The (Re)Nationalization of Congressional Elections

In the second half of the twentieth century, elections for the presidency, House, and Senate exhibited a great deal of independence, but the outcomes of congressional elections today are much more closely aligned with those of presidential elections. Split-ticket voting and the incumbency advantage have declined and party candidates in different arenas increasingly tend to win and lose together. Some analysts interpret these developments as evidence that voters have become increasingly set in their partisan ways, but an alternative explanation is that since the parties have sorted, each party's candidates now look alike, so voters have much less reason to split their tickets. Few voters have a liberal Republican or a conservative Democrat to vote for today.

MORRIS P. FIORINA

Series No. 7

"Partisan ideological realignment has not eliminated national tides in elections. It has, however reduced their magnitude."—Alan I. Abramowitz

The 2006, 2010, and 2014 congressional elections were not kind to the preceding claim. As the political parties sorted, electoral patterns changed, but in a manner that accentuated rather than dampened the likelihood of national tides. The outcomes of presidential, congressional, and even state legislative elections now move in tandem in a way that was rare in the mid- to late twentieth century, not just in the so-called wave elections, but in elections more generally. Political scientists commonly describe this development as nationalization. I write re-nationalization in the title of this essay because contemporary elections have returned to a pattern that was common in earlier periods of American history.[1] When elections are nationalized, people vote for the party, not the person. Candidates of the party at different levels of government win and lose together. Their fate is collective.

Alan I. Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 110.

1 Much of the data on recent congressional elections recalls patterns that prevailed from the mid-nineteenth century until the Progressive Era in the early twentieth century. Thus, current developments are more of a return to prior patterns than something new in our history.

"All politics is local" (no more)

Late twentieth-century political observers generally accepted this aphorism, credited to Democratic Speaker of the House Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill of Massachusetts, who served in Congress from 1952 to 1987. In retrospect the period in which O'Neill served might be viewed as the golden age of the individual member of Congress, especially in the House.[2] Party leadership was decentralized with committee and subcommittee chairs operating relatively independently of the party floor leadership. Members could pursue their policy interests relatively unconstrained by the positions of the leadership or party caucus.[3] Party discipline was weak, enabling members to adopt whatever political coloring best suited their districts. Democratic representatives could take the conservative side of issues, especially in the South, and Republicans could take the liberal side, especially in the northeast. Bipartisanship and cross-party coalitions were not at all uncommon.[4] At the presidential level Democrats could fracture as the party did in 1968 or lose in landslides as in 1972 and 1984, but voters would split their tickets and return Democratic majorities to Congress. Members had learned to exploit every advantage their incumbency offered and to build personal reputations that insulated them from the national tides evident in the presidential voting.[5]

Throughout this period, Republicans had talked about their goal of nationalizing congressional elections, by which they meant getting people to vote for congressional candidates at the same levels that they voted for Republican presidential candidates.

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2 The allusion is to the golden age of the MP (member of Parliament) in eighteenth-century Britain before the development of the modern responsible party system characterized by centralized party leadership and strong party discipline. See Lewis Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (London: Macmillan, 1957).

3 I use the modifier "relatively" in these sentences to recognize that there were limits on member independence, of course. For example, a member could not vote against his party's nominee for speaker. And in the aftermath of the 1964 elections, the Democratic caucus stripped the seniority of two members who had endorsed Republican Barry Goldwater for president.

4 For a good survey of how Congress operated during this period see Kenneth Shepsle, "The Changing Textbook Congress," in *Can the Government Govern?* ed. John Chubb and Paul Peterson (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1989), 238–267.

5 The literature on these subjects is massive. For a review as the period drew to a close see Morris Fiorina and Timothy Prinz, "Legislative Incumbency and Insulation," *Encyclopedia of the American Legislative System,* ed. Joel H. Silbey (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994), 513–527. For the most up-to-date survey of congressional elections see Gary C. Jacobson and Jamie L. Carson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections,* 9th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

This would have resulted in Republican congressional majorities in big presidential years like 1972 and 1980–84.[6] But voters seemed content to behave in accord with "all politics is local"—until 1994.

The Republican wave in 1994 shocked not only pundits but even academic experts on congressional elections. Republican gains were expected, to be sure, but most analysts expected two dozen or so seats on the outside. Most of us dismissed as fanciful Newt Gingrich's prediction that the Republicans would take the House.[7] But when the electoral dust settled, Republicans had netted fifty-four seats in the House and ten in the Senate to take control of both chambers for the first time since the election of 1952. When political scientists looked back over the period, they saw that growing nationalization had been underway for some time, but the signals had not been recognized.[8]

Elections in the Era of Incumbency and Insulation

Political scientist Walter Dean Burnham first pointed out that the declining correlation between presidential and congressional voting lessened the responsiveness of the political system.[9] That is, as incumbents insulated themselves from electoral tides, the capacity of voters to hold the government as a whole accountable weakened. In contrast to elections in the late nineteenth century, presidential coattails had all but disappeared by the 1980s (figure 1). Thus, fewer members of Congress felt indebted to the president for their elections. Moreover, midterm seat losses in the modern era were pale reflections of those that occurred in the late nineteenth century (figure 2). With most of their fates independent of his, members of the president's party had less incentive to help an administration of their party, especially if it entailed any political cost to them. The unproductive relationship between President Jimmy Carter and the large Democratic majorities in Congress epitomized this state of affairs.

