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Abstract and Keywords

This article discusses pork barrel politics which is an integral part of congressional political life and the legislative process. The first two sections of the article discuss pork barrel benefits and their connection to the reelection goal of the legislators. The second section looks at research and the literature on the patterns by which pork barrel benefits are awarded by Congress. Central to this discussion are the individual-benefit and collective-benefit motivations for supplying pork barrel benefits. The remainder of the section discusses scholarship on the strategies for pork barrel allocation and evaluates the contribution of research on the understanding of pork barrel politics.

Keywords: pork barrel politics, pork barrel benefits, individual-benefit motivations, collective-benefit motivations, pork barrel, politics, pork barrel allocation

PORK barrel politics is an integral part of congressional political life and the legislative process, a fact recognized by practical politicians and scholars alike. Tip O'Neill's well-known aphorism that "all politics is local" as well as David Mayhew's (1974) elegant exposition of the central role of particularized benefits in the electoral connection between members of Congress and their constituents both demonstrate a longstanding recognition that the drive to advance constituents' material interests is a fundamental fact of congressional life. Over the past several decades, a sophisticated body of research has advanced both our theoretical and empirical understanding of distributive politics in Congress.

This chapter assesses that scholarship and indicates possible directions for future research. The discussion is organized as follows. The first two sections define pork barrel benefits and their link to the reelection goal. The next section discusses the literature's implicit focus on two types of motives for supplying pork: individual- benefit and collective-benefit motives. The remainder of the chapter addresses the scholarship on

strategies for supplying pork and assesses the contribution of that research to a broad understanding of pork barrel politics. That discussion begins with the central role of congressional committees in formal theories of distributive politics. Next is a consideration of the commonly used empirical measures of legislators' demand for pork and measures pork barrel benefits themselves. Following that is a discussion of the research on the patterns by which pork barrel benefits are awarded by Congress; central to that discussion is a consideration of individual- benefit and collective-benefit motivations for supplying pork; that section concludes with a consideration of the size of distributive coalitions. This review of both the theoretical and empirical literature is necessarily selective. Other chapters in this volume (p. 316) deal more comprehensively with formal models of policymaking, including rational choice approaches to distributive politics. This chapter touches on that important body of theory but focuses on the empirical scholarship, much of which is deeply informed by rational choice theory.

Definition of pork barrel and distributive benefits

Pork barrel projects, also known as distributive benefits, are discrete, highly divisible benefits targeted to specific populations such as states and congressional districts; the cost is spread across the general population through taxation. Such benefits have little policy connection to one another (Shepsle and Weingast 1981, 96), and, according to Theodore Lowi, "are characterized by the ease with which they can be disaggregated and dispensed unit by small unit more or less in isolation from other units and from any general rule" (Lowi 1964, 690).

Rational choice theorists distinguish between pork barrel and distributive benefits; they define pork barrel benefits as a subset of distributive policy consisting of inefficient policies, in the sense that the cost of a pork barrel project exceeds its benefits (Ferejohn 1974, 235; Shepsle and Weingast 1981; Baron 1991). For the purposes of this chapter, this distinction is of little practical effect, as the inefficiency of such policies most likely exerts little restraint on members of Congress. This is partly because the money spent on such projects is interpreted politically as a benefit to the district (Shepsle and Weingast 1981, 101; Weingast, Shepsle, and Johnsen 1981) and partly because the collective costs of such inefficiencies are normally invisible to constituents because those costs are dispersed.

The reelection assumption and the demand for pork barrel benefits

The reelection goal is fundamental to all of the theoretical and empirical literature on pork barrel politics. Mayhew offers perhaps the best-known and surely the most elegant formulation of the linkage between legislators' desire for reelection and particularized benefits, a category that includes pork barrel projects (Mayhew 1974, 54–5). Specifically, members of Congress have a strong incentive to devote time and energy to gaining particularized benefits, because it is for those benefits that they believably (p. 317) can claim credit. By contrast, very few members can make such credible claims with respect to broad-based, general interest policy. As a consequence, in this area members are likely to simply take pleasing positions, leaving the real legislative work to other, more powerfully placed legislators. Thus, members are likely to be rewarded by their constituents for efforts to make the district better off with particularized benefits and for giving nominal support for other, broad-based policies that their constituents favor. Note that Mayhew does not completely ignore broad, general- interest policymaking, but he does highlight the critical importance of particularized benefits for members' electoral well-being. It is worth noting that Mayhew focuses on the House of Representatives. As later scholarship shows, the Senate faces slightly different incentives with regard to pork-seeking, a question considered below.

Motives for supplying pork

While members' motives for seeking pork are clear (the demand side), we can infer from the literature two categories of reasons for supplying such benefits. First, members supply pork to themselves because they can use it to satisfy district demand. This is essentially the perspective of much of the early rational choice literature on distributive politics, which focuses largely on omnibus bills consisting of nothing but distributive benefits intended to boost the recipients' chances of reelection.[1] Theories that take this approach can be thought of as individual-benefit theories. Especially in second-generation rational choice theories (Shepsle and Weingast 1995), committees play the dominant institutional role: they have control over the legislation in their jurisdiction and are composed of members with constituency-based high demand for the benefits within that jurisdiction. They broker omnibus pork barrel bills to meet that demand by forming majority coalitions of benefit-seekers (see, for example, Weingast and Marshall 1988; Shepsle and Weingast 1995). The predicted size of such coalitions has been a matter of considerable scholarly debate in the rational choice literature (Collie, 1988, offers a detailed analysis of the formative stages of that scholarship).

A second theoretical perspective on why pork is provided is less radically individualistic: pork barrel benefits are offered by key political actors in order to achieve certain collective benefits. The suppliers of such benefits may be policy coalition leaders in Congress seeking support for their favored general interest legislation (Evans 1994, 2004; Lee 2003), or majority party leaders in Congress (or the president) seeking to protect their party's majority (Balla, Lawrence, et al. 2002; Cox and McCubbins 1993), or bureaucrats seeking congressional support for their agencies and programs (p. 318) (Arnold 1979). Although not expressed as formal theories, this scholarship usefully can be thought of as articulating collective-benefit theories of pork barrel politics.

Regardless of the impetus behind the provision of pork barrel benefits (individual or collective benefit) and the locus of control over its distribution (e.g. committee chairs acting on their own or as agents of the majority party), rank and file members are motivated by reelection in seeking and trading votes for pork. The biases in the allocation of pork, discussed below, will be considered, where possible, in light of the motives driving the process of distribution, as will the discussion of the size of the coalition that receives benefits.

Who gets pork barrel benefits?

