The Determinants of Split Results at the Congressional District Level

by

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Abstract

Previous research on split-ticket voting has concentrated on the level or cause of split-ticket voting. There are many methodological problems with this approach. Thus, this paper studies the determinants of split results instead. The paper argues that split results are mainly a result of the conflict between competing forces -- incumbency and partisanship. An analysis of the elections of 1972, 1976, and 1980 for all 435 Congressional districts confirms this hypothesis. Consequently, they should continue to be an important factor in American politics suggesting that continued governmental policy stalemate between the legislative and executive branch is a possibility.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Dr. Michael Gant for his invaluable assistance in preparing this thesis. His many hours going over my work and his suggestions for improving it have made this paper immeasurably better. Any remaining shortcomings are, of course, my own.

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The Determinants of Split Results at the Congressional District Level

Although there is a growing body of literature on Congressional elections, studies of American voting behavior have focused primarily on Presidential elections. At the aggregate level, work on Congressional elections has centered on a few major issues: 1) The incumbent advantage (Abramowitz, 1975; Cover, 1977; Nelson, 1978); 2) Campaign spending (Jacobson, 1978 and 1980); 3) The Presidential party's midterm election seat loss (Tufte, 1975; Kernell, 1977); and 4) Presidential coattails (Edwards, 1973). Surprisingly, little study has been undertaken on the often-discussed phenomenon of split-ticket voting. Studies of split-ticket voting have either sought to explain the motivational basis for it (Campbell and Miller, 1957), or have analyzed what type of voter is likely to split his ticket, while trying to demonstrate a growing trend towards such split-voting (DeVries and Tarrance, 1974).

Unfortunately, these studies of ticket-splitting are rife with methodological problems. As Feigert has pointed out, studies that utilize individual survey data are of questionable validity for two reasons. First, there is the possibility of less than honest responses from voters who want to project voting maturity by claiming to vote the man and not the party. Secondly, faulty voter recall of whom they voted for in lower ballot races is also problematic. On the other hand, studies that have used aggregate level data to estimate the level of ticket-splitting are also questionable due to the confounding factors of voter dropoff (incomplete ballots) and split tickets in opposite directions offsetting each other, and thus, being masked at the aggregate level (Feigert, 1979).

Due to these problems, continuing to study split-ticket voting may not be fruitful. Additionally, split-ticket voting has little practical importance in and of itself. It garners its importance from the fact that presumably when it is widespread it leads to the presence of split results. Split results are said to occur, for the purposes of this paper, when the Presidential candidate of one party wins the majority of the vote in a Congressional district, while in the same district the other party's candidate wins the Congressional election.

This research will suggest an alternate approach to the study of this phenomenon. In so doing, we will focus solely on split results regardless of whether they are caused by split-ticket voting or other factors. It is the premise of this paper that the presence of split results is of importance because it leads to the cleavage of American government, with one party controlling the executive branch while another party may control one or both houses of Congress. This has the very real tendency to cause a stalemate in American government. For example, despite the fact that aiding the Contra's in Nicaragua is one of the highest priorities of the Reagan Administration, for two years now the President has been unable to get the House to appropriate military aid. This is due to Reagan's inability to carry a Republican majority with him into the House in either the 1980 or 1984 elections, despite impressive victories. Thus, to a large extent the stalemate in U.S. policy towards Central America is a direct consequence of split results in the elections of 1980 and 1984. Split-ticket voting is of little import, then, if it does not lead to split results, and split results are important whether or not they are caused by widespread ticket-splitting.

In this paper we will develop and evaluate a model to explain the occurence of split results. Previous research on split-ticket voting has not focused

on this topic and is, consequently, not very helpful in providing a foundation on which to build the model. Instead, more general studies of Congressional elections will be utilized in order to gauge what factors are important determinants of split results.

Theoretical Analysis and Previous Research

In any given election a multitude of factors affect the outcome. In a Presidential election year most of these impact both the Presidential election and other races on the ballot. For example, a robust economy, other things being equal, would be expected to benefit not only an incumbent President but also other members of his party. But while it is easy to accept that factors that are predominantly related to the President might help or hinder other candidates in his party, it is difficult to imagine the reverse being true. For instance, an individual Congressman who is viewed by his constituents as being proficient at providing constituent services might be expected to benefit at election time (Fenno, 1978; Mayhew, 1974), but this goodwill is unlikely to aid his party's Presidential candidate. It is to those factors, then, where a given condition exclusively affects the Congressional race, that one might look to find the determinants of split results. Thus, this paper will attempt to identify such factors and assess whether their conflicting with those factors that would affect both races increases the likelihood of a split result occurring.