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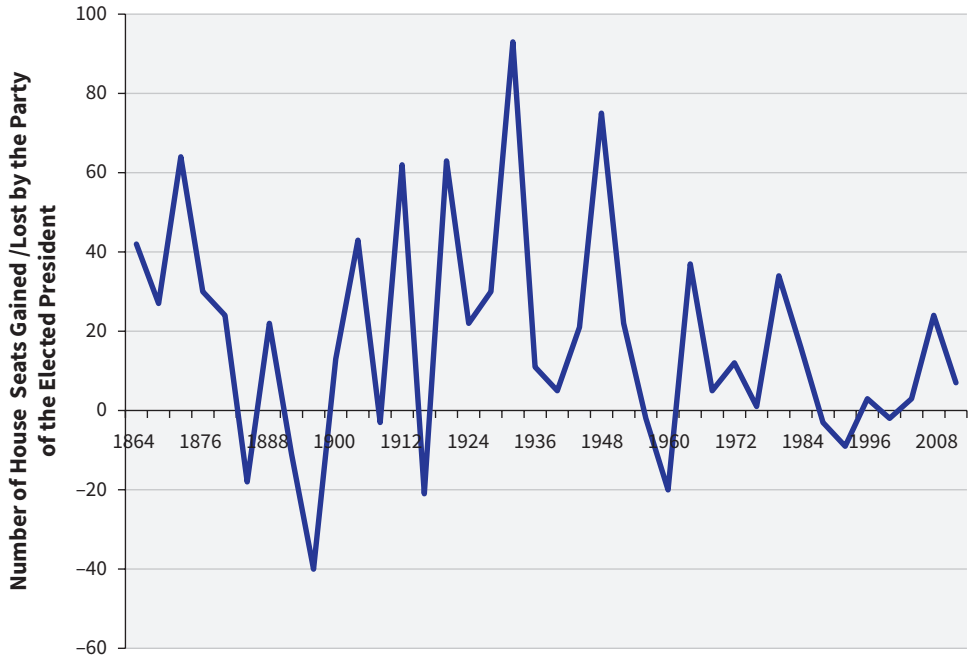
6 Continued Democratic congressional strength in the South would have made it difficult to win a House majority in a narrow presidential election.

7 "He's blowing smoke," as I put it to a *Congressional Quarterly* reporter at the time. Wrong.

8 See the essays in David W. Brady, John F. Cogan, and Morris P. Fiorina, eds., *Continuity and Change in House Elections* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press and Hoover Institution Press, 2000).

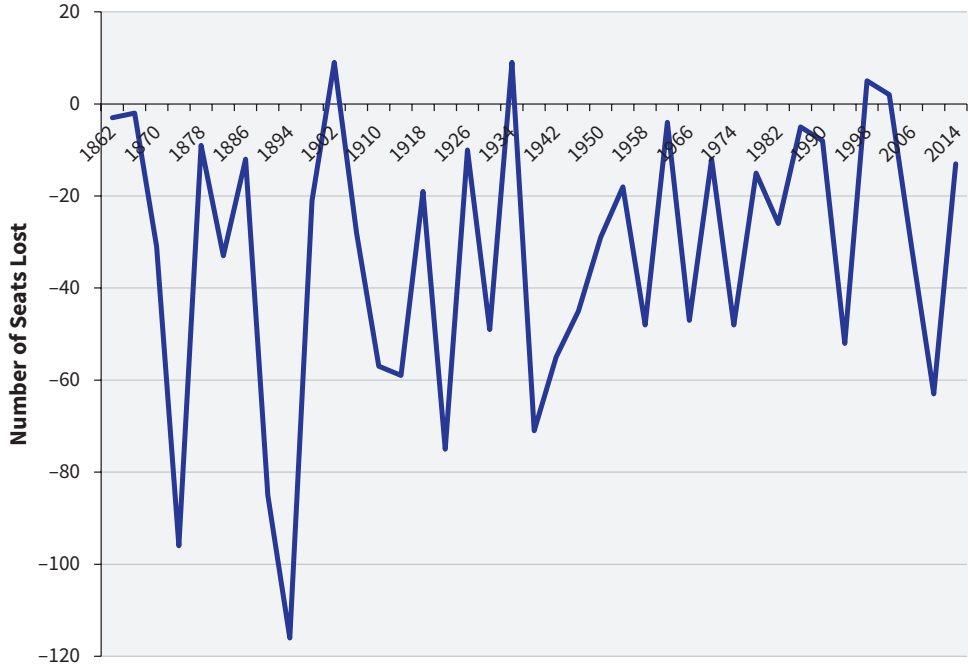
9 Walter Dean Burnham, "Insulation and Responsiveness in Congressional Elections," *Political Science Quarterly* 90, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 411–435.