This section starts with the central role reserved for congressional committees in most individual-benefit distributive theories, focusing on whether such committees are, as early distributive theories argue, composed of members with a high demand for the policies within the committee's jurisdiction. Next, I assess the ways in which scholars have measured the key concepts of demand for pork barrel benefits and the benefits themselves. The findings of the empirical literature are then considered in light of those measures and the reasons, individual benefit or collective benefit, for awarding pork barrel projects. The chapter ends with the literature on the size of distributive coalitions.

The committee benefit hypothesis

In individual-benefit rational choice theories of distributive politics, the role of congressional committees looms large. There are two major reasons for this. First, committees supply a structure-induced equilibrium that prevents majorities from cycling endlessly (Shepsle 1979). Second, committees can enforce logrolling bargains across distributive policy areas due to their jurisdictional monopolies and procedural floor protections (e.g. restrictive rules). Such factors enable committees to engage in interjurisdictional logrolls, using their control over their own policy areas to enforce bargains with other committees over time (Weingast and Marshall 1988). As a consequence, committee members are well positioned to extract from those bills a disproportionate share of the pork barrel benefits therein; committees thus are thought to attract members with a high demand for benefits within their respective jurisdictions. Indeed, Shepsle (1978) finds that the process of appointing members to committees in the House is structured to place high demanders on committees by means of an "interest-advocacy-accommodation syndrome" in which members request and receive appointments to committees in which their districts have a (p. 319) particular interest. This political structural feature of congressional organization is the basis for the prediction that committees will be composed of members who demand and receive more distributive benefits than the median member of the body.

On the other hand, some collective benefit theories of the organization of Congress do not predict high-demanding committees to the same extent. Partisan theories suggest that to the extent that the majority party pursues collective party goals (in particular, the protection and enhancement of its majority) through committee appointments, the party's concern for its collective reputation confines any impulse toward self-selection to committees with narrow jurisdictions, as the party's reputation is damaged by rampant pork barreling on committees with a broad national impact, that is, "uniform externalities" committees (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 203–6). Instead of the self-selection model prominent in early distributive theory, Cox and McCubbins propose a partisan selection model. In this model, parties use committee appointments to accomplish two goals: to help members get reelected by giving them pork and to unite the party behind broad national-impact legislation. They can afford to do the first when a committee has a narrow jurisdiction affecting few districts, as there likely will be little effect on the party's reputation. But for committees dealing in national policy, members must be more representative of the party's views (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 189–90). Thus, while the self-selection of high demanders is expected, it is limited to a few narrowly focused committees.

The informational theory of congressional organization is also concerned with a collective benefit: reliable information on the impact of policy proposals. Such information is provided in the service of floor majorities, not the majority party (Gilligan and Krehbiel 1990; Krehbiel 1992); to that end, committees are expected not to be composed of high demanders of distributive benefits but rather to be representative of the floor majority.

Yet some high demanders will be allowed on committees that will satisfy their demands in return for the specialized knowledge that these members bring; restrictive legislative rules limit such gains (Krehbiel 1992, 95–9). Those limited cases lead to some extra benefits for committee members, although not to the degree predicted by distributive theories.

When the collective benefit being sought through pork distribution consists of a majority coalition for general benefit legislation, committee members are expected to benefit. This is because policy coalition leaders most often come from the ranks of powerful legislators: committee chairs, party leaders in Congress, or the president (Arnold 1990, 7). When the coalition leader is a committee chair, as is usually the case, committee members are likely to benefit disproportionately because committee leaders want, if at all possible, to see their committees solidly behind them on the floor, providing consistently supportive cues to other members (Evans 2004).[2]

Most of the theoretical literature implicitly assumes that Congress directly supplies distributive benefits; however, for reasons discussed below, many recent empirical tests of the propositions of that literature employ data on federal discretionary (p. 320) spending distributed by bureaucratic agencies. To be sure, the authorizations and appropriations that supply those funds are written by Congress, but the bureaucratic discretion built into some of these programs introduces bureaucratic actors with their own goals and strategies into the distributive process.

Bureaucrats also distribute pork in order to buy support for collective benefits. Arnold (1979) argues that federal agencies allocate benefits strategically to cultivate their supporting coalitions in Congress. Consequently, members of the committees with jurisdiction over an agency can be expected to get a disproportionate share of such benefits.

This discussion shows that the expectation that members of the committees with jurisdiction in a particular policy area will disproportionately benefit from pork barrel policies (the committee benefit hypothesis), while not universal, dominates theories of distributive politics, although more uniformly for individual-benefit than collective-benefit theories.

Measuring committee demand for distributive benefits

What does the empirical research show about the prevalence of high demanders on committees? There is conflict among the results of numerous studies. A full treatment of the literature on this subject can be found in the chapter by C. Lawrence Evans in this volume. This section focuses to a limited extent on the research on the different approaches to measuring demand for pork and the conclusions reached by a number of studies on the degree to which committees are composed of high demanders.

Three measures of committee demand are commonly used. First, there are voting scores that purport to measure ideology or member preferences on one or more broad issue dimensions. The types of scores most commonly used are ADA (liberalism) and ACU (conservatism) scores, which are based on a number of different issue types, and Poole–Rosenthal NOMINATE scores, based on all non-unanimous roll-call votes cast by individual members of Congress. The second type of measure consists of ratings calculated by interest groups concerned with a particular committee's jurisdiction, such as COPE scores calculated by the AFL-CIO. The third consists of measures of likely constituent demand as inferred from appropriate district demographics. The first two types of measures are based on members' actual roll-call votes, while the third type is an attempt to measure district demand independently of members' expressed preferences. Although each is useful for measuring some types of preference outliers, they are not all equally appropriate measures of members' inclination to demand high levels of distributive benefits.

Broad voting scores are frequently used. Kiewiet and McCubbins compare the NOMINATE scores of party contingents on committees with their respective party caucuses. They find that Democrats and, to a lesser extent, Republicans on the House Appropriations committee and its subcommittees represent their party caucuses fairly closely (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991, 110, 129). Cox and McCubbins use ADA scores to test their partisan selection hypothesis for committee appointments. (p. 321) They find that a few committees, especially those with narrow jurisdictions (most of them constituency-oriented, such as the Agriculture Committee), are dominated by ideological preference outliers. However, most committees are not composed in this way, especially House control committees (which they consider to be "uniform externalities" committees). On these committees—Appropriations, Rules and Ways and Means—loyalty to the party is especially important. The authors argue that this is due to the centrality of those committees to the collective interests of the party (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 78–9).

Interest group ratings are also used. For example, Krehbiel (1990, 1992) tests informational theory's prediction that committees are representative of the floor majority and not composed of preference outliers, or high demanders. He examines nine House committees, including Appropriations, using interest group ratings appropriate to the committee's jurisdiction. He finds evidence that one committee, Armed Services, is composed of homogeneous high demanders. Otherwise, he finds only "spotty" evidence of preference outliers or of homogenous preferences (Krehbiel 1990, 1992, 130–4).

