Unified Government, Divided Government, and Party Responsiveness
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*R*evisionist accounts conclude that divided and unified government do not differ significantly in the production of "important" public policy. I argue instead that when one theoretically reclaims the concerns about party responsiveness and institutional features of American politics that have animated party government scholars, unified government is significantly more productive than divided government. Employing a range of measures of important legislative enactments in the postwar period, I find that unified government produces greater quantities of significant enactments and is more responsive to the public mood than is divided government. The evidence suggests that parties do, as party government theorists maintain, generate incentives to cooperation that help transcend some of the policymaking gaps created by the Constitution.

Does unified party control of government affect the enactment of significant public policy? Until recently, scholars believed that political parties narrow the policymaking gaps created by the Constitution. Where the Constitution disperses power federally across different geographical levels and institutionally across governmental branches, parties give politicians in these different levels and branches an incentive to work together to produce policy results that redound to their mutual political benefit. It was a short step from this standard argument to the conclusion that a government controlled by one party is more likely to pass significant public policy than is a government with control divided between the parties. Divided government reinforces the obstacles inherent in the Constitution, invites strategic standoffs between party politicians with competing institutional leverage, and makes the enactment of significant policy more difficult. For citizens, divided government greatly complicates the process of assigning blame and credit and inflates the cost of acquiring information about parties, politicians, and candidates.

There were always concerns that this conventional analysis overstated the extent of party unity under unified government and understated the incentive of politicians to cooperate under divided government, but not until David Mayhew's *Divided We Govern* (1991) was the conventional view comprehensively challenged. For the period from 1947 through 1990, Mayhew examined contemporary assessments and scholarly reflections to compile a list of "significant" legislative enactments. He transformed the debate by showing that such enactments were just as frequent during divided government as during unified government.[1] Mayhew's challenge to the conventional wisdom joined and inspired a flurry of work on both the causes (Fiorina 1994; Jacobson 1990; Petrocik 1991; Petrocik

and Doherty 1996; Sigelman, Wahlbeck, and Buell 1997; Wattenberg 1991) and consequences (Alt and Lowry 1994; Cox and McCubbins 1991; Franklin and Hirczy de Mino 1998; Gilmour 1995; Jones 1994; Kelly 1993a; Kernell 1991; Lohmann and O'Halloran 1994) of divided government.

Mayhew's findings are often reported as a repudiation of party government theory and studies of party decline, but scholars in these two camps might easily see Mayhew's data as reaffirming their view of the problems in the American party system: Mayhew simply rediscovered that American parties are weak. Parties are equally effective under divided or unified government, in this view, because weak, loose, fractious organizations are weak, loose, fractious organizations, period.[2] Nonetheless, Mayhew's findings came as a surprise and challenge to political scientists.

I argue that the conventional wisdom holds up better than the revisionist accounts suggest. Various measures of "significant enactments" support the notion that unified government helps pass policy. I also suggest that party government theorists made more nuanced arguments about unified and divided government than depicted in revisionist studies. In particular, when their insights about party responsiveness and institutional features are incorporated into explanatory models, unified government proves both statistically and substantively significant.

THE SCHOLARLY SCORECARD ON UNIFIED AND DIVIDED GOVERNMENT

Research since Mayhew's pathbreaking contribution has supported the revisionist argument. Jones (1994; see also 1997) finds that presidents and Congress have made significant policy across varied partisan configurations (partisanship, bipartisanship, copartisanship, cross-partisanship), and his comprehensive reassessment of the postwar presidency reaffirms the thrust of

[1] Mayhew 1995 brings the tally through 1994.

[2] Historian Joel Silbey (1996, 24) reflects these sentiments: "Divided government, as a clearly marked phenomenon ... only makes descriptive and analytic sense in the presence of a strong two-party system organizing and dominating the American political world with national parties that are disciplined enough to frame and articulate different policy agendas at their cores, and unified enough to carry their proposals through."

Mayhew's findings. To Jones, a system with responsible parties and a strong presidency is not necessary for important policymaking, not superior regarding representation, and in any event not very likely.[3] Another recent interpretation of the presidency, although not directly concerned with the question of divided versus unified government, reaches similar conclusions. To Skowronek (1993), "political time"—a cycle in which both unified- and divided-government presidents confront conditions of regime construction, maintenance, collapse, or challenge—suggests that presidents can be spectacularly unsuccessful during unified government if the broader policy regime is collapsing (e.g., Hoover and Carter), and presidents during divided government can be remarkably successful by pursuing what amounts to a triangulation strategy between the two parties (e.g., Eisenhower and Nixon).

Fiorina's (1996) review of post-Mayhew scholarship also generally confirms Mayhew's challenge to conventional wisdom. Quirk and Nesmith (1995) argue that divided government is likely to lead to gridlock only when the parties are debating highly ideological issues and there has been no significant shift in public opinion and political pressure. Looking at the Bush presidency, Quirk and Nesmith (1994) suggest that circumstantial factors, such as the budget deficit, issue complexity, and confused and uninformed mass opinion, do more to create policy deadlock than does divided government. Cameron, Howell, and Adler (1997) provide the most elaborate and sophisticated compilation yet of significant enactments. They seek to classify all successful legislation into four categories of significance. For the top two categories, "landmark" and "major," the results are mixed: Enactment of major legislation does not appear to vary significantly between unified and divided government, but enactment of landmark statutes does so at a rate of about two to three statutes per congressional term.

Krehbiel (1996, 1998; see also Brady and Volden 1997) offers the most significant and elegant theoretical exploration of lawmaking under divided and unified government. To Krehbiel, the supermajoritarian procedures of American politics make gridlock equally likely under unified and divided government. Unless the status quo equilibrium is extreme and far removed from the median preferences of an incoming regime, there is little reason to expect much in the way of major changes in policy. Under both unified and divided government the median preference point remains very much toward the political center. If the equilibrium is extreme, which is unlikely in the absence of exogenous shocks, then both unified and divided government are likely to break gridlock as the equilibrium moves toward median preferences. In this model, neither the form of party control nor the strength of the majority party does much to alleviate gridlock. Supermajoritar-

ian procedures make it difficult to move off the status quo, even if a newly elected majority desires change. These factors make major policy shifts equally unlikely during unified and divided government.

On the other side of the scholarly ledger, Kelly (1993a) argues that a reworking of Mayhew's list of significant laws shows that unified government *does* increase the number of important public policy enactments. In Kelly's view, Mayhew's method improperly rewards legislation that became significant years after adoption or because of changing events. Instead, innovative legislation should be considered an important departure at its time of adoption *and* deemed significant years later by experts, rather than meet only one of these criteria. Using this dual definition, Kelly (1993a) concludes that the production of important legislation is significantly greater under unified government (see also Kelly 1993b; Mayhew 1993).[4]

One possible problem with comparing successful legislative enactments in divided and unified government is that successful legislation may be unusually likely to garner bipartisan support, which may tilt the comparison in favor of divided government.[5] One remedy to this selection bias is to consider unsuccessful legislation. Edwards, Barrett, and Peake (1997) look at potentially significant legislation that failed to pass and conclude there is more legislation of this type during divided than unified government, particularly when the president opposes the legislation. Approximately seven more potentially significant bills that the president opposes die during a congressional session under divided government than during unified government. Edwards, Barrett, and Peake conclude that divided government increases by 45% the odds of potentially significant legislation failing. Similarly, Binder (1999) develops a measure of the legislative agenda and finds that failure of agenda items is significantly more likely in divided government. Each of these accounts argues that an accurate picture of legislative productivity requires analysis of both success and failure.

