the Democratic Party in Illinois suffered a serious blow to its reputation and perhaps to its statewide prospects for the 2010 elections when the Governor, Rod Blagojevich, was arrested by the FBI for several allegations regarding the so-called “Pay to Play” culture of Illinois politics and for allegedly trying to parlay the U. S. Senate seat recently vacated by President Barack Obama into personal and political gain for the Governor. The party which had been enjoying the reflected glory of the Obama victory was suddenly cast into the shadow of a chief executive under sustained attack by federal officials and held in contempt by many in the mass media and among political elites outside the state. Then Governor Blagojevich named former Attorney General Roland Burris to the open seat in the U. S. Senate, and that act set off a new round of conflict and controversy over whether to seat Burris. While Burris was subsequently seated, the prospects of a very competitive fight for that seat in 2010 loomed. To add to the problems faced by Illinois Democrats, the impeachment trial for Governor Blagojevich resulted in a vote in the House for impeachment and on January 29, 2009 the Governor was convicted by unanimous vote in the Senate and removed from office. This was the first time in Illinois history this had happened, and as Blagojevich left office Lt. Governor Pat Quinn was sworn in. During much of this period the internal divisions of the Democratic Party were very much on public display, and questions about how the Democratic Party had used its majority status and their ability to govern were insistently raised. Things were looking up a bit again for Illinois Republicans for the first time since the 2002 elections, and their prospects for 2010 were certainly enhanced.

The debate over partisan realignment will continue in the academic literature and among political activists and the attentive public. Within the confines of that debate, it is clear that what happens in the big urban and industrial states, like Illinois, and party developments in other Midwestern, Northeastern and Western states is equally important with the historic realignment which has already taken place in the South. Indeed the Deep South is now so much the core of the Republican coalition that any debate over future scenarios about where the Republican Party is going and who will lead it must start with the party's bedrock in the South and its values and interests. What that means for the rest of the country, and for Republican prospects in a non-southern state, like Illinois, and the future of their state level Republican parties, remains more problematic. It is very worthwhile studying a state like Illinois to glean some empirical evidence to bring to bear on the debate about the future of both major parties in 21st Century America.

Patterns of Politics in Illinois

Illinois in 2008 was both typical of other states and in one respect very different. In 2008 Illinois was the home state of Barack Obama and in that respect it was expected to vote very heavily for its favorite son just as Arizona was expected to vote for John McCain. Each state followed that predictable script although the McCain margin in Arizona was less than the Obama margin in Illinois. Illinois has recently been dubbed a "Dark Blue" state by Paul Green one of the state's most widely respected political observers (Green, 2003 and 2007). Green called it that in recognition of the fact that Illinois has been trending more and more toward the Democrats in the first decade of the 21st Century. However, in the last several decades of the 20th Century Illinois was often regarded as a "bellwether state" as the Judis and Teixeira quote above indicated because its economic, social and demographic characteristics made it a microcosm of the nation as a whole. During the Nixon Administration the phrase, "will it play in Peoria?" became a popular marketing maxim because of the typical characteristics of that mid-sized city and its mid-American location in Illinois. Indeed, for over a century Illinois was a political weather vane, and it had a very good long-term record of having voted for the presidential popular vote winner in all cases in the 20th and 21st Centuries except for 1912, 1976, and 2004. A recent study by the Associated Press named Illinois the "most typical" state in the union because of its demographic and economic heterogeneity and its close resemblance to the nation as a whole (Ohlemacher, 2007). So, Illinois bears close study even though the Democrats are currently enjoying a dominant position and the Republicans are examining carefully the question of how and where to rebuild their party. The data provided in the empirical section of this paper can provide some tentative clues to the answers to questions of where the two major parties have been and where they may be going in this important state.

The classic pattern of Illinois politics was first enunciated by Peter Colby and Paul Green in 1986 in a much quoted article. Colby and Green divided the state into Central City Chicago, Suburban Cook, and the five suburban collar counties of northeastern Illinois and the remaining ninety-six counties which constituted "Downstate" (Colby and Green, 1986). In this typology the three geographic sections were roughly equal in population with each section containing about one-third of the total each. Since the city of Chicago usually voted overwhelmingly Democratic, and the suburban ring voted just as overwhelmingly Republican, this left the ninety-six counties of Downstate to hold the balance of power in Colby and Green's classic analysis. In the original Colby and Green formulation, the northern and central Illinois counties consistently voted Republican while the Metro-east area around St. Louis and much of deep southern Illinois consistently voted for the Democrats. This basic pattern had existed for decades and extended all the way back to the Civil War because of historic, cultural, economic and immigration influences which led to consistency and some stability in the patterns of Illinois politics. Since the Downstate counties were roughly evenly divided in population between the Democratic counties and the Republican counties, with a small advantage going to the Republicans, this led Illinois as whole to be very competitive in most statewide races and the parties to be very competitive. This competitiveness is underscored by various earlier empirical studies in political science, such as the classic study by Austin Ranney, which always rated Illinois as a competitive state, but one which leaned slightly toward the Republicans in that era (Ranney, 1965). That picture still exists and more recent party competition studies have also rated Illinois as a competitive state (Bibby and Holbrook, 2003). However, Illinois recently has moved slightly along the continuum toward the Democratic Party in more recent studies. This movement reflects the Democratic Party's successes statewide beginning with the elections of 2002 in which the Democrats won the Governor's office for the first time in 26 years and also won all the statewide constitutional offices except for the State Treasurer position which they then picked up four years later. In addition, the divided nature of Illinois politics had been illustrated by the fact that one Senator was a Democrat while one was a Republican in the era of 1996 through 2002, and the House delegation was almost exactly even. That competitive pattern was also broken in 2004 when the Republican seat in the U. S. Senate changed from Republican Peter Fitzgerald to Democrat, Barack Obama. Along with the senior senator, Dick Durbin, this gave the Democrats two United States Senators from Illinois, a pattern which will continue at least until 2010. So, beginning with the statewide elections of 2002, the partisan map of Illinois has been shifting consistently in a more Democratic direction. Based on the findings presented in this study, we will explore some of the additional contours of that shift and the prospects for both parties for 2010 and beyond.

The 2008 Election Results

There was never much real doubt that Obama would win Illinois in the general election. Both parties tacitly or overtly admitted that very real prospect from the start. The published polls consistently showed Obama with a comfortable lead in Illinois, and the only real question was how much his margin would be and how much damage a big Obama victory might do to the Republicans in other races lower on the ballot. Neither campaign targeted Illinois for special attention and resources. To the extent that Illinois residents saw any political advertisements on television it was a result of national advertising or because they lived in a media market that bordered on one of the battleground states like Missouri or Indiana. Neither candidate spent much time campaigning in Illinois although on the rare occasions when Obama had any down time he came back to Chicago for rest and reunion with his family. Both parties raised a lot of money in Illinois from a lengthy list of contributors, and some of that money was raised in private gatherings with the candidates or their surrogates. The Republicans especially fretted publically over a potential “coat-tail” effect from the Obama campaign harming the down ballot Republican candidates’ races. There were predictions of further Republican losses in the Illinois Congressional delegation and in the Illinois House and Senate because of the feared Obama electoral tide. Most of that fear proved to be unfounded or at least exaggerated in the end.

