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Eric M. Uslaner

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Comparative State Policy Formation, Interparty Competition, and Malapportionment: A New Look at "V. O. Key's Hypotheses"

ERIC M. USLANER

AN AREA OF AMERICAN POLITICS in which there has been a marked pattern of growth of interest in the last decade is comparative state policy formation. While political scientists have been studying state government for many years, few early studies were explicitly comparative in focus. Indeed, they consisted of mostly single-state studies with an emphasis on specific decisions or the formal properties of the state's decision-making bodies. There were a few notable exceptions, such as the analysis of the South by Key in 1949 and Lockard's study of New England in 1959.[1]

The "break with the past," the first cross-state comparative study

* I have benefited from the comments of Duane Lockard, Malcolm E. Jewell, and W. Phillips Shively at various stages of the preparation of this manuscript. My greatest intellectual debt is to Ronald E. Weber, with whom I have discussed these ideas in the course of our long standing collaborative research. I alone, of course, am responsible for what is maintained in this article.

[1] V. O. Key, Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Vintage Books, 1949); and Duane Lockard, *New England State Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).

which attempted to generalize beyond a single state or region in the political science literature, is the classic Dawson-Robinson article[2] on the impact of interparty competition and socioeconomic variables on welfare expenditures in the American states. The growth of the literature in the field was slow after the Dawson-Robinson article, but began to increase dramatically in the late 1960s. By the 1970s, the field had become a major subdiscipline within the area of American politics. The study of comparative state politics increased (perhaps exponentially) as did the available computer technology (particularly software, i.e., canned programs) as well as the more general concern for policy analysis.

The study of comparative state policy formation has not, however, been dependent upon the growth of computer technology for the selection of hypotheses to be examined. Surely, this literature has not been immune to charges that it has been marked by a lack of theoretical focus and that no firm conclusions have been established despite scores of studies. Indeed, as Charles O. Jones commented in a review of the state policy literature, one gets the impression that ". . . lots of things are related to lots of things, other things being equal."[3] And, he adds, "It would be all too simple to conclude that reading these pieces in sequence is like taking a long trip only to find yourself back home again. And yet that is not a bad analogy for assessing the contribution of this literature."[4]

Yet, reading the literature, one finds more optimism despite the mixed set of results. It does not appear to be theoretically barren, although one may question whether we need, e.g., so very many indicators of interparty competition (IPC) or whether scholar X's measure of a given variable is really that much better than scholar Y's. The theoretical framework which seems to provide the basis for most contemporary work is that developed by the acknowledged "first master" of comparative state politics, V. O. Key, Jr. It is next to impossible to find an article on comparative state politics which

[2] Richard E. Dawson and James A. Robinson, "Inter-Party Competition, Economic Variables, and Welfare Policies in the American States," *Journal of Politics*, 25 (May 1963), 265-289.

[3] Charles O. Jones, "State and Local Public Policy Analysis: A Review of Progress," in American Political Science Association, *Political Science and State and Local Government* (Washington: American Political Association, 1973), 34.

[4] *Ibid.*, 38.

does not mention Key; many even quote his two seminal works on the topic, *Southern Politics in State and Nation* and *American State Politics.*[5] If Key's work is judged so highly and students of state politics have followed Key's work so closely, then why does the literature receive comments of the sort proposed by Jones?

The answer, I believe, is that Key's work has been followed, but also misunderstood. In this article, I shall argue that two hypotheses which have played major roles in the literature of comparative state policy formation and which are attributed to Key should not be so attributed, at least as they have been formulated in the literature. Jones has nicely argued that many authors miscite Key and his argument will be discussed below. But my point is more fundamental than that: even Jones appears to accept as a "Key hypothesis" one which I do not believe should be attributed to him. In particular, I shall challenge the assertions that the following hypotheses are Key's: (1) the greater the degree of interparty competition in a state, the more liberal its welfare policies (or general policy orientations) should be; and (2) the more well apportioned a state, the more liberal its welfare policies (or general policy orientations) should be.

The sources for my arguments are the works of Key himself. Why should there be such confusion, then? Others have also read Key and not come to this conclusion. My response is that Key was simultaneously a political scientist, devoted to the development of theory and to hypothesis testing, and also a journalist, who liked to tell a good political story and wrote as if he were being paid by the word. This dual strand of Key's work is most notable in *Southern Politics.* Thus, at least part of the difficulty in delineating Key's actual hypotheses lies in the fact that his propositions are often buried in the middle of narratives about the politics of a given state or region. Furthermore, these statements did not always take the form of propositions as contemporary social scientists might prefer. And, most critically, Key hardly followed the deductive-nomological method of hypothesis generation in which the final hypothesis is neatly deduced from two clearly stated prior statements (assumptions, laws, etc.). One thus has to cull from his works specific hypotheses. This is not always an easy chore, since

[5] Key, *Southern Politics*; and *American State Politics: An Introduction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956).

it is deceptively easy to find a statement leading one to believe that Key was proposing a hypothesis but later to discover that on a different page the purported hypothesis is rejected by the author himself. It is my contention that for the two hypotheses under consideration, such is indeed occurring. Previous researchers, however, have not (for whatever reason) uncovered disavowals of these claims.

Aside from a perspective on the sociology of a rather small bit of knowledge (i.e., what Key said and what he didn't), what is the purpose of such an exercise as this? It is to suggest that the theoretical frameworks for studying state policy formation are in need of revision. I do not propose a new framework here, but instead maintain that Key offered us the beginnings of such a conceptualization. In particular, the arguments about the effects of interparty competition and malapportionment which have dominated the literature are based upon a misreading of Key. Thus, while further work in these areas is conducted to carry on a "tradition in the literature," I maintain that the tradition has largely been self-sustaining and does not have much of an independent theoretical justification. By reexamining Key's analyses, we can see what a more systematic analysis of representative government would look like. These two hypotheses have played such a large role in general discussions of representative government that they would appear to be a useful starting point toward a reexamination of the dynamics of politics and policy formation along the lines actually suggested to Key.

