

## *The Paradox of Multiple Elections and Divided Government*

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In this paper, I identify a relationship between the paradox of multiple elections (PME) (Brams, Kilgour, and Zwicker 1997, 1998) and divided government. PME occurs when voters who face several elections may not know the results of one election before they vote in another. Often the winning combination (the set of winners of each individual election) is not a combination that most voters prefer. ANES data shows that when elections result in divided government PME emerges; when elections result in one party rule, PME is not present. While the 2000 elections break a pattern found in the 12 previous presidential elections, a new definition explains the anomaly. This study concludes that elections reflect majority preferences when they exist, but otherwise tend to be somewhat arbitrary.

The *paradox of multiple elections* (Brams, Kilgour, and Zwicker 1997, 1998) refers to the somewhat surprising results that can occur on ballots with at least three elections, where the elections can be represented as binary choices.<sup>1</sup> The paradox focuses on people's choices as combinations of their votes for the three offices. The *winning combination*, the set of winners of the three federal elections, as illustrated by the 1996 federal elections, was DRR; a Democrat won the Presidency, and Republican majorities were elected in the Senate and House of Representatives.<sup>2</sup> While DRR was the winning combination in 1996, it was tied for the fourth most popular combination out of eight possible combinations (see Table 1). More voters chose DDD, RRR, and DDR; and DRD received the same percentage of the vote as DRR. Herein lies the paradox: *the winning combination may not in fact be the most frequently selected combination.*<sup>3</sup> Thus, with just 5 percent of the vote, the winning combination, DRR, was far from the public's first choice in combinations. Yet, no one disputed the outcome of the 1996 elections.

PME highlights the difference between aggregation by individual offices and by combinations. If voters make their decisions for each office independently of the other offices, the combination outcome should not matter. If, however, voters consider the relationship between these offices when they cast their ballots, then the combination outcome could be very important. The question is whether, and to what extent, voters think in terms of combinations when they vote for these three offices.

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The author wishes to thank Steven Brams, Otto Davis, William Keech, Dan Little, Barbara Palmer, Meg Weekes and two anonymous reviewers for their comments, and Jennifer Napp for data collection assistance.

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*The American Review of Politics*, Vol. 26, Winter, 2005-06: 369-383  
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The 1996 elections were not the only instance of the multiple elections paradox. In fact, I report here that for every election (in the ANES data set) that produces divided government, the winning combination is only the third or fourth most popular combination. By contrast, when unified government is the electoral outcome, the most popular combination is almost always the winning combination; by definition, the paradox is not present. Indeed, the only time when unified government resulted without being the most popular combination was in 2000. Even this anomaly can be explained with a new definition of winning combination offered later.

### **Non-separable Preferences and Divided Government**

One critical aspect of PME is the requirement that voters cast their votes for all three elections before they know the outcome of any one election. If knowing the outcome of one election would change some voters' preferences for another election, these voters' preferences are said to be *non-separable*.<sup>4</sup> If, for example, people knew that a Democratic candidate would win the presidency, they might want to elect Democratic majorities to Congress to facilitate legislative progress.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, voters might want to elect Republican majorities to Congress to prevent a Democratic President from enacting certain policy initiatives. Similarly, knowledge of a Congressional election's outcome might influence which party voters prefer to have in control of the White House. Research indicates that many voters had non-separable preferences for the Presidential and House elections in 1996 (Smith et al. 1999). If voters do indeed have non-separable preferences, the current system does not provide an adequate representation of their choices (Brams, Kilgour, and Zwicker 1997).<sup>6</sup> PME would not exist if the most popular combinations also were the winning combinations in every election; yet the existence of the paradox itself presents adequate reason for concern about voters with non-separable preferences.<sup>7</sup>

This work contributes to research on divided government by examining voters' preferences for all three federal offices; the bulk of research on divided government focuses only on votes for the Presidency and the House.<sup>8</sup> The three-office analyses provide a more complete picture of voters' behavior. This research also extends the research of Brams and his colleagues by testing for PME over 13 elections, using individual level data which has not been previously aggregated, and making an explicit link between PME and divided government.