Scholars looking at the results or content of public policy rather than the number of important enactments also have concluded that the form of party control makes a difference. Divided government leads to more protectionism in trade policy, according to Lohmann and O'Halloran (1994), and it produces higher budget deficits (McCubbins 1991) and a slower response to tackling deficits (Alt and Lowry 1994; Poterba 1994). Looking at the divided-government Bush presidency

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[3] Skepticism about the practicality of party government in the American context has been an enduring critique against this model. Baer and Bositis (1993, 204–43) find, however, that a strong majority of the reforms suggested by the American Political Science Association's Committee on Political Parties (1950) had been implemented in some form by the early 1990s.

[4] In a "mini-research report," Reynolds (1995) also finds that more significant enactments occur during unified than divided government. He compiled a list of major legislation passed since Andrew Jackson's administration, using the most widely adopted college history text as the arbiter of what historians consider "significant." Not surprisingly, since a college text must discuss important legislation rather than simply list it, the Reynolds list is shorter than that of Mayhew and consists of legislation of extraordinary importance. According to Reynolds, from 1829 to 1946 important enactments averaged 2.4 during unified sessions of Congress and 1.2 during divided sessions. Taylor (1998) also examines legislative productivity but does not test for the effect of unified government.

[5] Rohde (1991) notes that final passage votes are less partisan than other votes.

and the first two unified-government years of the Clinton term, Thorson (1996) concludes that final passage coalitions for significant legislation were more likely to be partisan under unified government, leading to differences in the content of public policy. Weatherford's (1993) analysis of tax cut discussions in 1958 reaffirms this finding (see also Coleman 1996). Similar to Jones, Weatherford finds that stalemated institutions during divided government give leaders incentives to modify legislative-executive relations away from partisanship and toward consultation in the development of policy. Political actors who contemplate a long period of shared power find grounds on which to broker agreements. Neither Thorson nor Weatherford suggests that policy passage is less likely during divided government, but it appears that policy content will differ.

It is fair to say that the research record is mixed. Quirk and Nesmith (1995, 533) offer the best summation: "The debate is far from over. It is clear that the critics' worst fears about divided government are not supported by the evidence. Yet the view that it makes no difference is hardly plausible. Whether the president and the majority in Congress have compatible ideological and electoral goals or conflicting ones almost certainly matters somehow. The question is how."

BACK TO FIRST QUESTIONS

The dispute over the relative productivity of divided and unified government is but the latest iteration of a longer debate over the production of public policy in the United States. Since World War II, this debate has proceeded through four stages. In the 1940s and 1950s, party government theorists complained that public policymaking in the United States was fragmented and inconsistent because of constitutional structure and the decentralized nature of party politics (Schattschneider 1942). During the 1960s, critics of pluralism charged that "interest group liberalism" parceled out government authority to interest groups, limited democratic access, and immobilized American government (Lowi 1969). In the 1970s, observers feared that an onslaught of unfiltered interest group demands had created a "governability crisis" across Western countries that might only be solved with restrictions on democratic inputs into the policymaking system (Huntington 1975). By the 1980s, pundits and scholars alike concluded that the increasingly common divided control of government, and its heightened party polarization, led almost invariably to stalemate and gridlock in the production of policy (Cutler 1980; Sundquist 1988–89).

Part of the reason for the mixed interpretation of the research to date is that scholars have lost sight of this history and tend to conflate the divided government critiques of the 1980s with the party government propositions of the 1940s and 1950s. The notion that unified government will be dramatically more productive than divided government is *not* the staple of the party government perspective that is often implied. This depiction is misdirected for two related reasons: party responsiveness and institutional features.

Consider E.E. Schattschneider's (1942) classic work on party government, which is often cited as a prototypical argument that unified government should be more productive. Schattschneider in fact makes a strong argument that divided and unified government in American politics do *not* sharply affect legislative output, particularly overall output. In a discussion concerning the diverse constituencies and points of view of the parties, Schattschneider (1942, 89–90, 131) states:

> Another characteristic consequence of the nature of the rivalry of the major parties in a two-party system is that much business is done across party lines. This is proof of the thesis that the differences between the parties are not fundamental or absolute. In the interests of scientific investigation it is fortunate that the routine operations of American government offer conclusive evidence of the truth of this proposition. What happens when, let us say, the Democrats are in control of one house of Congress and the Republicans in control of the other?
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> .... Congress enacts substantially the same *volume* of legislation (public acts and private acts) when party control of Congress is divided as it does when one party is in control of both houses. It is not contended here that the volume of legislation is an accurate measure of the legislative output of Congress. No doubt some major controversial bills in each case were obstructed by divided party control or had to be emasculated to be passed whenever the consent of both parties has been required for enactment. What is clear is, however, that a great mass of business can be transacted across party lines when the necessity arises. The mere fact that one party is in control of the Senate while the other is in control of the House does not bring the government to a standstill.
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> .... From the standpoint of presidential leadership it is worthy of note that the president is sometimes able to appeal to the opposition party for support almost as successfully as he can appeal to his own party and, on the other hand, that most of his troubles are likely to be made for him by his own partisans in Congress.

In a discussion that presages spatial analysis and minimum winning coalitions, Schattschneider argues that American parties are moderate and reasonably so. Responsibility in his view will make the parties more consistent in their differences and less confused, but not more radical and not necessarily unable to transact business across party lines.

To Schattschneider, party consistency goes to the root of the value of parties themselves: They are the best available institution for organizing and responding to majorities. Parties that are inconsistent and incoherent cannot organize or respond to majorities effectively. For the party government model, then, responsiveness is key. That responsiveness rather than raw numbers of enactments should be most important to the party government school is unsurprising.[6] Schattschneider was deeply interested in a polity that could

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[6] Valelly (1992) expresses similar concerns: Mayhew's line of research indicates that divided government can produce policy but fails "to explore adequately the connection between divided government and perceived or real paralysis and the resulting damage to public

respond to "the people" and not just "the interests." It would not be a sign of responsiveness if, during a period in which the public is not demanding legislative activism, a government were to engage in numerous and wideranging policy initiatives. Therefore, simply comparing the number of important legislative enactments may be beside the point or, at minimum, not the whole point. The real question is whether the number is higher when the public prefers activism and lower when the public is more quiet. What interests party government theorists, then, is whether unified government is more responsive to the public's policy mood than is divided government. At times this may mean producing substantial amounts of important legislation; at other times it may mean a less active government. The point is to respond quickly and effectively to majorities. A party government theorist might anticipate a small edge in this regard for unified government, but unified government alone cannot assure responsiveness.