My focus here in examining these two hypotheses is not to conduct an analysis of all of the problems of aggregate data analysis in the study of comparative state policy formation or similar studies at the subnational or cross-national level of analysis—even though the framework employed in these latter areas often depend directly upon those in comparative state politics and even the works of Key in particular.[6] The prominence of the IPC and malapportionment "hypotheses," however, suggests that an intensive analysis of the supposed logic underlying other predictions in the literature may well be warranted (although beyond the scope of this paper). I turn now to an examination of these hypotheses attributed to Key.

[6] Cf. Robert Jackman, *Politics and Social Equality* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975), 76-77.

The Inter-Party Competition Hypothesis

The "hypothesis" establishing a direct linkage between IPC and more liberal welfare spending policies was *suggested* by Duane Lockard[7] but, as we shall see below, was not actually put forward as a testable proposition by him. The most famous—and most straightforward—statement of this hypothesis and its relationship to Key is found in the classic article by Richard E. Dawson and James A. Robinson:

> Our study is an attempt to expand further on the *hypotheses* of Key and Lockard concerning party competition and welfare policies, testing them in a larger 'laboratory' and applying slightly more rigorous statistical techniques. Our initial hypothesis can be briefly stated: *The greater the degree of inter-party competition within a political system the more liberal the social welfare measures that system will adopt.*[8]

The Dawson-Robinson article has become a classic for several reasons. Perhaps the foremost is that their conclusion, namely that socioeconomic factors in a state's environment have a stronger impact on welfare policies than does IPC, seemed to go against so much of the "conventional wisdom," and particularly that of such scholars as Key and Lockard. Secondly, the Dawson-Robinson study began a new tradition in the study of comparative state politics: rather than focusing on a single state or region, their analysis covered all 46 contiguous states which had partisan legislatures. And, of course, their use of (rank-order) correlation coefficients marked a break with the case study approach which had dominated the field.

The reaction to the Dawson-Robinson piece was strong (both positively and negatively). Some students of comparative state politics thought that the article "took the politics out of policy formation" and attempted replications to reinstate a hypothesis which I contend was never offered by Key. Others sought replications to confirm the conclusions of Dawson and Robinson. The debate has continued to be present and does not seem much closer to a resolution today than it did in 1963. Much of the controversy has centered around problems of measurement (both about more liberal welfare policies and IPC itself) and data analytic techniques. I shall not present a history of the entire controversy, but rather shall

[7] Lockard, *New England State Politics,* 327.

[8] Dawson and Robinson, 270. Emphasis in original.

restrict my attention to the claims made by those who have continued the analysis.

Support for the Dawson-Robinson finding is found in studies by Thomas R. Dye,[9] John G. Grumm,[10] Jack L. Walker,[11] Richard I. Hofferbert,[12] Brian R. Fry and Richard F. Winters,[13] and Bernard H. Booms and James R. Halldorson.[14] These authors have used varied approaches and measurement techniques: Dye, Grumm and Hofferbert employed measures of "welfare liberalism," based upon state expenditure levels. Fry and Winters, on the other hand, employed a novel index of "redistribution" to capture what they considered the central idea of Key's conceptualization of the impact of party competition on policy formation: i.e., the struggle between the "haves" and the "have nots."[15] Booms and Halldorson employed an adjusted redistribution index based on that of Fry and Winters; whereas Walker employed an index of "innovation," measuring the extent to which state initiatives on a broad range of policy areas

[9] Thomas R. Dye, *Politics, Economics and the Public: Policy Outcomes in the American States* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966), esp. ch. 9. This and the following citations are among the mnay which have misinterpreted the works of Key. For a notable recent example, see R. Kenneth Godwin and W. Bruce Shepard, "Political Processes and Public Expenditures," *American Political Science Review*, 70 (December 1976), 1127-1135. For a critique of this article and the theoretical and statistical problems arising from a model of the policy-making process which is overly simplistic, see Eric M. Uslaner, "Expenditures and Politics: Who Gets the Cookies?" *American Political Science Review*, 72 (March 1978), forthcoming. Also note that not every scholar who has used either the interparty competition or malapportionment hypotheses has directly cited Key. Some have based their citations on others who misinterpreted Key, leading to a rather confused chain of reasoning throughout the literature.

[10] John G. Grumm, "The Effects of Legislative Structure on Legislative Performance," in Richard Hofferbert and Ira Sharkansky, eds., *State and Urban Politics* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), 298-322.

[11] Jack L. Walker, "The Diffusion of Innovations in the American States," *American Political Science Review*, 63 (September 1969), 880-899.

[12] Richard I. Hofferbert, "The Relation Between Public Policy and Some Structural and Economic Variables in the American States," *American Political Science Review*, 60 (March 1966), 73-82.

[13] Brian R. Fry and Richard F. Winters, "The Politics of Redistribution," *American Political Science Review*, 64 (June 1970), 508-522.

[14] Bernard H. Booms and James R. Halldorson, "The Politics of Redistribution: A Reformulation," *American Political Science Review*, 67 (September 1973), 924-933.

[15] Cf. Key, *Southern Politics*, 307.

indicated a willingness to adopt new programs. Support for the IPC linkage with more liberal policies has been produced by Charles F. Cnudde and Donald McCrone for the selected issue areas of Aid to Dependent Children and unemployment compensation (but not for per pupil expenditures and Old Age Assistance),[16] Richard C. DeLeon for states which are in the top third of a redistribution rank ordering,[17] and John F. Fenton.[18] But note that Fenton distinguishès between two-party job-oriented systems and two-party issue-oriented systems. The relationship holds in the