Obama did win a very convincing personal victory in Illinois. He took 61.92 percent of the vote in Illinois compared to 36.78 percent for John McCain (Illinois State Board of Elections, Official Canvass). This compared to 52.7 percent for Obama nationally compared to 45.9 percent for McCain . On the electoral vote, the Obama victory nationally was much more lopsided with 365 electoral votes for Obama to 173 for McCain. Obama won all the states John Kerry had won in 2004, and he added nine states that George W. Bush had won in his re-election bid in 2004. The Democrats added 8 Senate seats and 24 House seats to their national congressional margins. No incumbent Democratic Senator running for re-election was defeated. Among those Senators re-elected was Senator Dick Durbin who carried 98 of the 102 counties in Illinois. Durbin scored a popular vote victory over Steve Sauerberg by a 67.84 to 28.53 margin (Illinois State Board of Elections, November 4, 2008). This was one of the largest U. S. Senate victories in Illinois history. Incumbent Democrats lost only four U. S. House seats nationwide, and they did not lose any in Illinois. After the election the Democrats controlled 29 Governors’ offices and the Republicans 21. The Democrats also picked up control over several state legislative bodies in 2008. In Illinois the Democrats simply strengthened the control they already had by winning a net gain of three seats in the House where they held a comfortable 70 to 48 vote margin and they defended the status quo in the Senate where they held a 37 to 22 seat margin. Overall then, in both the nation and in Illinois, November 4th was a very good election for the Democrats and not so good for the Republicans. Many Republican leaders and

commentators thought it could have been much worse given the national economic conditions and the unpopularity of the Bush Administration and the low job approval ratings for George W. Bush personally. That same feeling of relief that a landslide loss statewide had been avoided seemed to be shared by Illinois Republican leaders. Illinois Republican leaders, like the Republican Party leaders nationally, immediately turned to questions of party building and what they needed to do in order to get to be more battle ready for 2010 and 2012. We turn now to the empirical data to document the contours of the Obama presidential victory in Illinois and to see what we can discern of Illinois' partisan past and what we can learn of its potential for the future.

The Data Analysis: Part I

In this section we will present the results for the Illinois presidential election of 2008 with the counties as the unit of analysis. There are 102 counties in Illinois and the results for each county are presented in Map I. The color coding adopts the national television map visual conventions with the red counties being Republican and the blue counties Democratic in 2008.

(Map I-Appendix A)

The color coding of the map helps to highlight and dramatize the statewide and regional geographic differences. Broadly sketched, northeastern Illinois, most of north central and northwestern Illinois and some parts of central Illinois all voted Democratic. This pattern is also augmented by the Metro-East area around St. Louis and a small smattering of deep southern Illinois counties, most notably the biggest, Jackson County, the home of Southern Illinois University Carbondale. In fact, every county in Illinois which was the home of one of the four year state universities was also a blue county, thus emphasizing Obama's appeal to young people. The smaller and more rural counties of Alexander, Pulaski and Gallatin Counties in deepest southern Illinois also voted for Obama. The rest of southern Illinois, much of central Illinois, and western Illinois, and a scattered few counties in northern Illinois (notably Ogle, Lee, Grundy, Livingston, Woodford, Marshall, Stark, and Tazewell Counties) were McCain country.

Part of the thesis of this paper is that the changes in the electoral map may be the wave of the future for Illinois politics and they may also be a metaphor for the larger demographic and political trends which mark the transitions underway in the nation at large. Most notably for this thesis, the whole segment of northeastern Illinois is where most of the people in the state live. It is the fastest growing section of Illinois, and it all went for the Democratic presidential candidate in 2008. This conversion of the collar counties has been underway for some time now in Illinois politics; however, it has been reinforced and accelerated by the 2008 election. As the suburban counties, along with Cook County outside the city become more and more heterogeneous, they are also becoming more Democratic.

Those fast growing metropolitan areas, like the rest of urban America, are now the home of a much more racially and ethnically mixed population and they make their livings in a wide variety of ways not always associated with the traditional economic base of the older more homogeneous and more prosperous view of the suburbs left over from the 1950s and 1960s. Consequently, the suburban ring around Chicago is no longer the predictably deliverable base of the statewide Republican Party that it was when Colby and Green captured its importance in 1986. Indeed, in his much more recent writings, Paul Green has acknowledged and marked these important demographic and political changes in northeast Illinois (Green, 2007). The fact that Cook and the collar counties were all blue counties in the 2008 presidential election is certainly a point in favor of the earlier predictions by Judis and Teixeria regarding the potential for the more diverse and more “ideolopolis” oriented suburban areas increasingly going Democratic (Judis and Teixeria, 2002). The same socio-economic and educational indicators are also found in Champaign County, Coles County, DeKalb County, McLean County, McDonough County, and Jackson County, all the homes of the major public universities in Illinois (outside Chicago). As was noted earlier, Obama carried every county where the twelve major state universities are located in Illinois. Certainly this result is consonant with the Judis and Teixeria thesis regarding the hallmarks of the “ideolopolis” counties. In addition, the suburban counties on the east side of the Mississippi River near St. Louis benefit from some of the same suburbanizing trends that mark the high growth areas of northeastern Illinois. In fact, Obama carried every county in Illinois identified by Judis and Texieria as “ideolopolis” counties except for the somewhat smaller counties of Grundy in northeastern Illinois and Clinton and Monroe counties in the metro-east area (Judis and Teixeria, 2002, 102).

Certainly Barack Obama enjoyed the status of “favorite son” in the 2008 presidential race in Illinois and any long term generalizations need to be tempered by that reality. All of that advantage could evaporate by 2010 and certainly by 2012. However, many of the political, demographic, economic and social trends which culminated in 2008 had been underway at least since the early 1990s, and they indicate why the Democrats have evidenced such strength in statewide races in Illinois, and other big urban and industrial states outside the South during the first decades of the 21st Century. These are the trends the Republicans will have to confront in their efforts to rebuild in Illinois and nationally as the 2010 elections approach.

Trends in Southern Illinois

The corollary to the same statewide trends in Illinois favoring the Democrats can be seen in Republican successes in central and southern Illinois. Those are the more rural and less diverse counties in general. The Republicans have always been dominant in much of central Illinois. These are historic political commitments in most cases going back decades and generations. In that sense, then, the results for 2008 in the counties where McCain won

generally reflect continuity with past patterns. What is somewhat new is the change in some southern Illinois counties where the southern Illinois region is becoming something of a Republican bastion. If one defines “southern Illinois” as everything south of Interstate 64, then there are numerous counties found in that region which had a long tradition of Democratic loyalty. As David Kenney and Barbara Brown explained in their textbook, this Democratic loyalty stemmed from historic migration patterns where southerners from the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee moved up from the South and brought their Democratic loyalty with them (Kenney and Brown, 1992). Indeed this area of deep southern Illinois was deeply divided in its loyalties during the Civil War, as many of the people in this area wanted to join the South and many soldiers from this area fought for the Confederacy. For generations after that, the southern Illinois region had counties which were more reliably Democratic than Cook County in the northeast. Counties like Franklin, Randolph and Perry were Democratic powerhouses from the standpoint of the percentage of the vote cast for presidential and statewide Democratic Party candidates. Their courthouses were also largely dominated by elected Democrats. Their state legislative candidates also did very well for the Democratic Party in southern Illinois. Add to the weight of history and culture the fact that these counties also had vast coal reserves and many active mines, and a strong and vibrant union environment, led by the United Mine Workers, and one has the ingredients for Democratic Party success in election after election for generations in this region. The congressional district centered in southern Illinois routinely sent leading Democrats to the U. S. Congress, and this district was represented continuously from the early 1950s through 2002 by Kenneth Gray of West Frankfort, Paul Simon of Carbondale, Glenn Poshard of Carterville and David Phelps of El Dorado(Jackson, 2004-b).