Party responsiveness is complicated by the institutional features of American politics. Rather than simply declare that unified government will be more productive, classic statements of the party government perspective, such as the work of Burns (1963), emphasize the institutional difficulties facing any form of government, divided or unified (see also Cutler 1980). To Burns, both the separation of powers and, more important, the ideological divisions within American parties, especially the Democratic Party, are critical. Unified *party* control of government is one thing, he argues, but unified *ideological* control of government is quite another. Frymer (1994) shows that Burns is correct. Studying the period 1977 through 1992, Frymer (p. 307) concludes that "the reason for important policy accomplishments is the lack of ideological division between the two branches of power regardless of conditions of party control." The persistence of an important conservative contingent in the Democratic Party complicates policymaking under Democratic unified government. Frymer's (p. 310) observation that "President Reagan appears ... to have a much more powerful and unified coalition than Carter had under unified government" would not surprise party government proponents such as Burns (see also Fleisher and Bond 1996). Indeed, such an observation would be precisely the point.

Burns, among others, also suggests that the Senate complicates the utility of unified government. Because a Senate supermajority (of varying sizes over time) is needed to stop threatened or actual filibusters and a two-thirds supermajority is needed to overturn vetoes, a party controlling the Senate with less than these proportions will be less able to direct the legislative process. Mayhew (1991, 131–4) notes that this kind of institutional barrier is one reason legislators feel compelled to put together large, bipartisan coalitions. For party government theorists, the rules of the Senate are another intervening variable between unified party

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confidence itself and to key democratic norms," such as accountability.

control and legislative output. Even if unified parties can be more responsive to public demand, this type of institutional feature can constrain that responsiveness. Unlike the more enthusiastic advocates of unified government in the 1980s, party government theorists of the classic variety anticipate a small productivity edge for unified government, an edge that is increasingly likely to be revealed as institutional obstacles to party responsiveness weaken.

Krehbiel's gridlock thesis, although based on the institutional factors that concern party government scholars, suggests that the number of important enactments will not differ significantly between unified and divided government. But there are reasons to suspect that gridlock as Krehbiel defines it need not preclude a greater quantity of significant legislation under unified government. If transaction costs of bargaining and negotiating are lower within than across parties—indeed, if parties exist partly to cut such policymaking costs and increase the long-term likelihood of political victory, as Aldrich (1995) argues—then unified government may produce significant acts in larger numbers. These enactments, as Krehbiel suggests, may still fall within the region of gridlock rather than move beyond or outside preexisting policy preferences, but reduced transaction costs should produce more such enactments in unified government, particularly when institutional obstacles are weakened. Reduced transaction costs are an implicit reason party government theorists argue for the benefits of more centralized, consistent parties.

Furthermore, Cox and McCubbins's (1993) twin arguments—majority congressional parties shape the business of Congress to serve party, not chamber, preferences, and the party label creates potential electoral benefits that can be maximized by a strategic party—suggest how policy preference distributions which conceivably may produce enactments in divided government may be overshadowed by electoral incentives and the belief by one or both parties that an even more desirable form of the legislation can be passed in a future Congress. It is reasonable, then, to anticipate that some legislation which *could* pass under divided government will be more likely to pass under unified government. Gilmour (1995) discusses a range of cases in which just such thinking about future opportunities to shape legislation appears to have motivated members of Congress to obstruct legislation rather than settle for a viable compromise.

In sum, when insights by party government theorists about institutional features of American politics, party factionalism, and party responsiveness are reclaimed and incorporated into the current debate, there is good theoretical reason to expect unified government to be more productive than divided government.

DATA AND VARIABLES

The effect of divided and unified government on the number of significant legislative enactments should be considered within the context of party responsiveness and key institutional features of American policymak-

824

ing. I describe dependent and independent measures in turn; see the Appendix for further measurement details.

The dependent variables are measures of legislative productivity. Rather than develop another classification of significant enactments, I rely on a range of tallies constructed in other studies. Mayhew's (1991, 1995) list of significant legislation consists of two waves: legislation deemed significant at the time of enactment by journalists and other observers, and legislation later deemed significant by specialists in various policy areas. Kelly (1993a) argues that analysts should focus only on legislation considered significant at the time of enactment *and* later deemed so by scholars. But whether a policy stands the test of time will be due to much more than the form of party control when it was initiated. To "blame" either form of government for policies that eventually do not prove to be of singular importance may be misleading. Therefore, it makes sense to analyze not only Mayhew's entire data set and the Kelly alternative but also the wave based solely on contemporary observations. These cut directly to the issue of responsiveness: Do observers in a particular era believe that government is enacting important policy responses to pressing public problems? Beyond these three dependent measures, I also include Edwards, Barrett, and Peake's (1997) tally of the number of potentially significant bills that failed to pass and calculate the percentage of important legislation enacted into law (i.e., Mayhew's measure divided by the sum of the Mayhew and Edwards et al. indexes, multiplied by 100).

For independent variables I begin with those included in Mayhew's study—*Budget Deficits, Early Momentum*, and *Activist Mood*.[7] Budget deficits, measured as a percentage of federal outlays, should constrain the enactment of important legislation. Early momentum, measured by a dummy variable that is coded one for the first two years of a president's term, zero otherwise, is expected to increase the enactment of important legislation. A public mood supportive of government activism should boost the number of significant enactments. Mayhew uses a dummy variable for 1961–76 to indicate the "activist period" during which the public mood expected substantial government action on a number of fronts. Unfortunately, the construction of this variable is based on a range of scholarly studies, and these define this period as activist at least partly *because* of the volume of important legislation.

What is needed is a measure based on public opinion that tracks public support for government activism. Stimson (1991) combined responses to a battery of survey questions to build an index of *Public Liberalism*

for 1955–88; recently, he revised and extended the index back to 1952 and forward to 1994.[8] This measure offers a more precise assessment of public demand than the dummy variable approach. Just as important as how to operationalize "public mood" is how to enter it into a regression model. Existing studies enter the activism dummy variable and the unified government dummy variable separately, but this format does not test whether government is more responsive to public mood during unified party control. I enter mood and unified government interactively. One would expect that the more activist the public mood, the greater will be the number of significant enactments. If party government theorists are correct, then the public mood, measured here as public liberalism, will produce an additional increment of significant enactments during unified government.

A second set of variables measure the institutional features cited by party government theorists as possible obstacles to policymaking, particularly during unified government (see also Binder 1999). I employ a *Senate Supermajority* measure that is coded one when either party holds sufficient seats to invoke cloture, zero otherwise. Under divided government, if the nonpresidential party has a supermajority in the Senate, then the enactment of important legislation can become more difficult. Yet, a president who knows his strategic options are limited may be more willing to deal and reach consensus with the opposition, particularly if party activists and fellow partisans in Congress do not strongly object. Under unified government, supermajorities should increase the number of important laws passed.

Another institutional feature emphasized by party government scholars is intraparty factionalism, particularly the regionally based ideological split in the Democratic Party. The effect on legislative productivity is clear: A deeply split Democratic Party is less capable of making public policy. During unified government, a party split prevents taking full advantage of the electoral hand the voters have dealt. Rather than assume that the Democratic split must be regional, I employ first-dimension DW-NOMINATE scores (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 1997) to measure intraparty factionalism (*Democratic Party Division, Republican Party Division*) in the House. This measure indicates the weighted mean distance between fellow party members in the DW-NOMINATE scores. Higher intraparty Democratic divisiveness should decrease the enactment of significant legislation and reduce some of the potential productivity advantages of unified government.

