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CHIEFTAINS DELIVERING: POLITICAL DETERMINANTS OF CAPITAL SPENDING IN IRELAND 2001-07

Submitted towards award of PhD

January 2010

JANE SUITER, BA

Under the supervision of Professor Michael Marsh Trinity College Dublin I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment. on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any Other University, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that Such work has been cited and Acknowledged within the text of my work and I agree that the Library may lend or copy the thesis upon request.

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Summary

This is a study about the allocation of resources in Ireland. It asks to what extent capital expenditure is allocated according to geopolitical or to policy considerations. In other words, to what extent do electoral calculations and to what extent does policy drive spending decisions? Many voters assume that governments do spend for partisan gain or in order to boost their re-election chances. Anecdotally, there is plenty of evidence, and legislators certainly indulge in a good deal of credit-claiming. Empirically, despite large-scale research elsewhere, to date there is no comprehensive spatial analysis of government spending in Ireland; indeed, there has been no systematic attempt to ascertain whether the Irish government engages in partisan spending.

Theoretically, the literature argues that politicians will target either swing or core voters, depending on institutional incentives. However, this thesis argues that the incentives operating in Ireland will lead to a more personalist targeting of voters, with individual ministers or 'chieftains' likely to deliver significant additional resources to their own personal bailiwicks, while the governing party is likely to be unable or unwilling to target the areas of the party's core electoral strength or swing voters.

Chapter Two presents a systematic explication of the ways in which politicians pursue vote-buying strategies, from the US to the UK and beyond. It looks in detail at the institutional structures that incentivise different types of particularistic spending.

¹ The usage of the word 'chieftain' in place of ministers follows from the observation of one of the interviewees that many legislators are tribal, with behaviours akin to a chieftain delivering goods and looking after their own clan or tribe. Of course the title of the prime minister, or Taoiseach, literally translates as chieftain.

Chapter Three examines the incentive structures in Ireland in more depth, arguing that the Irish party system's foundations on multi-member districts, strong constituency organisations, and clientalism induced credit claiming provides a significant incentive for politicians to develop and seek support on a personal basis, while STV makes candidate-centred voting compatible with party voting to a degree that is virtually unique.

Chapter Four derives four hypotheses, where Cabinet ministers either (a) behave in their individual interests, looking after their own personal re-election concerns; (b) behave in their collective interests, looking after core voters; (c) look after swing voters; or (d) those of citizens generally.

In the following three chapters, these hypotheses are tested, employing data from three government departments covering the areas of sports spending, primary and post-primary education capital spending, and roads spending in the years 2001-2007. In each spending area, the central empirical strategy is to regress the dependent variable on measures of policy and on measures of political influence in order to test each hypothesis. The core findings are that the interests of the individually powerful ministers frequently trump the interests of the ruling party in making the partisan allocations. In addition, it finds evidence that policy needs are not always met, with many departments lacking core information on which to make decisions.

Chapter Eight employs qualitative evidence gleaned from a wide range of interviews – from Cabinet ministers to advisers and civil servants – in order to discover the processes and practices operating in the real world. It discovers that, while the civil service finds it frustrating that recommendations for reform often go unheeded, in many ways the culture of the minister as chieftain appears to be embedded.

The conclusion, in Chapter Nine, summarises the core findings and charts a way forward to a situation in which policy could be debated and decided, and

empirical models could be utilised by government departments, to ensure that monies are allocated in order to meet policy goals.

Acknowledgements

This work was undertaken with the support and assistance of a number of people and I am eager to acknowledge their contribution.

I am indebted to my supervisor Professor Michael Marsh, for his sage advice and encouragement during the preparation of this thesis. One could not wish for a better mentor. Professor Ron Johnston of Bristol was an insightful and helpful external examiner, I could not have hoped for more. I also wish to acknowledge Dr Gail McElroy, Professor Michael Gallagher and Professor Cees van der Eijk of the University of Nottingham for helpful suggestions. I would also like to thank Dr Clionadh Raleigh and Dr Garrett O'Boyle for their time and assistance.

I wish to record my appreciation for the Department of Political Science at Trinity College Dublin for awarding me a doctoral scholarship for the past number of years. I am also very grateful to colleagues and friends for their amenity and assistance over the years. I would particularly like to acknowledge Matt Wall for his perceptive comments on my initial draft and Thomas Daubler for commenting on some of the empirical material.

I am also extremely grateful to my family for all their help and support over the years — which cannot have been easy. My husband Nicky was extremely patient at my often late nights and early mornings and supported me above and beyond the call of duty. My children Cillian, Colm and Chloe were all both understanding and supportive at all times. I would also like to thank my mother Viola and step father Sean who were the embodiment of support and encouragement and took over on child minding duties at regular intervals to enable me to complete this work.

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"Ber Cowen he is a TD me boys, Ber Cowen he is a TD. He got Clara a swimming pool because it isn't by the sea²"

This is a study about the allocation of resources in Ireland. It asks to what extent capital expenditure is allocated according to geopolitical or to policy considerations. In other words, to what extent do electoral calculations and to what extent does policy drive spending decisions? It answers questions not only about swimming pools but other infrastructure too, including schools and roads. During the completion of this thesis, the observation has been repeatedly made that surely all decisions are political. However, I distinguish between policy-derived needs-based spending, which is, of course, decided on in the political sphere, and spending that can be envisaged as electorally based, whether partisan and directed by parties at marginal or core districts, or personal – flowing to the constituencies of the individual ministers.