Partisanship, issues, and the general state of the economy are all important factors affecting the outcome of Congressional elections (Hinckley, 1980). However, all of these would be expected, to greater or lesser degrees, also to affect the Presidential election in similar ways, and would not therefore be

expected to exert a strong influence in favor of split results. On the other hand, the advantage a Congressional incumbent possesses vis a vis a challenger, as well as the level of campaign spending in the race, are two factors that should almost exclusively bear on the outcome of the local election. These, then, may be the important determinants of split results. It should be noted that personal characteristics of the local candidates also exclusively affect the Congressional race, but due to the difficulty of measuring such intangibles as candidate personality at the aggregate level, they will of necessity be ignored.

The advantage an incumbent possesses when seeking re-election has been well documented. Indeed, on average, 90% of those incumbents who run for re-election to the House are successful (Hinckley, 1980: p. 37) The incumbent's advantage stems primarily from the fact that his visibility is much higher than that of the challenger and, consequently, he is much better known. As Hinckley points out, incumbents, by frequently visiting the district, mailing Congressional updates, and staying in the newspapers, are able to foster a generally positive image in the minds of the voters. Moreover, this positive image has little to do with the voting record of the Congressman or his general ideological stance. Challengers, on the other hand, are not well known by the voters and foster neither a positive nor a negative image. In Hinckley's words, "(f)or a large number of House voters, essentially no choice is provided; one candidate is known and the opponent is not" (Hinckley, 1980: p.51).

Conversely, Senate incumbents, while still enjoying an advantage, are not as successful as their House counterparts. Compared to the 90% re-election rate of House incumbents seeking re-election, only about two thirds of Senate incumbents who seek re-election win (Hinckley, 1980: p. 47). The reason Senate incumbents are more vulnerable is the same reason House incumbents are not -- visibility.

While Senators are equally, if not more, well known by the voters, their challengers are also well known. Challengers in House races are known by only 44% of the voters, but Senate challengers are known by 85% (Hinckley, 1980: p. 50). This considerably lessens the impact of the incumbency advantage since for Senate elections, voters do have a choice to make.

This suggests that if a House challenger is going to overcome the incumbent's advantage, he must raise his recognition level among voters. The best way for a challenger to raise his recognition level is by continually keeping his name before the voters by way of campaign advertising. To do this he must spend money: we must therefore analyze the effects campaign spending has on Congressional elections.

Previous research has shown that, as would be intuitively expected, the more money a candidate spends, the better chance he stands of being elected. However, both candidates do not benefit equally from an increase in spending. As Jacobson (1978) points out, challengers gain more from a high level of spending than do incumbents:

> What the challenger spends is an important determinant of the outcome, while spending by incumbents makes relatively little difference. Incumbents are apparently able to adjust their level of spending to the gravity of a specific challenge... but the marginal gain in support derived from additional spending does not approach that of the challenger from an equal spending increment (Jacobson, 1978: p. 483).

This is true because an incumbent is already well known by the voters while the challenger, by spending money, is able to generate new name recognition by voters who previously possessed a blank image of him. In fact, whereas typically an incumbent far outspends his opponents, in 1978 over half the House

incumbents who were defeated by their opponents were outspent (Hinckley, 1980: p. 54). Thus, high campaign spending can to some extent offset the incumbency advantage.

These two factors -- the incumbency advantage and the level of campaign spending -- are the two factors we believe will be important in determining where split results will occur.

Main Hypotheses

Following the previous analysis, our main hypotheses will focus on the effects of the incumbency advantage and campaign spending on split results. Emphasis will be placed on the possible conflict between the incumbency advantage and other factors affecting the elections.

First, it should be noted that the incumbency advantage should be especially pronounced in Presidential election years. Presumably, a voter has a limited amount of time to devote to following the various elections. In a Presidential election year, most of this time will be swallowed up by the extremely high profile Presidential electon. Thus, less time will be available for consideration of lower ballot elections. This should exacerbate the incumbency advantage since the challenger will have less of a chance to build up name recognition.