### **Paradoxes**

Many paradoxes exist in social choice and mathematics (Saari 1995, Saari 1994; and Lagerspetz 1996). These paradoxes illuminate how difficult

it can be to interpret what appear to be straightforward preferences. For example, when seemingly trivial changes in procedure produce vastly different outcomes, paradoxes emerge. In the case of PME, a change in the level of aggregation from the individual offices to the three-office combinations generates sharply different interpretations of voters' preferences.

PME was originally identified by Brams, Kilgour, and Zwicker (1997) in the context of referendum elections, where voters choose either to support or oppose specific policies. They found the winning combination for three environmental propositions on the November 1990 California ballot is only the fourth most popular combination. When Brams, Kilgour, and Zwicker (1998) expanded the analysis to include all 28 statewide propositions from November 1990, they found that *none* of the voters in Los Angeles County selected the winning combination for the county.<sup>9</sup>

Brams, Kilgour, and Zwicker (1997, 1998) also identified the paradox in the federal election context (President, Senate, House). With Congressional district level data, in which each district is classified into one of the eight combinations, they examined the 1976 and 1980 elections. The paradox was not found in the 1976 data; the winning combination, DDD, was the most popular combination, with 40.8 percent of the districts. By contrast, the winning combination in 1980, RRD, was the fourth most popular combination; it won only 14.3 percent of the districts. The 1980 data provided the paradoxical result; the winning combination was not the most frequently selected combination.

### **PME and Divided Government**

Six of the eight possible combinations of federal office elections are choices for *divided government*. Despite popular notions about the novelty of divided government, the historical record indicates that episodes of divided government have occurred periodically since the 1820s (see Silbey 1996 for details).

One prominent explanation for divided government, the balancing strategy (Alesina and Rosenthal 1995, 1989; Fiorina 1992; Erikson 1988), suggests that voters split their tickets as a conscious attempt to prevent extremist political policies. While these voters see programmatic differences between the Democrats and Republicans, they want to ensure that neither party has too much power in enacting governmental policies. When such voters split their tickets, the result is divided government. Researchers offer mixed results for the balancing theory. While Sigelman, Wahlbeck, and Buell (1997) and Lacy (1998) find that ticket splitting does not reflect respondent preferences for divided government, Smith et al. (1999) find significant support for balancing in the 1996 elections.<sup>10</sup>

Scholars have suggested other reasons for divided government, characterized by Burden and Kimball (2002) as structural explanations. These alternatives include issue ownership (Petrocik and Doherty 1996), differing responsibilities across government branches (Jacobson 1990), and the rise of candidate-centered politics (Wattenberg 1991, 1994).

Burden and Kimball (2002) thoroughly analyze the causes of ticket splitting and find that Congressional elections shape ticket splitting tendencies. Because most House elections feature strong incumbents facing relatively under-funded, unknown challengers, voters naturally tend to vote for the incumbent. The lack of serious competition in many congressional districts limits the voters' ability to balance their votes, even when they desire to do so (Burden and Kimball 2002). While Burden and Kimball (2002) do not find support for the balancing theory, they do find that candidate positions influence ticket splitting. In particular, they note an increase in ticket splitting when competing candidates take similar positions and are near the ideological center.

### **Testing for PME**

The American National Election Studies (ANES) data allow for tests of PME on a national random sample of voters in every Presidential election since 1952. Data for individual voters from these 13 Presidential elections can be analyzed prior to any aggregation. For each Presidential election year, the ANES data is used to generate frequencies of individuals voting for each of the eight possible voting combinations. Some respondents were excluded from the analyses because they lived in states without a Senate election in the Presidential election year.<sup>11</sup> Other respondents did not report votes for one or more of the offices; whether respondents abstained, refused to give interviewers their preferences, or failed to remember their preferences for any or all offices, they were excluded from the analyses. Finally, people who voted for a candidate other than the Democrat or Republican for any federal office were also dropped from the analyses.<sup>12</sup> The remaining samples range in size from 418 to 836.