Figure 1. Presidential Coattails Declined in the Second Half of the 20th Century



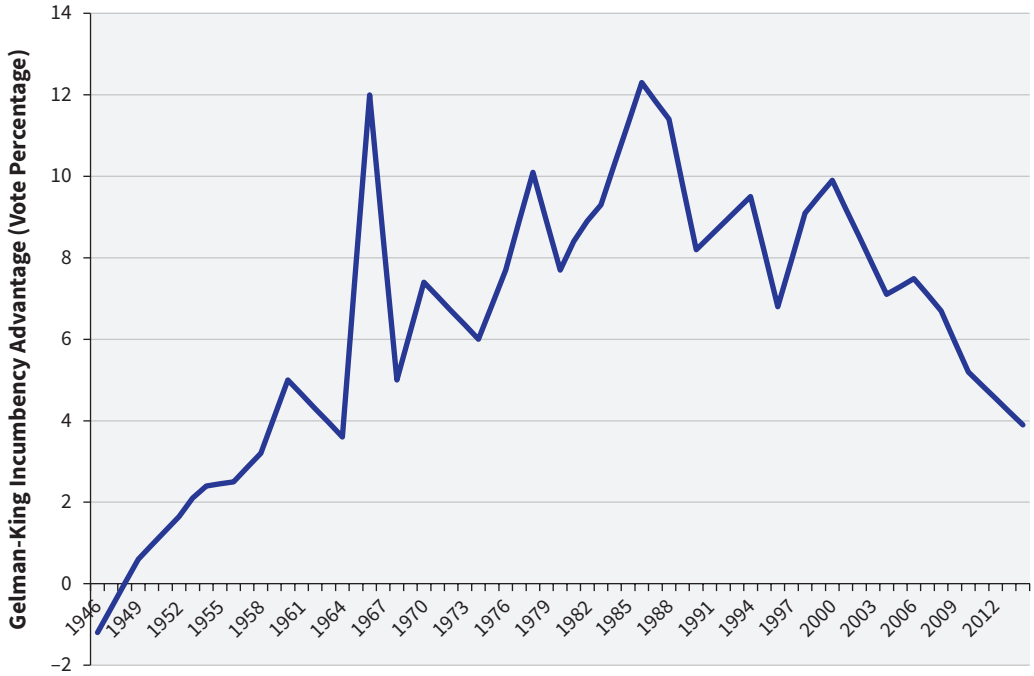
Source:
Harold W. Stanley and Richard G. Niemi, *Vital Statistics on American Politics 2013–2014* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2013).

Figure 2. Midterm Seat Losses by the Party of the President Declined in the Second Half of the 20th Century



Source:
Harold W. Stanley and Richard G. Niemi, *Vital Statistics on American Politics 2013–2014* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2013).

Figure 3. The Incumbency Advantage in House Elections Has Declined from its Mid-20th-Century Levels



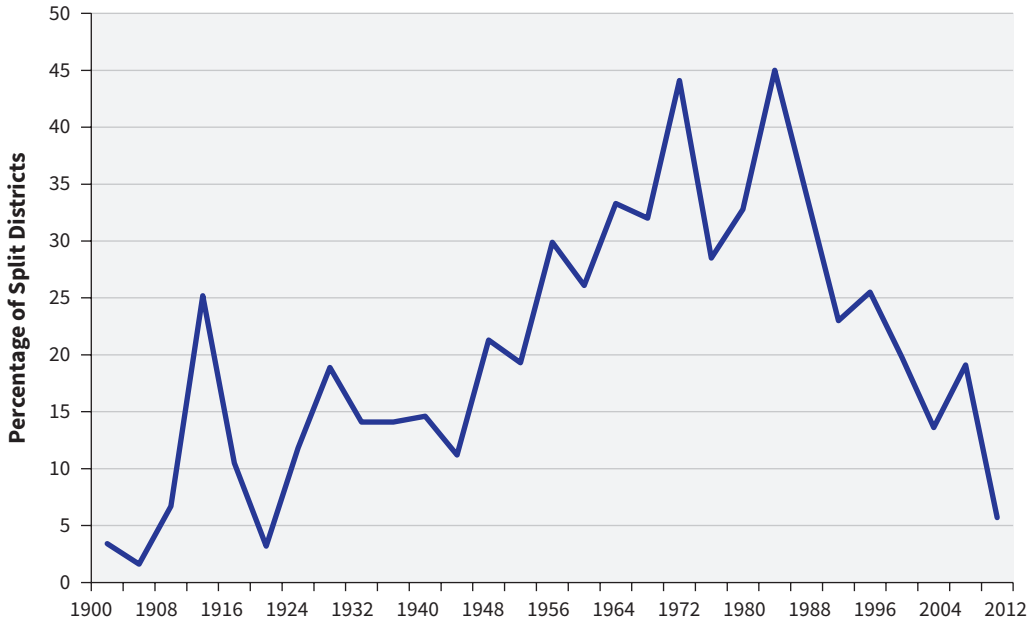
Source:
Calculations provided by Gary Jacobson.