Stated loosely, the main hypothesis of this paper is the following: If the incumbency advantage favors the Congressional candidate of one party, while other factors affecting both the Presidential race and the Congressional race favor the other party, a split result is more likely to occur. The affect of campaign spending is more difficult to predict. Presumably, those races in which a Congressional incumbent was out of step with the district are the ones in which we

would expect a challenger to spend a considerable amount of money (Jacobson, 1978). However, these are also the districts in which we would expect split results without high spending. Thus, we would expect to find more split results because of the conflict between incumbency and other factors, but less due to the lessening of the incumbency advantage due to high spending. Additionally, higher campaign spending, by raising the profile of the race, causes many more factors to come into play such as local issues. The effect of these we cannot measure. Therefore, we would expect a higher level of split results where spending is higher, but as a result of the spending a lower percentage attributable to the conflict with incumbency advantage.

Thus, these hypotheses are consistent with conventional political science theory. They argue that split results are determined by the interplay of well-known forces in elections. Consequently, political observers should not be surprised that they are a relatively frequent occurence.

Data Collection

In order to test these hypotheses, data was collected for all 435 Congressional districts for the 1972, 1976, and 1980 elections. A wide array of socio-economic data, election results, and demographic statistics was collected for each district. The source for this data was The Almanac of American Politics for the election year following each Presidential election. (For a more complete description of the data collection see Appendix 1)

Operationalizations

The first step in defining the model is to define those factors other than incumbency and campaign spending that impact upon Congressional elections. The first factor is partisanship. Usually, the partisanship or level of party competition of a state is measured by taking election results from various races -- Presidential, Gubernatorial, Senatorial, Congressional -- and arriving at some weighted average of these as the measure (Schlesinger, 1955; Pfieffer, 1957). This approach is inappropriate for this research for two reasons. First, it is difficult to obtain election results broken down by Congressional district for Gubernatorial and Senatorial races. Secondly, the purpose of this paper is to determine what causes variations between different races in the same district in the same year, specifically the Presidential race and Congressional races. Using an average of these two results as a measure of partisanship would be using as a measure the very difference we are attempting to explain. Thus, a more indirect measure is necessary.

It was decided that instrumental variable analysis should be used in order to arrive at a measure of partisanship. It is well-known that a variety of demographic factors are important indicators of partisanship. Such things as level of income, blue/white collar employment, race, and region of the country in many cases give important clues to the direction of partisanship (Hinckley, 1980). Thus, the various demographic statistics of each of the Congressional districts was used in determining it's partisanship. To identify the relative weights to assign to these demographic statistics the percent of the two party split for the Democratic candidate for President was regressed on the demographic statistics for each district. The resulting equation was used to calculate an instrument for partisanship for each

Congressional district. A score over 50% would mean that the district would be expected to vote Democratic based on its demographic makeup, and a score below 50% would mean that it should lean to the Republicans. This instrument turned out to be a relatively strong predictor of partisanship as the R-square's for 1972, 1976, and 1980 were .5548, .5344, and .65834. Thus, a high amount of confidence can be placed on the instrumental variable. For comparison with the incumbency factor, any district that would be expected to go Republican was assigned a value of -1 and districts that favored the Democrats were given a score of +1. (The regression equations are reported in Appendix 2.)

Measures of incumbency and campaign spending are easier to obtain. For incumbency, to be consistent with the coding of partisanship, any district in which a Republican incumbent was running was given a score of -1. Districts with Democratic incumbents running were given a score of +1, and districts that had no incumbent running in the general election were given scores of zero. Campaign spending figures were obtained from two different sources. For the 1972 election the Common Cause campaign finance reports were utilized. Thereafter, campaign spending figures were taken from The Almanac of American Politics. The dollars spent by each candidate were added together to obtain the total amount of money spent in each district.

Each district, then, had a partisanship score of either -1 (Republican) or +1 (Democratic); an incumbency score of either -1 (Republican Congressional incumbent), 0 (no incumbent running), or +1 (Democratic incumbent); and a profile score representing the total amount of money spent by both candidates in the Congressional race. Based on our model, a split score was then calculated for each district. Since our model predicts that those districts in which the incumbency

factor and partisanship are in conflict are likely to exhibit split results, the incumbency score and the partisanship score for each district were multiplied together. As a result of this, any district in which the two factors concurred would have a split score of +1 and those districts in which they conflicted would have a split score of -1.

Following this calculation, a variety of crosstabulations were run to test the predictive capacity of the model by comparing the predicted results (split/straight) with the actual results, controlling for campaign spending and other factors.