In essence, this is a geopolitical examination of the allocation of capital expenditure in Ireland. So why study the destination of funding? There are normative, empirical and theoretical reasons to do so. Normatively, I argue that one of the prime functions of government is to spend taxpayers' money and that governments should decide the policy basis for spending – for example, should education funds be spent in a non-partisan fashion to benefit those who are most in need of the particular service? It is also axiomatic that money should be spent in an equitable, open and transparent manner. Yet many governments have a reputation among the voting public for doing the opposite. In other words, many voters assume that governments do spend for partisan gain or in order to boost

² Some of the lyrics penned by the Taoiseach (prime minister) about his father, who had been a TD (representative), which he sang in his hometown at a ceremony to mark his appointment – (O'Dea, G. 2008).

their re-election chances. Anecdotally, there is plenty of evidence, and legislators certainly indulge in a good deal of credit claiming. Empirically, despite large-scale research elsewhere, to date there is no comprehensive spatial analysis of government spending in Ireland; indeed, there has been no systematic attempt to ascertain whether the Irish government engages in partisan spending. Theoretically, the literature argues that politicians will target either swing or core voters, depending on institutional incentives. However, this thesis argues that the incentives operating in Ireland will lead to a more personalist targeting of voters, with individual ministers or 'chieftains' likely to deliver significant additional resources to their own personal bailiwicks, while the governing party is likely to be unable or unwilling to target the areas of the party's core electoral strength or swing voters.

Whether some constituencies receive relatively more funding than others for non-policy reasons is a question of both empirical and normative importance. So-called 'pork barrel' undermines representation, reduces the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the electorate, and has consequences for individual ethical behaviour. It may also constitute a drag on economic performance and have implications for the budget and expenditure processes. It may thus have major consequences for politics and economics. Apart from its obvious substantive implications, this project is also of relevance to the theoretical study of political institutions such as the electoral, party and representative systems.

This chapter will begin with an examination of the perception of selective distribution of public goods in Irish politics, citing and documenting numerous illustrative examples. Having established that there exists at least a perception that such spending takes place, it will then outline the substantive importance of the phenomenon, elaborating the problems arising from 'pork barrel' politics from the point of view of normative democratic theory as well as the resultant sub-optimal public policy outcomes. The scholarly understanding of the concept of the pork barrel will then be summarised, and the operational definition for this project will be outlined and justified. The existing state of knowledge on the causes and

consequences of pork barrel politics will then be outlined, and the Irish case and the approach of this thesis will be contextualised within this scholarly framework. A detailed outline of the approach of this thesis, chapter by chapter, will then be elaborated.

1.1 Irish pork – an inglorious history

Journalistic reports of pork barrel generally suggest that individual TDs, and particularly ministers, attempt to bring home large amounts of goodies in order to protect their electoral interest. For example, in 2002, the then Irish Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy, used the occasion of his Budget speech to announce the decentralisation of over 10,000 lucrative government jobs. He hailed decentralisation as a move that would lead to a radical change of culture in terms of policy formation in the country: "No longer will policy be made entirely in Dublin on the basis of a Dublin mindset." He also claimed that the locations had been selected to take full account of the National Spatial Strategy, the existence of good transport links - by road, rail and/or air - and the location of existing decentralised offices. Nevertheless, many commentators roundly condemned the decentralisation proposals as a purely political gesture, and they were seen as part of a long-established political tradition in Ireland of 'delivering' benefits to constituencies and particularly those of Cabinet ministers. Within hours, Tom Parlon.³ a junior minister belonging to the junior coalition partners the Progressive Democrats, had erected signs around his constituency baldly declaring "Welcome to Parlon country". A further clue to the political intentions underlying the announcement was the fact that they were developed by McCreevy's personal press officer, who took a two-week sabbatical to draw up the proposals in secret. The Irish Times described what happened:

The queue of politicians to bring a slice of the public service back home formed almost as soon as Mr Charlie McCreevy announced last December that 10,000 civil servants were to

³ Parlon was Minister responsible for the Office of Public Works, the body that would be responsible for purchasing the new buildings that the programme required.

be decentralised away from Dublin. The proposal was based on two simple and matching policy imperatives: the need to rejuvenate towns around the State and the need to take pressure off the capital's creaking infrastructure. But it was always going to be trouble. Politicians may be responsible for running the State, but they are each elected by just a small piece of it. Bringing a cluster of jobs to their hometown is a sure-fire vote winner. Those who thought they might have some influence with Mr McCreevy - his Cabinet colleagues, Ministers of State, backbenchers and the independents whose support the Government needs - got on the job fast. More than 100 locations have now been suggested by more than 80 Oireachtas members (almost all Government supporters) in representations made to Mr McCreevy. To judge by the correspondence, shown to The Irish Times following a request under the Freedom of Information Act, not only Dáil backbenchers but Ministers see their role in the issue as looking after their own constituencies over and above all other considerations. Some of it is comical, but there is a serious issue in danger of being overlooked: decentralisation is supposed to be the tool of a long-term development strategy for the State and the public service. Instead, it is seen by backbenchers, junior ministers and some senior Cabinet members as a vote-catching opportunity (Brennock 2000).