The disassociation between the presidential and congressional electoral arenas probably was both a cause and a consequence of the rapid growth in the advantage of incumbency in the second half of the twentieth century. This terminology referred to a "personal vote," the additional support that incumbents could expect compared to what any generic non-incumbent member of their party running in their district in a given election could expect.[10] Scholars identified numerous advantages of incumbency: the growth in nonpartisan, non-ideological constituency service as the federal role in society and the economy expanded, the decline in high-quality challengers as local party organizations withered and became too weak to recruit and fund strong candidates, and, later, the widening campaign funding advantage incumbents enjoyed. Various measures of the incumbency advantage appear in the literature, but the one with the firmest statistical basis is that of Andrew Gelman and Gary King.[11] As figure 3

10 Bruce Cain, John Ferejohn, and Morris Fiorina, *The Personal Vote: Constituency Service and Electoral Independence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

11 Andrew Gelman and Gary King, "Estimating Incumbency Advantage without Bias," *American Journal of Political Science* 34 (1990): 1142–1164.

Figure 4. Split Presidential and House Majorities in Congressional Districts Today Are the Lowest in a Century



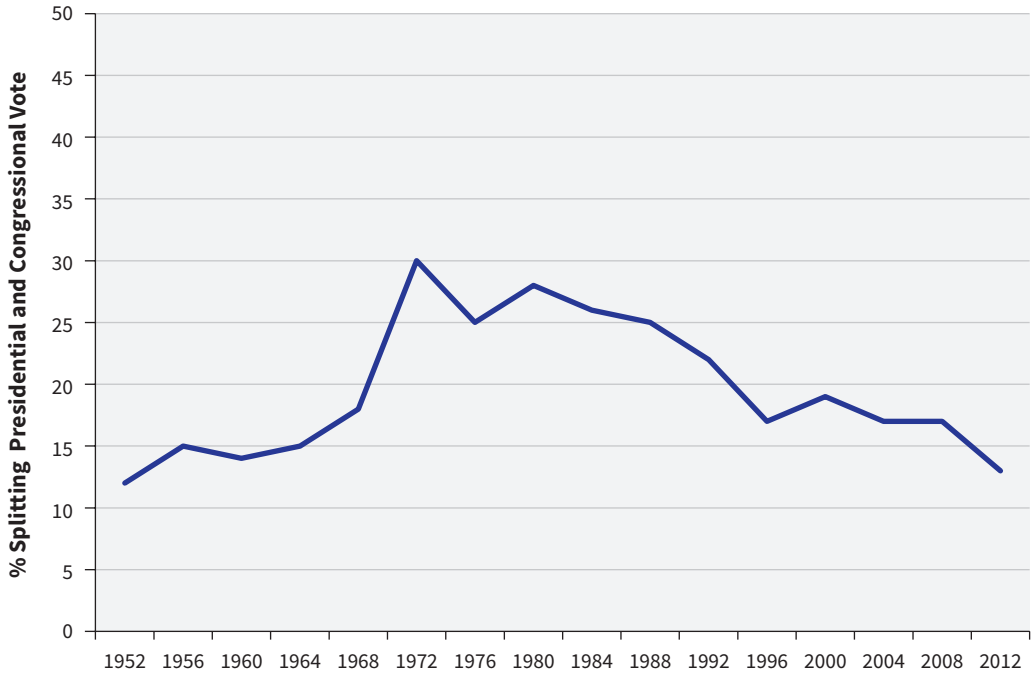
Source:
Harold W. Stanley and Richard G. Niemi, *Vital Statistics on American Politics 2013–2014* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2013).

shows, from the mid-1950s to the late 1990s the estimated advantage fluctuated between 6 and 12 percentage points until beginning a downward trend in the new century.[12]

Figure 4 provides what is perhaps the most striking illustration of the growing disassociation between the presidential and electoral arenas—the growth in the proportion of congressional districts that cast their votes for the presidential candidate of one party while electing a member of the other party to the House of Representatives. In the late nineteenth century when straight-ticket voting was prevalent, such split district majorities were rare, but they jumped after 1920 and increased rapidly after World War II, culminating in elections like 1972 and 1984 when nearly half the districts in the country split their decisions. This development

12 For a recent comprehensive analysis of the decline in the incumbency advantage see Gary Jacobson, "It's Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections," *Journal of Politics* 77, no. 3 (July 2015): 861–873.

