Divided Government, Legislative Professionalism and the Veto in the American States

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Divided government has been the subject of much research. The majority of this research has focused on the Congress with less attention paid to the states. The states are becoming more important in an era of policy devolution. Given that more decisions are being shifted back to the states, an examination of the policy making process at the state level becomes more pertinent. Additionally, the analytical advantages of the states provides an opportunity to study how the veto is used given a variety of institutional context and given a variety of types of vetoes. Hopefully, this study will begin the process of reassessing our traditional view of professionalism and the benefits of a professional versus an amateur legislature. Many of our traditionally views when fully examined may not be the full story.

Research on divided government has focused on the causes (Fiorina 1994; Jacobson 1990; Petrocik 1991; Petrocik and Doherty 1996; Sigelman, Wahlbech, and Buell 1997; Wattenberg 1991) and consequences (Alt and Lowrey 1994; Cox and McCubbins 1991; Franklin and Hirczy de Mino 1998; Gilmour 1995; Jones 1994; Kelly 1993a; Kernell 1991; Lohmann and O’Holloran 1994). This research focus on the later question of the consequences of divided government and in specific the impact of divided government on the gubernatorial veto. However, the two are not completely independent from each other. In order to fully understand the consequences of divided government it is necessary to explore the causes of divided government and their indirect influence on policy outcomes.

Many scholars have recognized the importance of explaining divided government in order to understand the American political system (Cox and Kernell; Fiorina 1990; Jacobson 1991; Mayhew 1991; Sundquist 1988). Divided government is not a topic
strictly in the domain of congressional and presidential scholars. V.O. Key (1956) noted that divided government had been common in the states and was even more common at the time he was writing.

In the early history of the nation, divided government was not as prominent as in the modern period. In the last 20 years we see unified government during the Carter administration and during the first two years on the Clinton presidency. In the 19th century, however, divided government was generally the product of mid-term elections. In an off year election the president’s party was not as excited about the election and therefore did not turnout in large numbers. Additionally, mid-term elections were a referendum on the performance of the president (Hinckley 1967; Tufte 1975). Voters use the mid-term as an adjustment on the decision made in the president.

In recent decades ticket splitting has become much more prominent and more important as an explanation of divided government. Campbell and Miller (1957) attributed split ticket voting to the absence of strong party identification. If a voter had strong attachment to a party, he or she was more likely to vote a straight ticket. On the other hand, with an absence of strong party loyalty voters are more likely to split their tickets. Other scholars have found similar findings of strong partisanship as an inhibitor of divided government (Maddox and Nimmo 1981). DeVires and Tarrance (1972) found ticket splitting among partisans offered a contrary view. Voters may choose divided government to prevent one party from having to much control and therefore may desire a governor put in place to yield the veto in order to keep the legislature in check.

The United States has a unique political system. The structure of the American system in addition to the policy preferences of voters allows different parties to control
different aspects of the government and therefore results in the veto being an important aspect of the legislative process which is not present in other forms of government.

Various scholars have offered structural explanations for divided government (Fiorina 1990; Jacobson 1991; Key 1956). Divided government is nearly unheard of in other parts of the world, but has become the structural norm for the United States. Scholars have advanced various theories to explain divided government. These explanations are focused on two fronts: structural explanations, and policy explanations.

Structural explanations focus on the effects of separation of powers and the independent nature of elections has resulted in a climate in which divided government is almost preordained. In the United States, the executive and legislative branches are separate. The executive is not from the legislature as is the case in a parliamentary system. This separation gives the possibility of different parties controlling the different branches of government thus allowing the veto to become a much more important instrument in policy determination.

In addition to the separation of the branches of government, the electoral structure also contributes to the increased likelihood of divided government. The president, the Senate, and the House of Representatives have different terms of office. The president has a four-year term, a senator six years, and a house member for two years. These different terms of office result in candidates running for election in different years. The electoral constituency and the salient issues change from election to election, therefore in different elections different parties have the advantage.