Things have changed both economically and politically in southern Illinois. The traditional southern Illinois congressional district has been divided between two remaining districts, one represented by Jerry Costello a Democrat from Belleville and the other by John Shimkus a Republican from Collinsville. Franklin, Randolph and Perry counties, long time bastions of Democratic Party strength, all voted for McCain and against the presidential candidate from Illinois in 2008. As was noted, they all voted for Bush over Kerry in 2004 and Perry and Franklin Counties were the only counties in Illinois voting for Gore in 2000 but against Obama in 2008. The map of southern Illinois was predominantly red in the 2008 presidential results with only four exceptions. While there are still lots of Democrats in those counties and lots of Democratic officials in the County Court Houses, their presidential voting has now migrated to the Republican column. In this respect much of southern Illinois resembles the South and the voting transition it has made. There are complex economic, cultural and religious reasons for these changes in a pro-Republican direction. For example, on the economic front most of the coal mines have closed; the United Mine Workers union is a pale shadow of its former self, and the mantra of seeking “jobs, jobs, jobs” is found everywhere in

southern Illinois, like much of the rest of the nation. Almost every little town has an industrial park and many towns and counties have economic development commissions. All these industrial parks and economic development commissions avidly seek new business and industry, and they eagerly bestow tax breaks and infra-structure promises on those companies which could locate there. The public officials and the general public are eager for economic development. The fact that most of the jobs sought are likely to be non-union is of little concern in a region which used to be the strong hold of John L. Lewis and his United Mine Workers. A Wal-Mart Supercenter or a Target store may employ somewhere near the same number of people as a coal mine used to employ; however, the jobs and the pay levels are quite different. The need to attract jobs and the accompanying economic development is the major objective for most public officials and chambers of commerce, and most political campaigns are fought out on how to best pursue that quest. There is a constant sense of endemic economic insecurity in southern Illinois, as there is in much of the rest of the nation in times of economic hardship. However, that feeling which has only recently descended on the rest of the nation is a long term feature of the political culture in southern Illinois. (This insecurity is also a feature of much of the rest of the rural landscape in the nation as a whole as agriculture has declined and jobs have fled). This economic insecurity creates a climate of perceived relative deprivation where “us versus them” and “southern Illinois versus Chicago” is a major theme repeated in the media and in the campaigns of those who run for office extolling traditional values while at the same time promising economic change. There is today a strong new group of social issues which have much appeal in southern Illinois and parts of central Illinois, just as they do in many parts of the nation as a whole. Those traditional values voters are especially found in the rural and small towns of Illinois just as they are in most of the rest of the United States. The Republicans have been much more adept than the Democrats in appealing to those traditional values voters, and this plus the economic changes away from basic industry and toward more temporary and insecure jobs are a big part of the explanation for the shifts in this region in the direction of the Republican Party.

The picture presented above is also a microcosm of the larger national tides as well. That is, the deep South, and much of the border South (i.e. Oklahoma, Missouri, Kentucky and West Virginia) went to McCain in 2008. Before the realignment of the South because of civil rights and the cultural conservatism movement, these had all been reliable Democratic Party states, and even in more recent times, West Virginia had been mostly Democratic and Missouri a competitive toss up state. Most rural areas in those states went for McCain in percentages which exceeded Bush’s margins over Kerry in 2004. Yet, those geographic areas of the Appalachian region and the Deep South are the only major examples where the presidential voting increases for the Republican candidate was evident in 2008 compared to 2004 or 2000. Otherwise the electoral surge was toward Obama and the Democrats almost everywhere else-

just as it was statewide in some central and western counties and much of northern and all of northeastern Illinois.

The Republicans are now especially dependent on the South and the cultural conservatives in the South and elsewhere for national electoral success. While this base gives them a dependable core of committed voters, it also makes it more difficult to expand the base. Southern Illinois and parts of central Illinois offer a metaphor for some of the national trends which are pulling on the Republican Party. In the aftermath of their losses in the 2008 presidential election nationally, many Republican leaders, and the intelligentsia who support the Republicans in conservative think tanks and media sources such as Fox news and the National Review have been trying to sort out their future and trying to discern a path back to power in 2010 or 2012. In so doing, they would do well to study the results in the big blue states like Illinois to find out what has happened to the Republican Party in the competitive counties and states of the Midwest and Northeast. The data analysis offered in Part I of the data analysis of this paper offers a tentative step in that direction. The data analysis in Part II extends those trends briefly back in time.

Data Analysis: Part II

In the second map we display the results from the 2004 and the 2008 presidential elections. This picture presented in Map II provides two snap-shots, taken four years apart, which can give us some longitudinal data at the presidential election level. If there is movement or change going on in the Illinois electoral system, this map will help capture some of its contours.

(Map II-Appendix B)

There is both continuity and change vividly displayed in Map II. The continuity is evidenced by the 15 blue counties, counties which voted for the Democrats in both 2004 and 2008. These are certainly the hard core base of the Democratic Party in Illinois. There is likewise significant stability demonstrated by the 57 red counties on the map, counties which voted consistently for the Republican presidential candidate in both 2004 and 2008 even though the candidates and the circumstances had changed considerably in the ensuing four years. For those who despair about the current state of the Republican Party in Illinois, it may come as a surprise to note that 57 counties, more than half of Illinois' 102 total counties, were consistent and unyielding in their support for the Republican Party in both 2004 and 2008. There were 55 counties where the Republican presidential candidate won in 2000, 2004, and 2008. This support for the GOP cause in 2008 came in the face of the powerful national tide running heavily for Obama and against the Republicans and against John McCain. This tide was even more strongly running for Obama and against the Republicans in Obama's home state in

2008. This consistent level of support extends back over other races at the state and national level as evidenced by earlier papers in this line of research (Jackson and Gottemoller, 2007). This pattern has elements of continuity and change compared to earlier presidential elections and other lower level election results in Illinois politics. Chicago and Cook County, of course, were very deep blue and turned out very large numbers for Obama the first ever presidential candidate from the City of Chicago with a real chance to win the White House prize. In addition, there were 15 counties which had voted for John Kerry in 2004 which Obama carried handily in 2008 and these might be regarded as the most loyal geographic base of the Democratic Party in Illinois. These 15 counties are the bluest of the blue counties and constitute the most loyal core of the Democratic Party in Illinois. There were no counties carried by Kerry in 2004 and by McCain in 2008. In other words, the Democrats did not lose a single county from their base in the shift from Kerry as their candidate in 2004 to Obama as their candidate in 2008, and as we will see, they expanded their base considerably in 2008.