Figure 5. Split Ticket (President/House) Voting Has Declined

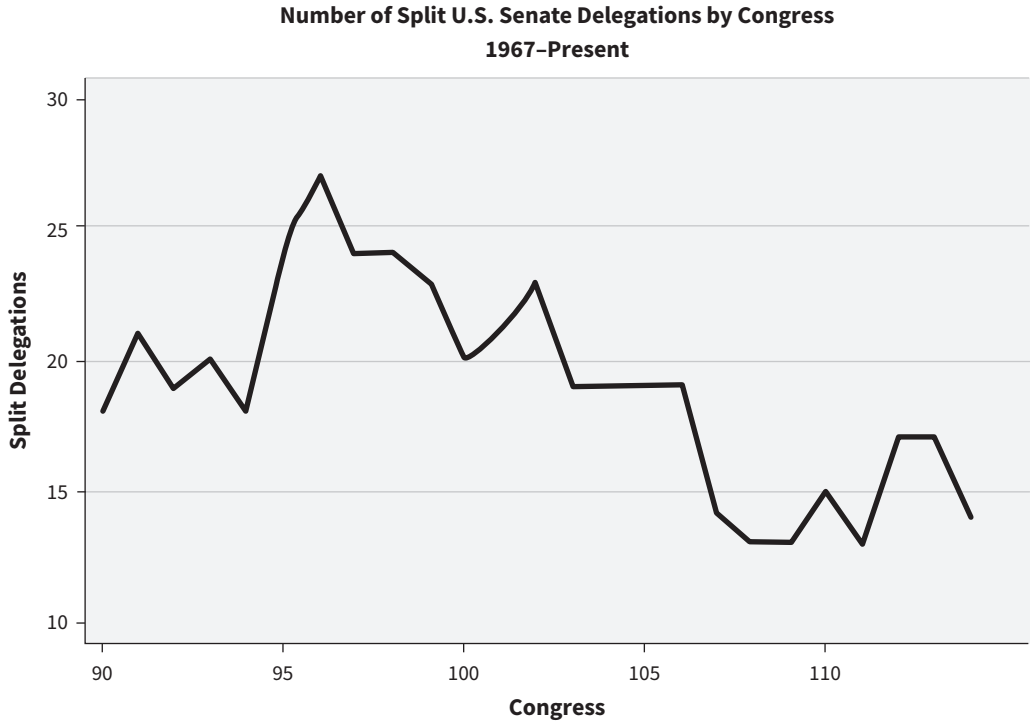


Source:
ANES

and its reversal in recent elections had important incentive effects. Suppose that after President Reagan's reelection in 1984, Speaker O'Neill had decided to follow the kind of oppositional strategy that congressional Republicans have adopted during the Obama presidency. Had he announced his strategy to the Democratic caucus, they likely would have rejected it. In 1985, 114 Democratic representatives held districts carried by Reagan. They might well have said, "Wait a minute, Tip. I have to be careful—Reagan won my district. I can't just oppose everything he proposes." Contrast that situation with 2013 when only sixteen House Republicans came from districts that voted for Obama in 2012. An overwhelming majority of the Republican conference saw little electoral danger in opposing Obama's every proposal.

The decline in split outcomes reflects the decline in split-ticket voting shown in figure 5. During the height of the incumbency era, a quarter to a third of voters split their ballots between the presidential and House levels. Since 1980 that figure has dropped in every election but one. By 2012 it had declined to only half the 1984 figure.

Figure 6. Split Party Senate Delegations Have Declined in Recent Decades

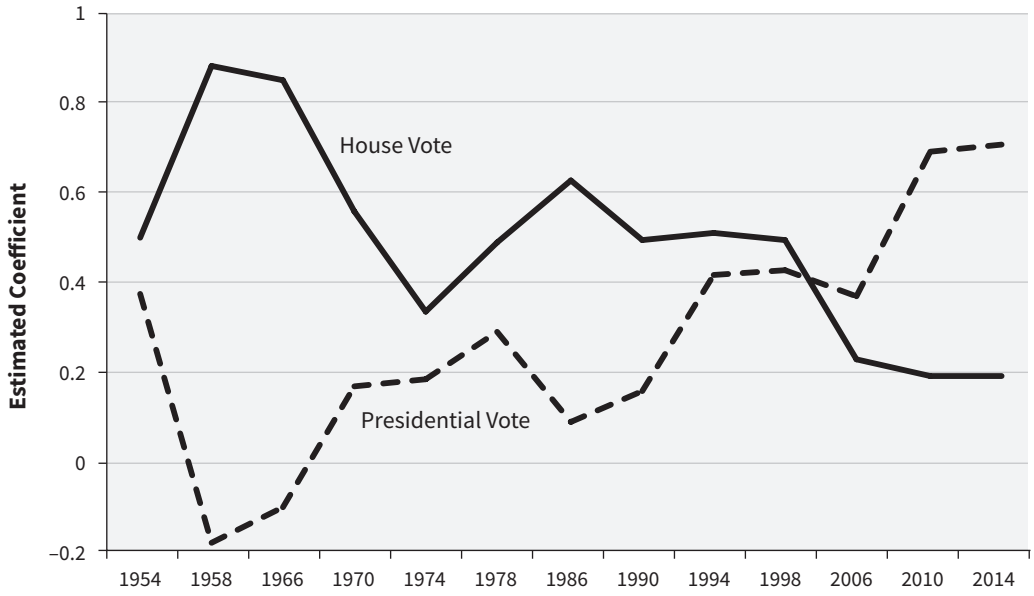


Source:
Christopher P. Donnelly, "Balancing Act? Testing a Theory of Split-Party U.S. Senate Delegations," January 2015.