[16] Charles F. Cnudde and Donald J. McCrone, "Party Competition and Welfare Policies in the American States," *American Political Science Review,* 63 (September 1969), 858-866. Cnudde and McCrone differ from most other authors in that they use the "more sophisticated" technique of causal modeling to attempt to separate the effects of socioeconomic and political variables upon measures of policy outputs. Another recent attempt to determine the effects of alternative predictors of outcome variables through a variant of causal modeling (path analysis or what the author calls "effects coefficients") is Michael S. Lewis-Beck, "The Relative Importance of Socioeconomic and Political Variables for Public Policy," *American Political Science Review,* 71 (June 1977), 559-566. In particular, Lewis-Beck criticizes the structural equation model proposed by myself and Ronald E. Weber in "The 'Politics' of Redistribution: Toward a Model of the Policy-Making Process in the American States," *American Politics Quarterly,* 3 (April 1975), 130-170; his charge is that we do not consider the indirect effects of socioeconomic variables upon policy outputs. We maintained in our article, and I reemphasize the point below, that the question is not answerable by statistical manipulations. Rather, it is a theoretical question. Even if the question could be resolved by statistical inference, partitioning the path coefficients into direct and indirect effects (particularly when there are two socioeconomic variables and only one political variable) does not seem to resolve the problem. If the causal chain is long enough, then the initial variable(s) will almost always have some measurable indirect effects, regardless of how spurious these may seem theoretically. (I am indebted to John L. Sullivan for pointing this out to me.) This type of reasoning may lead to a "genetic fallacy," in which one might argue that for want of a nail, the horse was lost; for want of a horse, the rider was lost—leading to the loss of the battle and eventually the entire kingdom, all for want of a nail (the first exogenous variable in the causal sequence). For a discussion of this fallacy, see Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method* (New York: Harcourt, Frace, and World, 1934), 388-390.

[17] Richard E. DeLeon, "Politics, Economic Surplus, and Redistribution in the American States: A Test of a Theory," *American Journal of Political Science,* 17 (November 1973), 781-796.

[18] John H. Fenton, *People and Parties in Politics* (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1966), 22, 77.

latter states to a much greater degree than it does in the former.

An examination of this literature reveals many citations to Key and indeed, on several occasions, direct quotes from *Southern Politics*. Yet, it appears that only Lockard and Fenton have carefully integrated Key's work in their own studies—but both of these authors take Key as a point of departure and do *not* attribute their own hypotheses to Key (although both indicate *how* Key's work affected their own thinking). Dawson and Robinson have already been challenged on this same problem by Jones.[19] Our examination of what Key actually maintained thus should begin with a consideration of what Jones considered to be the two critical quotations from Key's *Southern Politics*. First:

> Within the capitalistic society, the tendencies in negation of competition, toward the maximization of short-run returns to the immediate holders of power, constitute a powerful drive toward self-strangulation. Economic competition alone may not serve to maintain a healthy ruling class; a continuing political challenge compels a defense and a strengthening of a ruling class. The upper bracket that goes unchallenged develops privileges and repressions destructive of mass morale and often restrictive of the potentialities of the productive system. And ruling groups have so inveterate a habit of being wrong that the health of a democratic order demands that they be challenged and constantly compelled to prove their case.[20]

Second:

> . . . if there is a single grand issue it is that of public expenditure. It follows that the grand objective of the haves is obstruction, at least of the haves who take only a short-term view. Organization is not always necessary to obstruct; it is essential, however, for the promotion of a sustained program in behalf of the have-nots, although not all party or factional organization is dedicated to that purpose. It follows, if these propositions are correct, that over the long run the have-nots lose in a disorganized politics . . . The have-have-not match is settled in part by the fact that substantial numbers of the have-nots never get into the ring. For that reason professional politicians often have no incentive to appeal to the have-nots.[21]

Jones correctly argues that Key's arguments centered exclusively on the rather different political patterns in the South and were not meant to apply to the rest of the country without further investigation. Yet, he adds, ". . . it certainly is legitimate to develop the IPC hypothesis from Key's remarks."[22] But, is it? We think not.

[19] *Op. cit.*
[20] Key, *Southern Politics*, 310.
[21] *Ibid.*, 310.
[22] *Op. cit.*, 33.

Particularly troublesome about the Dawson-Robinson article and many of the empirical tests of the IPC-policy linkage that followed the pioneering study is that ". . . not one of the articles, not even Dawson and Robinson, bother to quote Key. Indeed, Dawson and Robinson even miscite the crucial question from Key (including two blank pages and the title page of Part Two) and make an error in the copyright date of the book (1951 for 1949)—errors that are repeated by at least two other scholars in citing Key's original thoughts."[23] These "misuses" of Key's "hypotheses," while disturbing, do not present the basic points in my argument.

I maintain that the IPC hypothesis cannot be found in Key's work and that Key would probably not have agreed with it had he read it elsewhere! Consider the following quote from Key: "The great virtue of the two-party system is, not that there are two groups with conflicting policy tendencies from which the voters can choose, but that there are two groups of politicians."[24] Of the many citations to Key's work in the literature on comparative state policy formation, the only citation to this critical statement is found in Lockard.[25] What Key was arguing is straightforward: in loose, multi-factional one-party states, there is little room for accountability of the legislators to the voters because such a political system lacks any continuity of issues or leaders. The voters simply have no way of determining what the long-term issues or coalitions of leaders are. Under such conditions, it is the organized interests who will prevail over the disorganized. Among the disorganized members of society are clearly the voters in such a system. Key stresses the organization-disorganization dimension to a much greater extent than he does the "haves"-"have-nots" distinction.[26] It is clear that he considers the two groups to overlap considerably.[27] Yet, examining only the rich-poor dichotomy misreads Key's analysis.

In particular, Key argues that the organized group flourish and the disorganized mass electorate flounders in multi-factional one-party states because in these states *politics is issueless* and the "[t]he factional system simply provides no institutionalized mecha-

[23] *Ibid.*
[24] Key, *Southern Politics,* 309-310.
[25] *Op. cit.,* 327.
[26] Key, *Southern Politics,* 298-311.
[27] Key, *Southern Politics,* 307-310.

nism for the expression of lower-bracket viewpoints. By chance and by exertions of temporary leaders and connivers, candidates are brought into the field, but no continuing, competitive groups carry on the battle."[28] Following this statement is the quotation about the virtue of the two-party system. Yet, a strong bifactional system within a single party can produce similar results in terms of giving the voters a choice between alternative candidates. This choice will not always translate into "more liberal" policy decisions, but it can hold the leaders more accountable for whatever they do while in office. Thus, Key was arguing that either a two-party system or a one-party system with clearly defined factions would produce a greater *potential* for the adoption of policies favorable to disorganized groups, the "have-nots" in particular. Yet, potential is hardly a causal factor. And there is nothing in the corpus of Key's work which leads one to believe that he intended to say anything more than that. Indeed, the context of *Southern Politics* should make it clear that Key was only referring to the peculiar politics of one region and did not extend his arguments to the more competitive states.