Some scholars have been quick to dismiss structural factors of divided government (Beck et. all 1992). However, these dismissals are from an examination of
national level studies. It is reasonable to expect that voters will behave differently in state
elections than in national elections. Voters are generally more informed about national
level politics than about state level issues. A central assumption of Fiorina’s (1996)
policy balancing theory is that voters are informed. Personal calculation of the voter is
likely to be more important when the voter is informed. Conversely, if voters are
uninformed the structural aspects of the political system are likely to be more important;
therefore it is reasonable to suspect that while the vote choice may be more important in
explaining divided government at the national level structural factors could place a
significant role at the state level.

Alternative theories of divided government have focused on policy explanations.
Morris Fiorina (1996) has advocated a policy balancing theory of divided government.
His theory has been the subject of many debates within the discipline. The majority of the
American people are in the middle of the political spectrum. The parties, however, are on
the left and right. Most Americans idea position falls between that of the two parties and
they believe that if one party controlled the entire government radical and extreme public
policy would be the result. In order to prevent policy formation at the far right or far left
voters split their tickets with the expectation that resulting policy will be moderate and
closer to the center where they reside. The use of the veto to keep the opposing party in
check is a tool in bringing about more moderate policies.

Some criticism of Fiorina results from the assumption that the American
electorate is highly informed about politics and the political system. In order to bring
divided government about consciously the voter has to be highly cognizant of how the
political system works. A question that arises is what percentage of voters engaging in this type of voting would be necessary to affect the outcome of an election.

The literature addressing the policy balancing theory is varied and inconclusive, with some scholars finding support for the thesis (Lacy and Paolino 1998; Smith, Brown, Bruce, and Overby 1999) and others finding little support (Beck, Baum, Alvarez and Smith 1992; Alvarez and Schousen 1993; Born 1994; Sigelman, Wahlbeck, and Buell 1997; Burden and Kimball 1998).

Other possible explanations for divided government included Jacobson’s (1990) model in which he theorizes that voters attempt to match party and legislative strength. The perceived state of existence is that Republicans are superior in foreign affairs while Democrats are better at handling domestic affairs, Jacobson’s findings are confirmed by Alvarez and Schousen who find empirical support for the theory of Jacobson. However, these theories are much less plausible at the state level in which the division of expertise between the legislative and executive branches is less clear.

The vast majority of the divided government literature has focused on the national government. State level analysis more rare. Divided government in the states has tended to parallel what has occurred at the national level. Unified governments declined sharply after the 1952 elections, stabilized in the 1960s and declined further in the 1980s (Fiorina 1996). The states offer an opportunity to study divided government in a way that is impossible at the national level. The national government supposedly is more important than state governments, however, with an N of one it is impossible to make many broad generalizations or subject the findings of Congress to rigorous empirical testing. For example, if will did a time series analysis of Congress from the formation of the Republic
we would only have an N of 106. In reality data considerations make this impossible and therefore the resulting N would be far less than 106. On the other hand, at the state level we have 50 new observations every two years, therefore, a three election study at the state level yields a higher N than is possible studying the entire history of the Republic at the national levels.

The data problems present at the national level has resulted in many different scholars attempting to explain divided government at the individual instead of the aggregate level. In some cases scholars dismiss structural factors as insignificant largely because of the difficulty testing them at the congressional level. An individual level analysis allows research at the national level that would be impossible at the aggregate level. These analyses often result in neglecting the larger structure of the political system in which the individual resides. An important question to answer is if divided government and its consequences is the product of the structure of the political system of individual voter preferences.

A state level study also offers variation not present at the national level. For the past half century the national government has generally consisted of unified Democratic government or divided government with a Republican executive. The only exceptions occurred from 1952 to 1956 when there was unified Republican government and from 1946 to 1948 and from 1994 to the present with divided government with a Democratic executive. More variation in governmental structure is present at the state level thus allowing us to make better empirical generalizations.