All of these studies find that high-demanding committees are relatively rare. In particular, they find little evidence of self-selection of high demanders to the House Appropriations Committee, which distributes most of the pork barrel projects awarded by Congress.

Although broad measures such as NOMINATE scores are appropriate for determining whether committees are generally representative of the chamber or whether a party's contingent on a committee resembles the House party caucuses, such measures are less well suited to determining whether members of a committee are high demanders of any

distributive benefits that the committee's jurisdiction might make it possible to obtain. This is especially true when that jurisdiction is multidimensional, going well beyond distributive issues. The appropriations committee is an example, as it deals with the discretionary budget of the federal government and thus most policy areas. Members of this committee may be faithful agents of the party caucus on the policy issues that divide the two parties, but there may be particular distributive needs within members' districts that attract otherwise loyal party members to this committee and lead them to demand high levels of distributive benefits. If such benefits help to buy those members' loyalty on larger partisan issues, they may be granted them. Indeed, Maltzman and Smith (1995) find, for the House Appropriations Committee, a distributive dimension along which the committee is not representative of the chamber; yet on most issue dimensions, the committee's preferences reflect those of the chamber quite well. Broad measures of preferences, measures that may include no or relatively few district-relevant questions, are unlikely to detect high demanders of distributive benefits.

Interest group ratings pose other problems. For example, they may include issues that are extraneous to the policy areas with which they purport to be concerned. Indeed, Hall and Grofman (1990) challenge Krehbiel's (1990, 158) results, based on interest-group ratings, for the Senate Agriculture Committee and related subcommittees. They show that the relevant interest group rating scores (in this case, the (p. 322) National Farmers Union) include extraneous issues; given that those scores are calculated from relatively few votes (typically a dozen or less), such extraneous issues can have a large effect. When Hall and Grofman recalculated NFU scores, purging them of such votes, the agriculture committees proved to be composed of high demanders, contrary to Krehbiel's results.[3]

All these measures are based on members' roll-call votes. The most common alternative employs district characteristics relevant to the policy jurisdiction of the committee. This approach is intended to measure demand for benefits in a way that is exogenous to members' preferences; for example, district demand for agricultural earmarks might be based on the percentage of the population engaged in farming. Hurwitz, Moiles, and Rohde (2001) use such measures; they find that members of the House Agriculture Committee and the agriculture subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee indeed tend to be high demanders. Although those members are outliers on distributive issues they vote in a partisan manner on other policy dimensions. Likewise, Hall and Grofman (1990) measure Senate committee-floor differences with constituency characteristics and find, as they do with purged interest group ratings, that the agriculture committees are composed of high demanders.

In the most extensive use of district-based measures of demand, Adler and Lapinski (1997) examine a broad range of House committees, devising a unique demand measure for each of thirteen committees. Their comparison of the differences in medians between the committees and the chamber for the years 1943–1994 shows that the "private goods" committees, including committees whose narrow jurisdictions are conducive to pork barreling, are disproportionately high-demanding (those committees are Agriculture,

Interior, and Merchant Marine and Fisheries), as are other more policy-oriented committees, including Armed Services, Banking, and Education and Labor.

Sprague (2008) demonstrates (like Hall and Grofman, 1990) that the measure of demand influences the findings. Using interest group ratings, the most appropriate alternative to district characteristics, she replicates Adler and Lapinski's test for the same committees in the same years. She finds that Adler and Lapinski's constituency- based measures indeed identify more high-demanding committees than do interest group voting scores.

The level at which preferences are measured—committee or subcommittee—also has consequences for the conclusions, especially for the appropriations committees. These subcommittees are specialized by policy area, thus allowing high demanders to focus on their area of interest, and relatively autonomous (Savage 1991). As the major purveyors of earmarks in Congress, they are attractive to members who seek (p. 323) high levels of distributive benefits for their districts. Thus, if there is any basis in fact to theories predicting self-selection of high demanders of pork to particular committees, we should see evidence of it on appropriations subcommittees. Kiewiet and McCubbins (1991), using NOMINATE scores (appropriately, for their purposes), test and reject the hypothesis that these subcommittees are composed of ideological preference outliers, but such measures are not the most appropriate for measuring demand for distributive benefits. Instead, the subcommittees must be examined using specific measures of demand. It is at this level that we should expect to see a full committee membership that may be generally representative of the House divide into high-demanding subcommittees.

Adler (2000) addresses this question when he applies the same methodology employed by Adler and Lapinski (1997) (district demand as measured by constituency characteristics) to ten of the thirteen House Appropriations Committee subcommittees. For the majority of those subcommittees, the median member's district exhibits a higher level of demand for spending in its jurisdiction than the chamber as a whole. Thus, an otherwise representative House Appropriations Committee (Cox and McCubbins 1993) accommodates distributive high demanders within its specialized subcommittees.

To summarize, it is clear that some committees are not composed of high deman-ders. Overall, it is likely that the variance is related to the type and number of issue dimensions in a committee's jurisdiction. Crucially, there is disagreement over whether the House Appropriations Committee, which has the greatest ability to engage in earmarking, is composed of high demanders. (There is far less research on the Senate Appropriations Committee.) Studies that analyze the representativeness of the committee as a whole using broad-based preference measures tend to conclude that it is not composed of preference outliers; however, the results for appropriations subcommittees depend on the measure used. Nevertheless, given that studies using district-based measures of demand for pork barrel benefits show that a number of committees, including most notably at least half of the appropriations subcommittees, are populated by members with high

demand for district-level distributive benefits, we should expect to see extra shares of pork being given to members of panels with jurisdiction over bills that offer such benefits.

Before turning to an examination of the scholarly findings on the question of which groups of legislators actually are favored in the distribution of pork barrel benefits, it is necessary to consider an additional measurement issue. The next section assesses the two major ways in which scholars have operationalized the concept of pork barrel benefits.

Approaches to measuring pork barrel benefits

Scholars have measured pork barrel benefits using one of two types of data: congressionally designated earmarks for recipients in specific states and districts, attached to spending legislation (normally in committee reports) by Congress itself, and federal (p. 324) spending administered by the bureaucracy. When bureaucratically administered federal spending is measured as discretionary grants to members' districts, it conforms to the classic definition of distributive benefits. Such grants are, in general, highly disaggregable: a grant to a particular district can be altered or eliminated without affecting any other district's benefits. Of course, some grants impact more than one district as do some earmarks, but grants (and earmarks) are more likely to meet this definitional requirement than other types of federal spending. However, some caveats are necessary when bureaucratic spending is used to test certain theoretical propositions of the distributive literature; these issues are discussed here.