A more recent example is the Minister for Arts, Sports and Culture John O'Donoghue, otherwise widely known as the 'Minister for Kerry' on account of his widely perceived ability to procure capital allocations for his home constituency. The Minister was a representative for the Kerry South constituency on Ireland's south west coast. Over the few months in the run up to the 2007 election, he granted almost one-fifth of the total aid for festivals in the state to his own constituency. The sports clubs in his area also did remarkably well, receiving up to 20 per cent of discretionary sports grant allocations on some occasions. The *Sunday Tribune* reported:

The sight of O'Donoghue raining money upon the half of Kerry charged with returning him in the forthcoming general election has become as traditional a sporting ritual as the county footballers making their annual run at Sam Maguire. Between the ϵ 200,000 given to Beaufort GAA and the ϵ 400 made available to the Kingdom Archery club, Kerry South received a whopping ϵ 2.32m on this occasion. That's more than 16 other entire counties. If that sounds familiar, it's because last year the minister's bailiwick outdrew 17 counties. Twelve months before that, 18 counties were less well got than his fortunate half of Kerry. At least the figure is going down.

According to the 2006 Census, Meath is one of the fastest growing counties in the country, with a population in excess of 162,000. Kerry South is a constituency containing less than half as many people. Yet Meath received £100,000 less in grants this week. That's difficult to figure out unless you run the numbers through a political calculator. Having narrowly missed out on two out of three seats in Kerry South last time, Fianna Fáil must be confident O'Donoghue's running mate Tom Fleming can get over the hump this time around. Anything else would just be ingratitude on the part of the electorate.

It might sound churlish, given the last two governments have spent more on sports facilities than any previous administrations, but the politicisation of the sports capital grant system damages what began as a laudable initiative. A system established so that every club, big and small, might aspire to building its own facilities has degenerated into an episode of pork barrel politics that makes a mockery of the departmental claim the money is doled out on an equitable points basis. If your application scores a certain amount of points as tallied by objective civil servants, you receive a grant. A fine theory that appears to be utterly undermined by reality.

If the points system is so objective, how come it managed to always come down in favour of Donegal and Kildare when Jim McDaid held the sports portfolio and Charlie McCreevy was in charge of the national purse strings? Between 1999 and 2002, those counties were first and second. Strangely enough, once the ministers moved on, they slumped to 24th and 26th. The objective points system that once worked so well for clubs from Letterkenny and Kill suddenly began to fail them. Lo and behold, it began to work objectively for the constituents of their replacements. O'Donoghue's home county moved into first place once he took over the brief in 2003. Brian Cowen's Offaly has inexplicably risen from 26th to sixth since he became Minister for Finance (Hannigan 2007).

And former Minister for Finance Charlie McCreevy was viewed as a master:

On May 31 1999, the Irish finance minister Charlie McCreevy attended a Monday-morning breakfast at the Naas Court Hotel. Officially launching the town's new sports centre project, an ambitious joint venture involving the local soccer, hockey and athletics clubs, McCreevy took the opportunity to tell his audience that Kildare had received a very small share of public sports funding in the past and he hoped this would change. He was as good as his word. When the facility finally opened in the summer of 2001, nearly two-thirds of the £1.4m spent on its construction had come from the government coffers.

The funniest thing about last week's brouhaha regarding McCreevy's central role in the controversial funding of the Punchestown agricultural event centre was the opposition's faux sense of outrage in the Dáil last Tuesday. Outrage is an emotion that usually requires some element of shock. Nobody can be surprised at the minister breaking a government cap on spending to find an extra $\&pmath{\in} 1.5m$ for Punchestown just three weeks after he met with its representatives at a clinic. There has been no politician more adept at looking after his constituents' sporting and recreational needs than the Fianna Fáil representative from Kildare North.

This is, after all, the man who took home the captain's prize at Naas Golf Club last July, the day after his government gave it €300,000 under the capital sports grants programme. No other course in the country got more than half that amount. Of course, his largesse didn't stop or start there. As far back as 1999, Kill GAA club received £350,000 in the great lottery hand-out, and nobody batted an eyelid that an outfit, which boasts McCreevy as its most prominent member, received more national lottery funds that year than 13 entire counties.

Of those who apply each year to the visionary scheme set up to distribute national lottery money at local level to help improve sporting infrastructure, more than half are turned down. What a coincidence that lucky Kill managed to score big in four out of the last five allocations. Or that seven Kildare GAA clubs have carved up nearly €2.5m between them in the past two rounds. From the day in 1999 that 20% of the total sum awarded nationally was divvied up between Kildare, and Donegal, home county of then sports minister Jim McDaid, this system has been rife with cronyism (Hannigan 2003).

Having established that at least the perception of the problem exists, it is now important to outline the substantive importance of the phenomenon, elaborating the problems arising from 'pork barrel' politics from the point of view of normative democratic theory as well as the resultant sub-optimal public policy outcomes.

1.2 Partisan spending – the context

In the US, where the literature is huge,⁴ the most commonly used image for geopolitical allocations of monies or partisan spending is 'pork barrel', or the notion of individual legislators 'bringing home the bacon'. Essentially, the term 'pork barrel' is used to describe spending projects that favour a particular constituency or group of voters. It is certainly a practice with a long and often pejorative history in the lore of politics. The origin of the term is somewhat murky but, according to Diane Evans (2004: 3), it probably derives from the pre-Civil War South, when slave owners set out barrels of salt pork for their slaves on holidays. The slaves were frequently undernourished, and the resulting mad rush for the pork inspired the image of greedy politicians grabbing benefits for their own constituents with great fervour, trampling over others in their rush. In the US, the term has been widely used for well over a century. It was certainly used in Congress as early as the 1870s to describe legislation containing projects for members' districts (Ashworth and Ulph 1981).