The flip side of this coin, implied by Schattschneider's comments on working across the aisle, is that the Republican Party is also likely to be less than perfectly cohesive. Here, however, intraparty factionalism is likely to *contribute* to the enactment of significant policy during unified government. In all but two years

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[7] Although "early momentum" is my term, it reflects Mayhew's (1991, 117–8) discussion of the advantages of policymaking in a president's first two years. These advantages include a full set of agenda items to pursue fresh after the presidential election as well as a Congress and president that have not yet shifted into presidential reelection mode. Krehbiel (1996, 25) argues that these early successes reflect the reestablishment of equilibrium under a new set of preferences rather than any particular skill of presidents or deference of Congress.

[8] The new version covers 1952–96 and has lower and upper limits of 0 and 100, respectively. For 1952–94, the minimum is 49.84, the mean is 58.75, and the maximum is 68.10 (by congressional session).

TABLE 1.   Passage of Legislation under Varying Forms of Partisan and Institutional Control, 1947–94

Partisan or Institutional Control	Important Laws (Mayhew)	Important Laws (Kelly)	Failed Legislation (Edwards et al.)	Total Bills Enacted	Journalists' Selections (Mayhew)	Important Legislation Enacted (%)[a] All	Important Legislation Enacted (%)[a] President Opposed
A. Divided	11.36	6.45	13.29	708.71	8.64	31.52	48.68
Unified	12.60	8.78	3.44**	700.80	10.80	41.52*	79.06**
B. Divided Republican	11.46	6.60	14.08	693.54	8.77	31.38	46.50
Unified Democratic	13.00	9.50*	3.50**	691.89	11.22	40.46*	79.57**
C. Not unified Democratic	11.20	6.17	12.60	713.53	8.53	32.76	50.43
Unified Democratic	13.00	9.50*	3.50**	691.89	11.22*	40.46	79.57**
D. No Senate supermajority	11.06	6.69	10.75	700.47	8.94	33.87	56.07
Senate supermajority	13.86	9.00	6.43	717.43	11.00	39.03	70.84
E. Not unified or no Senate supermajority	10.89	6.40	11.17	699.79	8.63	33.01	54.32
Unified and Senate supermajority	15.60*	10.80**	3.20**	726.80	13.00**	44.19*	83.06**
F. Divided and Senate supermajority	9.50	4.50	14.50	694.00	6.00	26.12	40.28
Unified and Senate supermajority	15.60	10.80*	3.20	726.80	13.00*	44.19**	83.06**
Mean per Congress	11.88	7.50	9.44	705.42	9.54	35.44	60.57
Standard deviation	4.95	3.69	7.80	147.05	3.54	11.15	21.53
High	22	16	23	1,028	19	55.17	94.12
Low	5	2	1	465	4	17.50	23.33
Congresses	1947–94	1947–86	1947–92	1947–94	1947–94	1947–92	1947–92

Note: Entries equal the mean number of laws (percentage for Important Legislation Enacted) for each session of Congress under the specified form of party or institutional control. $*p \leq .05$, $**p \leq .01$; one-tailed.
[a]In "All," failed bills include all those identified by Edwards et al. as potentially significant. In "President Opposed," failed bills include those identified by Edwards et al. as potentially significant but opposed by the president. The percentage was computed by dividing Mayhew's number of important enactments by the sum of Mayhew's number and the number of failed bills, with failed bills defined in each of the two ways specified.

of unified government in the postwar period, the Democrats controlled the presidency, House, and Senate. Under these conditions, greater levels of Republican intraparty division would add votes to the Democratic position on roll-call votes, thus contributing to the passage of public policy. Ironically, the weak, fractious parties that concern party government theorists can partly contribute to legislative productivity during unified government, albeit not for the reasons those theorists would prefer.

Including these institutional features suggests that not all *Unified Government* is alike: Which party is in control may also distinguish different episodes of unified government. If the Democratic Party appeals to voters at least partly by promising active government, it seems reasonable to expect more legislative activism during Democratic (*Unified Democratic*) than during Republican (*Unified Republican*) control. Similarly, it is not obvious that divided government with a Democratic president (*Divided Democratic*) should produce the same quantity of important legislation as divided government with a Republican president (*Divided Republican*). To test whether these distinctions are analytically useful, I examine several forms of unified and divided party

control in addition to the standard unified versus divided government comparison.[9]

FINDINGS

Forms of Party and Institutional Control

A series of *t*-test examinations comparing periods of divided and unified control and comparing periods when certain institutional features are present or absent provides a first look at whether party control of government affects the enactment of significant legislation. The variables being compared during these periods are the various measures of legislative productivity. Results appear in Table 1.

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[9] Sources for the tallies of important enactments and potentially important bills that were not enacted are Mayhew (1991, 1995; see also Kelly 1993a) and Edwards, Barrett, and Peake (1997), respectively. I take the total number of public bills enacted from *Vital Statistics on Congress 1995–1996*. Data on roll-call votes, party membership, and party size come from various issues of *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*. Data for public liberalism through 1994 were provided by James Stimson (1999). Intraparty factionalism measures were provided by Keith Poole (1999). I drew budget deficit data from the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*.

826

Considering first the forms of party control, the results for Mayhew's dependent measure are the outliers, whether one compares divided versus unified government, divided government with a Republican president versus unified Democratic government, or unified Democratic government versus all other kinds of party control (comparisons A, B, and C in Table 1, respectively). For Kelly's measure of important legislation, failed legislation, journalists' selections of key enactments, and the percentage of important legislation enacted, unified government is significantly related to legislative output in 11 of the 15 t-tests in comparisons A, B, and C; the remaining four tests are just beyond conventional levels of significance.[10]

The productivity differences between unified and divided government in the Kelly and journalist measures, typically two to three pieces of legislation, may not seem great. Surely, this productivity improvement must fall short of the "great expectations" of party government proponents. But there are problems with this interpretation of statistical and substantive significance. First, as noted above, the expectations of historical proponents concerning unified government are not as elevated or as simple as subsequent commentary has implied. Second, if it is even partially true that unified government more often enacts "tougher to pass" legislation than does divided government, then dismissing the importance of a few enactments may be misleading—these may well be two or three bills that *could not* pass during divided government. Third, and perhaps most important, is such a difference so small? Proponents of party government were making a systemic case, not an argument about a single session of Congress. The real issue, then, is how divided or unified governments perform over an extended period. Two or three landmark pieces of legislation over five congresses means ten to fifteen significant enactments that otherwise would not have occurred. One can certainly defend such a difference as substantively significant. To paraphrase the old saw about government budgeting, two or three bills here and two or three bills there and pretty soon you are talking about a welfare state.

Turning to the institutional features that disturbed party government scholars such as Schattschneider and Burns, a Senate supermajority does not significantly increase the number of important enactments, although the Kelly and "President Opposed" measures fall just short of significance (comparison D in Table 1). Supermajority in this case refers to any Senate supermajority, whether of the president's party or the opposition party. Overall, there are seven such Senate majorities after 1947, five during unified government and two during divided government.