We also made a longer time frame comparison of the 2000 presidential election results versus the 2004 and 2008 results at the county level. There were 24 counties carried by Al Gore in 2000 which also voted for Obama in 2008. These counties too can be regarded as bedrock Democratic strength in Illinois although 9 of these counties defected from Kerry in 2004. (See Appendix E). There were only two counties, Franklin and Perry Counties in southern Illinois, which voted for Gore in 2000 but which did not vote for either Kerry in 2004 or Obama in 2008. This illustrates some of the transition toward the Republicans which is taking place in some parts of southern Illinois, and in the nation as a whole. In addition, there were 57 counties, mostly in central and southern Illinois, which also were consistent in voting for the Republican, George W. Bush, in 2004 and for McCain in 2008. As was noted earlier, 55 of those counties voted for the Republican presidential candidate in 2000, 2004, and 2008. In that limited sense, the classic pattern of Illinois politics which emphasized the tripartite division of the state into central city Chicago and the suburban ring versus "Downstate" was vaguely recognizable in very rough outline. However, by these same classic standards enunciated by Colby and Green in 1986, the results in Map II demonstrate some very significant changes. There were 30 counties carried by Obama in 2008 which had not voted for Kerry in 2004. These were the "swing counties" which produced a much larger victory for Obama than the vote for Kerry in 2004 and even larger than the 2000 vote for Gore who was much more competitive than Kerry in Illinois.

As the author pointed out in an earlier paper, the Illinois Republican Party has a strong tradition and a deep history in several geographical parts of the state. This history extends all the way back to the Civil War in many counties (Jackson and Gottemoller, June 2007). Indeed Abraham Lincoln was a Whig before he was a Republican, and in some of these counties the roots of the Republican Party extend all the way back to the old Whig Party that predates the Republican Party. Many of these traditionally Republican counties lie in central and western

Illinois and a few lie in far northern and far southern Illinois. This shared history and deep party loyalty provides a bed rock for the Republicans which will stabilize them in the face of adversity and in a volatile time like the present in Illinois politics. It will also provide a foundation on which the Republicans can build toward new statewide majorities in future races. Illinois can still be a competitive party state, and if the Republicans again become more competitive statewide it will be because they have a firm foundation in many of these very red counties. The same is also true in the mirror image blue counties which typically and consistently support the Democrats in their areas of bedrock party strength.

The continuity that is evident in these results is also found in the 15 counties which voted for Democrat Al Gore in 2000, for John Kerry in 2004 and for Barack Obama in 2008 (See Appendix E). These most loyal Democratic counties include Cook County which is the behemoth in northeastern Illinois. Cook County alone contains over five million people, and it is well over forty percent of the total population of the state. When added to other urban counties like St. Clair, Madison, Rock Island, Winnebago and Champaign, all of which went for the Democrats in both 2004 and 2008, one finds a very large proportion of the explanation for why the Democrats have done so well in statewide races recently. Based on the continuity of votes in a pro-Democratic direction alone one can find much of the key to the “dark blue” cast to Illinois politics recently (Green, 2007). These loyal Democratic counties contain 6.5 million people, over half of the population of Illinois.

The story is not complete with just an emphasis on continuity and stability. There is also a story of change in these data presented graphically in Map II. The change at the aggregate level is provided by the 30 counties which voted for George W. Bush over John Kerry in 2004, and thus which traditionally may be tilted toward the Republicans, and then voted for Barack Obama over John McCain in 2008. These change-of-color counties, color them purple for the time-being as we do in Map II, are the most interesting part of the story. In this analysis they also will be labeled the “swing” counties. They include all of the five collar counties, i.e. Will, Du Page, Kane, Lake, and McHenry. The recent swing counties include the entire northern tier of counties which border on the State of Wisconsin plus DeKalb, Carroll, Henry, Bureau, La Salle, and Kankakee Counties in the next tier south of the Wisconsin border. The swing counties include the state capital in Sangamon and several central Illinois counties. In a rough ring around Sangamon, these counties also include Macoupin, Montgomery, Cass and Marion Counties. They also include Hardin and Pulaski County in deep southern Illinois.

These are the true marginal, or swing, counties, i.e. the counties which can go either way in a race depending on the candidates, the issues, and the circumstances of the day. The dependable red and blue core counties provide a bedrock foundation for both parties, but this foundation must be built on by an appeal to the proper issues presented by attractive and

articulate candidates. In these swing counties the candidates and their presentation of the issues make more difference than the parties. These are the counties where a Republican can win, as evidenced by George W. Bush's victory in 2004, and indeed based on other earlier analyses, these are counties where the Republican candidates probably should be the favorite and the "normal vote" is likely to be slightly in the Republican direction (Jackson and Gottemoller, 2007). However, the results in 2008 when Barack Obama won these marginal counties indicate that the right Democrat, running on the right issues and with favorable national tides, can also win. These are the counties that probably hold the keys to victory for individual candidates for either party and the counties which may hold the long term fate of the two major parties in Illinois. The swing counties are anchored by the very large suburban counties surrounding Cook County, starting most notably with Du Page and extending to Kane, Will, McHenry, Lake, and then on south to Sangamon and the Metro-East area. These swing counties alone hold 4.8 million people, or almost one-third of the total population of the state of Illinois (See Appendix C). In the next segment of this paper we will explore in more depth the characteristics of the three different partisan county types.

The Demographic Characteristics of the Partisan Types of Counties

In an attempt to further analyze the differences between the swing counties and those which have been consistently Republican or consistently Democratic in recent presidential elections we examined some of the more important demographic variables available in the U. S. Census data. These variables included: (1) percent white persons in the county (2) percent black persons in the county (3) median value of owner-occupied housing units (4) median household income (5) per capita money income and (6) percent persons below poverty level. While demography is not necessarily destiny, these variables capture some of the important indicators of the different people and interests which make up the two major parties. It is clear that geographic considerations, where people live, how much income people make, what their neighborhoods are like from an economic and racial viewpoint and other socio-economic characteristics provide the context to people's lives, and those variables are important components of the explanation of why people vote as they do and what party they support. These are important variables because of their correlations with the vote at the individual level of analysis. The data presented here use the county as the unit of analysis and thus provide aggregate data used as explanatory variables for aggregate election results. Table 1 provides the results of that socio-economic analysis. (See also Appendix C and D).

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Three Types of Counties

	<u>Democratic in 2004-08</u>	<u>R in 2004- D in 2008</u>	<u>Republican in 2004-08</u>
% White	85.95%	91.34%	95.82%
% Black	10.75	5.62	3.76
Median Home Value	\$76,493	\$95,216	\$67,517
Median Household Income	\$39,780	\$46,296	\$40,462
Per Capita Income	\$18,862	\$20,299	\$17,809
Persons Below Poverty Level	12.9%	10.59%	10.90%
	————— N = 15	————— N = 30	————— N = 57

Data compiled by author from U. S. Census Bureau website.