The term 'pork barrel' is not as widely used in Europe and elsewhere and is frequently replaced in the literature with 'distributive politics', describing how distributions are made. However, it always applies to discretionary government spending. There are a number of general definitions, but one coined by Evans (2004: 13), based on the original by Weingast, Shepsle et al (Weingast, Shepsle et al. 1981), is suitable for our purposes when combined with the broad-based definition by Ferejohn (1974: 235) that pork is any geographically targeted spending that could be aimed at electoral gain. Combining these then, my definition is that pork is a distributive policy, which could be aimed at electoral

_

⁴ To name just the pioneers: Plott 1968; Goss 1972; Ferejohn 1974; Strom 1975; Ritt 1976; Rundquist and Griffith 1976; Johnston 1978; Rundquist 1978; Arnold 1978; Greene and Munley 1980; Johnstone 1980; Ray 1980; Kiel and McKenzie 1983; Wilson 1986; Rich 1989; Anderson and Tollinson 1991; Gryski 1991; Reed and Schansberg 1993; Bowler, Farrell and McAllister 1996; Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1984; Mayhew 1974; Stein and Bickers 1994; Ward John 1999; Golden 2005; Tavits 2009.

gain, that targets discrete benefits to specific geographic populations, such as constituencies, but spreads the costs across the general population through taxation. The most common explanation for pork spending occurring is because elected representatives, believing themselves to be elected to represent their local constituents, want to be able to deliver something of substance to them (Stein and Bickers 1994: 130-134). The electoral connection with distributive spending is generally axiomatic. In a wide-ranging discussion of water projects, Ferejohn (1974) gives three reasons why such projects may be of value to electoral representatives, and all are related to re-election. First, representatives believe that bringing home a project gives them an electoral record on which they can campaign. Second, an impression of service to constituents can create an impression of invulnerability, warning off high-quality competitors. Third, like the machine politicians⁵ of yore, they can use the projects to buy the freedom to do as they wish, or as their party leaders wish, on issues of more importance on Capitol Hill. As Fenno (1978) puts it, they can buy leeway for their activities in Congress with the credit that pork barrel service earns them from constituents. Irish legislators running in multi-member districts face the additional pressure of competing with other members of their own party, each trying harder than the others to take credit for locally delivered projects.

1.3 Normative concerns

There are broadly three types of normative concern with partisan allocations of funds: general egalitarianism, democratic standards, and individual ethical behaviour. General egalitarianism, as almost all political theorists in the western tradition argue, going back as far as Plato, is that, whatever the structure of government, its role is to rule in the general interest and not in the partisan interests of some group. As Plato argued: "...our aim in founding this State was not the disproportionate happiness of any one class, but the greatest happiness of

⁵ William Safire, in his *Safire's Political Dictionary*, defines "machine politics" as "the election of officials and the passage of legislation through the power of an organization created for political action."

the whole; we thought that in a State which is ordered with a view to the good of the whole, we should be most likely to find justice, and in the ill-ordered State injustice: and, having found them, we might then decide which of the two is happier" (Plato: 109). Little has changed among the views of political theorists in this regard in the intervening millennia and thus, if there is empirical evidence of special favours for some group, the concern is what this means in terms of egalitarian justice.⁶

Sartori (2005) argues that, in the history of political thought, the notion of the party as a legitimate entity for political contestation was first clearly enunciated by Burke, who distinguished parties as "a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest [my emphasis], upon some principle in which they are all agreed", as opposed to a factional grouping. Burke argued that factions were a separate sort of entity: "Such a generous contention for power [the party's] ... will easily be distinguished from the mean and interested struggle for place and emolument" (of factionalism) (Burke 1776: 87)

Parties/factions had been much derided by authors from Plato to the Federalists and beyond, the difference being that, while previous thinkers conflated parties and factions as being a negative force for disharmony and disunity, Burke saw that parties grouped around competing plans for national ends could be a respectable and even desirable political institution, whereas factions to gain goods for a specific group remained an evil to be avoided. In his Address to the Electors of Bristol, Burke said:

⁶ From the perspective of what is a particularly interesting interpretation of proportionality in respect of Irish government spending (A.K. Sen's *Inequality Reexamined* [Harvard, 1995]), proportionality with respect to what is needed to generate general human capacities implies that the disadvantaged are initially favoured so as to give them the same opportunity to develop general human capabilities. Of course some of the practitioners of pork barrel politics may endorse this, arguing that the areas being favoured have fallen behind and that they were therefore rectifying injustices. That possibility will be tested with demographic data.

"Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole: where not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed, but when you have chosen him, he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of Parliament" (Burke 1776).

In Ireland, De Valera was to take this to heart, promising in 1926 to promote "a programme for the common good, not a class programme".

Furthermore, there are two areas of concern with the issue of democratic standards. The first is the political equality of voters and the second is the political equality of office seekers. Many democratic theorists, as Hyland (1995) argues, identify the essence of democracy with political equality of members of the demos. In a representative democracy, the political equality of members of the demos is mediated through the representative system, with members having the power to elect their representatives. Formally, in genuinely democratic systems, equality would be indisputable in terms of counting votes. This notion of fairness is embodied in the well-known principle of 'one person, one vote' or 'justice as fairness' that theorists such as Robert Dahl and John Rawls (1971; Dahl 1989; Rawls 1971) consider being an essential ingredient of democracy. Indeed, many major democratic theorists⁷ identify political equality as a core principle of a normally functioning democracy, while formal political equality is generally achieved with equality of peoples' vote. This is also a major argument used in justifying democracy as a system of government – basically, we start from the premise that all people are equal and should therefore all be allowed to have an equal say in collectively binding decisions, with democracy being the only system of governance that institutionally maximises this equality. But there are ways in which the formal equality of people's votes can be undermined in practice – for example, those with greater economic resources might lobby the government to further their own economic interests, or those who participate in the decisionmaking process might ensure outcomes more favourable to their own interests.