Senate supermajorities failing to confer any surplus of legislative productivity may seem puzzling, but the reason is readily apparent. The last two sets of com-

parisons in Table 1 (E and F) add an explicit reference to unified and divided government. The first pits all congresses without supermajorities, whether divided or unified, against all periods of unified government featuring supermajorities (comparison E). All the measures of legislative productivity, including Mayhew's, display differences that are in the expected direction and significant. Comparison F looks only at the seven congresses with Senate supermajorities and compares the production of important legislation in these cases during the two periods of divided government and the five periods of unified government. The results show that a unified government supermajority is significantly more productive than a divided government supermajority for four of the measures (and nearly so for Mayhew's measure). The significance of the institutional context, rather than unified government alone, is exactly the point that classic party government theorists would make.

Edwards, Barrett, and Peake's (1997) finding that potentially important bills are more likely to fail during divided than unified government also raises the possibility that a simple comparison of unified and divided government is misleading: More legislation *potentially* may pass under unified than divided government, but this difference is masked in a simple comparison of divided versus unified sessions because "easier" or less divisive significant legislation has already passed under divided government. Unified government would pass not only this "easier" block of legislation but also a "harder," even if small, block that cannot garner bipartisan approval.

One way to test this possibility is to examine voting coalitions under both forms of party control. Mayhew (1991, 24) notes that bipartisan voting coalitions were more common during divided than unified government. Some simple calculations based on Mayhew's data indicate that during the activist period, from 1961 through 1976, 64 important enactments during divided government passed with bipartisan majorities in both houses, 6 passed with a bipartisan majority in one house, and 4 passed with nonbipartisan majorities in both houses. Ten enactments out of 74, then, or only 14%, passed without a bipartisan majority in at least one house. During unified government, nonbipartisan majorities were more common. Over the same span, 42 important enactments during unified government passed with bipartisan majorities in both houses, 15 with a bipartisan majority in one house, and 9 with bipartisan majorities in neither house. In sum, during unified government, 36% of the important enactments passed without a bipartisan majority in at least one house. This seems to confirm the notion that unified government enacts the kind of legislation that cannot make it through divided party control of Congress and the presidency. Legislation with broad, bipartisan appeal can pass during both kinds of party control, but important legislation that requires a strong partisan majority is more likely to pass during unified government. There may also be occasions in which, as noted

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[10] For theoretical reasons, Edwards, Barrett, and Peake (1997) emphasize potentially significant bills the president opposed that failed to pass; I use that version of their measure of policy blockage here.

TABLE 2. Significant Legislative Enactments that Failed in Prior Congresses				
Partisan Control	Total Significant Enactments	Significant Enactments that Previously Failed		Previously Failed Enactments
		Number	% of Total	
Unified Democratic				
Kennedy 1961–62	15	4	26.7	Minimum Wage Increase Area Redevelopment Act Foreign Assistance Act (multiyear) Drug Regulation
Carter 1977–78	12	3	25.0	Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act Clean Water Act reauthorization Clean Air Amendments
Divided Republican				
Nixon 1969–70	22	6	27.3	Coal Mine Safety Act Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty National Environmental Policy Act Occupational Safety and Health Act Agricultural Act (multiyear) Unemployment Compensation
Reagan 1981–82	9	2	22.2	Economic Recovery Tax Act Nuclear Waste Repository Act

Note: Significant enactments are taken from Mayhew's list. Each was reviewed in the appropriate edition of the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* to determine its legislative history, if any. Items are considered to have failed in previous sessions if they were introduced without further action, held up by filibuster, defeated in committee, or defeated on the floor. Not considered failures were items discussed near the end of the previous administration (e.g., by a presidential commission) but not acted upon or cases in which presidents made proposals in their outgoing budget that were subsequently passed by the following administration.

above, a possible bipartisan compromise during divided government is deferred, because one of the parties believes a policy more to its liking can be passed after the next election.

Another sign that unified government solves the problems that divided government leaves behind would be the adoption during unified government of important enactments that stalled during divided government. Specific examples from President Clinton's first two years—motor voter registration, family and medical leave, and the Brady handgun control bill—suggest a more general pattern. To test this possibility, I started with Mayhew's list of important enactments for the first two years of the unified Kennedy and Carter presidencies and the divided Nixon and Reagan presidencies. I chose presidents (other than Clinton) in whose first term control switched from unified to divided (or vice versa) and control of the presidency switched parties.[11] Because analysts often suggest that presidents are stronger before rather than after the midterm election, I restricted the comparisons to the first two years of a president's term. To determine which of the enactments were passed after previous defeat or obstruction, I read through the legislative histories in *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*.

The results in Table 2 do not support the idea that unified government is more likely to pass important legislation that failed in previous sessions of Congress. Instead, an almost equal percentage of important enactments in the first two years of these unified and divided governments consisted of proposals that had

died in a previous session. In sum, it is true that unified government does the "heavy lifting" in the sense that certain kinds of bills—those without strong bipartisan majorities—are more likely to pass but not in the sense that it disproportionately fixes the failures of previous congresses.[12] This latter point is consistent with Krehbiel's (1996) contention that the early portion of a new regime of any type can produce a number of accomplishments as it rejects or revises old policies that are newly out of equilibrium.

The Revisionist Model and Alternative Data Sets

The comparisons in Table 1 support the proposition that unified and divided government differ in their production of significant enactments, especially under favorable institutional configurations. Table 3A presents generalized event count (GEC) regression of the tallies of significant enactments on the set of independent variables introduced in Mayhew (1991); the "percentage enacted" dependent variable is estimated through ordinary least squares.[13] Event count analysis acknowledges that the number of significant enact-

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[11] Truman provides two cases (1947–48, 1949–50) in which the form of party control changed but not the party control of the presidency. Eisenhower represents a switch in the presidential party but not the form of party control (1953–54) and a switch in the form of party control but not the presidential party (1955–56).

[12] If the amount of revived legislation does not differ during newly elected unified and divided government, then the important distinction may be that resuscitated legislation has to be watered down or revised more substantially to pass during divided government. This claim is plausible, but bills are often revised substantially during the legislative process, even during unified government. Even more important, the key for the analysis in Table 2 is that these enactments, even if revised, are still significant enough to merit inclusion on Mayhew's very selective list.

[13] I use Gary King's Count software (version 4.02e) for the GEC analysis and Eviews (version 3.1) for OLS and autoregressive (GLS) estimations and for the *t*-tests in Table 1. SPSS for Windows (version

828

ments per Congress must be counted in integers and that the count is bounded on the lower end by zero and is not likely to have a standard normal distribution. Event count techniques also account for the possibility that the occurrence of some events makes other events more (or less) likely and that the relationship between the independent variables and the tally of events is likely to be nonlinear. Because GEC coefficients are not intuitively interpretable, unlike OLS regression coefficients, I provide a substantive interpretation of the unified government coefficients at the bottom of the tables.[14]

The results for Mayhew's important laws are as Mayhew reported: Unified government does not make a difference; the first half of a president's term is more conducive to passing important legislation; and the activist period (1961–76), reflecting the public's supportive mood for energetic government, is highly significant. For each of the other measures of important legislation in Table 3A, unified government significantly affects productivity in the expected direction. It produces one to two more significant enactments per congressional session, blocks about ten fewer potentially significant bills than divided government (see last line in Table 3A for these interpretations of the GEC coefficients), and significantly increases the percentage of important bills that become law. The independent variables other than unified government—budget deficits, public mood, early momentum—are also generally significant. The activist mood adds about 5 significant enactments per Congress in the Kelly and journalists measures and about 7.5 enactments in the Mayhew tally. Every 3% of the budget deficit leads to a little more than one failed significant bill.[15]

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8) was used to identify potentially high-leverage cases (described below).

