

## Divided in Unified Government of Presidential and Semi-presidential Regimes

Panel Chair:

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Abstract:

Conventional wisdom asserts that unified government in which the same party controls the presidency and parliament has smoother relations between the executive and legislative branches than divided government. Unified party control is more effective in enacting legislation since it has a majority to meet the threshold. However, this book argues that presidents during unified government can be spectacularly unsuccessful over legislation, depending on their institutional strengths and partisan powers. Unified party control of the branches cannot automatically provide a solid basis for presidents to be dominant in the parliament. Some presidents can have a much less powerful and divided coalition than other presidents under unified government. When the president and majority in the parliament have conflicting policy and electoral goals, it is remarkably possible to see deadlock within the party even during unified government. Schattschneider accurately observes that in U.S., most of the president's troubles are likely to be made for him by his own partisans in Congress and the roll calls demonstrate that parties are unable to hold their lines in a controversial public issue when the pressure is on.<sup>1</sup> Unlike executives in parliamentary systems, the United States president cannot count on members of his party to support his policy preferences and even with unified party control, the American system guarantees conflict between the president and Congress.<sup>2</sup> Unified party control can link two separated branches together but does not guarantee they are on the same page all the time. We cannot assume that a single party with a majority in the legislature must have a high degree of cohesion and provide consistent support to the president. Overemphasizing unified control over separated branches can be a consequence of a failure to fully account for the different degrees of lawmaking in various contexts. Presidents even in the period of unified governments have to exercise their legislative influence within the constraints of institutional features and political dynamics. Through the lens of this analysis,

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<sup>1</sup> Elmer Eric Schattschneider, 1942. *Party Government*. Westport: Greenwood Press, p.131.

<sup>2</sup> Jon R. Bond, and Richard Fleisher, 1990. *The President in the Legislative Arena*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp81-2.

we aim to provide insight into why some presidents failed to legislate even though they have a majority in the legislature or to clarify the challenges facing the president in leading the legislature in this panel.

If you have a Paper you think might fit in this Panel, please contact the Panel Chair before 10 February with the following information:

- Title of the paper (no more than 20 words)
- Abstract of the paper (no more than 250 words)
- Author's (and if applicable co-author's) email address as registered in their MyECPR account
- 3 – 5 keywords