⁷ With obvious exceptions such as Schumpeter

In addition, there is an issue of equality between office seekers. From a constitutional point of view, all have a right to stand for election and, from the perspective of general election rules, no one person should be in any more privileged a position. Thus, if a few incumbents, such as Cabinet ministers, can use political office to provide partisan favours to political supporters to give themselves a greater opportunity or a chance of re-election, this also subverts the democratic process. Formal equality is subverted if some representatives of some groups have greater power over some people that they represent.

The third problem derives from an individual using political power to provide partisan favours, perhaps with the intention of increasing chances of electoral success, which would be of concern from the perspective of the ethics of government. This harks back to the point that many democratic theorists accept that, whatever type of governmental system, it is not the purpose of government, as opposed to a particular political party, to favour one group. Problems, however, can arise from the conflation of personal and state power – this patrimonial system (or neo-patrimonial when the wielder of state power subjects themselves to elections) is a deviation from the ideals of republican/constitutional governance where state power and personal power are separate.

Of course, if spending is electorally driven, it also produces a practical concern that particular groups in society – be they children, roads users or sports people – will not receive that spending according to their need, but rather according to the pork-getting skills and abilities of their representatives. Ask any primary head-teacher who never seems to get to the top of the waiting list for a new classroom to replace a dilapidated portakabin, and the human cost of this practice becomes clear.

1.4 Framework

The vast bulk of theoretical work on distributive politics is based on the experience in the US, where scholars have devoted a formidable effort to the

study of the allocation of discretionary spending over more than 30 years, from Mayhew (1975), to Bickers and Stein (1994) and Cox and McCubbins (1993; 2001). The existing empirical contributions primarily focus on to whom the money or projects are targeted. Is it to supporters of individually powerful congressmen or to swing voters? In the more recent parliamentary literature – Lindbeck and Weibull (1987), Dixit and Londregan (1996), Ward John (1999), McGillivray (2004), Golden and Picci (2008) and Tavits (2009) - the debate is over whether legislators or parties direct discretionary resources to core supporters of a party or to swing voters who are crucial to a government retaining power? In more recent times, there has also been a focus on the 'which' - that is, which institutional structure aids or hinders particularistic spending? The majority of work in the field assumes that parliamentary governments target marginal districts in order to maximise seats rather than votes. A few have made a distinction between strong and weak party systems, where the motivations are very different, and between majoritarian and proportional systems. McGillivray (2004) model the party at the centre of the vote-purchasing decisions, while Golden & Picci (2008) argues that, under certain institutional arrangements such as open-list PR, it is not the party that is most relevant, but rather a more personalist pattern of partisan spending is observed. However, they use aggregate data for individual legislators looking only across time and not space. This thesis argues that, at least in Ireland under PR-STV8 and theoretically in any open PR list environment, Cabinet ministers will deliver to their own bailiwicks, while parties will not be able to deliver to either core or swing voters in a consistent fashion.

Thus this thesis contributes to this framework by breaking new theoretical/methodological ground, arguing that the interaction of the institutional structures in Ireland incentivise ministers to feather their own nests and favour their personal constituencies disproportionately. Gallagher and Komito (2005) argue that, if a TD becomes a minister, constituents' expectations will rise accordingly, as there is a belief that a minister who is sufficiently hard working

⁸ Carey and Shugart (1995) had STV fourth in their rankings of electoral systems providing a strong incentive for politicians to cultivate a personal vote.

and adroit can deliver in a big way for the constituency, and ministers help foster this impression both because they are expected to and because they can. In addition, the Cabinet system, combined with a weak parliament, confers powerful incentives and numerous opportunities for decision-making Cabinet ministers to use public money for their own partisan gain, by earmarking substantial funds and projects into handpicked constituencies or areas.

To date, there has been an absence of focus on the 'how' – if ministers or parties do deliver partisan allocations, how do they this? Is there 'logrolling', where members make deals and bargains between themselves on the passage of both omnibus and general interest legislation? Or perhaps there is a Cabinet subcommittee that makes these decisions, or the administrative and organisational back-up may simply be absent, making structured pork barrel less likely. In order to answer this question, this thesis also provides qualitative description of the processes and motivations underlying pork barrel or partisan spending.

The thesis also breaks new empirical ground, with a detailed grant-by-grant dataset covering three different areas of government spending over a six-year period. Most previous studies have focused on a single type of spending at a time. In contrast, this is a wide-ranging study, involving several components of government spending, allowing me to highlight the spending areas that are more and less susceptible to particularised spending. According to the Candidate Election Study, the three most common areas for Irish candidates to claim credit are community and sports facilities, schools and local roads, and it is these three areas that this thesis will examine in detail. First is an examination of sports grants, an area where there is considerable anecdotal evidence and some empirical evidence (Considine 2008) that partisan spending exists. These funds, delivered

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⁹ The Candidate Election Study was completed by a team, under the direction of Professor Michael Marsh, in the Department of Political Science at Trinity College Dublin following the 2007 general election in Ireland. It involved a postal questionnaire, which was sent to every candidate in the election, that canvassed their views and opinions on a wide range of subjects. The data has not yet been published and all references to the study in this thesis are the author's own interpretation.

through the National Lottery, are likely to be among the most susceptible to partisan allocation. It may even be that, if there is no evidence of electorally driven spending in sports grants allocations, it will be difficult to uncover elsewhere. The second area to be examined is education grants, both to primary and to post-primary schools. Much of this spending is likely to be programmatic, with schools all receiving a summer works grant, for example, and thus patterns of partisan spending are likely to be more difficult to detect here. Third is an examination of expenditure on non-national roads. Again, it may be difficult to discern patterns where much spending is likely to be targeted at areas with the greatest traffic flow, and hence damage to roads, or greatest road length.