### **Support for PME and the 2000 Anomaly**

The data produce two striking results. First, a systematic pattern emerges for the twelve elections from 1952-1996. Second, the 2000 elections do not conform to the pattern. Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents who select each of the eight voting combinations from 1952 through 2000. The percentages are reported by row (year). The entries in bold type are the winning combinations: RRR in 1952, RDD in 1956, etc. The final

**Table 1. Percentages of Voters who Chose Each Voting Combination, 1952-2000**

Year	DDD	RRR	DRR	DDR	RDD	RRD	DRD	RDR	N	Rank of 8 Combinations
1952	36%	<b>49%</b>	1%	1%	6%	3%	2%	3%	738	1st
1956	39%	42%	0%	1%	<b>9%</b>	3%	2%	4%	836	3rd
1960	<b>46%</b>	36%	1%	2%	6%	4%	4%	2%	418	1st
1964	<b>51%</b>	24%	5%	5%	2%	4%	6%	3%	719	1st
1968	35%	37%	2%	4%	<b>6%</b>	6%	3%	7%	560	4th (tie)
1972	26%	34%	2%	2%	<b>16%</b>	10%	6%	5%	653	3rd
1976	<b>39%</b>	26%	3%	6%	9%	7%	4%	6%	651	1st
1980	28%	31%	3%	7%	7%	<b>11%</b>	3%	11%	494	3rd
1984	32%	33%	3%	4%	<b><i>11%</i></b>	<b>8%</b>	3%	5%	640	4th
1988	34%	28%	1%	6%	<b>9%</b>	8%	6%	7%	745	3rd
1992	<b>42%</b>	26%	4%	6%	5%	7%	<b>6%</b>	4%	712	1st
1996	40%	35%	<b>5%</b>	8%	3%	3%	5%	3%	516	4th (tie)
2000	41%	<b>34%</b>	3%	6%	3%	5%	4%	<b>3%</b>	646	2nd

The combinations refer to preferences for the Democratic or Republican candidate for President, Senate, and House of Representatives. Winning combinations (based on the Brams, Kilgour, and Zwicker definition) appear in bold. New winning combinations (based on only Senate seats determined in the election year) are in bold italic (1984, 1992, and 2000 only).

column shows the winning combination's rank (out of the eight possible combinations) for each election.

1968, 1972, 1980, 1984, 1988, and 1996), PME is found. The winning combinations in these elections rank third or fourth of the eight combinations; support ranges from 5 to 16 percent. In the other elections (excluding 2000), when the electoral outcome is unified government, the winning combination is also the highest-ranked combination (1952, 1960, 1964, 1976, and 1992). Although these elections result in unified government, the percentage of respondents supporting the winning combination varies substantially; the low is 39 percent in 1976 and the high is 51 percent in 1964, the only year in which the winning combination receives an absolute majority (and not merely a plurality of the votes) – in the sample.<sup>13</sup>

The 2000 elections present an anomaly. Despite the electoral result of Republican control of the Presidency and both chambers of Congress, the paradox emerged. The most popular combination was not RRR, but rather DDD. Yet, this result is hardly surprising, given the divergence between Democrat Al Gore's popular vote victory and Republican George W. Bush's electoral vote triumph. If Gore had garnered the electoral vote victory, the winning combination would have been DRR, the sixth most popular

combination, offering strong support for the multiple elections paradox and for the established pattern of results. But, needless to say, Gore did not win sufficient electoral votes and the ANES data merely reinforce his hollow victory in the popular vote.

### **Redefining the Winning Combination**

The preceding findings use the Brams, Kilgour, and Zwicker definition of winning combination, but an alternate definition focusing on the Senate's staggered terms deserves consideration. With only one-third of Senators' seats in play in each election, the Senate winner could be defined as the party that wins a majority of these Senate elections. Thus, as long as two-thirds of the Senators are not chosen in any single election year, they could be ignored when determining the election's winning combination.

