

**MU MVZ 449  
Spring 2010  
Masaryk University  
Department of Int'l Relations & European Studies  
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**Elections & Electoral Behavior  
Dave McCuan**

What do we know?  
What do we *not* know?  
What questions are we asking?

An overview of the sub-field of  
Campaigns, Elections & Mass Political  
Behavior

## **Review of Contents of Course**

- Elections are a distinguishing characteristic of all democracies.
- Course will focus on how national elections and sub-national elections operate in the United States.
- We'll focus on the Pres election, congressional elections, and non-candidate elections.
- There is, however, a BIG problem with this research: **the Macro-Micro problem.**

## Key Questions This Term

- Key questions
  - Why do we have elections?
  - How should we judge the importance and impact of elections on our political system?
  - What are the key characteristics of the American electoral system?
  - How do voters respond to campaigns and elections?
  - What are the politics of electioneering?

## Why the Study of Elections Matters

- Elections link political equality with popular sovereignty; thus,
- Elections matter as a reflection of what...?
- Elections serve to “legitimize” leaders, policies, protest, and preferences.
- Elections link public opinion w/ public policy
- This raises several serious questions:
  - Are citizens *capable* of informed consent?
  - Two models prominent: opinion-sharing & role-playing

## What We Study

- Examples
  - Bush, Gore, and the Electoral College
  - Bush, Kerry, and 60,000 votes in OH
  - Comparative focus: USA versus Britain, France, Germany
  - CA Recall 2003
  - CA Gubernatorial Race 2006
  - 1994 – 2004, & - 2006 in the US Congress
  - Both the Primary season & the General Election of 2008
  - What prospects look like for Fall 2010

## What the class is, and is not...

“The difference between political science and politics is like the difference between reproductive science and sex.”

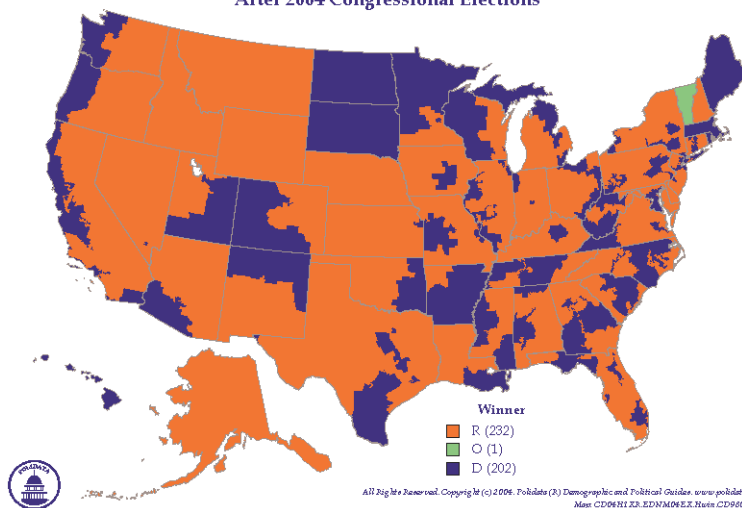
-Thomas F. Schaller, associate professor of political science at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County

## The Macro-Micro problem

- Data, gathered from study after study in Political Science, suffers from what is called the “Ecological Fallacy” problem.
- Let’s illustrate with results from the 2004 election, setting up the 2006 election, with an eye towards 2010.
- Why? Two successive MIDTERM election periods.
- Then, we’ll examine the 2008 results.

## The House Prior to November 2006

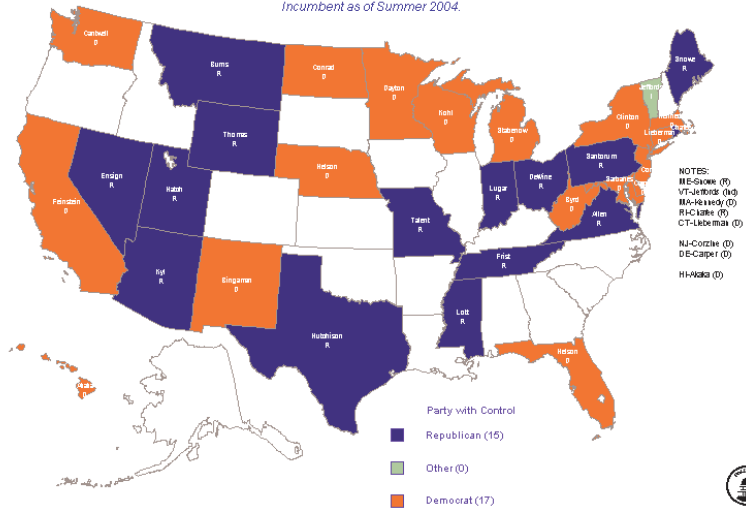
U.S. House, 109th Congress  
After 2004 Congressional Elections