This research will endeavour to answer each of these three questions in order to give a complete real-world view of partisan allocations in Ireland.

1.5 The structure of the thesis

The irony is that, despite the widespread journalistic conclusion that partisan spending exists and that politicians use it to feather their own nests, there has been almost no empirical investigation into the truth of this, although Gallagher (2005), for example, has stated that pork is *said* to exist, and (Considine, Crowley et al. 2008) found some evidence in sports grants. This thesis is primarily a quantitative project, examining capital spending allocations to undercover whether political or policy variables are the best predictors of government spending. This thesis will also look at who actually makes the spending decisions and whether they are made collectively or individually. In other words, do the interests of the political party dominate, or those of individual Cabinet ministers or indeed the public at large? As a result, it will speak to the debate on whether the government directs funding on the basis of policy or whether, instead, particular groups of voters are targeted.

The chapters that follow develop more fully my argument that we need to systematically examine the interaction of institutional incentives that determine

how a legislator can distribute pork. Chapter Two presents a systematic explication of the ways in which politicians pursue vote-buying strategies, from the US to the UK and beyond. It looks in detail at the institutional structures that incentivise different types of particularistic spending and argues that we can expect that the key figures in terms of the distribution of particularistic spending in a parliamentary system will be Cabinet ministers or parties or a combination of the two. We can expect that Cabinet ministers will attempt to use their bureaucratic decision-making ability to distribute largesse. Given that each Cabinet minister has control over his own constituency or bailiwick, he is likely to succumb to the temptation to look after his own. It is also possible that he will engage in logrolling, trading favours with other members for the Cabinet, imitating the legislators of US lore – this could be quite random or could be the glue necessary to secure a coalition. Or indeed, he could do the bidding of the party, looking after particular core or swing voters, which the party machinery would deem important.

Chapter Three will look in more detail at the institutional structures in Ireland that make any of these outcomes more likely than any of the others. It argues that the Irish party system's foundations on multi-member districts, strong constituency organisations, and localism makes for campaigns that are highly personalised, while STV makes candidate-centred voting compatible with party voting to a degree that is virtually unique (Marsh 2000). In addition, it provides a significant incentive for politicians to develop and seek support on a personal basis (Carey and Shugart 1995). Of course, having the incentive is not the same as having as the ability, and thus it is those candidates with access to resources who are most likely to divert the largest proportion of resources to their home ground. Ordinary backbenchers can merely lobby ministers to ensure that their constituency gets a look-in. In general, those with both the incentive and the opportunity are likely to be the so-called 'spending' ministers with access to the largest budgets and the widest range of discretionary projects. Thus, if and when a TD becomes a minister (or 'chieftain'), expectations rise enormously, and there is a belief that a minister can really deliver in a big way and ministers help foster this impression. But does

the political interest of powerful individual legislators, such as Cabinet ministers, trump the interest of the governing party? It is to this question that Chapter Four turns, where a number of hypotheses are set out, asking whether the Cabinet does seek to distribute an unequal amount of resources to constituencies it wants to target – marginal and swing seats – or the constituencies of core voters, as the literature would predict. Or is Irish pork more particularistic, with Cabinet ministers looking after themselves? Or is it rather based on a stated policy, delivering to areas most in need or to other areas in accordance with stated policy objectives? This chapter will also set out the data utilised and the detail of the quantitative methods employed. The data for each chapter comes from Freedom of Information requests and covers the years 2001–2007; in other words, two general elections and one local and European election. The two terms also allows us to compare and contrast the influences of two very different Ministers for Finance: Charlie McCreevy to begin with, and Brian Cowen from 2004.

Each individual grant has been allocated to its constituency and is then analysed with a variety of econometric techniques. The dependent variable is either the amount of money granted to a particular project or the number of grants in a district. Independent variables include the political and the policy driven. The political variables remain the same for each area of spending, variables such as the presence of a Cabinet minister, the level of vote for the governing party at the previous election, the swing at the previous election, as well as dummy variables that are utilised to determine the extent of individualist allocations, including the Minister for Finance who has direct control over all areas of spending and the particular line minister, such as the Minister for Arts and Sports when examining sports grants and the Minister for Education when looking at grants to schools. Policy or needs-driven variables vary between different areas. All are proxies of spending outcomes. For example, when examining sports grants and education grants, various age cohorts are utilised, as well as variables denoting whether a particular club is in a designated disadvantaged area. Among schools, designated disadvantaged schools are also controlled for, along with other variables such as the number of children in a school. When examining roads expenditure,

independent variables include the length of the road network in the area, the number of cars, the number of commuters and so on.

Chapters Five to Seven will examine a different area of government spending and indeed will look at organisational and institutional features of various government departments in order to specify the mechanisms that may contribute to the partisan distribution of funding. In all instances, the civil service and other outside bodies have made a series of recommendations in each area, which would improve the allocation of funding. Most, however, appear to be gathering dust.