This new definition alters the winning combination for just three elections in the analyses.<sup>14</sup> In 1984, Ronald Reagan was re-elected in an electoral landslide and the Republicans retained control of the Senate, but a majority of the Senators elected in 1984 were *Democrats*. The old definition made RRD the winning combination (favored by 8% of the respondents), while the new definition suggests RDD (chosen by 11% of the respondents) should be considered the winning combination. In 1992, the first election to produce unified government in 12 years, the Democrats retained control of the Senate despite *Republican* victories for a majority of the Senate seats. The old definition suggests DDD, the most popular combination with 42 percent support, should be considered the winning combination; by the new definition, however, DRD, a combination supported by only 6 percent of the respondents, is considered the winning combination. Finally, in 2000, the Republicans may have won control of the White House, Senate and House, but the Democrats won the majority of Senate seats at stake. Thus, under this new definition, the winning combination in 2000 should be considered as RDR, a grouping chosen by only 3.2 percent of respondents, earning a place as the *least* popular combination (in a tie with RDD).

### **Discussion**

The data provide important information on divided government. Despite popular support for the concept of divided government, most people in most elections do *not* vote for divided government. In 2000, 75 percent of the respondents in these analyses cast ballots for unified government; 41 percent supported only Democrats and 34 percent supported only Republicans. Straight ticket voting declined from a high (for the set of elections examined here) of 85 percent in 1952, to below 70 percent in 1972 and remained

below 70 percent until 1996. The data not only indicate that most voters do not vote for divided government, they also show that remarkably few voters choose the particular version of divided government that occurs. While 25 percent of the voters in 1996 chose some type of divided government, only 1/5 of this group (5% of the 1996 sample) voted for the winning outcome, DRR. It seems highly unlikely that people who chose RDD, RRD, or RDR would like the DRR outcome merely because it represented one type of divided government. Instead, supporters of RDD might be extremely disappointed after they supported the losers in all three elections.

The 2000 ANES included a question eliciting preferences for divided government. Respondents were asked whether they preferred one party controlling the presidency and Congress or split control.<sup>15</sup> Table 2 shows reported (or purported) preferences for divided government by reported vote in the 2000 elections. If people cast votes consistent with their reported preferences for divided government, the main diagonal cells (voted one party AND prefer one party, voted split ticket AND prefer split control) would be filled. Yet, Table 2 clearly shows a different result. In fact, the *off*-diagonal cells account for 55 percent of the respondents. By far the most populated cell (with nearly half of the respondents in this analysis), is the upper right cell, where the people stated a preference for split control and, nonetheless, chose to vote a straight ticket.

The contradictory data in Table 2 could be considered disturbing, but not surprising. Surely, it is disturbing when individuals profess one attitude and act in a manner wholly inconsistent with their stated attitude. Nearly half of the respondents in these analyses purported a preference for divided government, but cast a straight party line vote for the three federal offices in 2000. Such inconsistent behavior might well provoke dismissive comments about the faulty thought processes employed by American voters. Yet, the behavior itself should not be surprising, given the well-documented power of

**Table 2. Preferences for Divided Government  
by Reported Vote in 2000 Election**

	Prefer One Party	Prefer Split Control	N
Voted One Party	26% (139)	<b>48% (251)</b>	390
Voted Split Ticket	<b>7% (36)</b>	19% (99)	135
Totals	33% (175)	67% (350)	525

Voted one party includes DDD and RRR combinations; voted split ticket includes the six remaining combinations. The bold entries denote inconsistencies between preferences and actions in 2000 election. Subjects who reported "No Preference" between one party and split control were excluded from this table. See Appendix Table A4 for more complete information.

party identification and incumbency in predicting voter behavior (Jacobson 2001). Preference for divided government might provide valuable information to researchers, but the variable simply cannot compete with the stalwarts of party identification and incumbency. These data support Burden and Kimball's (2002) conclusion that the lack of quality competition limits voters' choices and thus their ability to follow through on desires for balancing or ticket splitting.