The early theoretical literature on coalition formation in Congress addresses the construction of bills consisting of pork barrel projects for individual districts by Congress. The closest real-world manifestation of such benefits is appropriations earmarks, although highway reauthorization bills have also been a rich, if less frequent, source of earmarks. Until recently, comprehensive earmark data at the level of congressional districts have been hard to come by. Indeed, extraordinary efforts were often required to connect an earmark with a congressional district, as published descriptions of earmarks themselves typically did not specify the exact districts to which they were directed.[4] Even the bureaucratic agency which was required to disburse the money was sometimes not sure where or how the money was to be spent (Savage 2009). Although there is considerable early research on water projects (Maass 1950, 1951; Ferejohn 1974), a type of earmark that, unlike most, spans much of the history of the country, in this area as well, connecting projects with individual districts, while more feasible than with many other types of earmarks, has been laborious (Wilson 1986).

This problem was ameliorated by new rules passed by both the House and Senate in 2007; the rules required that the name of the member requesting each earmark (called the earmark "sponsor") be publicly disclosed. Several independent watchdog groups have made those data available in spreadsheet format, including Taxpayers for Common Sense (TCS), (http://www.taxpayers.org), Legistorm (http://www.legistorm.com), which uses TCS

data, and Citizens Against Government Waste (http://www.cagw.org). The Office of Management and Budget also provides data on all "disclosed" earmarks (http://earmarks.omb.gov). However, these data sets are not identical. Most obviously, the total value of earmarks reported by TCS, CAGW, and OMB varies: for example, for Fiscal Year 2008, the difference between the value of earmarks reported by TCS and OMB was approximately $1.7 billion, or 10 percent of the OMB total. The discrepancy in the number of earmarks reported by these organizations is lower, amounting to no more than 3.3 percent, or fewer than 400 of more than 11,000 projects granted that year. Nevertheless, these new data will enable scholars to test distributive theories far more exhaustively than has previously been possible, as earmark data for the first time are available for every policy area at (p. 325) the level of the congressional district. Researchers can now determine whether results previously obtained for specific kinds of earmarks (discussed below) are generalizable to all policy areas.

In contrast to the previous scarcity of earmark data at the congressional district level, data on earmarks awarded to states have been available since 1991 from Citizens Against Government Waste. Prior to Fiscal Year 2008, due to the absence of the sponsor's name and the vagueness of the descriptions of these projects, earmarks are connected only with states, although some are not coded even at this level and remain entirely obscure. Nevertheless, it is possible to use these data for research on Senate earmarking over a relatively long time span, one that includes a nearly 10-fold growth in earmarking from 1,429 projects in Fiscal Year 1995 to a peak of 13,997 in FY 2005, according to CAGW data.

As noted above, many studies use an alternative measure: the distribution of pork barrel benefits by bureaucratic agencies (for an important example, see Arnold 1979). Prior to the early 1990s, due to the difficulty of collecting wide-ranging bureaucratic data, studies of the politics of bureaucratic grants consisted of case studies that typically examined no more than a handful of federal agencies at a time. Comprehensive data were provided in 1991 by Kenneth Bickers and Robert Stein, who transformed for scholarly use the most complete source of data on spending for federal domestic assistance from the *Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance* and the *Federal Assistance Awards Data Sy stem* (Bickers and Stein 1991). FAADS data makes analysis possible at many levels of aggregation of federal-aid program spending in congressional districts from 1983 on. These data have been widely used in studies of distributive politics, not only in Stein and Bickers' own book, *Perpetuating the Pork Barrel: Policy Subsystems and American Democracy* (1995), but also in other important studies. This rich and flexible data-set has allowed scholars to test a wide range of hypotheses about distributive politics and federal spending more broadly.

What difference does the measure of pork barrel benefits make? Each measure, bureaucratic grants or earmarks, is best though not exclusively suited to test one type of theory of distribution. Because earmarks are particularized benefits requested and awarded within Congress, they are appropriately used to test the propositions of most distributive theories. With respect discretionary bureaucratic grants, the effect of purely

congressional goals and strategies is likely to be diminished by bureaucrats' own goals as well as the requirements that members of Congress themselves often impose on the agencies. Stein and Bickers (1994a, 1995), while assuming that agencies have an incentive to allocate grants strategically to retain the favor of members of Congress, acknowledge that members' individual impact on grant allocations is limited. Frisch (1998, 18–19) critiques the use of bureaucratic grants as measures of pork barrel benefits on similar grounds, particularly focusing on the constraints on bureaucrats' discretion, such as objective program requirements (many of them specified by Congress) and peer review of grant applications (Frisch 1998, 18–22).[5]

(p. 326) Congressional influence is indeed a step removed from the actual designation of specific projects, yet members of Congress influence the shape of the programs under which grants are awarded (especially eligibility requirements), solicit grant applications, and assist grant applicants. Moreover, bureaucrats have incentives to curry favor with legislators through their awards. These data are most appropriate for testing hypotheses about bureaucrats' allocation strategies, as Arnold (1979) does. Nevertheless, with the proper caveats, much can be learned about distributive politics from the study of the allocation of discretionary bureaucratic grants. For example, such data have allowed tests of distributive theories for time periods predating comprehensive data on earmarks. Indeed, before the modern-day explosion of earmarking, Arnold (1979, 6) noted that Congress did not, in fact, distribute individual pork barrel projects; thus, bureaucratic pork was virtually the only thing to study. It should also be noted that grants offer legislators the chance to claim credit; a look at almost any member's website will reveal multiple grant announcements in which, at a minimum, the member strongly implies that he or she helped to get the award.

Patterns of allocation of pork barrel benefits: the committee benefit hypothesis

The literature has, as discussed above, long debated the question of the self-selection of high demanders to committees and the distributional consequences of any resulting committee bias. Scholars have hypothesized that members of the committees with jurisdiction over a bill that offers distributive benefits will receive a disproportionately large share of those benefits. This proposition is especially prominent in individual-benefit distributive theory. As the discussion above indicates, the predictions of collective-benefit approaches vary.