# Setting Up 2006 in the Senate: The Over-Exposure Thesis

## Races Up in 2006, U.S. Senate

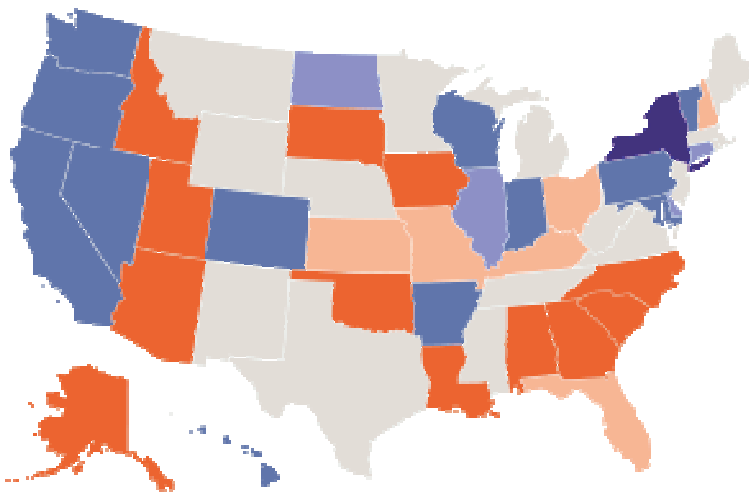
*Incumbent as of Summer 2004.*



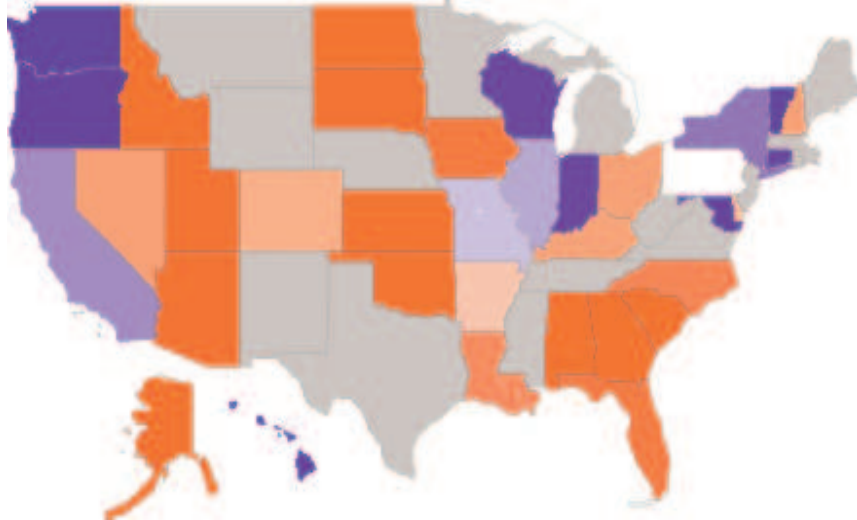
An ampersand (&) indicates incumbents not running for reelection.