Data Analysis

The results of our data analysis generally support the predictions of our hypotheses. However, there is some difference in the strengths of relationships between different years and across campaign spending levels in the same year. For the most part, though, our hypothesis that the incumbency factor is the primary determinant of split results is confirmed.

Data Analysis -- 1972

The results for 1972 conform well with our predictions. Approximately 43% of all Congressional districts exhibited split results. As was previously discussed, our model predicts a split result when a Congressional district has a partisanship score that favors one party, but the incumbent Congressman is from the other party.

As can be seen in Table 1, 86.2% of these splits would be predicted by the conflict between incumbency and partisanship. Of the 57% of the districts that exhibited straight results, our model would have correctly predicted 86%. Thus,

there is a strong correlation between the incumbency/partisanship conflict and split results (Gamma = -.94958).

The analysis of campaign spending is somewhat murkier for 1972. There is little of no relationship between the level of spending and the presence of split results. Spending was divided into three categories -- less than $50,000, between $50,000 and $100,000, and greater than $100,000. Approximately 48% of the low group were split, 39% of the middle group, and 42% of the high group. Thus, there is little relationship and what relationship there is runs counter to our expectation that the level of split results would increase with the level of campaign spending (Gamma = -.09757).

However, when the actual split results are compared to those predicted based on the incumbency/partisanship conflict, a clearer picture emerges as can be seen in Tables 3A-C.

The predictive power of the model is strong for all three levels of spending but as was hypothesized, it is least strong for high levels of spending. The gammas for low, average, and high spending are -.97869, -.98706, and -.84923, respectively. Additionally, 95.3% of the splits are predicted accurately in the low spending category, 90.7% in the average category, and 69.5% in the high spending category.

The question naturally arises as to the differences between districts that had Democratic incumbents running and those that had Republican incumbents running. Table 4 shows that 74.2% of the districts with Democratic incumbents exhibited split results in 1972. Our model would have correctly predicted 99% of those. 25.8% exhibited straight results, and our model would have correctly predicted 42.1% (Gamma = -.96662). On the other hand, as can be seen in Table 5, 97.4% of the Republican districts had straight results of which our model would have correctly predicted 99.3%. Only 4 Republican districts exhibited split results.

Thus, 1972 was a year in which virtually all Democratic districts exhibited split results and virtually all Republican districts exhibited straight results. This is probably due in large part to the Nixon landslide of 1972. The Democrats held a majority of the seats in the House and Nixon won by relatively large margins almost everywhere. It is not surprising, then, that a high percentage of Congressional districts would exhibit split results. The model outlined in this paper would have correctly predicted almost 90% of these districts. Our hypothesis that split results and campaign spending would have a positive relationship was not confirmed. At least for 1972, there appears to be no relationship. However, our primary model has much better success at lower levels of spending than at higher. Overall, except for the relationship between split results and campaign spending, 1972's results confirm our predictions.

TABLE 1 -- Analysis of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, 1972

Predicted	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Split	13.9%	86.2%	45.3%
Straight	86.1%	13.8%	54.7%
	N=245 56.6%	N=188 43.4%	N=433 100%

Chi-square = 221.478 p<0.0
Gamma = -0.94958

TABLE 2 -- Crosstabulation of Split Results by Campaign Spending, 1972

Results	Spending: Low	Spending: Average	Spending: High	
Straight	52.2%	60.9%	58.5%	56.5%
Split	47.8%	39.1%	41.5%	43.5%
	N=180 41.7%	N=110 25.5%	N=142 32.9%	N=432 100%

Chi-square = 2.430 p<.2967
Gamma = -0.09757

TABLE 3A -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, Low Campaign Spending, 1972

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	18.1%	95.3%	55.0%
Predicted: Straight	81.9%	4.7%	45.0%
	N=94 52.2%	N=86 47.8%	N=180 100%

Chi-square = 105.229 $p<0.0$
Gamma = -0.97869

TABLE 3B -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results Average Campaign Spending, 1972

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	6.0%	90.7%	39.1%
Predicted: Straight	94.0%	9.3%	60.9%
	N=67 60.9%	N=43 39.1%	N=110 100%

Chi-square = 75.448 $p<0.0$
Gamma = -0.98706

TABLE 3C -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, High Campaign Spending, 1972

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	15.7%	69.5%	38.0%
Predicted: Straight	84.3%	30.5%	62.0%
	N=83 58.5%	N=59 41.5%	N=142 100%