For a number of reasons, Senate elections are more difficult for political scientists to study. Only thirty-three or thirty-four states hold them every two years, making statistical analysis iffy. Moreover, it is not the same third of the Senate that runs every two years, and the third of states that holds elections in a presidential year next holds them in an off-year, and vice-versa. For all these reasons, political scientists tend to focus on the 435 House elections held every two years. But patterns analogous to those discussed have appeared in Senate elections as well, despite the noisier data. As figure 6 shows, the number of states that elected one senator from each party rose sharply in the same period as split outcomes in the presidential and House arenas surged, peaking in 1978 when twenty-six of the fifty states were represented in Washington by one senator from each party.[13] This number dropped in half by 2002 but then began to rise again. I know of no research that explains this recent development. But despite the unexplained recent trend, it is clear that

13 Thomas L. Brunell and Bernard Grofman, "Explaining Divided US Senate Delegations, 1788–1996: A Realignment Approach," *American Political Science Review* 92, no. 2 (June 1998): 391–399.

Figure 7. The National Component of the House Vote Now Exceeds the Personal/Local Component



Source:
Calculations by Matthew Dickinson

states today show more consistency in their Senate voting than they did several decades ago.[14]

A very striking demonstration of rising nationalization appears in figure 7. Suppose you wanted to predict the outcome of a midterm election in a specific district. Suppose further that you had two pieces of information: (1) the Democratic presidential candidate's vote in that district two years earlier and (2) the Democratic congressional candidate's vote in that district two years earlier. Almost everyone would guess that the second piece of information is the more important of the two, especially since in the vast majority of the districts one of the candidates—the incumbent—is the same candidate who ran two years prior. Congressional election researchers typically treat

14 Special elections for the House have some of the same characteristics as Senate elections—there aren't many of them and they are held in very different electoral contexts. Thus, it is interesting that a statistically significant effect of presidential approval shows up in special election results beginning with the 2002 election. That is, special elections have become more nationalized. H. Gibbs Knotts and Jordan M. Ragusa, "The Nationalization of Special Elections for the U.S. House of Representatives," *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 26, no. 1 (2016): 22–39.

the presidential vote as capturing the national forces at work in an election—the state of the economy, domestic tranquility or lack thereof, peace and war, and so forth, while the congressional vote captures the local, more individualized, more personal factors at work. Statistically speaking, the local component of the vote was more important until the turn of the new century, although the relative strength of the national component had been increasing.[15] In 2006, however, the lines crossed and the national component has continued to be more important. Today one can better predict the winner's vote in a congressional district using the district's previous presidential vote than its previous House vote.

Finally, although there is little research on state level elections, there are indications that the growing nationalization of national elections has extended downward to the state level as well. Gubernatorial outcomes increasingly track presidential results, and David Byler reports a simple analysis of the relationship between the presidential vote in a state and the number of legislative seats won.[16] The relationship has fluctuated considerably since World War II, but after falling to a low and statistically insignificant level in 1988, it has steadily risen since. Moreover, recall the discussion in the first essay of this series of the hundreds of legislative seats lost in the midterm waves of 2006, 2010, and 2014. In recent decades state elections too seem to be showing increasing evidence of nationalization.

Within the political science community there is general agreement that party sorting, which has produced more internally homogeneous parties, underlies the movements shown in the figures presented above. But in my view a number of observers have erroneously located the cause almost entirely in party sorting in the *electorate*. For example, Gary Jacobson writes that the incumbency advantage "has fallen in near lockstep with a rise in party loyalty and straight-ticket voting, a consequence of the widening and increasingly coherent partisan divisions in the

15 This analysis was originally conducted by David Brady, Robert D'Onofrio, and Morris Fiorina, "The Nationalization of Electoral Forces Revisited," in *Continuity and Change in House Elections*, ed. Brady, Cogan, and Fiorina. It has been updated over the years by Arjun Wilkins and Matthew Dickinson.

16 Kyle Kondik and Geoffrey Skelley, "My Old Kentucky Home: Could Matt Bevin Soon Be in the Governor's Mansion?" *Sabato's Crystal Ball,* July 16, 2015, www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/my-old-kentucky-home-could-matt-bevins-soon-be-the-governors-mansion/; David Byler, "2016 Presidential Election Could Decide State Legislative Races," *Real Clear Politics,* January 14, 2015, www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2015/01/14/presidential_election_could_decide_state_legislative_races.html.