If equal benefits do not go to all members (an extreme version of the universalism hypothesis), and there is evidence that they do not (Stein and Bickers 1994b, 1995), we are left with two potential distributional biases: committee members benefit disproportionately or members of the majority party are favored. These alternatives depend on the structure that induces a voting equilibrium—committees that serve as agents of floor majorities or as agents of the majority party.[6]

While early research found mixed results for the committee benefit hypothe-sis,[7] numerous recent studies have found that members of the relevant authorizing and appropriations committees receive disproportionate distributive benefits. To the extent that high demanders serve on these committees, this consequence is not unexpected, particularly in the House, where committees are more powerful than in the (p. 327) Senate. However, there is considerable variation among studies in the extent of this advantage as well as the types of benefits most subject to committee influence. For example, Evans (1994, 2004) and Lee (2003) find that members of the House Public Works Committee were advantaged in the distribution of highway demonstration projects attached to the 1987, 1991, and 1998 reauthorizations of the federal-aid highway program. In these cases, the chairs sought to use projects to secure the votes of their own committee members (of both parties) to facilitate a united front for the committee bill on the House floor. Similarly, Frisch (1998) found clear evidence in all policy areas that members of House appropriations subcommittees obtained significantly more earmarks from their own committees' bills than other members.

In one of the first articles in what will surely be a wave of important studies using the new data on earmark sponsorship by individual members of Congress, Lazarus, and Steigerwalt (2009) find that in Fiscal Year 2008 appropriations bills, members of both the House and to a lesser extent the Senate appropriations committees received disproportionate numbers of awards. The dependent variable in this study is the total number of earmarks awarded by all subcommittees; given the autonomy of the subcommittees, future analyses should disaggregate the data to determine whether subcommittees especially favor their own members or practice universalism among subcommittees as a form of inter-subcommittee logrolling.[8]

Research on Senate earmarking using state-level data shows mixed results by appropriations subcommittee. Crespin and Finocchiaro (2008) find that for most subcommittees, states represented by senators on the full committee or the relevant subcommittee receive more earmarked monies than other senators. However, the effect varies; it is greatest for four subcommittees: transportation, defense, military construction, and VA/HUD, all of which have great potential to locate benefits in members' districts. Some of the subcommittees on which no committee benefit was found —Legislative Operations, Foreign Operations, and Treasury—have little or no opportunity for district-level earmarking.

Similarly, in an examination of Senate appropriations bills from four subcommittees across three Congresses, an examination that focuses on the use of pork to buy votes, Evans (2004) found that in nearly every case, members of the relevant subcommittee benefited, but to varying degrees; such benefits were less likely to go to other members of the Appropriations Committee.

Disproportionate committee benefits are not always found. Balla, Lawrence, et al. (2002) use data on academic earmarks to test competing hypotheses concerning the allocation of pork. This research is discussed more fully below, but it should be noted here that in their

joint test of benefits to members of the House and Senate appropriations committees, they found an overall benefit only for the Senate. However, they did not include membership in the relevant subcommittees in the model; the possibility of such an advantage cannot be ruled out.

Another type of committee benefit is possible. Given the considerable power and autonomy of the "cardinals," as chairs of the appropriations subcommittees are (p. 328) known, we might expect that they, and (depending on the subcommittee's traditions) ranking minority members grant larger shares of pork to their own states and districts. Indeed, some of the studies cited above include this variable and often find such an advantage. Crespin and Finocchiaro (2008) find this for all Senate earmarks; Balla, Lawrence, et al. (2002) find that House cardinals benefit; Senate cardinals do not. Similarly, for earmarks in highway reauthorization bills, Lee (2003) finds that House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee leaders, minority and majority, gain extra benefits. On the other hand, Lazarus and Steigerwalt (2009), in their examination of fiscal 2008 earmarks, find no extra benefit for cardinals in the House. However, the House studies all use different data, which may explain the different results. Different subcommittees and different chairs apparently award earmarks in distinctive ways.

We now turn to studies of the bureaucratic allocation of pork, focusing primarily on the type of benefit that meets the classic definition of the pork barrel: discretionary grants-in-aid to states and districts. Here the findings are mixed. For example, in the empirical portion of his ground-breaking study of the strategic allocation of grants by bureaucrats, Arnold (1979) examines model cities and water and sewer grants, along with military base closures. He finds that bureaucrats favor members of House authorizing committees and appropriations subcommittees with the most direct jurisdiction over their programs and funding; moreover, those allocations tended to be bipartisan. Rich's (1989) findings are similar for the House, but he uncovers no such effect in the Senate.

Heitshusen (2001) finds bureaucratic bias toward the jurisdictionally-narrow House Agriculture Committee and the agriculture appropriations subcommittee but not toward the more diverse Education and Labor Committee and its corresponding appropriations subcommittee. This finding is consistent with the argument that committees with fewer jurisdictional dimensions are more likely to be composed of high demanders than those with broader jurisdictions (Maltzman and Smith 1994).

Thus, the committee benefit hypothesis is not supported by the results of every study considered here, and in those that find such a benefit, the magnitude of the effect varies. However, the weight of recent evidence on this question favors this hypothesis, regardless of whether the pork barrel benefit is allocated by Congress or the bureaucracy. The key question for future research is to determine the conditions under which committees benefit. The most promising avenue concerns the breadth of committee jurisdictions, as several studies have shown that this variable conditions the tendency of committees both to attract high demanders and to favor their own members.

This question is especially relevant to the study of appropriations subcommittees, which distribute most legislative earmarks.

Partisanship in the distribution of pork

For years, the common wisdom was that pork barrel benefits were allocated in a bipartisan manner. This conclusion was based on both the traditions of House and (p. 329) Senate appropriations committees (Fenno 1966, 547–9) as well as other committees that deal in distributive benefits (e.g. the House Interior Committee: Fenno 1973, 58; the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee: Evans 2004). Mayhew (1974) implicitly connects this bipartisanship to the classic rationale for the universal distribution of benefits—members want to ensure that they will get benefits (Wein- gast 1979); therefore, they have an incentive to agree to broad, bipartisan distribution (Mayhew 1974, 89–90). Indeed, studies that analyzed data from years prior to the mid-1990s, when they estimated the impact of party at all, tended to find a bipartisan distribution of pork.

Bureaucrats also have incentives to be evenhanded in the distribution of grants; Arnold (1979) describes those incentives and finds a pattern of bipartisan distribution in his case studies. On the other hand, Anagnoson (1982) found some evidence of partisan bias in the executive branch, but that bias affected only the timing of grant announcements rather than the awards themselves. He concluded that "the agencies seem to be at least partially successful in insulating their decisions from the political process" (Anagnoson 1982, 560). In a much broader examination of new discretionary grants in the 1980s, Stein and Bickers (1994a, 390, 1995) found no partisan bias.