Lockard followed a similar research design in adopting Key's framework for the analysis of New England politics.[29] In his state-by-state analysis, Lockard made comparisons with Key's state analysis in the South and then *added* that more liberal programs are found in the two-party competitive states than in the one-party states of New England.[30] In Key's analysis, however, there were no really competitive two-party states! And, furthermore, Lockard qualifies his own position a few pages later when he remarks that these results occur "where parties have a reasonable degree of unity."[31] Dawson, Robinson, and their followers do not recognize this critical concern of both Key and Lockard. Fenton, who discusses the critical difference between job-oriented and issue-oriented parties, is an exception. A final quotation from the now infamous chapter 14 of *Southern Politics* should establish my contention that the IPC-welfare policy linkage should not be attributed to Key:

[28] Key, *Southern Politics*, 309.
[29] *Op. cit.*, 23, 44, 327, 331.
[30] *Ibid.*, 331ff.
[31] *Ibid.*, 333.

To appraise one-party factions as instruments of popular leadership requires a comparison of the results on one-party and two-party systems. Differences in governmental action under the two systems might be attributed to dissimilarities in political organization. The problem thus phrased presupposes that one-party systems are alike, but they are not; that two-party systems are alike, but they are not. Moreover, two-party states have not been subjected to intensive analysis and *the essential facts for the comparison are lacking.*[32]

Thus, Key argued that the conclusions he drew from one-party states apply to those states and not necessarily to the more competitive ones. There is simply no foundation for the argument of many, including Fry and Winters, that the IPC linkage is a "venerable Key hypothesis."[33,34]

[32] Key, *Southern Politics,* 299. Emphasis added.

[33] *Op. cit.,* 521.

[34] Even Lockard attributes the IPC hypothesis to Key. In yet another test of the IPC-policy linkage, which he claims supports the relationship, Lockard refers to "Key's hypothesis." See Lockard, "State Party Systems and Policy Outputs," in Oliver Garceau, ed., *Political Research and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 190-220. Indeed, he has told me that in his *New England State Politics,* which grew out of a dissertation on Connecticut politics written under Key, Key found his arguments consistent with those in *Southern Politics.* To what extent does this obviate the claims I have made? I do not consider them damaging because Lockard and Key were both making comparisons *within* relatively homogeneous regions in the United States. Furthermore, the comparisons each made were not based upon very different patterns of party competition throughout the nation, but rather with strongly one-party states as compared to *more* competitive states. Neither had anything close to the *most* competitive states in the country as the bases for their comparisons, except for Lockard's example of Connecticut (which was just becoming competitive). The highly competitive state of Massachusetts in Lockard's analysis is also misleading in that Democratic and Republican strength in that state come from quite different groups, thus weakening the basis for the IPC hypothesis, which at least implicitly argues that both parties are actively seeking the support of the lower classes. Also, Lockard's analysis in *New England State Politics* is primarily concerned with party cohesion on various policy areas rather than the policy outputs which are associated with the literature spawned by the Dawson-Robinson article. Even when he does consider one type of policy across the six New England states (tax structures), he is careful (1) to note that "the six New England states have a sufficient similarity of heritage, governmental structure, economy, and social composition to make such a comparison among alternative party systems possible"; and (2) to make an explicit linkage between the need for two-party competition in order to produce strong "centralized" (Lockard's own terminology) party systems. Now such an argument is clearly unobjectionable, but it in no way implies the IPC hypothesis which has dominated the literature. Thus, Lockard can argue that Key found the hypotheses in *New England State Politics* con-

It is, however, correct to argue that Key maintained that the single-party loose factional states did produce more "conservative" politics than might otherwise be the case.[35] Yet, it is somewhat unclear whether Key meant by "conservative" ideological concerns, the refusal to innovate, or both.[36] It appears that he was referring to both meanings of "conservatism," but his only *explicit* statement on the problem is on the readiness to innovate. In the fifth edition of *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups,* Key states that long-term single-party domination of a state "handicaps political initiative."[37] Similarly, Theodore Lowi has argued that the dominant party in such a system loses the capacity to "innovate."[38] The party becomes conservative in the sense that it does not want to veer from an established course of action—not in the ideological sense.[39] Indeed, extending Key's logic on bifactional vs. multifactional systems, it simply would be disleading to argue that the policies adopted in all one-party legislatures are ideologically conservative (i.e., hurt the "have-nots").

Lowi instead argues that minority parties are more permeable and therefore more likely to foster innovations than majority parties of reasonably long standing.[40] Yet, he is careful to argue that ma-

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sistent with those in Key's own works and it is not difficult to see the connections. The problems in the literature—except for the work of a few scholars (cited below)—postdate Lockard's study. The only disturbing part of Lockard's later argument is his seeming (but not actual) acceptance of the IPC argument as posited by Dawson, Robinson, and their followers as a hypothesis of Key—or indeed of himself; it should be noted that his method of testing the hypothesis *does* consider cohesion as well as competition.

[35] Key, *Southern Politics,* 309; Lockard, *New England State Politics,* 327.

[36] In his treatment of innovation, discussed in greater detail below, Lowi states, "Key's *Southern Politics* is significant as a study of the consequences of one- and no-party systems, inviting speculation on differences in systems where parties are in operation" ("Toward Functionalism in Political Science: The Case of Innovative Party Systems," *American Political Science Review,* 57 (May 1963), 570-583, at 572, n. 14.) This is precisely the point emphasized here.

[37] Key, *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups,* fifth edition (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Co., 1964), 310.