[14] Substantive GEC coefficient interpretations are simply the product of the coefficient and the mean value of the dependent variable. Unlike other event count methods, GEC analysis tests for both negative and positive contagion in the data. Enactments display negative contagion, meaning that their passage tends to discourage other significant enactments, perhaps due to crowding out or waning political capital. (Conversely, failure of potentially important bills tends to show signs of positive contagion.) Scholars are just beginning to explore methods to address event count estimation in a time-series environment (Brandt, Williams, and Fordham 1998; Jackman 1998). Results were substantively similar when I estimated the models with time-series regression techniques.

[15] To test for Great Society leverage, I also ran the models in Table 3 with a dummy variable for 1963–66. The variable reached significance in four of twenty-five estimations. In three of these four, there was no effect on the significance of unified government or the unified government interaction term; in the one remaining instance, the unified government interaction moved from significance to just beyond conventional levels of significance. I also computed standardized Df-Fits values on these models. Values of 2 or more were present in six of the twenty-five estimations: twice for 1959–60, twice for 1961–62, twice for 1975–76, and once each for 1971–72 and 1979–80 (two of the six estimations had two congresses with Df-Fits values above 2). Omitting these cases had little effect on the results. In one estimation, unified government becomes significant, in another it becomes insignificant; in the remaining four estimations, omitting these specific congresses has no effect.

Party Responsiveness and Legislative Productivity

Should we expect Democrats and Republicans to be equally activist when they have unified control of governm· ·nt? As suggested above, it would be reasonable to e,· ·ct Democrats to be somewhat more aggressive. Tal· ? 3B adds an interactive control for Republican un. ied government and a control for divided government featuring a Democratic president. My primary aim is to discern whether a comparison of the prototypical institutional arrangements of postwar politics—unified Democratic control versus divided Republican control—displays starker productivity differences than does a comparison of all forms of unified government to all forms of divided government.

Unified government in Table 3B still fails to explain Mayhew's list of enactments. For Kelly's list, journalists' selections, and the Edwards, Barrett, and Peake list of failed legislation, Table 3B's unified government coefficient has a minor additional influence of about one-quarter enactment compared to Table 3A's unified government coefficient; the unified government coefficient for the percentage passed estimation is also slightly higher. Republican unified government has a constraining effect on the enactment of important legislation compared to the baseline of divided Republican government, including on Mayhew's form of the dependent variable. For the remaining independent variables, coefficients are of about the same magnitude as in Table 3A. Table 3B suggests productivity levels that match theoretical expectations, that is, compared to the divided Republican government baseline, unified Democratic government boosts enactments, and unified Republican government decreases them. Of course, there is only a single two-year period of unified Republican government in the time span of this study, so caution is appropriate. As both revisionist and party government theory would suggest, and the values of the constant and the coefficients confirm, each form of government is capable of producing significant legislation.

Party government scholars stress intraparty factionalism, particularly the regional split within the Democratic Party, as an obstacle to government responsiveness. A divided Democratic Party could weaken many of the legislative benefits of the Democratic majorities so common in the postwar era.[16] Table 3C presents the revisionist model with additional variables representing Democratic and Republican intraparty division. As noted above, I compute these variables from DW-NOMINATE scores. Results are mixed. Ideological division in the Democratic Party does generally dampen the enactment of significant legislation in the Mayhew and journalists measures, but at a probability level narrowly outside conventional levels of significance. Factionalism in the Republican Party contributes significantly to the enactment of important policy

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[16] From this point on, I do not include an interaction for the single two-year period of unified Republican government. In effect, this is a conservative approach that makes the party government argument more difficult to substantiate.

TABLE 3. Unified Government and Legislative Productivity

Independent Variables	Important Laws (Mayhew)	Important Laws (Kelly)	Failed Legislation (Edwards et al.)	Journalists' Selections (Mayhew)	Important Legislation Enacted (%)
A. Mayhew Model					
Early momentum	.265**	.157	−.021	.184**	6.40
	(.067)	(.135)	(.209)	(.088)	(3.77)
Activist mood	.638**	.630**	.341*	.485**	8.25*
	(.064)	(.146)	(.172)	(.093)	(3.99)
Budget deficit	−.003	−.005	.046**	.004	−1.33**
	(.004)	(.007)	(.009)	(.005)	(.22)
Unified government	−.025	.234*	−1.104**	.146*	22.10**
	(.064)	(.142)	(.264)	(.078)	(4.03)
Constant	2.106**	1.550**	1.937**	1.868**	56.65**
	(.098)	(.142)	(.174)	(.110)	(3.84)
Mean log-likelihood	18.434	8.111	14.037	12.420	
N	24	20	23	23	23
Adjusted R^2					.83
Standard error of the regression					8.97
Durbin-Watson					1.88
Effect of unified government[a]	−.30	1.76	−10.42	1.39	
B. Mayhew Model, Controlling for Forms of Party Control					
Early momentum	.293**	.186*	−.040	.206**	7.37*
	(.078)	(.144)	(.214)	(.095)	(4.12)
Activist mood	.647**	.568**	.332*	.470**	8.46*
	(.075)	(.136)	(.181)	(.103)	(4.34)
Budget deficit	−.000	−.006	.044**	.005	−1.22**
	(.005)	(.009)	(.011)	(.006)	(.28)
Unified government	−.000	.275*	−1.138**	.174**	23.49**
	(.070)	(.138)	(.292)	(.079)	(4.56)
Unified government × Republican president	−.182**	−.976**	.175	−.345**	−4.22
	(.064)	(.155)	(.270)	(.082)	(10.35)
Divided Democratic government	.218	−.075	−.260	.125	8.17
	(.190)	(.278)	(.309)	(.191)	(12.14)
Constant	2.053**	1.583**	1.980**	1.850**	54.54**
	(.137)	(.201)	(.227)	(.147)	(5.05)
Mean log-likelihood	18.462	8.216	14.041	12.450	
N	24	20	23	24	23
Adjusted R^2					.81
Standard error of the regression					9.34
Durbin-Watson					1.79
Effect of unified Democratic government	−.00	2.06	−10.74	1.66	
Effect of unified Republican government	−2.16	−5.26	−9.09	−1.63	
C. Intraparty Division					
Early momentum	.251**	.164*	−.056	.152*	7.006*
	(.060)	(.126)	(.175)	(.087)	(3.679)
Activist mood	.597**	.536**	.548**	.499**	6.421
	(.067)	(.114)	(.177)	(.100)	(4.286)
Budget deficit	−.004	−.006	.030*	−.001	−1.079**
	(.004)	(.008)	(.017)	(.006)	(.254)
Unified government	.053	.377**	−.874**	.200**	19.760**
	(.082)	(.143)	(.369)	(.096)	(4.499)
Democratic Party division	−.284	.142	−2.163**	−.465	22.977
	(.342)	(.649)	(.011)	(.395)	(13.701)
Republican Party division	.784*	1.136*	2.327**	.554	−12.102
	(.404)	(.836)	(.006)	(.478)	(20.411)
Constant	1.107*	−1.852	3.426**	2.092**	7.612
	(.679)	(1.945)	(.188)	(.881)	(42.483)
Mean log-likelihood	18.490	8.205	14.267	12.454	
N	24	20	23	24	23
Adjusted R^2					.84
Standard error of the regression					8.690
Durbin-Waston					2.104
Effect of unified government	.63	2.83	−8.25	1.91	