Taken together, the data show that how election results are aggregated can make a difference. If the electoral mechanism used aggregation by combination, the most popular combination would always be the winning combination and we would *never* have divided government (because either DDD or RRR is always the most popular combination). Yet, we often have divided government, because we use aggregation at the individual office level. While other electoral mechanisms, such as approval voting and the borda count, would reflect voters' preferences for combinations more accurately, these mechanisms are impractical for U.S. national elections. See footnote 6 for information about the impractical nature of the alternative mechanisms.

Although this study does not determine whether respondents have separable preferences, the current results coupled with Smith et al.'s (1999) finding of voters with nonseparable preferences raise some question about whether the current electoral mechanism can handle such voter preferences. The PME focus on voting preferences for the three-office combinations, rather than individual offices, illustrates how voters might think about the relationship between these offices when they vote. If the most popular combinations were always the winners, we would not have a paradox, and we would have less cause for concern about voters with nonseparable preferences. Yet the existence of PME presents some cause for concern, because the current system simply cannot accommodate voters with nonseparable preferences across federal offices. As long as elections require that voters cast their votes for all three offices without knowledge of the outcome of any one office, people must act as if they have separable preferences, an action that is by definition problematic for voters with nonseparable preferences.

### **Understanding the 2000 Results**

In the end, the 2000 elections were essentially a tie. The Presidential election was determined by razor thin margins for both the popular and electoral votes (and some would add, even the Supreme Court decision).<sup>16</sup> The Senate election produced a deadlocked chamber (with 50 Republicans and 50 Democrats), requiring the Vice President to break ties and tip the



balance to the Republicans. The House remained under Republican control with a mere nine vote margin over the Democratic minority.

To be sure, at the macro level, the 2000 election was a virtual tie. And yet, at the micro level, the election was remarkably different; in numerous districts, the elections were incredibly lopsided. As many have noted, the number of truly competitive Congressional contests is small, and appears to be shrinking. The number of marginal districts continues to decline, largely as a result of increasingly aggressive partisan redistricting in the states. In 2000, the average vote percentage for House incumbents running against a major party opponent was 65.1 percent (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2002).

PME allows for the juxtaposition of the macro and micro level election results. The national tie and the local blowouts mesh with the paradox. A majority of respondents voted for the same party for President, Senator, and Representative in 2000 (41% for Democrats, 34% for Republicans). Across the nation, largely homogeneous congressional districts provided both parties with locally strong showings, which balanced out at the aggregate level. Thus, the electoral outcome was a tie with a slight Republican tilt, making RRR the winning combination, but not the most popular one in the 2000 elections. Furthermore, according to the alternate definition on page 9, the winning combination is RDR, which presents the most extreme form of the paradox as it is the *least* popular combination (tied with RDD for only 3.2% of voter support).

### **Future Directions for PME Research**

The research reported here suggests several potential directions for future research related to PME. First, researchers would benefit from additional evidence regarding the prevalence of non-separable preferences in the voting population. The existing evidence regarding non-separable preferences is somewhat limited (Smith et al. 1999). More extensive proof of voters with non-separable preferences would amplify the importance of PME. Second, this research would benefit from a large-scale survey (such as ANES) with multiple questions about preferences for divided government, including follow-up questions (when appropriate) that ask people about the conflict between their purported preferences for divided government and their actual straight ticket votes for federal office. Further, the new questions should be repeated, without changes in question wording, in every presidential election year to allow for a longitudinal study of divided government and PME.<sup>17</sup>

### Conclusion

As many researchers have demonstrated, elections are an imperfect instrument (Riker 1982; Arrow 1963). PME is yet another illustration of how elections are not always perfect. Specifically, the paradox shows that sometimes the most preferred combination is not the winning combination in federal elections. To be sure, this finding represents a weakness in the system, but it need not be considered in a negative light. Without the paradox, we would (almost) always have unified government. While support for divided government varies, a system that cannot produce divided government would be undesirable, according to some scholars. Such a system would not reflect the populace's diverse views. In a sense, PME represents an extreme form of checks and balances, and maybe the framers would like the way the system works now. In another sense, PME demonstrates the non-responsiveness of the vote when faced with complex voter preferences.