Chapter Five looks in detail at sports capital grants funded though the National Lottery. It examines the extent to which stated policy, such as encouraging greater numbers to play sport and the targeting of disadvantaged areas, predicts spending and the extent to which political variables make a difference. It also looks at variables such as the changing demographics in order to ascertain whether funding matches the changing patterns of living in Ireland and, of course, the extent to which political variables predict the level of spending. The ministers here include the former Minister for Arts Sports and Tourism, Jim McDaid, as well as his successor, John O'Donoghue. Chapter Six looks in detail at education capital spending, covering both primary and post-primary schools. It examines whether policy variables such as the number of children in a particular school or constituency determines either the size of the number of allocations to that school or district and indeed whether designated disadvantaged schools receive the funding that government policy states they are entitled to. Chapter Seven looks in detail at roads spending, again examining the balance in the predictive power between policy and electoral variables.

Chapter Eight provides qualitative description of the processes and motivations underlining pork barrel or partisan spending in a series of interviews that will provide a reconstruction of the process of decision making within and without Cabinet that allows goods to be distributed. The project will also shed light on the motivations behind the process, illuminating an area of political decision making

that is usually difficult to discern. Specifically, this part of the project seeks to establish whether the capacity exists for the centralised direction of spending for electoral ends in the Irish Cabinet or whether the interests of individual ministers prevail. It consists of extensive interviews with both current and former Cabinet ministers, their advisers and civil servants.

Finally, Chapter Nine will summarise the results across all cases, setting out the extent to which electoral or policy considerations matter most in the range of spending areas. It outlines the implications across a range of areas, from normative considerations about how our democracy should work, to practical considerations about implementing reform, which has been repeatedly called for by the civil service but consistently ignored by ministers. Finally, it provides some recommendations for policy in the future.

Chapter Two: The Institutional Connection

2.1 Abstract

This chapter presents a systematic explication of the ways in which politicians pursue vote-buying strategies, from the US to the UK and beyond. It looks in detail at the institutional structures that incentivise different types of particularistic spending and argues that we can expect that the key figures in terms of the distribution of particularistic spending in a parliamentary system with an open list system (or PR-STV) and weaker parties will be Cabinet ministers acting in either in the collective or in their own individual interests.

2.2 Introduction

There is an enduring belief in politics, as Frisch (1998:113) puts it, that legislators who bring home the bacon are rewarded for their efforts at the ballot box. The formal theory has its roots in Mayhew's (1975) extended essay on the impact of re-election goals on Congress members' behaviour, where he argues that the reelection incentive gives rise to a bias towards distributive legislation, as it is for such benefits that members believe they can claim credit. The direction, extent and scope of distributive spending are dependent on the institutional context, including the power of the ruling party or parties and the electoral and bureaucratic systems. Previous literature has found incentives to target core voters and swing voters in varying settings. In some settings, parties are the key drivers and, in others, individual legislators. The central argument of this thesis is that, under certain institutional arrangements, the imperative of powerful individual legislators may trump the interest of the majority of voters and indeed the interest of the ruling party. Legislators will use whatever discretion they have over spending allocations to bolster their own electoral chances. At the same time, parties, which have the incentive to target particular groups of supporters or potential supporters, may or may not have the organisational or bureaucratic Chapter Two: Institutions

ability or will to do so effectively. This account therefore offers a novel contribution to the long-established partisan theory of distributive politics or 'pork barrel'.

This chapter is set into three broad areas. First, it turns to the central discussion in the literature of who is targeted by partisan spending. The core debate is one that envisages core supporters being rewarded for their loyalty at the ballot box and swing voters being encouraged to vote for the party or individual that delivers at the next election. I shall consider each of these, placing them in their appropriate institutional settings with a discussion of the expected differences between presidential and parliamentary systems, strong and weak party settings, and party and candidate-centred electoral arenas. I will argue that, to date, the impact on incentives produced by open list and transferable vote systems, which heighten intra-party competition, has been largely ignored by the existing literature and I will devise a new schematic setting out the varying incentives to deliver to core or swing voters under a range of institutional structures. This section will be completed with a discussion of the likely form of delivery in Ireland's institutional context, delivery to core voters by individually powerful legislators.

The second section will identify the mechanisms by which funds may be allocated in a partisan manner. It is of course worth noting that, even if the institutional structures incentivise an individual or party to deliver partisan funds, there must be both the opportunity and the ability to do so. In the US, the literature highlights the importance of 'logrolling', or the bargaining and trading of influence or votes among legislators to achieve the passage of projects that are of interest to one another – or, to put it more colloquially, "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours". In Europe and elsewhere, there is little discussion of the mechanism. Are parties the primary organising force, or are distributive decisions within the gift of individually powerful legislators? Or is it also a matter of logrolling – the exchanging of political favours – and, if so, is this simply among ministers or between parties and ministers? In addition, there may be opportunities within the committee system for logrolling, and other possibilities include a lobbying model

or a bureaucratic-centred model. Thus, in this discussion, the motivations and capacities of legislators come into play, while institutional and legislative-executive design impacts the incentive structure. The third section turns to a discussion of the type of goods that are amenable to pork barrel, distinguishing between public, local and private goods. Finally, in the conclusion, there are some expectations about what the discussion may mean for expectations about the mode of delivery in Ireland. The next chapter will then turn to looking in detail at the institutional structures in Ireland.

2.3 Who benefits? Core or swing voters

The vast bulk of the work on partisan spending assumes that politicians desiring to increase their chances of re-election will target specific sub-groups of voters with distributive benefits, that is, either core or swing voters. However, this was not always the case and the first theories of partisanship in distributive politics stretch back at least as far as Lowi and Ferejohn (Lowi 1969; Ferejohn 1974), who argued for a universalistic form of redistribution. Ferejohn's key insight, focusing exclusively on the US Congress, was that narrow constituency interest would benefit at the expense of the general taxpayer. This sparked a vast literature on universalism versus geographic targeting, led by Weingast (1979) and leading eventually to one of the definitions still widely used, that distributive policy is that "which targets benefits to specific populations such as constituencies but spreads the cost to the general population through taxation" (Weingast, Shepsle et al. 1981: 96). Nonetheless, empirical researchers found difficulty in validating the universalist arguments, no matter how appealing they were at a theoretical level, sparking a search for a new approach to distributive politics, which came to be known as partisan theories of distributive politics.