American electorate."[17] Abramowitz agrees: "The decline in ticket-splitting can be traced directly to increasing partisan-ideological consistency within the electorate."[18] To some extent that is surely the case, but such conclusions overlook the increasing partisan-ideological consistency among the *candidates*. Fifty years ago a New Jersey Democrat and a New Mexico Democrat faced different primary electorates. Today both cater to coalitions of public sector workers, racial and ethnic minorities, and liberal cause groups like environmental and pro-choice organizations. Similarly, fifty years ago Ohio and Oregon Republicans depended on different primary electorates. Today both cater to business and professional organizations and conservative cause groups like taxpayers and pro-gun and pro-life groups. This growing homogenization of each party's candidates has been reinforced by developments in campaign finance. Individual contributions increasingly come from ideologically committed donors who hail from specific geographic areas—Texas for Republicans, Manhattan and Hollywood for Democrats.[19] And while anonymity prevents similar research for contributions to independent committees and other recipients of "dark money," the same is probably true for campaign funds that come through those avenues. No matter what state or district you come from, if you need contributions from Texas oil interests or Hollywood liberals, you are going to lean in their direction.[20] Recent research suggests that these trends may extend to congressional primary elections as well.[21]

Now, if Democratic presidential and House candidates are nearly all liberals endorsed and supported by the same liberal groups and organizations, and Republican presidential and House candidates are nearly all conservatives endorsed and supported by conservative organizations and groups, one major reason to split your ticket has

17 Jacobson, "It's Nothing Personal," 861–862.

18 Abramowitz, *Disappearing Center,* 96.

19 James G. Gimpel, Frances E. Lee, and Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz, "The Check Is in the Mail: Interdistrict Funding Flows in Congressional Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 2 (April 2008): 373–394. See also Michael J. Barber, "Representing the Preferences of Donors, Partisans, and Voters in the US Senate," special issue, *Public Opinion Quarterly* 80 (March 2016): 225–249.

20 Tina Daunt, "Obama, Hollywood Huddle to take back Senate, House," *The Hill,* April 6, 2016, http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/house-races/275386-obama-hollywood-huddle-to-take-back-senate-house.

21 "Primary challengers, particularly ideological primary challengers, are raising more money, and they are raising much of that money from donors who do not reside in their states or districts." Robert G. Boatright, *Getting Primaried: The Changing Politics of Congressional Primary Challenges* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 137.

disappeared.[22] The simple fact is that we don't know how many voters would split their tickets if they were offered chances to vote for conservative Democratic or liberal Republican House candidates because the parties offer them few such choices anymore. Consider that in the 2012 elections in West Virginia, Mitt Romney shellacked Barack Obama by a margin of 26.8 percentage points at the same time that Democratic Senator Joe Manchin thumped his Republican opponent by a margin of 24 percentage points. If one assumes that everyone who voted for Obama also voted for Manchin, which seems reasonable, the implication is that 25 percent of West Virginians split their tickets, voting for Romney and Manchin. Are West Virginians unusual in their willingness to ticket-split, or are they just unusual in having the opportunity to vote for a pro-life, pro-gun Democrat?

Similarly, noting that self-identified liberals increasingly vote for Democratic congressional candidates and self-identified conservatives for Republicans, *New York Times* columnist Charles Blow opines, "We have retreated to our respective political corners and armed ourselves in an ideological standoff over the very meaning of America."[23] Such a conclusion is not justified. Liberal and conservative voters may not have changed at all. Compared to a couple of decades ago, in how many House districts today does a liberal voter have a liberal Republican candidate she could vote for, and in how many districts does a conservative voter have a conservative Democratic candidate he could vote for? Commentators have blithely equated the *lack of opportunity* to make the kind of choices made in the past with *unwillingness* to make the kind of choices made in the past. As I discussed in the third essay in this series, ordinary voters—even many strong partisans—are still much less well-sorted than high-level members of the political class. Thus, I believe that the increased similarity of partisan candidates

22 Readers familiar with my earlier "policy-balancing" hypothesis will understandably ask how the decline in split-ticket voting relates to the balancing hypothesis. While researchers reported some cross-sectional support for balancing, temporally speaking, as the parties diverged, more balancing (split-ticket voting) should have occurred. The fact that it declined indicates either that the balancing hypothesis is wrong or (I would prefer to think) that its effect has been overwhelmed by other factors. See Morris Fiorina, *Divided Government,* chap. 5 (New York: Macmillan, 1992). But see Robert S. Erikson, "Congressional Elections in Presidential Years: Presidential Coattails and Strategic Voting," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (August 2016): 551–574. Erikson's analysis indicates that balancing occurs but is dominated by coattails.

23 Charles M. Blow, "The Great American Cleaving," *New York Times,* November 5, 2010, www.nytimes.com /2010/11/06/opinion/06blow.html?ref=charlesmblow.

is at least as important a part of the explanation for the decline in ticket-splitting as the not-so-increased similarity of partisan voters.[24] Only the appearance of candidates like Donald Trump whose positions cut across the standard party platforms can let us determine whether electoral stability results from stable voters or similar candidates. Speaking purely as an electoral analyst, I would say that the data generated by nominations of non-standard candidates like Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Trump, and third-party candidates would enhance our understanding of the contemporary electorate.