In the era of amorphous party lines, there were good reasons for bureaucrats to follow a bipartisan strategy in awarding grants. However, partisan polarization in Congress increased in the years subsequent to much of the research on which conclusions about bipartisanship are based. Inconveniently for scholarship, this increase occurred at approximately the same time that data on congressional earmarking became available. McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (2008) show that post-war polarization in Congress began in the late 1970s, rose sharply in the 1980s and accelerated in the 1990s. This change raises the question as to whether growing congressional partisanship altered political actors' pork barrel allocation strategies. Especially in the House, as the conditions for party government (Rohde 1991) were increasingly met in the 1990s and the new Republican majority of the 104th Congress adopted a strategy of using the Appropriations Committee to further its policy goals (Aldrich and Rohde 2000), there is some indication that norms of bipartisanship in the distribution of pork barrel benefits began to break down.

The question is how a partisan distributive process might work. Partisan theories of congressional organization (Cox and McCubbins 1993; Rohde 1991) suggest a collective-benefit rationale for partisanship in allocational decisions over which Congress has full

control: majority party leaders might use such benefits to secure their majority, while refining their strategies to limit damage to the party's reputation. Also, to the extent that party leaders seek to use earmarks to build majority coalitions for their general-interest policy goals, they might buy more of those votes from their own party members, given the declining chances of attracting the other party's members.

Moreover, if the politics of distribution has become more partisan, bureaucrats could face conflict among incentives to favor the majority party, on the one hand, and to avoid alienating a minority that could soon become the majority party, on the other. In scholarship that ranges over the years of increased partisanship in Congress, (p. 330) there is indeed somewhat more, if still mixed, evidence that partisan impulses affect bureaucratic allocation. Three studies find evidence of partisan influences on federal spending. Levitt and Snyder (1995), using FAADS data for the years 1984–90, examine the impact of partisanship on formula-based spending programs (excluding most entitlements) with programs where bureaucrats have more discretion. They find that partisanship has a significant impact on discretionary spending and an even greater influence on programs governed by formula. These results differ from Stein and Bickers's (1995) findings, but Levitt and Snyder do not as clearly restrict their measure of discretionary spending to discretionary grants as do Stein and Bickers; therefore, their results may not be directly comparable.

For military procurement contracts awarded by the Department of Defense, there is evidence of extra benefits for the majority party in both the Senate and the House. That bias was longstanding, encompassing the years 1963–95, although in the Senate it went only to conservative Democrats on defense committees. In the House, contracts went disproportionately to all committee Democrats. Thus, in the House, partisan bias in the distribution of military pork is mediated by committee membership; in the Senate, it is mediated by both committee membership and ideology (Carsey and Rundquist 1999; Rundquist and Carsey 2002, 86–97).

Finally, Carroll and Kim (2010) find that between 1983 and 1996, members of the House majority whose policy preferences were most often overridden by the party majority were compensated most generously in the form of bureaucratic grants for casting procedural votes that helped the party to maintain its agenda control.

With respect to congressional earmarks, where restraints on partisanship may be weaker than in the bureaucracy, there is evidence of evolving partisanship in the distribution of highway earmarks in highway reauthorizations. Evans (2004, 77–84) found no partisanship in the House Public Works and Transportation Committee's distribution of highway demonstration projects in the 1987 and 1991 reauthorizations of federal transportation programs. Instead, committee leaders used those projects to build bipartisan coalitions in support of the leaders' preferences on those bills. Yet despite the longstanding tradition of bipartisanship on that committee, skyrocketing congressional partisanship in the 1990s left its mark on project distribution. By the next program

reauthorization in 1998, partisan effects on the earmarked projects in the bill were strong, with majority Republicans enjoying an advantage, along with committee members (Lee 2003).

However, vote-buying may not have been committee leaders' only collective- benefit motive for giving such projects in the 1998 highway bill. There is also evidence of an electoral strategy in earmark distribution in 1998. Lee (2003) found that while some earmarks went to all members electorally at risk regardless of party, vulnerable majority party members got greater numbers of, and more valuable, earmarks. Lazarus (2009) obtains a similar result using other data.

Balla, Lawrence, et al. (2002) found evidence of a similar partisan electoral strategy in the House, but not in the Senate, on academic earmarks in the 1990s. Members of the minority were as likely as the majority to be awarded at least one such earmark, but majority party members received earmarks of significantly greater dollar value. (p. 331) They label this pattern "partisan blame avoidance," a strategy designed to give the majority an edge while restraining the minority from accusing the majority of wasteful spending. Unlike Lee, they did not find an effect for electoral margin, but they did not interact that variable with the member's party, making it unclear whether the majority pursued a blanket strategy of helping incumbents or targeted the most generous benefits to its vulnerable members. They explain their null findings for the Senate thus: "This result is consistent with the common claim that parties are less influential in the Senate than in the House" (Balla, Lawrence, et al. 2002, 523).

Senate bipartisanship in earmarking is not the case across the board, however. Evans (2004) found mixed results for earmarks awarded by four Senate appropriations subcommittees in three congresses in the 1990s; in some years on each of the subcommittees majority party members received more; in other years, they did not (Evans 2004, 198–202). Nevertheless, as growing partisanship would suggest, a study of all earmarks awarded to House and Senate members in Fiscal Year 2008 found a majority-party advantage in both House and Senate (Lazarus and Steigerwalt 2009).

In their examination of appropriations earmarks awarded over a longer period, 1996–2005, Crespin and Finocchiaro found that overall, states represented by two senators from the majority party received significantly more earmarks; but like the committee benefit they found, that effect was significant only for the subcommittees that tend to offer high levels of pork. Whether this is an explicit electoral strategy is unclear, as partisan effects were not mediated by a senator's next reelection date.

If unlimited data on pork barrel awards were available over the long term, it would be instructive to determine whether partisanship in pork barreling developed with the overall growth in partisan polarization or whether, given incentives favoring universal distribution, partisan pork barreling lagged overall partisanship. Unfortunately, such long-term overall data are truncated, but the policy-specific data that are available

suggest growing partisanship in earmarking. Although the CAGW data on state-level earmarks span mostly the period of high partisan polarization in Congress, it is the only broad data set with which to test the hypothesis that partisanship in earmarking varies with the level of partisanship in the Senate.

The bicameral perspective

The discussion of the empirical research on the allocation of pork barrel benefits has focused on committee and partisan biases. That research has found indications of House–Senate differences; specifically, there appears to be less bias of both types in the Senate. There is another important difference between the House and Senate in the allocation of pork; a collective-benefit perspective provides the rationale. In particular, in the Senate small states enjoy an advantage in the use of federal funding to buy votes. Each state has equal representation, but policy coalition leaders can buy the votes of senators from small states more cheaply than those from large states (Lee 1998; Lee and Oppenheimer 1999). Indeed, they can assemble a majority coalition with small-state votes, a strategy that Lee (1998) and Lee and Oppenheimer (1999) (p. 332) found in formula program spending. In the House, of course, such extreme variation in district size does not exist, so a small-state strategy is pointless there. However, distributional patterns differ for formula and pork barrel spending, so more research is needed on whether small states enjoy an advantage in the distribution of pork. When pork is used for vote-buying, one would expect it, but to the extent that the distribution of pork has become more partisan, considerations of state size might be overwhelmed by partisan factors.