### APPENDIX

**Table A1. Percent of Respondents Who Select Each of the Two-chamber Voting Combinations (President and House)**

Year	DD	RR	DR	RD	N	Rank
1952	38.8%	48.7%	2.3%	10.3%	1009	1st
1956	39.4	45.1	2.1	13.5	1151	3rd
1960	45.2	40.5	5.0	9.4	766	1st
1964	58.6	26.3	8.7	6.4	947	1st
1968	39.9	42.3	7.0	10.8	776	3rd
1972	30.5	39.9	4.6	25.0	1293	3rd
1976	41.2	34.0	9.2	15.6	1049	1st
1980	34.5	37.8	7.9	19.8	762	3rd
1984	35.6	39.0	5.6	19.8	1142	3rd
1988	40.4	34.3	7.1	18.3	1030	3rd
1992	47.8	29.8	10.1	12.3	1126	1st
1996	43.6	38.6	13.4	4.4	926	3rd
2000	42.7	39.0	10.0	8.3	882	2nd

Winning combinations for each election are in bold.

**Appendix** (continued)

**Table A2. Pooled Results of Respondents' Support for Voting Combinations by Party Identification of Respondents for 1952-2000**

	Democrat	Republican	Independent	Other/None
DDD	2778	138	174	38
DDR	285	44	33	2
DRD	257	36	41	5
DRR	102	86	24	3
RDD	304	194	79	10
RDR	85	261	49	5
RRD	130	296	66	7
RRR	240	2314	193	46

**Table A3. Support for Voting Combinations by Vote for Incumbents and Non-incumbents for the U.S. House and U.S. Senate in 2000**

	House Incumbent	House Challenger	House Other*	Senate Incumbent	Senate Challenger**	Senate Other***
DDD	159	80	28	127	94	46
DDR	32	4	3	14	11	14
DRD	16	6	1	20	2	1
DRR	15	6	1	8	7	7
RDD	17	4	0	16	4	1
RDR	16	4	1	12	6	3
RRD	23	3	6	17	10	5
RRR	124	57	39	122	61	37
	402 (62%)	164 (25%)	79 (12%)	336 (52%)	195 (30%)	114 (18%)

\*The House Other votes refer to races without incumbents.

\*\*The Senate challenger vote only includes races in which an incumbent is running.

\*\*\*Other Senate votes refer to races without incumbents.

**Table A4. Support for Voting Combinations by Preferences for Divided Government in the 2000 Elections**

Combination	Prefer One Party	Prefer Split Control	No Preference	N
DDD	32%	<b>52%</b>	16%	259
RRR	26	<b>54</b>	19	213
DDR	<b>37</b>	50	12	40
DRR	<b>14</b>	82	4	22
DRD	<b>13</b>	61	26	23
RRD	<b>31</b>	47	22	32
RDD	<b>9</b>	86	5	21
RDR	<b>14</b>	67	19	21
Total	28	55	17	631

The bold entries denote inconsistencies between preferences and actions in 2000 election.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Some elections include independent or third party candidates, but they are seldom serious contenders for office. In the analyses reported later, respondents who vote for independent or third-party candidates are excluded. For more information, see footnote 12.

<sup>2</sup>According to Brams, Kilgour, and Zwicker's definition of the winning combination, the winner of the Presidential election is the candidate who receives the most votes and the winners of the Senatorial and House elections are defined as the party which controls the majority of the chamber's seats after the election. An alternate definition of the winning combination is discussed later in the paper.

<sup>3</sup>Brams, Kilgour, and Zwicker (1998) indicate that the strongest form of the paradox occurs when the winning combination is the least popular combination. When the winning combination is not the least popular combination, they characterize the finding as a weaker form of the paradox. Some people might not perceive the paradox of multiple elections as a paradox. The finding could also be referred to as a discrepancy or inconsistency. For this paper, the word *paradox* is used as Brams, Kilgour, and Zwicker used the term. Further, some might suggest that PME is more coincidence than anything else. Although there is an element of coincidence in PME, there is also a concrete aspect of PME when focusing on voters with non-separable preferences. For these individuals, PME shows the very real contrast between what they want (as represented by their combination of votes) and how their votes are counted (as represented by the individual office level results).