Chi-square = 40.147 $p<0.0$
Gamma = -0.84923

TABLE 4 -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, Democratic Incumbents, 1972

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	57.9%	98.8%	88.2%
Predicted: Straight	42.1%	1.2%	11.8%
	N=57 25.8%	N=164 74.2%	N=221 100%

Chi-square = 64.234 $p<0.0$
Gamma = -0.96662

TABLE 5 -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, Republican Incumbents, 1972

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%
Predicted: Straight	99.3%	100%	99.3%
	N=147 97.4%	N=4 2.6%	N=151 100%

Chi-square = 0.0274 $p<.87$
Gamma = 1.0

Data Analysis -- 1976

The results for the data analysis of the 1976 election, while not as strong as those for 1972, also confirm our hypotheses. As shown in Table 6, 29% of the districts were split, with our model correctly predicting 71% of these. Of the 71% of the districts that had straight results, 64.7% exhibited agreement between partisanship and incumbency. Thus, the relationship again runs in the hypothesized direction and is quite strong (Gamma = -.63056).

Our hypothesis relating to campaign spending appears to be confirmed for the 1976 election despite its weak relationship in 1972. Because of the increased spending in 1976, campaign spending was broken down into three different categories -- less than $75,000, between $75,000 and $150,000, and greater than $150,000. As can be seen in Table 7, split results increase as spending increases as 15.5% of the low group, 22.5% of the average group, and 48.1% of the high group exhibited split results (Gamma = .52146). Thus, the relationship runs in the hypothesized direction and is quite strong.

Contrary to our findings for 1972, the predictive power of our model increases with greater spending when the level of spending is controlled for. This also runs contrary to our secondary hypothesis. As shown in tables 8A, 8B and 8C, the model shows a relatively weak relationship for low and average levels of spending, and a strong relationship for the high spending category. The gammas for low, average, and high spending are -.40426, -.45125, and -.64755 respectively. Additionally, the split results were accurately predicted in 44% of the low spending category, 59.3% of the average spending category, and 83.8% of the high spending category.

Once again there are more split districts with Democratic incumbents than there are with Republican incumbents. As shown in Tables 9 and 10, however, the percentage of split Democratic districts is lower than in 1972, and the percentage of splt Republican districts is higher. 32.1% of the districts with Democratic incumbents were split and 76.3% of these had a conflict between incumbency and partisanship. Of the 68% that had straight results, about 60% had agreement between incumbency and partisanship (Gamma = −.66830). In 1976 almost 23% of the Republican districts were split and our model explains about 55% of these. Of the straight Republican districts about 72% would also be correctly predicted by our model (Gamma = −.51181). Thus, there are still more districts that are split with Democratic incumbents, but more Republican districts were split in 1976 than in 1972, as a Democratic President claimed the White House. This is probably largely due to the fact that the Democrats held a majority of the House seats and won the presidency. A lower level of split results would be expected.

As in 1972, then, the 1976 results confirm our main hypothesis, but the relationship is weaker. The relationship with campaign spending is still murky as the 1976 results directly conflict with the 1972 results. Increasing campaign spending led to increased split results in 1976 and increased the predictive power of our model. The main point, however, is that further support for our main hypothesis has been garnered.

TABLE 6 -- Analysis of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, 1976

	Actual Straight	Actual Split	
Predicted Split	35.2%	70.6%	45.5%
Straight	64.7%	29.4%	54.5%
	N=309 71.0%	N=126 29.0%	N=435 100%

Chi-square = 43.711 p<0.0
Gamma = -0.63056

TABLE 7 -- Crosstabulation of Split Results by Campaign Spending, 1976

Results	Spending Low	Spending Average	Spending High	
Straight	84.5%	77.5%	51.9%	71.0%
Split	15.5%	22.5%	48.1%	29.0%
	N=161 37.0%	N=120 27.6%	N=154 35.4%	N=435 100%

Chi-square = 43.833 p<0.0
Gamma = 0.52146

TABLE 8A -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, Low Campaign Spending, 1976

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	25.0%	44.0%	28.0%
Predicted: Straight	75.0%	56.0%	72.0%
	N=136 84.5%	N=25 15.5%	N=161 100%

Chi-square = 2.901 $p<.09$
Gamma = -0.40426

TABLE 8B -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, Average Campaign Spending, 1976