Indeed, the findings for earmarks are mixed. Balla, Lawrence, et al. (2002) found an advantage for small states in the selection of states to receive at least one academic earmark, but Evans (2004) found state size to be significant in only five of the twelve subcommittee-year models for Senate appropriations earmarks. Crespin and Finocchiaro's findings for all earmarks, 1996–2005, are similarly mixed.

Other effects of bicameralism are beginning to emerge. Shepsle, Van Houweling, et al. (2009) argue that the difference in House and Senate electoral cycles leads to strategic inter-chamber behavior: the Senate "back-loads" earmarks toward the end of senators' terms, but the House counters this tendency by ramping up earmarks to states with a senator up for reelection in a given cycle. This study is based on state-level CAGW data. Newly available district-level data for the House will allow assessments of strategic inter-chamber behavior which takes into account individual- level strategies as well. For example, such data could consider the vulnerability of House members in states with senators up for reelection, testing the hypothesis that those House districts are penalized less than others when a state's senator is up for reelection.

Summary: biases in the distribution of pork

Overall, while findings are mixed, there is evidence that committees with control over earmarks (appropriations committees and their subcommittees and highway authorization committees) extract extra benefits for themselves. Future research should be devoted to more clearly identifying the conditions under which they do so and the degree to which they display a partisan bias in the distribution of pork. Promising avenues include the degree to which a particular committee or subcommittee attracts high demanders for pork, which is likely dependent on the breadth and complexity of that committee's jurisdiction and its opportunities for distributing pork. Moreover, future research should give more consideration to the purposes for which earmarks are provided. Different collective benefit purposes can produce different patterns of earmark distribution: for example, vote buyers may be bipartisan, while party leaders may adopt a partisan electoral strategy in the distribution of pork.

The size of pork barrel coalitions

This section briefly discusses the theoretical literature on the size of distributive coalitions and considers empirical tests of its predictions. For a more in-depth (p. 333) consideration of the early theory on coalition size, see Collie (1988); Volden and Wiseman's contribution to this volume examines more recent theoretical developments.

Early rational choice theories assume that the distribution of benefits to members' own constituents is the major goal of public policymaking; legislation is modeled as large omnibus bills consisting of nothing but distributive benefits. Theorists have debated the equilibrium size of such pure distributive policy coalitions. On one hand, it is argued that the victorious coalition for distributive benefits is likely to be minimal winning, in which only a bare majority of members gets projects (Buchanan and Tullock 1962; Riker 1962; Riker and Ordeshook 1973; Snyder 1991). The advantage of such a coalition to its members is that total benefits are divided into fewer shares, leaving more for each member.

Others argue that universalistic coalitions form to pass omnibus pork barrel bills (Ferejohn 1974; Weingast 1979; Shepsle and Weingast 1981; Niou and Ordeshook 1985). A norm of universalism develops out of members' uncertainty as to whether they will be included in any given minimal winning coalition; a universalistic coalition eliminates that uncertainty and its attendant electoral risk (Weingast 1979; Shepsle and Weingast 1987; Weingast and Marshall 1988).

Melissa Collie noted, as of 1988, that empirical research had only minimally grappled with the testable propositions of the rational choice literature (Collie 1988, 447). While the minimal-winning and universal coalition hypotheses have rarely been tested for the House over the past twenty years; we can consider a few studies that have done so. As usual, the results are mixed. Stein and Bickers (1994b) examined federal outlays for financial assistance to congressional districts using FAADS data from the 1980s. Not only did they not find evidence of universalism, they failed to find that even a minimal majority of members received benefits within particular program areas or within broader policy subsystems, regardless of the type of spending.

With respect to Appropriations Committee earmarks for House members, there is similarly scant evidence of universalistic or even majority distribution of benefits apart from a very few policy areas, at least in the 1990s. Frisch (1998) finds that with the exception of Army Corps of Engineers water projects, which consistently benefited more than 90 percent of districts, other subcommittees' earmarks benefited a minority of districts. These results are no doubt partly explained by the fact that most districts are not eligible for many programs, such as agricultural research and National Park Service construction earmarks; as Weingast (1994) points out, uni-versalism is not possible in

such areas. But all districts are presumably eligible for transportation earmarks, yet a majority of districts got them in only one out of the six years that Frisch considered.

In the Senate, the expectation of universalism presents a much lower empirical bar. In the extreme, the receipt of benefits by as few as fifty House districts would result in universal distribution for states if those House districts were distributed among the fifty states. Not surprisingly, Frisch (1998) finds that in each of the six years he examines, all 100 senators claimed credit for earmarks. Yet even in the Senate, the expectation of universalism is not met for discretionary bureaucratic grants. Lee (1998) and Lee and Oppenheimer (1999), using FAADS data, found that the median discretionary grant program allocated money to as few as twenty-two states and as (p. 334) many as twenty-seven states from the 98th to 101st Congresses. Such results might be explained by the argument that senators have reason to value pork barrel benefits less than House members because, in states with more than one House district, each earmark benefits a smaller proportion of senator's constituents than formula programs; therefore, senators focus far more on gaining advantage in the latter, a more efficient strategy. However, it is also the case that when earmarks are available, senators seek them energetically.

To the extent that earmarks are added to legislation for collective-benefit reasons— for example, to buy votes for bills with a broad national impact—there is somewhat less reason to expect that all, or even a majority of members, will receive them. When policy coalition leaders add pork to a general-benefit bill to win the votes of members who have not yet committed to the bill, there is likely already a substantial base of support on the merits of the bill. Therefore, there is no need to give projects to more than a minority of members to build a majority to support the underlying bill. In fact, in the 1987 reauthorization of the federal highway program the leaders of the House Public Works and Transportation Committee gave highway earmarks to only seventy-six members, approximately 17 percent of the House. However, this less-than- majority strategy is not stable over time. Once it dawns on members that they can realize gains from trading their votes, they have an incentive to conceal their true preferences from coalition leaders in order to extract pork barrel benefits. There is indeed evidence of that effect for highway bills. At the next reauthorization, earmarks went to 60 percent of the House, more than three times as many members as in the previous reauthorization (Evans, 2004). By the 1998 reauthorization, 86 percent of House districts received earmarks Lee (2003). These results suggest that once a particular distributor of earmarks reveals a willingness to use them to buy votes, there is movement over time toward universal distribution.