[38] Theodore J. Lowi, "Toward Functionalism," *passim.*

[39] Lowi, "Party, Policy and Constitution in America," in William Nisbet Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham, eds., *The American Party Systems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 238-276.

[40] Lowi, "Toward Functionalism," 581.

jority parties often can be innovative, given a dynamic leadership and changes in the external environment.[41] However, he expects that the minority party, more than the majority, will find political gains in being innovative. The Lowi argument is consistent with Key's (and, indeed, Key is often cited). However, this argument also needs qualification. The terms "majority party" and "minority party" are not as clear as one might wish.

Consider, e.g., the Congressional Republicans. Clearly, the GOP is competitive with the Democrats in terms of respective seat proportions in the House and Senate. Yet, for only four years since 1933 have the Republicans held majority control of either house. This somewhat competitive status has led the Congressional party, according to Jones, to have a "minority party mentality."[42] Innovation is downplayed; the electoral survival of each member is stressed. The rationale behind this strategy of dispair is that the party out of power will not get credit for any successful policies adopted by the Congress and that the majority party is highly unlikely to adopt any policy which clearly has the minority party's imprint upon it. The New York Democrats faced a situation similar to that of the Congressional Republicans, when in 1965, they attempted to organize the state's legislature for the first time in a generation. The new majority party spent most of the first session of the Assembly attempting to choose a Speaker; the logjam finally was broken by open GOP cooperation with one of the Democratic factions. Innovation could not get off the ground before the legislature was organized. Thus, the relationship between innovation and IPC—although stated in the form of a testable hypothesis by Key—needs considerable clarification before it qualifies as a testable proposition. In the interim, then, we cannot evaluate the lack of relationship that Walker found between IPC and innovation in his study, except to note that Key's basic idea does not seem to be supported by the data.

In summary, then, I have shown that the IPC-welfare policy linkage was not posited by Key. The most direct formulation comes from Lockard, but even in this situation analysis of state policy formation appears to have oversimplied an argument. What needs to be done is very simple if one's goal is to test Key's hypotheses:

[41] Lowi, "Toward Functionalism," 582.

[42] Charles O. Jones, *The Minority Party in Congress* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970), 190ff.

we need a comprehensive analysis of, first, how competitive party systems differ organizationally, and second, an intensive analysis of the policy outcomes and policy-making processes across competitive and non-competitive, job-oriented and issue-oriented party systems. Furthermore, we need a longitudinal analysis examining changes in party systems. Key's arguments can only be examined by comparing previously one-party systems with the more competitive situations which appear to have developed, particularly in the South[43] and in states such as Maine and Wisconsin. In terms of the actual linkages that Key posited, then, very little work has been done and the potential for future research is great. On the one hand, it is difficult to understand how Key has been so misinterpreted, because the bulk of his entire argument on the IPC-welfare policy linkage is found in only 14 pages of *Southern Politics*.[44] On the other hand, given some initial misinterpretations, it does not speak well of the discipline for not attempting to correct early errors. As we shall see, the next "misuse" of Key's hypotheses is somewhat easier to comprehend, although no less misleading.

The Impact of Malapportionment

Another major hypothesis attributed to Key is the claim that malapportioned legislatures enact programs which are more conservative (i.e., anti-urban) than legislatures with more equitable patterns of apportionment. As Key himself stated,

> Many factors have conspired to produce the low status of the American state legislature. Yet, among these factors, its unrepresentative character must be assigned a high rank. A body that often acts reluctantly under executive pressure and whose chief purpose often seems to be one only of negation cannot but in the long run lose prestige. A body that is condemned by its constitution to the defense of a partial interest in the state becomes, if not a council of censors, something other than a representative body in the conventional sense.[45]

As this quotation makes clear, the problem with the malapportionment hypothesis attributed to Key is that there is no evidence that Key ever posited a particular policy bias applicable to all states

[43] Cf. William C. Havard, ed., *The Changing Politics of the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972).

[44] Key, *Southern Politics*, 298-311.

[45] Key, *American State Politics*, 76-77.

which can be attributed to the effects of inequitable apportionment. While Key used the underrepresented urban areas of California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York as examples of poorly apportioned states[46] and argued that in general urban areas would be more fairly represented under a "one-man, one-vote" apportionment scheme,[47] he offered no direct linkage to change in policies. Nor does Key appear to rule out the possibility that at least some states may be apportioned in such a way that urban areas are overrepresented.

I believe that the basis for the direct linkage is itself indirect, indeed a consequence of the measurement of apportionment equity. Three major indices of malapportionment have dominated comparative state policy analysis: (1) a measure proposed by Manning J. Dauer and Robert K. Kelsay which indicates the minimum proportion of the state's population which could elect a majority of the state's legislature;[48] (2) the index of "urban underrepresentation" developed by Paul T. David and Ralph Eisenberg;[49] and (3) a general summary index, perhaps the most statistically sophisticated but the least straightforward in imparting the source of bias in an apportionment scheme, suggested by Glendon Schubert and Charles Press.[50] The first two indices, and particularly the David-Eisenberg one, call our attention directly to the rural-urban element of distortion of representation. It is thus not surprising that the hypothesis drawn from Key's work would be shaped by the available measure.

Once again, before turning to a reconstruction of what Key actually argued, we shall assess the evidence garnered for and against the hypotheses attributed to him. William E. Bicker, in perhaps the best summary of the controversy, has divided those who sought to confirm the apportionment-policy linkage and those who attempted to discredit it into the categories of "reformers" and

[46] *Ibid.*, 65-67.

[47] *Ibid.*, 83-84.

[48] Manning J. Dauer and Robert G. Kelsay, "Unrepresentative States," *National Municipal Review*, 44 (December 1955), 571-575.

[49] Paul T. David and Ralph Eisenberg, *Devaluation of the Urban and Suburban Vote* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Bureau of Public Administration, 1961).

[50] Glendon Schubert and Charles Press, "Measuring Malapportionment," *American Political Science Review*, 58 (March 1964), 302-327.