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	35.5%	59.3%	40.8%
Predicted: Straight	64.5%	40.7%	59.2%
	N=93 77.5%	N=27 22.5%	N=120 100%

Chi-square = 3.961 $p<.05$
Gamma = -0.45125

TABLE 8C -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, High Campaign Spending, 1976

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	52.5%	83.8%	67.5%
Predicted: Straight	47.5%	16.2%	32.5%
	N=80 51.9%	N=74 48.1%	N=154 100%

Chi-square = 15.761 $p<0.0$
Gamma = -0.64755

TABLE 9 -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, Democratic Incumbents, 1976

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	39.1%	76.3%	51.0%
Predicted: Straight	60.1%	23.7%	49.0%
	N=197 67.9%	N=93 32.1%	N=290 100%

Chi-square = 33.619 $p<0.0$
Gamma = -0.66830

TABLE 10 -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, Republican Incumbents, 1976

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	27.9%	54.5%	34.0%
Predicted: Straight	72.1%	45.5%	66.0%
	N=111 77.1%	N=33 22.9%	N=144 100%

Chi-square = 6.886 $p<0.01$
Gamma = -0.51181

Data Analysis -- 1980

The results for 1980 further support our main hypothesis. 32.5% of all districts had split results, and 73.8% of these had a conflict between partisanship and incumbency as can be seen in Table 11. Of the 67.5% which had straight results, about 75% had no conflict. Thus, once again the relationship is very strong and our main hypothesis is strongly confirmed (Gamma = -.78883).

The 1980 results agree with the 1972 results on the issue of the relationship between campaign spending and split results. As can be seen in Table 2, there is little or no relationship between spending and split results and what relationship there is is again runs counter to the predicted direction. Referring to Table 12, 41.5% of the low spending category, 25.8% of the average spending category, and 32.7% of the high spending category exhibited split results (Gamma = -.13968). The similarities between the results for 1972 and 1980 and their conflict with the 1976 results could be due to the similarities between the elections of 1972 and 1980. Neither race was close in most regions of the country, and a Republican candidate won the presidency while the Democrats kept their majority in the House. In 1976 a Democrat won the presidency, and his party already controlled the House.

However, as in 1972 and as hypothesized, the predictive power of our model decreases with increasing campaign spending as can be seen by examing Tables 13A-C. The gammas for low, average and high spending are -.81813, -.92355, and -.58865. In the low spending category, 76.7% of the splits were accurately predicted, while in the average and high categories, 80.5% and 66.7% were predicted correctly. Thus, the results for 1980 are again in accord with the results for 1972 and conflict with those for 1976.

As in the other two elections, in 1980 there were many more split districts with Democratic incumbents than with Republican incumbents. Referring to Tables 14 and 15, 47.9% of the Democratic districts were split compared to 7.8% of the Republican's. Our model would have correctly predicted about 80% of the districts with Democratic districts that were split and 54% of the straight Democratic districts (Gamma = −.64269). On the other hand, our model would have correctly predicted 94% of the straight Republican districts, while only 12 of the 154 Republican incumbent districts had split results (Gamma = −.49438).

The results for the 1980 election mirror those for the 1972 election. Our main hypothesis is strongly confirmed and campaign spending continues to have a murky relationship. Districts with Democratic incumbents were much more likely to exhibit split results, of course. Overall, our model has received strong support for the third time.

TABLE 11 -- Analysis of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, 1980

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	24.9%	73.8%	40.8%
Predicted: Straight	75.1%	26.2%	59.2%
	N=293 67.5%	N=141 32.5%	N=434 100%

Chi-square = 92.025 p<0.0
Gamma = -0.78883

TABLE 12 -- Crosstabulation of Split Results by Campaign Spending, 1980

	Spending: Low	Spending: Average	Spending: High	
Results: Straight	76.1%	63.4%	59.9%	67.5%
Results: Split	23.9%	36.6%	40.1%	32.5%
	N=180 41.5%	N=112 25.8%	N=142 32.7%	N=434 100%

Chi-square = 10.726 p<0.0
Gamma = .26314

TABLE 13A -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, Low Campaign Spending, 1980

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	24.8%	76.7%	37.2%
Predicted: Straight	75.2%	23.3%	62.8%
	N=137 37.2%	N=43 62.8%	N=180 100%

Chi-square = 35.575 $p<0.0$
Gamma = -0.81813

TABLE 13B -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, Average Campaign Spending, 1980