<sup>4</sup>Lacy (2001) provides an excellent model of non-separable preferences in dealing with survey responses.

<sup>5</sup>Researchers have studied whether unified and divided governments provide different levels of policy progress. While the conventional wisdom suggests that divided government is an impediment to passing legislation, Mayhew's (1991) work does not support this belief. Roughly the same number of major pieces of legislation occurs under each type of government. Other researchers, however, use alternate definitions of legislative success to show that different levels of productivity are found for unified and divided governments (Fiorina, 1992; Herzberg, 1996; Rieselbach, 1996). See Burden and Kimball (2002) for a more thorough summary of research on the impact of unified/divided government.

<sup>6</sup>Approval voting for the three-office combinations or the borda count could handle problems with non-separable preferences. These methods, however, are not practical for federal elections for many reasons. The voting procedure could be quite cumbersome. For example, voters would need to make eight votes to approve or disapprove of each combination for the three federal offices. Moreover, it would be difficult to interpret and implement the electoral tallies. After the aggregate results were complete, one would have to determine which districts and states would represent the designated percentage of Democrat or Republican Representatives and Senators.

<sup>7</sup>Some might suggest that PME is more coincidence than anything else. Although there is an element of coincidence in PME, there is also a concrete aspect of PME when focusing on voters with non-separable preferences. For these individuals, PME shows the very real contrast between what they want (as represented by their combination of votes) and how their votes are counted (as represented by the individual office level results).

<sup>8</sup>Divided government researchers have not ignored the Senate, but most have not included the results of Senate elections in analyses of voters' preferences for divided government. Burden and Kimball (1998) present analyses of split tickets for President/

House and for President/Senate, but they do not look at the three offices together. Brunell and Grofman (1998) present a thorough examination of split Senate delegations and how they relate to divided government, but they focus exclusively on the Senate.

<sup>9</sup>The exact opposite of the winning combination (replacing no with yes and vice versa) also received zero votes. Given the number of potential combinations (either 268.4 million or 22.9 trillion depending on whether abstention is excluded or included respectively), one would expect many combinations to lack support. Nonetheless, it is somewhat surprising that none of the voters chooses the winning combination.

<sup>10</sup>Grofman, Koetzle, McDonald, and Brunell (2000) offer an aggregate level explanation for split ticket voting, which focuses on the ideological make-up of house districts. More conservative house districts that go Democratic for the House are found to be more likely to opt for a Democratic President and vice versa.

<sup>11</sup>All voters who were excluded from the analyses because they did not vote in a Senate election are included in analyses of combinations for the President and House votes only (Appendix Table A1).

<sup>12</sup>In 2000, for example, 2.1% of respondents reported voting for a candidate other than the Democrat or Republican for the House of Representatives and 1.8% did so for the Senate. For the Presidency, 2.8% supported Ralph Nader, 0.3% supported Pat Buchanan, and 0.8% supported another independent or third party candidate.

<sup>13</sup>As expected, partisanship and incumbency are important factors in voters' preferences for combinations. See Appendix Tables A2 and A3 for the breakdown of voting combinations by these factors.

<sup>14</sup>The fact that altering the definition of winning combination changes the results could be interpreted as an indication that PME is synthetic. Yet, it could also be viewed as evidence that PME has the power to pick up the complexity and special features of our electoral system, including the Senate's staggered elections.

<sup>15</sup>The ANES question wording was: Do you think it is better when one party controls both the presidency and Congress, better when control is split between the Democrats and Republicans, or doesn't it matter? While this question is not perfect and has been criticized by some researchers, unfortunately it is the only question included in the ANES that addresses this issue.

<sup>16</sup>The 1960 election also featured a minimal popular vote margin between Kennedy and Nixon. Yet, Kennedy won 303 electoral votes to Nixon's 219. And the 1960 Congressional results yielded strong Democratic majorities in both chambers.

<sup>17</sup>The current question measuring attitudes toward divided government was asked in 1992 and 2000, which limits its usefulness.

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