"skeptics" respectively.[51] However, the bulk of the evidence leads to the inevitable conclusion that the skeptics are correct. Dye[52] finds no support for such a linkage—although he does attribute the hypothesis directly to Key.[53] Other studies which have failed to substantiate the linkage include David Brady and Douglas Edmonds;[54] Grumm, although he challenges Dye's interpretation of his own data;[55] Hofferbert;[56] Jacob;[57] Fry and Winters;[58] and Uslaner and Weber.[59] Only the work of Walker has produced reasonably strong relationships between policy outputs and apportionment,[60] although moderate relationships are found in studies by William R. Cantrall and Stuart Nagel,[61] and H. George Frederickson and Yong Hyo Cho.[62] It is interesting, though hardly surprising, to note that all three studies differ from the others in that they consider non-fiscal state policy outputs.[63] Since most fiscal policies involve only incremental changes,[64] it is not surprising that factors such as inequitable apportionment (or, indeed, inter-party

[51] William E. Bicker, "The Effects of Malapportionment in the States—A Mistrial," in Nelson W. Polsby, ed., *Reapportionment in the 1970s* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 154-155.

[52] Thomas R. Dye, "Malapportionment and Public Policy in the States," *Journal of Politics*, 27 (August 1965), 588-601; and *Politics, Economics and the Public*, 147 and 274-275.

[53] Dye, *Politics, Economics, and the Public*, 147.

[54] David Brady and Douglas Edmonds, *The Effects of Malapportionment on Policy Outputs in the American States* (Laboratory for Political Research, Report No. 3, Department of Political Science, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, 1966).

[55] *Op. cit.*

[56] *Op. cit.*

[57] Herbert Jacob, "The Consequences of Malapportionment: A Note of Caution," *Social Forces*, 43 (December 1964), 256-261.

[58] *Op. cit.*

[59] *Op. cit.*

[60] *Op. cit.*

[61] William R. Cantrall and Stuart S. Nagel, "The Effects of Legislative Reapportionment on Nonexpenditure Legislation," in L. Papayanopoulos, ed., *Democratic Representation and Apportionment, Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 219, 269-279.

[62] H. George Frederickson and Yong Hyo Cho, "Apportionment and Legislative Responsiveness to Policy Preferences in the American States," in L. Papayanopoulos, ed., *Democratic Representation and Apportionment*, 248-268.

[63] Cf. Bicker, "The Effects of Malapportionment," 160.

[64] Cf. Ira Sharkansky, *Spending in the American States* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1968), ch. 3.

competition) would have less effect on expenditure levels than would economic variables.[65]

The results which support the skeptics are not very surprising, since the hypothesis attributed to Key is untenable on several grounds. First, almost all of the studies testing the supposed linkage have been cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. Simply examining the differential policy enactments across well-apportioned and poorly-apportioned legislatures masks the confounding effects of other aspects of the policy-making process in the states.[66] However, longitudinal analysis or quasilongitudinal analysis will not resolve the issue once and for all. One limited study of policy outputs both before and after reapportionment indicates that there has been a shift towards more liberal policy decisions in California and that the members of the legislature *do* attribute policy changes to reapportionment.[67] Yet, a computer simulation of roll call voting in the Indiana House of Representatives over a 40-year period "weighting" the votes of legislators by the populations of their districts—and, hence, employing what we might consider a quasi-

[65] For a discussion of this problem, see Michael LeMay, "Expenditure and Nonexpenditure Measures of State Urban Policy Output: A Research Note," *American Politics Quarterly*, 1 (October 1973), 511-528. Not only does the argument apply to malapportionment, but it also seems quite relevant to other structural components of legislative systems—and their behavioral foundations. Leonard G. Ritt argued that legislative professionalism did not have a noticeable policy impact in his "State Legislative Reform: Does it Matter?" *American Politics Quarterly*, 1 (October 1973), 499-510. If one employs nonfiscal policy variables as well as subjective orientations of state legislators toward professionalism, a rather different conclusion is reached. See Eric M. Uslaner and Ronald E. Weber, *Patterns of Decision Making in State Legislatures* (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1977), ch. 5 and esp. 144-146.

[66] See Bicker, "The Effects of Malapportionment"; Bruce W. Robeck, "Legislative Partisanship, Constituency and Malapportionment," *American Political Science Review*, 66 (December 1972), 1246-1255; Alvin D. Sokolow, "Legislative Pluralism, Committee Assignments, and Internal Norms: The Delayed Impact of Reapportionment," in L. Papayanopoulos, ed., *Democratic Representation and Apportionment*, 291-313; Eric M. Uslaner and Ronald E. Weber, "The Electoral Impact of Reapportionment," presented at the 1973 Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association; and Uslaner and Weber, "Reapportionment, Gerrymandering, and Change in the Partisan Balance of Power in the American States," presented at the 1977 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association (an extension and revision of the 1973 paper).

[67] Sokolow, "Legislative Pluralism."

longitudinal design (since no actual reapportionment took place)—finds no general alteration in the outcomes of roll calls, but a tendency towards *conservatism* when changes in voting alignments did occur.[68] These conflicting results should sensitize us to the fact that the critical element in a before-and-after study is the difference in the *composition* of the legislature, not just the relative voting strength of a particular geographical area. Indeed, as we noted above, Key never posited a unidirectional linkage.

In addressing ourselves to the question of what linkages Key actually posited, we should first note the chapter title and subtitle of Key's most comprehensive discussion of the effects of malapportionment, "Frustration of Party: The Perversion of Separation of Powers."[69] Indeed, the potential for more "liberal" policies to be enacted *can* only be realized if the malapportionment within a state is corrected. The party in the legislature is itself weakened by the unrepresentative, antimajoritarian (Key's own language) character of the apportionment scheme.[70] Thus, reapportionment is a *necessary but not sufficient condition* for more liberal policy outputs *in states in which (1) the Democrats are disadvantaged by the apportionment formula:*[71] *and (2) there are visible policy differences between the two legislative parties.* Unfortunately, examining the relationship between policy outputs and malapportionment through such techniques as correlation coefficients can only (at best) establish *sufficient* conditions. Thus, the work of both reformers and skeptics (particularly) has focused on the wrong question! Before any analysis of the apportionment-policy linkages is ever warranted, we must first pose the question of whether changes in apportionment have produced the requisite changes in party strength in the states. Then, our task would be to demonstrate that the alteration of the political balance of power in a state has measurable policy implications.