Various theories have attempted to explain the increased instances of divided government in the states. The elections for state legislatures have become increasingly
independent from each other (Jacobson 1990). Fiorina (1996) sees divided government as the product of decreasing electoral majorities at both the national and state level. If Republican legislative candidates had been able to match the performance of Republican executives there would be fewer cases of divided government and more cases of government unified under Republican control. Fiorina (1996) examines the effects of professionalism on divided government. He finds that professional legislatures tend to benefit Democrats while non-professional legislatures tend to benefit Republicans. The opportunity costs are higher for a Republican to become a member of a legislature. Republican tend to hold high paying jobs while Democrats are poor and would improve their socioeconomic position by taking a high paying job in a highly professionalized legislature. A Republican, on the other hand, would not be willing to give up the high paying job to serve in a professional legislature that requires a large devotion of time. Conversely, Republicans would be more willing to serve in a non-professional legislature in which he or she could serve while continuing to keep their high paying job.

Republicans and Democrats also have opposing views of the role government should play in society. Republicans generally believe that government interferes with business too much and is part of the problem and not part of the solution. Republicans see the private sector as better equipped to answer the problems of the nation than government. Democrats, on the other hand, tend to have a more positive view of government. They tend to believe that government should be used to help solve problems instead of the belief that government creates more problems. When you have individuals that look at government from opposite prospective you are more likely to have quality candidates from the party that believes government can benefit society.
One of the most important tools a governor has at his disposal is the veto. Governors have a variety of different types of vetoes at their disposal. Some governors have a normal veto in which they must except or reject a bill in its entirety. Additionally, many governors have some form of an item veto. The item veto is often advocated as a means of bringing about fiscal responsibility (Crain and Miller 1990; Dixon 1985) although much of the research has revealed that this not always the case (Abbey and Lath 1995 & 1997; Abrams and Doug 1986; Gosling 1986; Holts-Eagan 1998; Nice 1998; Zycher 1984).

This research attempts to examine the linkage between the veto and divided government. Sherman (1984) identifies at least three factors of how harmonious the relationship will be under divided government: how great the legislative majority the opposition has in the legislature; the style and the personalities of the individuals involved; and whether an election year is near.

Contrary to popular belief it is expected that divided government does not have as great of an impact on the use of the veto as one would expect. Other factors are expected to influence the veto decision in addition to divided government. Most research concerning veto has occurred at the national level (Edwards, Barrett, and Peake 1997; Rohde and Simon 1985; Ingberman, and Villani 1993; Shugart 1995). Prescott (1950) offers one of the first studies on gubernatorial vetoes and finds that in 1937, 1945 and 1947 governors vetoed 6.7, 5.0, and 5.1 percent of bills passed by the legislature. Additionally, he finds than overrides of vetoes have declined to the point of being almost nonexistent. Wiggins (1980) uses 1973 data and finds that the use of the veto has a
greater association with divided government than with the strength of the governor’s formal powers.

**Theory and Hypotheses**

The primary research hypothesis for this study is that divided government increases the number of vetoes by the governor, however, this relationship is mediated by other important factors. The professionalism level of the state is expected to exert a positive and direct impact on the number of vetoes by the governor. As discussed previously Fiorina (1996) identified professionalism as a cause of divided government. This paper will move beyond examining professionalism as a cause for divided government and examine the consequences of professionalism on policy outcomes.

The effects of professionalism are not only indirect through increasing the number of cases of divided government but also have a direct impact on the veto decision and thus policy outcomes. It is expected that the more professional the state the greater the number of vetoes issued by the governor. This hypothesis is derived from expectations that professional legislatures have more career oriented members that represent ideological extremes and therefore are less willing to compromise thus resulting in more vetoes by the governor.

The secondary focus for this study will examine vetoes overrode by the legislature. Divided government is expected to exert a significant affect on overrides of vetoes. Partisan considerations are expected to manifest themselves much more in the override process. This situation is most likely to occur when you have a legislative party with a large number of seats and a governor of the opposing party. In this situation, the
legislature is much less likely to consult the governor concerning legislative matters since they know they can just override any veto.

**Empirical Analysis**

This study will cover regular sessions of all state legislatures from 1978 to 1998, with the exception of Nebraska which unicameral nonpartisan legislature renders it analytically distinct from the other states. Additionally, North Carolina is excluded in the cases where it had no veto. The data are obtained from various issues of the Book of the States from 1978 to 1998. Special sessions are excluded from the analysis. Special sessions often deal with specific issues, and therefore are not representative of the normal legislative process. Additionally, little variation exists in special sessions that often consider only a few issues thereby limiting the number of potential vetoes by the governor. The sample is chosen because a 20-year range provides an opportunity to examine the state given a variety of structural and contextual situations. Both divided and unified government has existed in a large number of states thus providing increased empirical leverage on the research question of whether divided government matters.