On the other hand, if the relevant collective benefit is not vote-buying but the protection of a party's congressional majority, every majority party member who wants sucha benefit may with certainty expectto be a memberof a successful minimal winning coalition (Shepsle and Weingast 1981, 109). However, that benefit may not be exclusive; Balla, Lawrence, et al. (2002) argue that while the majority party has an incentive to favor its own party members, it also has an incentive to give less valuable projects to the minority, opening the possibility of universal distribution, albeit with systematic partisan variation in the value of those benefits. Balla, Lawrence et al. do not explicitly test the universalism

hypothesis and indeed find that only a minority of districts received academic earmarks (2002, 517); however, to meaningfully test the universalism hypothesis, it would be necessary to know how many districts actually were eligible for such earmarks (Weingast 1994).

The obvious question is whether these findings are general or apply to just a few policy areas, such as public works. Unfortunately, a broad test of the hypothesis that earmarking starts with less than a majority of districts and rapidly grows to near universal proportions may be difficult to devise. Widespread earmarking in Congress has been well underway for nearly two decades, yet comprehensive data on which House districts receive earmarks have only recently become available.

(p. 335) Although it may not be possible to test hypotheses about the growth in earmarking over time, better tests of coalition size in the House are now possible. Research in this area had been sparse, owing primarily to the difficulty of attributing earmarks to House districts. New district-level data now make it possible to test competing hypotheses concerning coalition size in the total number of earmarks across all appropriations bills and in individual subcommittee bills, year by year.

Conclusion

This chapter has assessed important recent scholarship on pork barrel politics in Congress, with a particular focus on patterns of distribution and a secondary focus on measurement issues. It has also, where possible, framed the discussion in terms of the purposes for which pork is distributed and the resulting patterns of distribution. Directions for future research are suggested throughout, with an emphasis on the considerable research opportunities offered by newly available data, which now associate earmarks with their individual congressional districts. These data will allow more refined tests of the propositions of rational choice models as well as better testing and further development of collective-benefit theories of the distribution of pork barrel benefits. Moreover, the availability of comparable individual-level data for the House and the Senate will allow a fuller comparison of House and Senate allocation strategies and a more thorough consideration of the impact of bicameralism on the distribution of pork barrel benefits than has been possible to date.

How important is the study of distributive politics? It is well-established that pork barrel benefits in the form of both discretionary bureaucratic grants and congressional earmarks consume a relatively small proportion of the federal budget (Lee 2003; Stein and Bickers 1995). At the peak of congressional earmarking, in Fiscal Year 2005, earmarks accounted for 1.1 percent of total federal outlays. Perhaps due partly to the ensuing public outcry, earmarking in appropriations bills declined somewhat thereafter in numbers, value, and as a percentage of outlays. For 2009, earmarks consumed .6 percent of estimated federal outlays, a considerable decline; moreover, the dollar value was also

lower, amounting to 70 percent of the unadjusted value of earmarks in 2005.[9] Clearly, the omnibus pork barrel bills envisioned by early rational choice theory are virtually non-existent. The value of studying pork barrel politics lies elsewhere. First, the study of pork barrel politics provides a window into Congress members' electoral calculations, especially as they are linked to constituents' (p. 336) perceived demand (or, at a minimum, gratitude) for particularized benefits. Second, it has become clear that pork barrel benefits are distributed strategically by key political actors for collective-benefit purposes. As a consequence, the effects of pork barrel politics go beyond the individual-level electoral connection. Pork barrel benefits help policy coalition leaders build majority coalitions for general-interest legislation. Moreover, the strategic partisan distribution of pork demonstrates that majority party leaders use it as part of a strategy to protect their majority.

All of the literature on pork barrel politics frames the provision of pork in terms of members' reelection interests. This is equally true for scholarship that takes the individual-benefit and collective-benefit approaches. In the latter case, those who provide pork to further a collective goal do so by exploiting members' desire to use those benefits to bolster their reelection chances.

Indeed, despite the opprobrium heaped upon pork barreling, until very recently, most members of Congress stoutly defended the practice as an essential form of representation of their constituents' needs; moreover, they energetically resisted attempts to end the practice. Given such defenses, diatribes against pork barreling served mainly as an electoral positioning device for the few members who did not seek such benefits. However, in the wake of the 2010 elections that restored Republicans to the majority in the House partly on the basis of a campaign against alleged fiscal profligacy, Republicans in both houses succumbed to pressure from their most conservative members to ban earmarks for their members (this decision followed a temporary ban by House Republicans earlier in the year). As this book goes to press, it remains to be seen whether any potential collective benefit to the party that might result from such a ban can trump the perceived electoral benefits to individual members of bringing home the bacon, as the survival of the ban will depend upon it.

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Notes:

(1) See Shepsle and Weingast (1995) for an analysis of several generations of scholarship on distributive politics.

(2) For a formal model of vote-buying that includes but is not restricted to the use of distributive benefits, see Groseclose and Snyder (1996).

(3) Two additional studies offer alternative measures. Londregan and Snyder (1994) devise an alternate measure designed to distinguish between preference heterogeneity and measurement error. They find that, contrary to the conclusions of the studies cited above, one-third of House committees are composed of preference outliers. On the other hand, Groseclose (1994) critiques several assumptions in this literature and develops an alternative technique that corrects the flaws he identifies. Applied to the data, he finds some mixed evidence for preference outliers, but on balance concludes that the random-selection hypothesis cannot be rejected.

(4) Such data were collected either from inside congressional sources (Evans 1994, 2004), by the scholar's own labor-intensive efforts (Lee 2003; Frisch 1998), or by interested outside observers (Balla, Lawrence, et al. 2002).

(5) Frisch criticizes earlier scholarship for several flaws: incorporating non-distributive data such as formula and redistributive programs, making unwarranted conversions of state-level data to the level of congressional districts, and including awards that offer little opportunity for credit claiming by legislators (Frisch 1998, 18–19). He concedes that FAADS data remedies many of these problems.

(6) There are other possibilities: for example, a coalition leader might assemble the group of the cheapest benefits (Fiorina 1981; Lee 1998). However, less attention has been given to this hypothesis to date.

(7) See, for example, Plott (1968); Ferejohn (1974); Arnold (1979); Goss (1972); Rundquist and Griffith (1976); Ray (1980a, 1980b).

(8) Using the 2008 data, Lazarus (2010) analyzes earmark allocation in seventeen federal agency budgets and finds an earmark advantage for members of the associated House authorizing committees in seven cases.

(9) Total federal outlays are taken from "Historical Tables, Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2009," U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington DC, 2008, accessed online at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2009/pdf/hist.pdf (accessed September 16, 2009). Figures for earmarks are taken from Citizens Against Government Waste, accessed at http://www.cagw.org (accessed September 16, 2009).

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