Are More Nationalized Elections Good or Bad?

This question is related to the one asked at the conclusion of the fourth essay. In contrast to the elections of the late twentieth century when Democratic members of Congress could regularly win despite the travails of their presidential candidates, the electoral fates of candidates at different levels are intertwined. When combined with the tendency to overreach discussed in the fifth essay, the result *contra* Abramowitz can be wave elections like those of 2006, 2010, and 2014 that drastically change governing arrangements over a short period.

Here again there are arguments on both sides. On the plus side, more members of each party are held collectively responsible than previously, giving them more incentive to focus on policies that advance the interests of the country as a whole and less incentive to focus on, say, how many pork-barrel projects they can get for their districts. On the negative side, the disruption of government control gives parties very little time to pass and implement their programs. Some decades ago I argued for more collective responsibility on the part of the parties; whether it has gone too far is now the question.[25]

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24 An additional factor underlying the decline in split-ticket voting may well be that with the close party divide, voters realize that they are actually voting for an entire party, not just for individuals. For example, the seats of liberal Republicans like Chris Shays of Connecticut (defeated) and Marge Roukema of New Jersey (retired) became untenable not because they were personally unpopular but because voters in their districts understood that they would be part of a congressional majority they disliked.

25 Morris Fiorina, "The Decline of Collective Responsibility in American Politics," *Daedalus* 109 (Summer 1980): 25–45. Cf. Morris P. Fiorina, with Samuel J. Abrams, *Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics,* chap. 7 (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009).

Table 1. Popular Reaction to Wave Elections

Feel Happy About	*%*
1994 Republican Victory	57
2006 Democratic Victory	60
2010 Republican Victory	48
2014 Republican Victory	48

Source:
Pew Research Center

Interestingly, the American electorate shows mixed feelings about the current state of affairs. The Pew Research Center regularly queries voters about their satisfaction with the election result. As table 1 reports, the voters' collective minds have shown a change across the most recent wave elections. Solid majorities were happy about the thrashings of the Clinton Democrats in 1994 and the Bush Republicans in 2006. But only minorities registered satisfaction with the two more recent waves. It is almost as if voters are collectively saying, "This hurts us as much as it hurts you, but given your overreach, we have to do it."

Essay Series

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Morris Fiorina is the Wendt Family Professor of Political Science at Stanford University and a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution. For more than four decades he has written on American politics with particular emphasis on elections and public opinion. Fiorina has written or edited twelve books and more than 100 articles, served as chairman of the Board of the American National Election Studies, and received the Warren E. Miller Career Achievement Award from the American Political Science Association Section on Elections, Public Opinion, and Voting Behavior. His widely noted book *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America* (with Samuel Abrams and Jeremy Pope) is thought to have influenced then Illinois state senator Barack Obama's keynote speech to the 2004 Democratic National Convention ("We coach Little League in the blue states, and, yes, we've got some gay friends in the red states").

Series Overview

In contrast to most of modern American political history, partisan control of our national elective institutions has been unusually tenuous during the past several decades. This essay series argues that the ideologically sorted parties that contest elections today face strong internal pressures to overreach, by which I mean emphasizing issues and advocating positions strongly supported by the party base but which cause the marginal members of their electoral coalitions to defect. Thus, electoral losses predictably follow electoral victories. Institutional control is fleeting.

The first group of essays describes the contemporary American electorate. Despite myriad claims to the contrary, the data show that the electorate is no more polarized now than it was in the later decades of the twentieth century. What has happened is that the parties have sorted so that each party is more homogeneous than in the twentieth century; liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats have largely passed from the political scene. The muddled middle is as large as ever but has no home in either party. The growth in the proportion of self-identified independents may be a reflection of the limited appeal of today's sorted parties.

The second group of essays develops the overreach argument, discusses the role of independents as the marginal members of an electoral majority, and explains how party sorting produces less split-ticket voting. Rather than most voters being more set in their partisan allegiances than a generation ago, they may simply have less reason to split their tickets when almost all Democratic candidates are liberals and all Republican candidates are conservatives.

The third group of essays embeds contemporary American politics in two other contexts. First, in a comparative context, developments in the European democracies are the mirror image of those in the United States: the major European parties have depolarized or de-sorted or both, whereas their national electorates show little change. The rise of anti-immigrant parties may have some as yet not well-understood role in these developments. Second, in a historical context, the instability of American majorities today resembles that of the late nineteenth century, when similar significant social and economic changes were occurring.

A final postelection essay will wrap up the series.

These essays naturally draw on the work of many people who have contributed to a very active research program. I thank colleagues John Aldrich, Douglas Ahler, Paul Beck, Bruce Cain, James Campbell, Shanto Iyengar, Matthew Levendusky, Sandy Maisel, Paul Sniderman, and Guarav Sood, whose questions forced me to sharpen various arguments; and David Brady in particular for almost daily conversations about the matters covered in the posts that follow.