As the data in Maps I and II demonstrate, there is a great swath of red that marks the map of Illinois. It constitutes a faithful and dependable Republican core and it provides stability and continuity for Illinois Republicans, and it is a foundation upon which they can build as they try to fashion a winning statewide coalition. However, it is not enough. It is not nearly enough for a statewide victory. Even though there are 57 counties represented in the Republican faithful category, they constitute a total population of only 1,418,203 people total (See Appendix C). If one adds that bedrock Republican county total to the swing counties, which is a total of 4,821,962 in the purple counties, you get a total population of 6,240,165 which is slightly smaller than the 6,566,177 total in the loyal Democratic counties. In addition, the data in Table 1 indicate that the swing counties are the most prosperous counties followed by the Democratic loyalist counties (mostly due to the influence of Cook County) when measured by the median home value and median per capita income. The Democratic loyalist counties and the Republican loyalist counties are essentially tied on median household income. The swing counties are also the most affluent measured by the median household income and persons living below the poverty level. The Democratic loyalist counties are the most diverse measured by percent white and percent black, followed in turn by the swing counties which are in

between the two partisan types. The Republican loyalist counties are the least diverse measured by both of these variables. The demographic characteristics of the swing counties are particularly driven by the five collar counties around Chicago, and they certainly seem to live up to the expectations raised by such realignment theories as that advanced by Judis and Teixeira. The base of the two parties has been stable over the first three elections of the 21st Century in Illinois, and the red versus blue party base pattern is replicated with minor variation from year to year and election to election. The key to victory lies in the swing counties. The candidates who can win these swing counties are the ones who are going to win the statewide races of the future. The party which becomes ascendant in these swing counties will also ultimately prove to be the party that controls the majority of the statewide offices and the majority of the races in the future. These are data which should be contemplated by officials from both parties when they plan their long term strategies for both survival and prosperity.

Examples from Recent Congressional Races

In several respects the recent results in the different races for the U. S. House are instructive in learning more about the partisan trends in the Prairie State. As was noted previously, before the 2000 census, Illinois had 20 congressional districts and these were exactly evenly divided between the two parties with 10 each. This illustrates the very competitive nature of the statewide party system during the decade of the 1990s. After re-districting, Illinois lost one seat in the U. S. House due to a lack of population growth statewide. That seat was ultimately lost in southern Illinois when two incumbents, John Shimkus (R) from Collinsville and David Phelps (D) from El Dorado ran against each other in 2002. Since the district was drawn to favor the Republicans slightly, and since the 2002 congressional elections were heavily influenced by President Bush and the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the U. S., Phelps lost to Shimkus in one of the rare cases where two incumbents were placed in the same district as a result of the 2000 reapportionment (Jackson, 2004-b). This left the Republicans with a 10 to 9 statewide advantage in U. S. House seats in Illinois. It also marked the first time in generations when deep southern and southeastern Illinois was not represented by a Democrat since most of this district had previously been represented by Congressmen Glenn Poshard, Paul Simon, and Kenneth Gray as Phelps' predecessors in the eastern portion of this district. The trend toward Republican Party success in southern Illinois was reinforced by this change in the partisanship patterns which had endured for generations in this rural section of Illinois. So, the Republicans picked up a seat and enjoyed a 10 to 9 advantage after the 2002 reapportionment election. The advantage shifted back toward the Democrats in 2004, however. In that race, in the 8th Congressional District centered in Lake and McHenry counties in the northwestern suburbs of Chicago-land, challenger Melissa Bean, took on an incumbent, Republican Phillip Crane who had been in Congress since 1969. Crane was a leading conservative who had also briefly run for president and who had been Vice Chairman of

the powerful Ways and Means Committee in the House. While it is almost impossible to defeat a sitting member of the House unless there is a scandal involved, Crane had developed a reputation for being somewhat aloof and unconnected to the district and was considered to be somewhat vulnerable when Bean announced her challenge. After a hard fought contest, Bean prevailed and became one of the few challengers to win a House seat in 2004 and certainly one of a smaller still number where a Democrat took over a district that had been safely Republican for decades. Again, the diversity and changing population patterns in the eighth district had provided an opening, and coupled with a strong candidate against a vulnerable incumbent produced a rare party turn over in 2004. The congressional delegation from Illinois which had been 10 to 9 in favor of the Republicans became 10 to 9 in favor of the Democrats. Bean has been a target every election since 2004, and her district is always considered one which could be marginal; however, she has been re-elected twice since her initial victory. The early indications are that she may not even be targeted by the Republicans in 2010. The Bean victory is a metaphor for what has happened in other suburban districts in northeastern Illinois in the three elections held since 2002. The story in the rural and small town areas in Illinois is somewhat different and favors the Republicans in other parts of the state.

As noted earlier the Republicans have a bedrock in the 57 counties which voted faithfully for their presidential candidates in both 2004 and 2008. Control of over half of the counties in Illinois means control of a lot of county court houses and locally elected officials. It also helps provide safe seats for a substantial number of congressional representatives and state legislators. In the 18th Congressional District in central Illinois the comparatively easy switch from veteran Republican Ray LaHood to newcomer, 27 year old Aaron Schock, the youngest member of the U. S. House, in the face of the Obama tide in 2008 is a good case in point indicating the importance of each party's core constituency. That faithful and dependable core provides stability and continuity for Illinois Republicans, and it is a foundation upon which they can build as they try to fashion a winning coalition statewide. Just as interesting though is what happened in a neighboring district, District 11, where veteran Republican Congressman Jerry Weller decided to retire in face of some personal and political controversies. This district, farther north, and including parts of the metropolitan counties of Will, Kankakee, Grundy, and LaSalle and parts of other rural counties elected Democratic State Senator Debbie Halvorson over a very well funded and competitive Republican, Martin Ozinga. So, a seat which used to be in a reliable Republican district has now changed to Democratic. This is clearly a change which is related to the increased diversity of the suburban ring around the city of Chicago, and it indicates a brighter future for the Democrats. The same happened when former speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert, decided to retire from the U. S. House in the far western suburban District 14 in Kane, Kendall, and DeKalb Counties. This district had been a stronghold for the Republican Party for generations. When the special election in March of 2008 to replace the retiring Hastert was held, however, the district went for the Democratic candidate, Bill Foster

over the Republican candidate, Jim Oberweis by a convincing margin. Then in the general election in the fall of 2008 a rematch was held, and again the Democrat prevailed. In total this meant that a congressional delegation which had been almost evenly divided at 10 Republicans and 9 Democrats before 2004, and 10 Democrats and 9 Republicans after, had become 12 Democrats and 7 Republicans. This trend toward the Democratic Party in these exurban collar county congressional districts is enough to give the Republican Party in the state, as well as the national Republicans, pause regarding their future. They need more of the 18th District example where Aaron Schock easily replaced Ray LaHood, and they cannot afford to give up many more of those increasingly diverse suburban districts like the 8th, 11th and the 14th Congressional Districts which have changed from Republican to Democratic in 2004-2008.