The reconstruction of Key's arguments on the nature of the ap-

[68] C. Richard Hofstetter, "Malapportionment and Roll-Call Voting in Indiana, 1923-1963: A Computer Simulation," *Journal of Politics,* 33 (February 1971), 92-111.

[69] Key, *American State Politics,* ch. 3, esp. 64-73.

[70] *Ibid.,* 77, 83.

[71] *Ibid.,* 80-81. Cf. Robert S. Erikson, "Reapportionment and Policy: A Further Look at Some Intervening Variables," in L. Papayanopoulos, ed., *Democratic Representation and Apportionment,* 280-290.

portionment-policy linkage is not as simple as was our task on the IPC hypothesis. As the subtitle of the chapter in *American State Politics* indicates, Key believed that much of the frustration of party government in the states was directly traceable to the potential for divided control of the executive branch and the two houses of a state's legislature between the major political parties,[72] that malapportionment was a major, if not *the* major, cause of divided control, and that interparty competition itself (supposedly a panacea for the ills of "illiberal" policies, according to those who so often cited Key) was a contributing factor to divided control as well[73]—again, frustrating party government. The problem we confront, then, is the piecing together of Key's arguments. The difficulty with most of the previous literature has been its selective attention. Key has not been as badly misunderstood on this hypothesis as on the IPC linkage, but he generally has been only partially understood.

In attempting to develop a linkage mechanism which is consistent with Key's, we note that he was basically pursuing (at least) two separate lines of reasoning on the apportionment-policy relationship. Both lead directly to the role of the party in the legislature. The first is the divided control problem. Here the linkage is as follows: both malapportionment and increased IPC have independent effects on the possibility of divided control; a state government in which there is divided control cannot represent majority sentiment in the state (whether it be liberal *or* conservative), because the minority has a veto by its control of one major sector of the policy-making institutions. The second linkage is even more direct: apart from the question of divided control, malapportionment can work to deny a party its "fair" share of legislative seats (thus reducing interparty competition); hence, a party which might have enough support among the electorate to command a legislative majority might be adversely affected by an inequitable pattern of apportionment. In either situation, the legislature becomes "antimajoritarian," which Key despised.

We thus have several questions to ask before any policy linkage to malapportionment can even be seriously entertained. Does divided control appear to have much of an impact on policy? Does reapportionment have much of an impact on the potential for di-

[72] Key, *American State Politics,* 53ff.; and Key, *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups,* 300.

[73] Key, *American State Politics,* 57.

vided control? Does reapportionment similarly have much of an impact on the relative balance of partisan strength in a state legislature?[74] As Malcolm E. Jewell stated,

> The most obvious and measurable effect of reapportionment is to change the partisan balance in some legislatures. Increases in the proportion of urban seats have led to Democratic gains in many of the industrial states, though the extent of these gains has varied with changes in political tides. In the long run, with the growth of suburbia, the proportion of legislative seats that are safely held by one or both parties is likely to decline in most states, and a larger proportion of the seats are likely to be more closely competitive.[75]

Yet, Jewell's statement does not rely upon any empirical evidence. It is a speculation which we shall examine in greater detail after examining the divided control hypotheses.

Dawson and Robinson report strong correlations between divided control and two other measures of IPC,[76] a finding consistent with our result that three measures of Democratic strength in state legislatures relate strongly with an index of *single-party* control of state institutions.[77] Thus, Key's initial linkage is supported by the data. Jacob[78] and Hofferbert[79] report virtually no relationship between divided control and reapportionment. Reanalyzing a data base similar to Hofferbert's, Lockard finds that there is indeed a relationship between malapportionment and divided control, if the level of IPC is controlled.[80] However, we again stress the need for a longitudinal design, focusing on the extent to which widespread reapportionment actually had an effect on divided control. In a longitudinal analysis discussed below, Ronald E. Weber and I found that reapportionment seemed to increase the frequency of divided control of the legislature, contrary to Key's prediction. In the states in which divided control did occur after reapportionment, however, there was also evidence of a secular change in voting behavior—as Key had posited might produce split control.[81] Thus, while the

[74] Cf. Uslaner and Weber, "Reapportionment"; and Robert S. Erikson, "The Partisan Impact of State Legislative Reapportionment," *Midwest Journal of Political Science,* 15 (February 1971), 57-71.

[75] Malcolm E. Jewell, *The State Legislature,* second edition (New York: Random House, 1969), 20-21.

[76] *Op. cit.,* 278.

[77] Uslaner and Weber, "The 'Politics' of Redistribution," 169.

[78] *Op. cit.,* 256.

[79] *Op. cit.* 79.

[80] Lockard, "State Party Systems," 207.

[81] See Uslaner and Weber, "Reapportionment," 33-36.

initial examination of this Key hypothesis did not suggest confirmation, the problem is too complex to reach a simple decision on the basis of one reapportionment period. What is needed is not just a longitudinal approach, but rather an examination of changes across many reapportionment periods, controlling (if possible) for the effects of secular or realigning changes in the vote.