There are two dependent variables for this study. The first is a count variable of the number of vetoes issued by the governor. The second variable is a count of the number of vetoes that were overrode by the legislature.

*Explanatory Variables*

Divided government is one of the primary explanatory variables for this study. Divided government occurs when opposing parties occupy different components of the
government. If the governor, the state house, and the state senate are controlled by the same party divided control is coded as 0 indicating unified government. If different parties control two of the three components, the variable is coded as 1 indicating divided government.

**Professionalism**

The effects of professionalism are the second major focus of this study and are expected to be the major force in explaining the number of vetoes in the legislature. Legislatures that are more professional take on a wide range and number of issues, therefore, giving the governor more opportunities to veto legislation. Additionally professional legislatures are more likely to obtain career politicians that are using the legislature as a stepping stone to higher office. Political ambition results in individuals that are more independent and perhaps less willing to compromise with a governor of another party. Greater diversity in legislation also provides more opportunities for the governor to encounter bills in which he or she is opposed. Squire (1992) recognizes three measures of professionalism- length of session, compensation and staff. Legislatures that are more professional are higher paid, meet for more days, and have a larger number of staff.

All three indicators of professionalism are included in the model. Compensation is the salary the member makes for each year and the per diems received. The length of session is the number of days the legislature met during that session. If the state house and the state senate met for a different number of days an average of the two houses is included in the model.
The final indicator of professionalism included in the model is staff. There are three categories of staff—personal staff, district staff, and shared staff. Since theoretically, personal and district staff are more important than shared staff, they are weighed more. For each type of staff a score was calculated equaling zero if none were present, one half if part-time staff were present and one if full time staff were present. Each state was given a score based upon whether each of the three categories were full-time or part-time. Shared staff were weighed half of what personal and district staff were weighed. This resulted in a scoring ranging from zero, indicating no staff, to 2.5 designating full-time staff in each of the three categories. A state that had part-time staff in each of the categories would receive a score of 1.25.

**Governor’s Party**

The first control variable included in the model is the party of the governor. The variable is coded as 1 if the governor is a Democrat and as a 0 if the governor is a Republican. The governor often takes the lead in setting the agenda for the state therefore it is expected that with Governors taking this lead role they are unlikely to veto a lot of legislation. Additionally, Republicans and Democrats have different legislative priorities and different philosophies of government therefore; it is expected that Republicans will veto more legislation than Democrats. Republicans tend to see government as too big therefore a Republican governor can use the veto to help curb the size of government. Finally, Republicans tend to be more concerned with balancing the budget and therefore will use the veto to help promote fiscal responsibility.
**Legislative Strength**

The legislative strength of the parties is expected to impact gubernatorial vetoes. More vetoes are expected the greater the number of seats occupied by the majority party in the legislature. It is expected that the greater the legislative majority the greater the distance of legislative policy preferences from the governor’s preferences. Legislative strength is critical when examining the number of vetoes overrode by the legislature. Overriding a veto often requires a supermajority therefore, the partisan make up becomes much more important in the examination of this question. Interaction terms between the Democratic majority in both houses and divided government will be included in the model to account for the impact of the size of the legislative majority on legislative success. The interaction term for the house will be calculated as the percent of seats controlled by the majority party plus the percent of seats controlled by that party in the upper house if that party controls the upper house as well. Therefore, if there is a split legislature the interaction variable will indicate the percent of seats controlled by the majority party in just the lower house whereas in an unified legislature the interaction variable indicates the percent of seats controlled in the lower house plus the percent controlled in the upper house. The interaction variable for the senate in calculated in the same fashion.

**Election Year**

More vetoes are expected to occur in election years than in off years. During an election year partisanship is more likely to come to the forefront thereby yielding fewer
compromises between the governor and legislature and thus more vetoes. Following an election parties are much more likely to work with each other and formulate compromises thus decreasing the number of vetoes.