Conclusion

The data provided in this analysis indicate that the Republican Party faces serious challenges in Illinois in the near future. They have their work cut out for them in trying to rebuild a cohesive coalition which can win statewide. The Republican faithful base covers a lot of territory in Illinois, but not nearly enough people to win a statewide race. They must win a significant majority of the swing counties and even cut heavily into some of the reliable Democratic counties in order to have a realistic chance. This means that they must win again in the suburban and urban areas in numbers greater than those attained during the first decade of the 21st Century. This means that they must win among more diverse populations in the suburban and urban areas, a feat that the Republicans have found difficult to accomplish in Illinois recently. They have done well, even won overwhelmingly, among their core constituency; however, this is not enough. Of course, determining how to reach out to new voters who have not traditionally supported the party, or who may include a major share of moderates and independents, without at the same time alienating and losing the base is the challenge for both parties. Finding the right combination of candidates, issue and ideological appeals and timely political circumstances has proved to be an elusive strategic goal, especially for the Republicans in Illinois lately. This is a challenge faced in equal measure by the Democrats as they attempt to ensure their own future in a state that has favored them lately. In face of the controversy and scandals associated with the Blagojevich Administration, the Democrats likewise have their work cut out for them in 2010 and 2012 as they attempt to consolidate and extend the tentative hold they established in Illinois politics during the first eight years of the 21st century. The spectacle of the impeachment trial and conviction of Governor Blagojevich and the very serious federal charges he faces in court will hang over the Democrats in 2010 and will make the Governor's race, which would be an easy Democratic victory if Illinois were indeed permanently "deep blue" a much more competitive race given the controversies of 2008-2009 which surrounds the Governor's office. Likewise, the conflict engendered by Governor Blagojevich's appointment of former Attorney General Roland Burris

to the vacant U. S. Senate seat will make a race that the Democrats should have expected to win easily in 2010 a much more wide open and competitive contest. Given the recent trends in Illinois, the Democrats should have been the easy favorites for the two top of the ticket races in Illinois in 2010; however, the recent controversies surrounding former Governor Blagojevich will put both of these races into the competitive category, and they will likely be won or lost in the increasingly diverse and increasingly competitive swing counties.

The Democrats have certainly enjoyed a clear advantage in Illinois in the first decade of the 21st Century. That advantage extends to the Democrats winning the past two Governor's races, after 26 years of consistent losses of the Governor's mansion to the Republicans during the last quarter of the 20th Century. The Democrats have also established domination over all of the statewide constitutional offices since 2006. In addition, the Democrats enjoy a healthy majority in the Illinois House and in the Illinois Senate. Nevertheless, owning substantial legislative majorities and the chief executive office carries with it the obligation to govern. The objective of governing Illinois successfully has proven to be a challenge for Illinois Democrats. Internal party infighting and personality conflicts have dominated the story of Illinois politics for several years. In the meantime a budget crisis has grown to serious proportions and an apparently dysfunctional state government has not been able to rise to the task of matching the resources available to the state's needs. The result has often appeared to be chaotic to the average voter. Whether the Democrats can continue in power after the 2010 elections remains to be seen. Much still depends on the quality of the candidates recruited by both parties and the policies and issue positions they offer to the people of Illinois.

Is Illinois a perfect microcosm of the national as a whole? Clearly not although in the past it has been one of the best bellwether states. Presently Illinois is much more Democratic than the nation as a whole. Whether that majority will continue in 2010 will depend on how much damage is done by the Blagojevich scandal and the perception that state government in Illinois is not working and that the stalemate between the legislative branch and the governor's office is predominantly the fault of the Democrats. On the national scene, Illinois is also the home of Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States. Obama, aided by majority Democrats in both houses of congress now has a chance to govern. If they do so successfully they will undoubtedly be rewarded with electoral success in 2010 and 2012. If not, the Republicans will probably make a quick comeback with victories in the mid-term congressional elections of 2010, which is the usual pattern for the party out of the White House. Given the gravity of the economic and foreign policy issues the Democrats face, comparisons with Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal era challenges are not out of order. Meeting those challenges will be the litmus test for political success. A new national majority party coalition could arise out of the government's response to these difficult times. Ultimately how the leaders govern is supposed to count for something in a democracy, and leaders are supposed to be held

accountable by the voters. In the next election they should get their license to govern renewed, or cancelled, thus giving power to the other party or retaining the incumbent party. In 2009 and 2010 President Obama, and the Democratic majority in the U. S. House and Senate have the opportunity to govern successfully, and to face the very real problems they must deal with, and if they are popularly seen to do so, they will undoubtedly be rewarded with additional electoral success. If they fail to address the problems successfully, then the Democrats will suffer the jeopardy of electoral failure. That is the importance of periodic competitive elections in a democratic polity. Illinois will continue to be a big and important state nationally whether it ultimately turns out to be a leading edge indicator of a significant Democratic Party realignment or a continuously competitive microcosm of a competitive party system.

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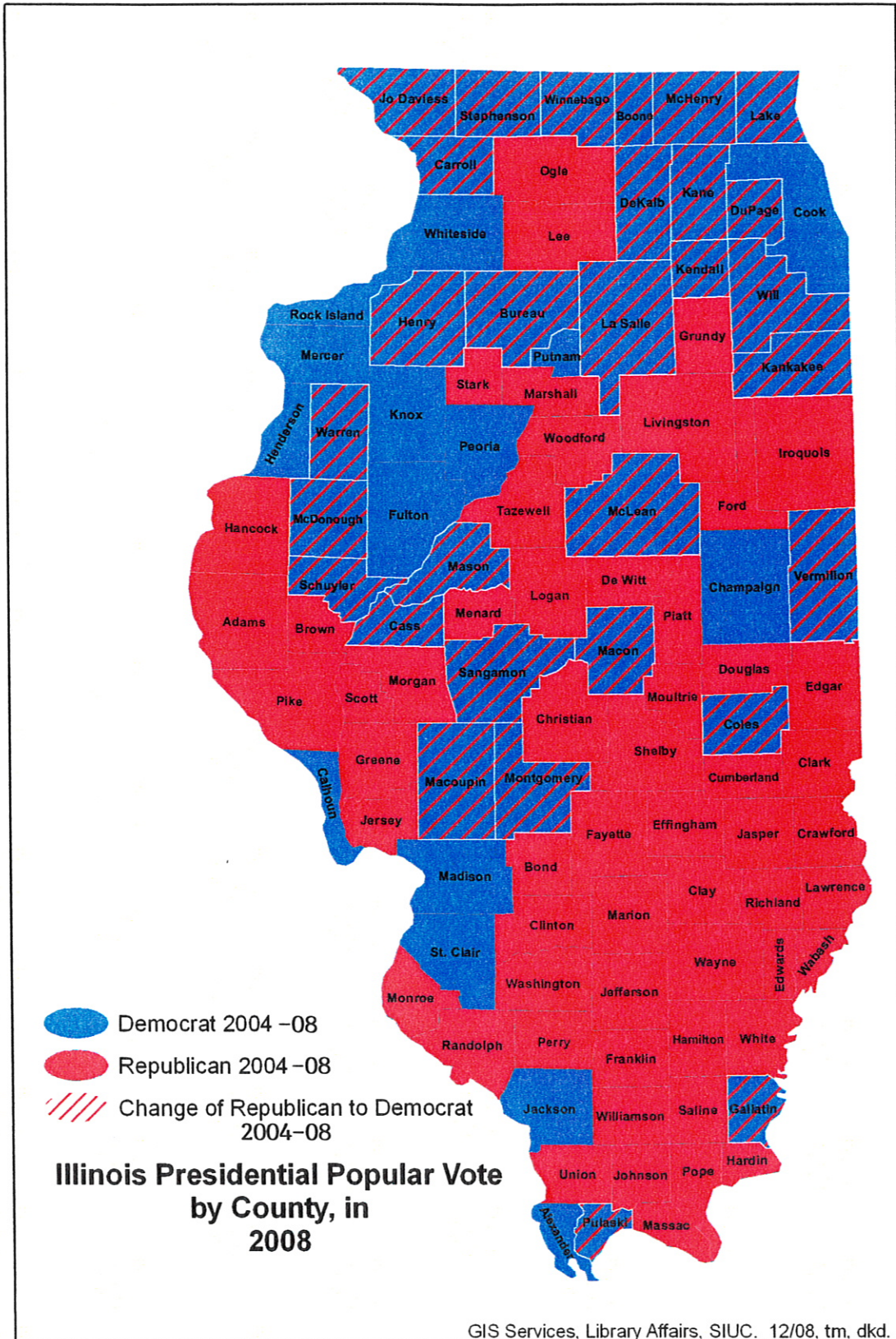
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Appendix B
Map II