TABLE 3. (Continued)

Independent Variables	Important Laws (Mayhew)	Important Laws (Kelly)	Failed Legislation (Edwards et al.)	Journalists' Selections (Mayhew)	Important Legislation Enacted (%)
D. Response to the Public Mood					
Early momentum	.210*	−.055	−.213*	.100	11.514*
	(.127)	(.158)	(.136)	(.128)	(4.866)
Public liberalism	.014	.007	−.045*	.014	1.082**
	(.013)	(.014)	(.024)	(.103)	(.385)
Budget deficit	−.014*	−.034**	−.003	−.010	−.464
	(.010)	(.014)	(.014)	(.011)	(.319)
Public liberalism × unified government	.004*	.009**	−.016**	.005**	.355**
	(.002)	(.003)	(.004)	(.002)	(.069)
Democratic Party division	.109	.032	−3.195**	−.148	60.132**
	(.417)	(1.098)	(.569)	(.468)	(14.012)
Republican Party division	1.716**	2.524**	4.224**	1.216*	−38.890
	(.540)	(1.003)	(.913)	(.609)	(29.947)
Constant	−3.083*	−4.781	5.417**	−1.181	−120.834
	(1.525)	(2.827)	(2.601)	(1.825)	(71.101)
Mean log-likelihood	18.983	8.587	16.498	12.972	
N	21	17	20	21	19
Adjusted R^2					.94
Standard error of the regression					5.394
Durbin-Waston					2.501[b]
Effect of public liberalism in unified government, with public liberalism set to mean value	2.80	3.98	−8.91	2.82	
E. Senate Supermajorities					
Early momentum	.165*	−.254**	−.078	.015	−.823
	(.101)	(.118)	(.157)	(.130)	(5.186)
Public liberalism	.006	−.017	−.010	.001	.438
	(.007)	(.014)	(.026)	(.013)	(.492)
Budget deficit	−.017**	−.044**	.012	−.014*	−.662*
	(.008)	(.013)	(.016)	(.011)	(.348)
Senate supermajority	−.143	−.323	.097	−.457*	−1.834
	(.284)	(.350)	(.293)	(.265)	(5.841)
Senate supermajority × unified government	.374*	.977**	−1.031**	.780**	22.959**
	(.290)	(.368)	(.445)	(.286)	(7.102)
Democratic Party division	−.049**	−.706*	−2.763**	−.392	64.749**
	(.018)	(.545)	(.692)	(.431)	(18.219)
Republican Party division	1.694**	3.001**	4.207**	1.239**	−59.347*
	(.011)	(.580)	(1.037)	(.516)	(26.829)
Constant	−1.898**	−1.841	1.639	.544	−37.192
	(.271)	(1.693)	(2.742)	(1.603)	(63.157)
Mean log-likelihood	18.991	8.788	16.394	13.035	
N	21	17	20	21	19
Adjusted R^2					.91
Standard error of the regression					6.352
Durbin-Watson					2.824[b]
Effect of divided government supermajority	−1.70	−2.43	.916	−4.36	
Effect of unified government supermajority	2.74	4.91	−8.81	3.08	

Note: The first four columns of dependent variables equal the number of laws for each congressional session; the last column equals the percentage of important legislation enacted. Table entries are unstandardized generalized event count regression coefficients; for the percentage of important legislation enacted, entries are unstandardized ordinary-least-squares regression coefficients. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. *$p \leq .05$, **$p \leq .01$, one-tailed.

[a]Computed by multiplying unified government coefficient by the mean of the dependent variable. The table entry refers to the number of enactments compared to the baseline (divided government in section A). "Effect" is computed similarly in following sections of the table.

[b]Estimation rerun as generalized least squares for correction of serial correlation, Prais-Winsten method. The Durbin-Watson value is from the original OLS estimation. Coefficient entries and standard errors are from the GLS estimation.

in the Mayhew and Kelly measures, as expected, but not quite significantly in the journalist measure.

Heightened Democratic division makes failed legislation somewhat less likely. Since failed legislation is more common in divided government, this coefficient likely reflects the ability to bargain across party lines more easily during divided government when the Democrats are split into substantially sized factions. In

831

other words, when a Republican president in divided government faces a sizable conservative Democratic contingent in Congress, there will tend to be fewer policy failures. (This relationship of Democratic splits to failed legislation also helps explain why Democratic Party division is positively related to the percentage of important legislation passing in Table 3C.[17]) Similarly, Republican factionalism leads to more failures during these common divided Republican presidencies. Regarding unified government, controlling for Democratic and Republican factionalism increases the effect of unified government for the Kelly and journalists measures, consistent with the expectations of party government theorists.

Another issue of responsiveness is whether parties in unified control of government can more effectively respond to the public mood. The question is not whether unified government per se is more productive—there is evidence of that with the unified government dummy variable—but whether unified government more effectively processes political "demands" as reflected by changes in the public mood. Table 3D tests this possibility with the addition of two variables: "Public liberalism" (measured with Stimson's index) replaces "activist mood" as a measure of the public mood, and public liberalism is interacted with unified government. Public liberalism significantly increases the percentage of important legislation enacted and discourages the failure of potentially significant bills; the Mayhew and journalist measures are near significance. Most critical in Table 3D is the interaction of public liberalism and unified government: When government is unified, a more liberal public mood makes enactment of important legislation more likely, and failed legislation less likely. The last line in Table 3D shows that when public mood is at its mean level, unified government adds three to four significant enactments compared to the divided government baseline.

Senate supermajorities provide legislative benefits to any party, whether or not it controls the presidency. For a party with unified control of government, a supermajority's ability to defuse filibusters can be especially helpful in overcoming resistance to proposals that do not have bipartisan support. The t-test analysis in Table 1 shows that supermajorities help the majority party during unified government. Table 3E provides more support. It follows the same logic as Table 3D: Rather than focus on unified government in general, this estimation examines unified government's affect under specific institutional conditions through the addition of variables for Senate supermajorities and Senate supermajorities interacted with unified government. During divided government, Senate supermajorities constrain the enactment of important legislation, but they are significant only for the journal-

ist measure. During unified governments, by contrast, they lead to the adoption of from three to five more significant enactments, produce nine fewer failed pieces of legislation, and boost the percentage of successful legislation by 23 points compared to nonsupermajoritarian government.[18]

CONCLUSION

The recent wave of research on divided government has brought a welcome specificity and data-rich approach to a topic broached previously in general terms. But this does not mean that some of the older conclusions about unified and divided government are incorrect. In this article I have drawn on a range of conceptions of "significant" legislation to see whether unified government is associated with the passage of more such enactments. The answer in most instances is "yes."