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	14.1%	80.5%	38.4%
Predicted: Straight	85.9%	19.5%	61.6%
	N=71 63.4%	N=41 36.6%	N=112 100%

Chi-square = 45.686 $p<0.0$
Gamma = -0.92355

TABLE 13C -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, High Campaign Spending, 1980

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	34.1%	66.7%	47.2%
Predicted: Straight	65.9%	33.3%	52.8%
	N=85 59.9%	N=57 40.1%	N=142 100%

Chi-square = 13.228 $p<0.0$
Gamma = -0.58865

TABLE 14 -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, Democratic Incumbents, 1980

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	46.0%	79.7%	62.2%
Predicted: Straight	54.0%	20.3%	37.8%
	N=139 52.1%	N=128 47.9%	N=267 100%

Chi-square = 30.658 $p<0.0$
Gamma = -0.64269

TABLE 15 -- Crosstabulation of Actual vs. Predicted Split Results, Republican Incumbents, 1980

	Actual: Straight	Actual: Split	
Predicted: Split	6.3%	16.7%	7.1%
Predicted: Straight	93.7%	83.3%	92.9%
	N=142 92.2%	N=12 7.8%	N=154 100%

Chi-square = 1.780 $p<0.18$
Gamma = -0.49438

Conclusion and Discussion

The results for 1972 and 1980 were very similar and differed somewhat in strength from those in 1976. This could be a result of the similarities of the two elections. In both 1972 and 1980 a Republican candidate won a landslide victory sweeping nearly every state. On the other hand, the 1976 election was much closer and a Democratic candidate won the Presidency. The closeness of the 1976 race could have had an important effect on weakening the relationship between split results and the incumbency/partisanship conflict. Many of the Congressional districts in 1976 had very close results in both the Presidential and Congressional races. Thus, a change of a few votes in many districts could have changed which candidate won a majority of the district. Many districts which exhibited split results could have easily exhibited straight results if a few votes were changed, and vice versa. In 1972 and 1980 this was not a problem since Reagan and Nixon won by sizable majorities in most districts in which they were victorious. Also, the majority of districts had Democratic incumbents, and with a Republican winning the presidency, a higher level of split results would be expected.

In all three elections, the main hypothesis of this paper was strongly confirmed. Thus, it can be said with some assurance that the principle determinant of split results is the presence of a conflict between the incumbency advantage and the general partisanship of a Congressional district. Since there is no reason to expect that the advantages that go along with incumbency will be significantly lessened in the future or that the partisanship of any significant number of districts will change in the future, it can be expected that widespread split results will continue to be prevalent during Presidential election years. Indeed, such reforms as spending limitations in Congressional races or government financing,

which are under consideration, would most likely strengthen the incumbency advantage by taking away from challengers the ability to outspend the incumbents.

The effect campaign spending has on split results was shown to be much less certain as was tentatively predicted. Split results increased with higher spending levels in 1972 and 1980 while the predictive power of the incumbency/partisanship conflict model decreased. In 1976, exactly the opposite was the case. However, in none of these years was the relationship statistically significant. This could be due to the closeness of the 1976 race altering the results. Additionally, landslide elections might cause voters to ignore the Presidential race, if it is seen as already decided, and concentrate more on the lower ballot races. This would probably not be the case in 1980, however, since the Presidential race was perceived as being too close to call up until the last week. It seems most likely that the party of the elected President is the important factor since split results are more likely when a Republican wins and less likely when a Democrat wins. Further research might focus on clarifying the effect of campaign spending on split results if, in fact, any effect exists.

Public Policy Implications

This research suggests that split results should continue to be an important factor shaping American politics for the foreseeable future. As was noted earlier, this has important implications in many areas of public policy given the likely policy stalemate that accompanies high levels of split results. If executive initiatives can be effectively blocked by an opposition majority in one House of the Congress, while Congressional initiatives are blocked by the executive branch, it is possible that a failure to address major national problems will continue to be the result.

This is likely to be a problem more for Republican Presidents than for Democratic ones. While the Republicans do presently control the Senate, they do so with only a slim majority. Due to the fact that the incumbency advantage is not as strong for Senators, it is a tenuous grip at best. The Democrats, on the other hand, hold a firm majority in the House, and they are unlikely to lose their majority in the near future. It would therefore appear likely that if a Democrat is elected to the Presidency, both Houses of Congress will either have Democratic majorities, or the House will have a Democratic majority while the Senate is more or less evenly split. A Republican President, on the other hand is likely to face opposition majorities in one or both branches of the legislature.