The question posed by Key and Jewell is perhaps the most interesting one in the attempt to establish a relationship between alterations in the partisan balance of power in a state and reapportionment. Dye examined changes in apportionment equality between 1962, the year in which the first landmark Supreme Court decision (*Baker v. Carr*) on the "one-man, one-vote" principle was handed down, and 1968, by which time virtually every state had completed court-ordered reapportionment. He found that there were significant changes in the Dauer-Kelsay indices of the minimum proportion of a state's population that could elect a majority of *each* house of the legislature, but concluded that the results of cross-sectional studies could not lead the reader to be overly optimistic about the possible policy consequences which the reapportionment might have.[82]

The Uslaner-Weber research, on the other hand, has come to somewhat different conclusions. Employing data on the proportion of votes in an election received by the Democrats and the proportion of state legislative seats they obtain, we have found little evidence to suggest that the overall effect of reapportionment was to produce more equity in the vote-seat ratio in 1968-69 than it did in 1962. We examined 41 state lower houses and 41 state senates; in some cases, reapportionment was not mandated, while in others data was not possible to obtain. Of the 82 chambers examined, only a bare majority (43 or 52 percent) had reductions in the deviations from a strict proportionality vote-seat norm, while the remaining legislative bodies actually became "less equitable." There was a slight tendency for improvements in the state senates (54 percent) compared to the lower houses (51 percent), but it is clear that there is indeed no overall pattern towards more (or less) equity in the post-reapportionment legislatures. Indeed, despite a decreased mean Democratic vote across the states for both sets of

[82] Thomas R. Dye, "State Legislative Politics," in Herbert Jacob and Kenneth N. Vines, eds., *Politics in the American States*, second edition (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), 174-175.

chambers, that party seems to be more advantaged in the overall vote-seat distribution than it was prior to *Baker v. Carr.* Examining the parameters of regression analyses together with the residuals from such equations, we concluded that the call for reapportionment led party leaders (both Democratic and Republicans) to make concerted attempts to "gerrymander" legislative districts to insure continued domination of the traditional "in-party" (in most cases, the Democrats).[83]

My speculation is that no firm apportionment-policy linkage can be made for the 50 states, given these results on reapportionment and change in the partisan balance of power. Studies indicating that reapportionment in California has both produced more liberal policies[84] and greater degrees of party cohesion within the legislature[85] are steps in the proper direction of intensive, microanalysis of changes in the policy making process in individual states (where contexts may vary greatly). Yet, such results need to be reconciled with aggregate findings such as ours, which indicate that (1) California's vote-seat ratios did become more equitable in both chambers after reapportionment; but (2) that the Democratic bias in the legislature was reduced by apportionment shifts[86], thus seeming to hinder rather than help "liberal" policy proponents. On this question, then, the web may clearly be more complicated than even Key had imagined.

Where Are We Left?

What is to be done? I am certainly not calling for a return to some sort of state of nature in the literature on comparative state policy formation in rejecting the argument that Key's work proposed either the IPC hypothesis or the one on apportionment. Jones, in arguing that we have indeed learned much about what types of questions to ask in this literature, suggests that we attempt to refine further our conceptual apparatus about the needs and demands of people in states, how these get on the various alternative political agendas, and how decision-makers perceive these demands

[83] Uslaner and Weber, "Reapportionment," 14-30.
[84] Sokolow, "Legislative Pluralism."
[85] Robeck, "Legislative Partisanship."
[86] Uslaner and Weber, "Reapportionment," Table IV (26-27).

and needs.[87] These are important questions, but they are difficult ones to answer. In particular, aggregate data will not provide us with anything approaching a satisfactory answer to the question of how decision makers perceive demands and needs. Perhaps, then, we ought to move away from aggregate analysis and, when possible, obtain data from a national sample of state decision-makers[88] or, when this is not possible, to do comparative case studies.

However, aggregate data analysis is not likely to go away. And it is still an area in which systematic work can be done if the researcher is careful about specifying the theoretical linkages in an analysis. At this point of a critique, we often hear a clarion call for a new conceptual framework. Yet, in the area of comparative state policy formation, it is not a new model that we need but a more detailed consideration of the old one. It was not Key, after all, who started the continuing debate over whether "political" or "socioeconomic" factors were the major determinants of policy decisions in the state (or anywhere else). Key's analysis always stayed close to the decision-making *process* itself and neither party competition nor any measure of income take part in the priority setting that is the basic element of the representative and accountable polity. Rather than attempting ever more sophisticated ways of testing the alternative impacts of these traditional factors, we should simply realize that this line of analysis is *not* in the "venerable" Key tradition.

On the other hand, the legacy he left us is indeed worthy of detailed consideration. We must begin to analyze systematically the forces which make representative and responsible government either more or less difficult to attain. Perhaps because the nomative ideas Key espoused have for over 20 years been dormant in the political science literature (particularly his commitment to party government), we have failed to see in them an outline of an empirical theory of representative government. The relationship between the apportionment system (which can determine who is represented and who is underrepresented), the party in the electorate (which is asked to select the men and women to serve in the government, although generally not on the basis of what welfare policies each party will pursue), the party organization (which is often the primary agent for recruiting the candidates for office), and the

[87] Jones, "State and Local Public Policy Analysis," 38-39.

[88] See Uslaner and Weber, *Patterns of Decision Making in State Legislatures.*

party in the government (which ultimately makes the decisions on questions of public policy) is indeed complex, as I have attempted to argue above. Yet, Key offered some critical insights into the necessary and sufficient conditions for each linkage pattern to hold. And, it is clear that any break in the chain of representation will have critical consequences for the ultimate policy decisions, which is why Key did recognize that the pattern of party competition does indeed have an impact upon the policy decisions reached in a state, but further contended that there is no simple way of telling what this impact would be in each case.[89]

I have sketched the chain of reasoning that Key employed above; the apportionment scheme, which sets the parameters for the men and women who might get elected and also determines the potential for divided control of government, is the starting point in the analysis. If the party organization is strong enough to select candidates committed to the party's legislative program and independent enough of contituency and committee pressures, can such a system appeal to a broad enough spectrum of the party in the electorate to win elections and attempt to implement its programs? And, finally, if there is single-party control of the legislative and executive branches, is the party in the government strongh enough to form a united bloc on legislation to which the individuals are supposedly committed to support? There have been numerous studies which have examined parts of this broader series of questions, but very few within any unified framework. It is this legacy that we have lost, the ability to see (as Key did) the dynamic interactions of the *political* factors. This is the direction we should be taking, with a particular emphasis on change. If we do so, we shall be worthy of reaping the "venerable" Key tradition, even if we cannot individually match his genius.

[89] Key, *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups*, 298-299.