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 Map: US6554CA.CC3784.Simply

# Setting Up 2010 in the Senate: The Show On The Other Foot



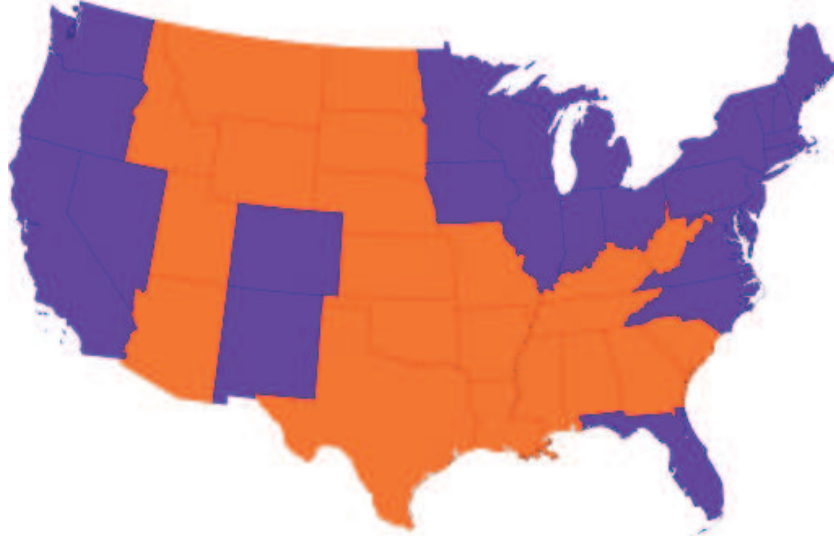
## Status / Trend of Races, Feb 2010



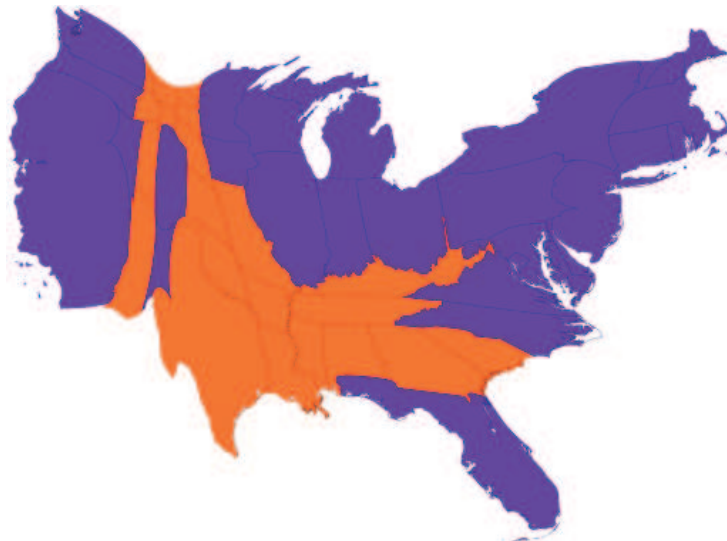
Did the Results of 2004 & 2008  
Reflect a Clear Preference  
Amongst Voters?  
What is all this attention to the  
Red-Blue Divide?

Are there other ways to envision  
the previous data beyond the  
simple, "Winner Takes All" system?

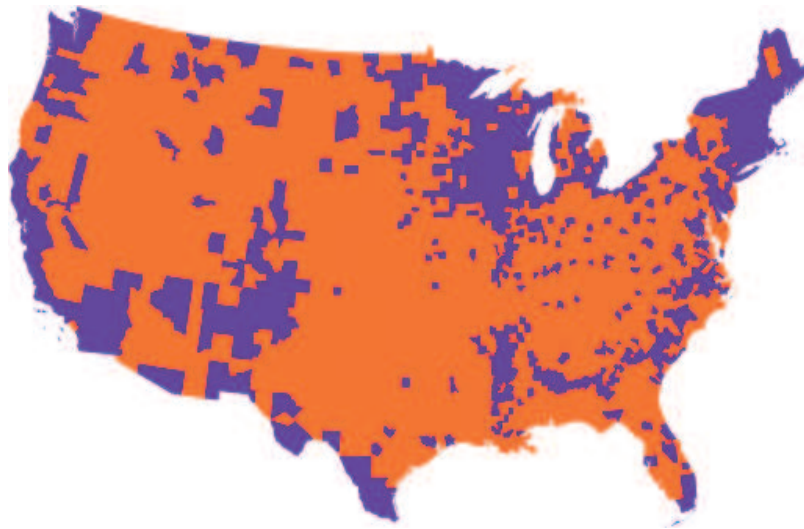
## 2008 General Election Results



## 2008 Gen'l Election by Pop. Size



## 2008 Gen'l Election by Counties



## 2008 Gen'l Election, Purple America