On many important issues President Reagan has been able to overcome the Democratic majority in the House by going over their heads and rallying public support. It is almost certain, however, that the presence of a Democratic House majority has caused President Reagan to significantly alter many of his initiatives to gain Democratic support before presenting them to the Congress. Reagan was able to pass his politically popular tax cuts through the House, but many Democratic House members balked at some of his spending cuts when pressure was brought to bear on them from affected groups, causing their defeat. It is unlikely that any Republican successors to Reagan will possess the rhetorical skills or public appeal that he has shown and, consequently, it will be much more difficult for them to be as legislatively successful as President Reagan has been. Therefore, it is unlikely that any Republican President will be able to make many further inroads into cutting the scope of the national government in domestic matters or in asserting a more forceful posture in foreign policy matters that require legislative acquiescence.

This is, of course, cause for either comfort or alarm depending on the ideological stance of an individual. Also, many may view the presence of split results as an effective check against fleeting majority whims being enacted into law after every Presidential election. However, the very real possibility of government stalemate should alarm all observers, especially in matters of foreign policy. If no coherent foreign policy course can be charted due to disagreement over means and goals between the executive and one branch of the legislature, American influence in the world could sharply decline. American allies will not be able to accurately predict U.S. policy if such policy is likely to change at any moment, due to different viewpoints in different sections of the government. This is the most serious consequence of split results, and one which America will have to confront in the years to come.

Appendix 1: Data Collection

Data were collected from two sources. Except for the campaign finance figures for 1972, all data come from the Almanac of American Politics of 1974, 1978 and 1980. The campaign finance figures for 1972 came from the Common Cause campaign finance reports compiled for each district.

All election figures were recorded as the Democratic percentage of the two party vote. Thus, any third party or independent candidates were ignored. Other data were recorded in different ways depending on the variable. Following is a brief description of how each of the variables used in this research was recorded:

Variable	Description
WHITE	% White in district
BLACK	% Black in district
SOUTH	Dummy variable for Southern states
EAST	Dummy variable for Eastern states
WEST	Dummy variable for Western states
RURAL	Less than 50% suburbs or city
AGE	Median voting age for district
EDUCATION	Median years of education for district
BLUE COLLAR	% of district blue collar
WHITE COLLAR	% of district white collar
POVERTY	% of district below poverty line
MEDIAN INCOME	% of National Median Income for district

Appendix 2: Regression Results

Following are the results of the regression analysis for partisanship in 1972, 1976, and 1980. Probability levels are for a one-tailed test.

Regression Results -- 1972

Variable	Slope	S.E.	t	p
% White	- 0.2661	0.046	5.840	<.01
% Black	0.1818	0.050	3.662	<.01
South	-15.7200	1.127	13.944	<.01
Rural	3.6339	1.129	3.212	<.01
Age	0.4016	0.149	2.693	<.01
Educ.	- 2.2409	0.841	2.665	<.01
B.Col	- 0.1792	0.070	2.550	<.01
Poverty	- 0.3368	0.194	1.740	<.05
Med.Inc.	- 0.0687	0.042	1.644	<.05
Constant	86.5790			

R Square = 0.5548 F = 58.436 S.E. = 8.122

N = 432

Regression Results -- 1976

Variable	Slope	.S.E.	t	p
% White	- 0.2618	0.041	6.288	<.01
% Black	0.1629	0.220	3.288	<.01
South	- 3.7209	0.949	3.923	<.01
West	- 3.1756	1.098	2.893	<.01
Educ.	- 3.0711	0.515	5.960	<.01
Age	0.3435	0.128	2.694	<.01
Constant	95.3868			

R Square = 0.5344 F = 81.863 S.E. = 7.274

N = 435

Regression Results -- 1980

Variable	Slope	S.E.	t	p
% White	- 0.2150	0.032	6.744	<.01
% Black	0.3000	0.041	7.352	<.01
South	- 8.1658	1.032	7.916	<.01
West	- 5.1019	1.160	4.400	<.01
Educ.	- 2.8481	0.650	4.380	<.01
B.Col	0.3136	0.097	3.228	<.001
W.Col	0.3689	0.112	3.288	<.01
Med.Inc.	- 0.1057	0.037	2.852	<.01
Constant	77.9286			

R Square = .65834 F = 100.196 S.E. = 7.192

N = 425

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