A variable is included in the analysis to indicate if it is an election year. Most states conduct governor and state legislative races in the same year. The election year variable indicates if there is a governor’s election in that state during the given year.

_Ideology_

It is expected that the more liberal a state the more active the legislature thus increasing the opportunities for the governor to wield the veto. The measure created by Berry, Ringquist, Fording, and Hanson (1998) is included in the model to count for the differences in ideology among the states. Berry, Ringquist, Fording, and Hanson (1998) created a dynamic measure of ideology. Their measurement is an improvement over the static measure of Erikson, Wright and McIver (1993). Their measurement is based on roll call voting scores of state congressional delegations, the outcomes of congressional elections, the partisan division of state legislatures, the party of the governor and other various assumptions. The measure of Berry et al, contrary to the belief of many scholars, reveals that ideology varies more from year to year than is recognized.

_Party Identification_

The party identification of a state should play a role in legislation enacted in the states. I expect that Democratic states have a more active legislative agenda than Republican states thus providing more opportunities for the governor to veto legislation.
Erikson, Wright and McIver (1993) formulate a measurement of state party identification derived from an aggregation of CBS/NYT polls conducted from 1976 to 1988. The aggregation of data helps to overcome the problem of small sample sizes of many states when single year data is used. Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1993) recognize the changing nature of party identification across time. While it would be preferable to have a dynamic measurement for each year considered in the study difficulties in obtaining adequate sample sizes makes formulating a dynamic measure extremely problematic. Additional work needs to be conducted to determine approaches that will allows us to establish a dynamic measure of partisanship, however, due to data considerations and a lack of a better measure, the index formulated by Erikson, Wright and McIver will be incorporated into the analysis. The measure indicates a mean score of party identification ranging from –100 indicating total Republican identification to 100 indication Democratic identification. These mean scores will be included in this analysis as an indicator of partisan strength.

Override Requirements

A variable will be included in the model to indicate whether a supermajority is required to override a veto. A supermajority requirement makes it much more difficult for the legislature to override the veto of the governor thus making overrides more difficult. Additionally, a governor is more likely to work with the legislature in constructing a bill when the threat of and override exists. It is expected that a governor is more likely to compromise with the legislature when a simple majority can override a piece of legislation than when a supermajority requirement is in place.
**Number of Bills Passed**

The final independent variable included in the model is the number of bills which pass both chambers of the state legislature. The greater the number of bills passed by the legislature the greater the number of opportunities for the governor the exercise the veto. This variable is included in the model to control for the number of opportunities to exercise the veto.

**Model Summary**

The model set forth previously will be examined using various event count statistical methods. The Poisson distribution assumes that the events are independent of each other. This is probably not a reasonable assumption when examining vetoes and overrides. If a governor vetoes a piece of legislation this identifies his or her willingness to veto other legislation. It is unreasonable to assume that the governor considers every bill in isolation and that the previous veto decisions have no impact on the decision the veto current legislation. It is likely that vetoes may increase in frequency over the course of the governor’s term with an initial spirit of cooperation following the election followed by a time of extreme partisanship. On the other hand, the pattern of vetoes may spike during the middle of the term with fewer vetoes immediately following the election and before the election.

Additionally, it is expected if a legislature is successful in overriding the governor’s veto in one instance they may be more likely to try and override future vetoes since they see that they have the strength to be successful. Due to the independence problem, I will use a negative binomial regression model to account for the lack of
independence in the model\textsuperscript{7}. The negative binomial model is a deviation of the Poisson model. Divided government and professionalism are the primary explanatory variables included in the model. Controls are provided for the governor’s party, election year, supermajority requirements, ideology, party identification, and the number of bills passed. Additionally, interaction variables between the party of the governor and divided government as well as between the legislative majority in each house and divided government will be included in the model.

The Poisson distribution assumes that events have a constant rate of occurrence. However, the negative binomial distribution accounts for non independence by assuming that events vary within an observation and therefore is more appropriate given the nature of gubernatorial vetoes and overrides and the lack of independence between the observations.