Appendix C

Population of counties by category	
Category	Population
Democratic in both 2004 and 2008	6,566,177
Republican in both 2004 and 2008	1,418,203
Republican in 2004 to Democratic in 2008	4,821,962

Appendix D

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>White</u> <u>persons,</u> <u>percent</u>	<u>Black</u> <u>persons,</u> <u>percent</u>	<u>Median value of</u> <u>owner-occupied</u> <u>housing units</u>	<u>Median</u> <u>household</u> <u>income</u>	<u>Per capita</u> <u>money</u> <u>income</u>	<u>Persons below</u> <u>poverty,</u> <u>percent</u>
Adams	94.80%	3.50%	\$75,600	\$39,304	\$17,894	11.30%
Alexander	63.20%	34.80%	\$33,400	\$25,874	\$16,084	23.80%
Bond	91.20%	7.30%	\$68,900	\$39,804	\$17,947	11.20%
Boone	95.30%	1.90%	\$123,600	\$54,926	\$21,590	7.90%
Brown	79.70%	19.10%	\$47,400	\$37,744	\$14,629	12.30%
Bureau	97.80%	0.50%	\$77,800	\$43,539	\$19,542	8.80%
Calhoun	98.90%	0.10%	\$61,600	\$40,032	\$16,785	8.90%
Carroll	97.30%	0.90%	\$68,700	\$39,086	\$18,688	10.10%
Cass	97.50%	1.00%	\$54,900	\$37,819	\$16,532	10.70%
Champaign	78.40%	11.40%	\$94,700	\$39,914	\$19,708	13.40%
Christian	96.20%	2.30%	\$61,000	\$39,839	\$17,937	11.10%
Clark	98.60%	0.40%	\$63,300	\$39,057	\$17,655	10.60%
Clay	98.40%	0.20%	\$51,500	\$34,353	\$15,771	12.10%
Clinton	94.60%	4.10%	\$83,700	\$48,926	\$19,109	7.60%
Coles	94.90%	2.50%	\$71,500	\$34,374	\$17,370	14.40%
Cook	66.60%	26.30%	\$157,700	\$43,584	\$23,227	15.20%
Crawford	93.70%	4.80%	\$54,200	\$37,602	\$16,869	11.90%
Cumberland	98.80%	0.30%	\$68,700	\$39,509	\$16,953	10.30%
DeKalb	90.70%	5.00%	\$135,900	\$48,148	\$19,462	9.60%
Dewitt	98.00%	0.70%	\$74,300	\$43,663	\$20,488	10.30%
Douglas	98.20%	0.40%	\$70,500	\$44,206	\$18,474	8.20%
Du Page	84.30%	4.40%	\$195,000	\$66,697	\$31,315	6.00%
Edgar	96.60%	2.00%	\$54,300	\$37,134	\$17,857	12.20%
Edwards	98.70%	0.20%	\$46,700	\$37,731	\$16,187	9.40%
Effingham	98.50%	0.30%	\$85,400	\$43,199	\$18,301	9.20%
Fayette	94.20%	4.90%	\$59,500	\$34,420	\$15,357	13.80%
Ford	98.10%	0.50%	\$70,600	\$42,629	\$18,860	8.10%
Franklin	98.60%	0.20%	\$45,100	\$32,398	\$15,407	15.40%
Fulton	95.00%	3.90%	\$58,100	\$36,924	\$17,373	12.10%
Gallatin	98.70%	0.20%	\$46,300	\$29,997	\$15,575	16.10%
Greene	98.10%	0.90%	\$47,900	\$35,422	\$15,246	12.50%
Grundy	96.80%	1.40%	\$128,600	\$59,216	\$22,591	6.00%
Hamilton	98.30%	0.60%	\$47,800	\$34,561	\$16,262	12.60%
Hancock	98.40%	0.40%	\$58,200	\$40,030	\$17,478	9.80%
Hardin	96.00%	2.60%	\$40,800	\$30,428	\$15,984	15.30%
Henderson	98.50%	0.40%	\$57,300	\$38,403	\$17,456	10.40%
Henry	97.20%	1.40%	\$77,700	\$44,284	\$18,716	8.20%
Iroquois	97.30%	1.10%	\$77,900	\$40,971	\$18,435	10.20%
Jackson	80.70%	12.50%	\$68,200	\$27,705	\$15,755	20.20%
Jasper	98.80%	0.20%	\$65,000	\$40,270	\$16,649	10.00%
Jefferson	89.20%	8.50%	\$63,800	\$35,818	\$16,644	13.90%
Jersey	97.70%	0.90%	\$82,800	\$45,455	\$19,581	8.50%
JoDaviess	98.20%	0.50%	\$89,100	\$43,465	\$21,497	7.80%
Johnson	86.50%	12.30%	\$64,700	\$36,157	\$17,990	13.50%