I reach my conclusions by reclaiming the theoretical concerns of classic party government scholarship, some of which have now reemerged in more formalized models of the political system. Although studies of unified versus divided government often cite party government theorists, scholars tend to ignore the nuance of the original arguments by conflating them with the less precise arguments of unified government enthusiasts of the 1980s and early 1990s. I have shown that taking these classic theoretical concerns about party responsiveness and institutional features seriously—Democratic versus Republican unified government, intraparty factionalism, responsiveness to public opinion, and Senate supermajorities—highlights how unified government contributes to policy achievements and how the productivity advantages of unified government can be thwarted.

The earliest and best party government scholars do not deny that divided government can enact important policy. Yet, to the extent that they believe unified government has policymaking advantages because of transaction cost factors and the political benefits of cooperation and institutional leverage, which were formally developed in later scholarship (Aldrich 1995; Cox and McCubbins 1991), they also realize there are many obstacles to its effective and efficient performance. With these obstacles reduced, they imply, unified government can demonstrate enhanced productivity advantages. The data presented here support this argument. Moreover, the deep commitment to democ-

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[17] The coefficients for Democratic and Republican division are quite large in the "percentage passed" estimation. As noted below, however, the range in intraparty factionalism on the DW-NOMINATE score registers less than a unit (refer to "Descriptive Statistics" in the Appendix for details). For example, a move from the minimum level of 1947–94 Democratic factionalism to the maximum would result in a percentage point change in the dependent variable of about 18.382.

[18] Tables 3D and 3E focus on the effect of unified government under particular conditions: levels of public liberalism and the presence of Senate supermajorities. Therefore, I do not include unified government alone as a dummy variable in these sections of the table. Adding the unified government dummy variable to the eight GEC estimations in these sections does, not surprisingly, obscure the interactive relationship somewhat: The interactive variable is significant in four of these reestimations, the unified dummy variable is significant in three (including two in which the interactive term is also significant), and both variables are not significant in three. Using OLS, an F-test shows the block of variables—Senate supermajority, public mood, Democratic and Republican intraparty division, the dummy variable measures of party control, and the interactions of unified government with Senate supermajority and public mood—is jointly significant in explaining the dependent variables.

832

racy, majority rule, and party responsiveness among these theorists means that any form of government should only be very active if the people so desire. They believe unified government can respond to these public demands more effectively than divided government. Again, the data here justify such a view.

These findings certainly do not exhaust the topic. As thorny as are the empirical issues in the portion of the debate covered in this study, the related normative and empirical questions about representation, accountability, the content of policy, and the nature of the policymaking process under the two types of party control are perhaps even more vexing (Fiorina 1996). Further empirical and normative complexities are added by such matters as the likelihood that unified governments will operate in an "obstacle-free" environment of low intraparty factionalism and solid supermajorities and, in the case of the Democrats, a liberal public mood adds (see Binder 1999).

Each form of government tallies major accomplishments; each suffers disappointments. To a public desiring "action," perhaps neither seems to do "enough" (McWilliams 1995). In a period dominated by divided government and public unrest about politics, the revisionist analysis of Mayhew and others strikes a surprising counternote by implying that the public is overwrought: Divided government works. But if divided government is less productive, as the data here suggest, then the public's frustration is understandable. Furthermore, a frustrated public can use unified government as one of its levers to push policy change.

Reasserting arguments made by party government theorists and divorcing party government theory from the less precise unified government advocacy of the 1980s does not require one to make extreme claims about the inevitability of "stalemate" under divided government—the revisionist analysis is correct to argue that such dire claims are not supportable. Nor does it mean one must assert that the opportunities for parties are endless, that they will always appear relevant to the public, or that they are not constrained by time, place, the nature of the state, and dominant policy concerns. It does mean reaffirming the idea that political parties bridge some of the Constitution's gaps, provide incentives for cooperation, forge significant public policy, and potentially respond to public opinion, particularly in periods of unified government when institutional features of American government and politics are favorable.

APPENDIX: MEASUREMENT NOTES ON INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Supermajority

The supermajority measure is coded one when either party holds sufficient seats to invoke cloture, zero otherwise. (Only the 1965–66 Congress featured a two-thirds majority in both houses, so I do not include a presidential veto override supermajority in this analysis.) Between 1949 and 1959, cloture required the votes of two-thirds of the Senate membership. Before 1949 and from 1959 through 1974, the votes

of two-thirds of all voting members were required. After 1974, 60% of the Senate membership was necessary.

Coding the presence of a supermajority is clear enough when an absolute number of votes is required, but it is less clear when the size of the necessary supermajority depends on the number of senators voting. One possibility is to set this variable as restrictively as possible, such that the supermajority is present only in years when a party has an absolute two-thirds majority. Such a coding, however, effectively denies that any important rules change took place; surely, the rule change was not intended to leave the conditions to invoke cloture entirely unaltered. At the other extreme, one can argue that the supermajority should be computed by multiplying the average voting participation rate (which was relatively low in the 1960s) by two-thirds. That seems too generous a standard, however, producing supermajority thresholds below 60 members in some years.

I took a middle course. Based on voting participation on cloture votes from 1959 through 1974, the mean number of votes necessary to invoke cloture was 61 (*Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1974*, 35). In not a single cloture vote over that period were 67 votes needed. Four-fifths of the cloture votes could have been successful with fewer than 64 votes. Therefore, for 1959–74, a supermajority exists when a party holds 64 or more seats. This middle ground, I believe, best reflects the realities of filibuster politics during this period.

Republican and Democratic Division

I limit the party factionalism measures to the House. This accords with the emphasis in party government theory on the filibuster/cloture supermajority as the key institutional feature in the Senate and intraparty splits as the key in the House. I do not deny that Senate parties also may be split (see Binder 1999). Limiting the factional data in this way has the added benefit of preserving degrees of freedom when there are a maximum of 24 data points from 1947 to 1994. This procedure also makes the "unified government matters" case more difficult to establish by not controlling for these other potential sources of factionalism.

Dummy Variables

Dummy variables are coded one (zero otherwise) as follows: activist period (1961–76); first half of president's term (1949–50 and every other Congress thereafter); Senate supermajority (1959–68, 1975–76, 1977–78); unified Senate supermajority (1961–68, 1977–78); unified government (1949–54, 1961–68, 1977–80, 1993–94); unified Democratic government (1949–52, 1961–68, 1977–80, 1993–94); divided Democratic government (1947–48); and unified Republican government (1953–54).

Descriptive Statistics

	Low	High	Mean	Standard Deviation
Democratic division, 1947–94, < 10	2.920	3.730	3.403	.243
Republican division, 1947–94, < 10	2.300	2.790	2.500	.138
Budget deficit, 1947–94	−11.650	23.735	8.408	9.020
Public liberalism, 1951–94	49.837	68.103	58.746	4.746

833

Bivariate Correlations

The highest correlations among the noninteractive variables are: Democratic and Republican division, .65; Democratic division and activist period, .54; Republican division and activist period, .50; Democratic division and budget deficit, −.50; Senate supermajority and activist period, .49; Senate supermajority and unified government, .49; Democratic division and public liberalism, −.40; and budget deficit and activist period, −.38. All other bivariate correlations are .26 (absolute value) or lower.

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835