**Results**

The model generally behaved in the expected manner with the exception of the election year variable. The results reveal that Republicans are more likely to veto legislation under divided government but Democrats are about as likely to veto legislation when the government is unified. It was found that a higher number of vetoes occurred when the Democrats controlled the governorship as opposed to the Republicans (see table 1). However, a further examination of the model and the interaction term between divided government and the party of the governor provides some evidence that Republicans are exercising the veto more often in cases of divided government.

\textsuperscript{7} For a further explanation of the negative binomial model please see King 1998; Alison 1987; Thompson 1954 and Neyman 1965.
The model also reveals that divided government has a positive and significant affect on the number of vetoes by the governor as hypothesized in this study. However, divided government does not operate in isolation and other factors must be considered to have a full understanding of the veto process.

[Table 1 About Here]

Two of the three indicators of professionalism behaved in the expected manner. Competition and staff were both positive predictors of the number of vetoes. However, the shorter the legislative session the fewer number of vetoes. In a shorter legislative session members are often rushed to get legislative passed and therefore have less opportunities to work out compromises with the governor and thereby avoid the veto by the governor.

In a professional legislature members are more career oriented and therefore have more clearly defined policy preferences and thus are less willing to compromise with the other party. A legislator in a professional legislature is more likely to be concerned with re-election and therefore will often adopt policy positions to help him or her get re-elected. A legislator may be less willing to compromise with the other party when it involves accepting policies that are not in complete alignment with voter preferences. In an amateur legislature members are often present for a short time and therefore to get something accomplished are more willing to compromise with the other party thus resulting in fewer vetoes. Amateur legislators are more concerned with enacting policy than with re-election.
The professionalism findings provide some interesting results for democratic theory\(^2\). More professional legislatures result in greater instances of gubernatorial vetoes. Professionalism concerning legislatures does not have the same connotation as it does in society at large. Divided government is often characterized by gridlock in which legislation is less likely to pass and the governor is more likely to wield the veto.

Professionalism in the business world does not invoke the vision of an atmosphere where nothing gets accomplished and everyone is acting in their own self-interest therefore we may need to reassess our view of professionalism when it comes to politics. Professionalism in the business world is characterized people working together to achieve a common goal of the interest of the company. Professionalism in the legislative setting may bring about a completely different atmosphere and in fact an amateur legislature may be more consistent with the traditional definition of professionalism as outlined by society in the business context.

Professionalism may be a tool if we desire a system that makes it difficult to pass legislation. Professionalism is a positive factor in preventing legislatures from acting on emotion and therefore putting in place legislation that is not fully thought out and may be bad for the state. A professional legislature is probably less likely to enact a measure off of emotion, however if the goal is for a system that encourages the quick and efficient passage of legislation then an amateur legislature may be the preferred path. In the world of politics an amateur legislature may be more professional in the traditional sense of the word where people conduct themselves in a manner in which they are able to work with

\(^2\) The bivariate correlations between the three indicators indicate that staff and session were correlated at a .35 level; staff and compensation at a .56 level and compensation and staff at a .58 level.
each other. Professionalism may invoke partisanship whereas bi-partisanship may be more likely achieved in an amateur setting.

A supermajority requirement to override a veto was found significant and resulted in a positive relationship with vetoes. This finding is reasonable when one considers that a governor does not have to fear his veto being overridden and therefore is less willing to compromise with the legislature. One the other hand, when this requirement is not present the governor has to work much closer with the legislature in order to prevent his or her least favorable outcome. If the governor prefers the status quo to the proposal of the legislature and a supermajority requirement to override is present then the governor has the advantage over the legislature in determining the policy outcome.

As previously mentioned vetoes were found less prevalent in election years than during off year election. Several explanations are possible for this finding. The legislative agenda is more limited during election years and therefore there are fewer opportunities for the governor to veto legislation. Elective officials are busier during election years and therefore have less time to devote toward legislative thus resulting is less opportunity to veto legislation. In addition, governors do not want to appear to be ruling by veto and unwilling to compromise with the other party. Voters are often turned off by partisanship therefore governors may be less willing to veto legislation during an election year unless public opinion is on their side.