Kane	89.90%	5.50%	\$160,400	\$61,246	\$24,315	7.90%
Kankakee	82.70%	15.00%	\$99,200	\$43,651	\$19,055	11.90%
Kendall	92.10%	4.00%	\$154,900	\$76,568	\$25,188	4.10%
Knox	90.40%	7.00%	\$63,500	\$36,358	\$17,985	13.40%
Lake	85.80%	6.70%	198,200	\$67,039	\$32,102	7.10%
LaSalle	96.50%	1.60%	\$87,000	\$43,848	\$19,185	9.80%
Lawrence	94.80%	4.30%	\$45,800	\$33,809	\$17,070	13.10%
Lee	93.40%	4.60%	\$83,400	\$44,205	\$18,650	9.30%
Livingston	93%	5.40%	\$79,700	\$45,591	\$18,347	10.10%
Logan	91.40%	7.00%	\$75,700	\$40,475	\$17,953	10.70%
Macon	82.40%	14.70%	\$69,800	\$39,047	\$20,067	14.30%
Macoupin	97.80%	1.10%	\$66,700	\$40,195	\$17,298	10.60%
Madison	89.90%	7.90%	\$77,200	\$45,326	\$20,509	11.20%
Marion	93.90%	4.00%	\$53,700	\$36,144	\$17,235	13.60%
Marshall	98.20%	0.50%	\$75,900	\$44,655	\$19,065	8.10%
Mason	98.60%	0.30%	\$61,200	\$38,260	\$17,357	11.30%
Massac	91.90%	6.20%	\$63,300	\$35,362	\$16,334	13.80%
McDonough	90.90%	4.60%	\$61,200	\$38,832	\$15,890	16.40%
McHenry	95.30%	1.00%	\$168,100	\$70,438	\$26,746	4.50%
McLean	88.70%	6.70%	\$114,800	\$51,176	\$22,227	10.10%
Menard	98.50%	0.06%	\$93,600	\$51,512	\$21,584	8.80%
Mercer	98.40%	0.50%	\$68,500	\$46,383	\$18,645	8.60%
Monroe	98.80%	0.30%	\$125,500	\$63,697	\$22,954	4.00%
Montgomery	95.10%	3.90%	\$54,800	\$35,938	\$16,272	12.90%
Morgan	92.20%	5.70%	\$75,800	\$39,335	\$18,205	12.40%
Moultrie	98.70%	0.30%	\$72,800	\$43,571	\$18,562	8.30%
Ogle	97.40%	0.90%	\$102,700	\$48,508	\$20,515	8.70%
Peoria	78.20%	17.10%	\$85,800	\$42,705	\$21,219	13.20%
Perry	90.00%	8.50%	\$55,000	\$35,243	\$15,935	13.80%
Piatt	98.30%	0.40%	\$82,600	\$49,792	\$21,075	6.40%
Pike	97.40%	1.50%	\$54,000	\$35,201	\$15,946	12.60%
Pope	92.50%	4.90%	\$50,600	\$32,625	\$16,440	15.40%
Pulaski	67.60%	29.80%	\$33,300	\$27,813	\$13,325	20.70%
Putnam	97.90%	0.70%	\$89,100	\$49,827	\$19,792	6.40%
Randolph	89.30%	9.30%	\$65,700	\$38,944	\$17,696	12.00%
Richland	97.90%	0.50%	\$62,500	\$34,738	\$16,847	12.30%
Rock Island	88.70%	7.80%	\$78,900	\$40,154	\$20,164	12.00%
Saline	93.90%	4.50%	\$48,300	\$31,438	\$15,590	16.10%
Sangamon	86.40%	10.50%	\$91,200	\$46,022	\$23,173	10.30%
Schuyler	98.40%	0.90%	\$54,000	\$39,415	\$17,158	10.10%
Scott	99.40%	0.00%	\$57,800	\$40,509	\$16,998	9.80%
Shelby	98.90%	0.30%	\$66,600	\$40,251	\$17,313	9.50%
St. Clair	67.70%	29.50%	\$77,700	\$42,190	\$18,932	15.00%
Stark	98.70%	0.30%	\$61,800	\$40,496	\$16,767	9.30%
Stephenson	89.10%	8.00%	\$81,400	\$41,846	\$19,794	10.80%
Tazewell	97.30%	1.10%	\$89,200	\$49,054	\$21,511	8.60%
Union	97.30%	1.00%	\$59,900	\$34,584	\$16,450	14.10%
Vermilion	86.40%	11.50%	\$56,000	\$36,233	\$16,787	14.90%
Wabash	97.60%	0.50%	\$56,200	\$38,937	\$16,747	11.80%
Warren	95.70%	2.30%	\$57,600	\$38,642	\$16,946	11.30%
Washington	98.30%	0.50%	\$74,300	\$45,124	\$19,108	7.20%
Wayne	98.30%	0.50%	\$48,600	\$35,168	\$15,793	12.10%
White	98.10%	0.40%	\$43,100	\$33,708	\$16,142	12.70%

Whiteside	96.80%	1.40%	\$75,700	\$41,318	\$19,296	9.70%
Will .	83.90%	10.70%	\$154,300	\$66,417	\$24,613	6.60%
Williamson	94.60%	3.30%	\$63,300	\$36,261	\$17,779	13.70%
Winnebago	85.00%	11.50%	\$91,900	\$43,942	\$21,194	12.70%
Woodford	98.00%	0.50%	\$102,900	\$57,561	\$21,956	6.00%

Appendix E

Solid Democratic Counties Carried by Gore in 2000	Most Loyal Democratic Counties Carried by Kerry in 2004	Solid Democratic Counties Carried by Obama in 2008	Swing Democratic Counties in 2008	Solid Republican Counties in 2004 and 2008
Alexander	Alexander	Alexander	Boone	Adams
Clahoun	Clahoun	Clahoun	Bureau	Bond
Champaign	Champaign	Champaign	Carroll	Brown
Cook	Cook	Cook	Cass	Christian
Franklin			Coles	Clark
Fulton	Fulton	Fulton	DeKalb	Clay
Gallatin		Gallatin	Du Page	Clinton
Henderson	Henderson	Henderson	Gallatin	Crawford
Henry		Henry	Henry	Cumberland
Jackson	Jackson	Jackson	JoDaviess	Dewitt
Knox	Knox	Knox	Kane	Douglas
LaSalle		LaSalle	Kankakee	Edgar
Macon		Macon	Kendall	Edwards
Macoupin		Macoupin	Lake	Effingham
Madison	Madison	Madison	LaSalle	Fayette
Mercer	Mercer	Mercer	Macon	Ford
Montgomery		Montgomery	Macoupin	Franklin
Peoria	Peoria	Peoria	Mason	Greene
Perry			McDonough	Grundy
Pulaski		Pulaski	McHenry	Hamilton
Putnam	Putnam	Putnam	McLean	Hancock
Rock Island	Rock Island	Rock Island	Montgomery	Hardin
St. Clair	St. Clair	St. Clair	Pulaski	Iroquois
Whiteside	Whiteside	Whiteside	Sangamon	Jasper
TOTAL 24	TOTAL 15	TOTAL 22	Schuyler	Jefferson
			Stephenson	Jersey
			Vermilion	Johnson
			Warren	Lawrence
			Will	Lee
			Winnebago	Livingston
			TOTAL 30	Logan
				Marion
				Marshall
				Massac
				Menard
				Monroe
				Morgan
				Moultrie
				Ogle
				Perry
				Piatt
				Pike
				Pope
				Randolph
				Richland
				Saline
				Scott
				Shelby
				Stark
				Tazwell

Note: Franklin and Perry Counties are the only two in Illinois carried by Gore in 2000 and lost by Kerry in 2004 and Obama in 2008. Obama carried all 15 that Kerry carried in 2004 plus 30 additionally in 2008

Note: Swing Democratic Counties are defined as those counties carried by Obama in 2008 but lost by either Kerry in 2004 or by Gore in 2000

Appendix E (continued)

Union
Wabash
Washington
Wayne
White
Williamson
Woodford
TOTAL 57