Finally, vetoes are driven by institutional factors instead of the ideology and partisan makeup of the state, however, the findings for ideology and partisanship were both in the direction of more democratic and liberal states having more vetoes. This is consistent with expectation in that the most Democratic states are the ones most likely to
have a divided government with a Republican governor and as previously found Republican veto more legislation in a split government. Finally, the results for overrides did not reveal any significant results and therefore require additional exploration in future studies (see table 2). However, the sign for governor’s party indicates that more overrides are expected with Republican governors. This may be the product of the fact that divided government with a Republican governor is more prevalent than with a Republican legislature and a Democratic executive.

[Table 2 About Here]

**Conclusion**

This paper has attempted to examine the conditions under which gubernatorial vetoes are most likely to occur. Divided government has become the norm in the American political system therefore it is important that we understand the conditions that bring about divided government as well as the consequences resulting from two party control of the government. Consistent with traditional wisdom divided government was significant in increasing the number of vetoes, however, other factors played a role as well. Vetoes are not strictly the product of divided government but the environment in which the legislation is formulated is also important.

Professionalism in the business world is often seen as a positive, however, in government professionalism may be a characterized by a self-interested system in which members strive to advance their own personal goals at the expense of the functioning of the institution. It may be in fact that those who argue for term limits have gotten it right all along. Term limits may not result in a system where inexperienced legislators are
unable to get anything accomplished but in fact may spur a harmonious relationship characterized by members that are willing to compromise and work with each other without the concerns of getting re-elected hanging over their heads. Professionalism in the legislative arena may promote inefficiency and ineffectiveness and therefore the career politicians may be an impediment to a legislature efficient and non-partisan in carrying out its duties. Future, research may want to re-visit the term limit debate which has generally been seen to be have negative consequences for the functioning of government.

Vetoes are often termed as negative, however, this is not always the feeling among the voters. In many cases the public prefers a governor who is willing to veto legislation. However, if the veto is something we desire to limit then a positive step in that direction may be the institution of more amateur legislatures. A further exploration of this area may reveal other possible consequences of term limits that have been neglected by previous research. Term limits may be an effective tool in eliminating careerism in politics and thus bring about a legislature characterized by more cooperation and less vetoes. Hopefully, this research will serve as a springboard for the reconsideration of what is meant by a professional legislature and the consequences of a professional legislature as it was traditionally been deemed. A professional legislature does not necessarily mean that the members of that legislature behave in the traditional professional manner as it is defined in the private sector.

Finally, understanding how divided government as well as professionalism effects the decision by the governor to veto legislation will help us to understand and predict policy outcomes with greater precision. Additionally, the research gives us a better
understanding of the legislative process in Congress. The decision by the president to veto legislation may not just be the product of just policy and ideology differences between the parties but the career ambitions of the politicians that make up the highly professional United States Congress.

While much insight was gained concerning vetoes future research needs to further explore overrides by the legislature. A different methodological approach needs to be undertaken to gain a better understanding of veto overrides. Overrides occur very infrequently therefore future techniques to account for rare events may be useful.
Table 1
Gubernatorial Vetoes
1978 – 1998

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<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
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<td>Governor’s Party X Divided Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session Length</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
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<td>Election Year</td>
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<td>Governor’s Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bills Introduced</td>
<td>.000 (.000)***</td>
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<td>Ideology</td>
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<td>Party Identification</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at p < .1  
** significant at p <.05  
***significant at p < .001  

Table entries are unstandardized coefficients. Standard Errors are in parentheses.

Log Likelihood    –2730.3284
N = 694
### Table 2
Legislative Overrides  
1978 – 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Divided Government</td>
<td>.695 (.619)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor’s Party X Divided Government</td>
<td>.352 (.849)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>.011 (.016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Length</td>
<td>-.004 (.003)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>.000 (.000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election Year</td>
<td>-.187 (.330)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor’s Party</td>
<td>-.187 (.665)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bills Introduced</td>
<td>-.000 (.000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>.012 (.012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Identification</td>
<td>.021 (.023)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supermajority</td>
<td>.290 (.432)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senate Interaction</td>
<td>.011 (.023)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Interaction</td>
<td>-.005 (.022)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.02 (.969)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* significant at p < .1  
** significant at p < .05  
*** significant at p < .001

Table entries are unstandardized coefficients. Standard Errors are in parentheses.

Log Likelihood:  -644.00996

N = 693
References