Mayhew (1975) was one of the first to make the link between partisanship and distributive policies in a study of the House Public Works Committee. However, the first formal partisan model of distributive policymaking was developed by Cox and McCubbins (1986), who argued that risk-averse politicians will channel

funds to their core supporters, or supporters who would be in their re-election constituency. Cox and McCubbins argued that politicians will favour those voter blocs that promise higher rates of return on their policy investment and that these higher rates are invariably associated with core supporters, easily identified from previous voting behaviour. Their model is driven by the assumption that politicians are risk-averse and that core constituencies are favoured investments because they are closer to the politicians on the "adherence" dimension (1986: 380). Cox, McCubbins and Sullivan (1984: 240) posit that core constituencies are the "best electoral investments available ... because those groups are in the lowest risk class". The least risky investments are also presumed to provide the highest yields, and the rule of "safety first" is thus perfectly suited to the incumbent's need for sustaining a pre-existing and secure majority.

An alternative perspective, based on persuasion and conversion rather than mobilisation of core voters, was laid out by Lindbeck and Weibull (1987), who offer a stylised theoretical account arguing for the logic of targeting swing voters. They countered that the expected electoral return of any given transfer is maximised when outlays are directed at swing voters. Transfers to loyal supporters or to committed opposition voters cannot be expected to affect voting choices, as these voters can be considered core voters whose choice is generally between abstention and voting for their party. In contrast "centrist" or "independent" voters are pivotal, as they are more likely to change party choice between elections and, for that reason, are likely to be courted by incumbents through largesse in the allocation of resources. Of course, these swing voters are also probably "riskier investments than are more ... loyal groups" (Cox, McCubbins et al. 1984: 240), as they may not reward the delivery of largesse with a vote preference. Lindbeck and Weibull also underscore the crucial role played by the degree of competition in the expected electoral outcome. Policy choice, in their probabilistic model, is determined by the nature of the distribution of partisan preferences among the electorate. Where preferences are packed in favour of one party, policy benefits will exclusively favour core constituencies; where

preferences are more evenly divided, swing voters should receive the lion's share of the incumbent's attention.

Dixit and Londregan (1995, 1996) provide a general model of how outcome-contingent transfers are targeted, from which both the Cox-McCubbins and Lindbeck-Weibull models emerge as special cases. Following Cox (2006) I follow their exposition here. Dixit and Londgregan envision a left-wing party, L, and a right-wing party, R, competing for votes (implicitly in a single-member district). Each party k announces a vector of transfers, Tk = (T1k,...,Tnk), where Tjk is the per capita transfer that party k promises to group j (voters are partitioned into n groups). Promises are credible ex ante and, if the relevant party wins, honored ex post. Party k's transfer policy must satisfy a $\sum_j N_j \ T_{jk}$ budget constraint, = B, where N_j is the number of voters in group j. Party k chooses T_k in order to maximize its vote total, $\sum_j N_j P_{jk}((T_{jL}, T_{jR}))$, where $P_{jk}(T_{jL}, T_{jR})$ is the proportion of group j's members who will vote for party k, given the transfer promises T_{jL} and T_{jR} . Although the model accommodates other possibilities, for expositional ease it is best to consider the special case in which $T_{jk} \ge 0$ for all j,k.

To formalize Cox and McCubbins' notion of "core support groups," Dixit and Londregan assume that the consumption benefit that members of group j will actually receive, when party k promises an amount T_{jk} , is $t_{jk} = (1 - \theta_{jk})T_{jk}$. Here, θ_{jk} E[0,1] denotes the proportion of the subsidies that k intends to deliver to group j that will actually reach it. Group j is a core support group for party k when θ_{jk} is relatively small. As Dixit and Londregan (1996, p. 1134) point out, "A party's core constituencies need not prefer its issue position. It is the party's advantage over its competition at swaying voters in a group with offers of particularistic benefits that makes the group core." In practice, core groups tend also to provide solid support to their party but it is important to recognize that there are two distinct notions of what makes a group core. Following Cox (2006), I shall refer to voters with a strong preference for a particular party as its "core" voters; in addition, a party's core voters will be those it knows well and to whom it can more effectively and credibly target benefits.

To provide some micro-foundations for the group response functions, $P_{jk}(T_{jL}, T_{jR})$, Dixit and Londregan proceed as follows. All voters in a given group are assumed to have the same income, denoted y_j for group j (so the groups can be thought of as income or occupational strata). Voter h is assumed to have an innate preference for party R, represented by a real number X_h . If voter h is in group j, then h votes for L if $U_j[y_j + (1 - \theta_{jL})T_{jL}] > U_j[y_j + (1 - \theta_{jR})T_{jR}] + X_h$, and votes for R otherwise. Here, $U_j[y_j + (1 - \theta_{jk})T_{jk}]$ represents the utility that a member of group j derives from his or her total income, $y_j + (1 - \theta_{jk})T_{jk}$. Letting Φ_j be the cumulative distribution function of X_h in group j, $P_{jk}(T_{jL},T_{jR}) = \Phi_j[U_j[y_j + (1 - \theta_{jL})T_{jL}] - U_j[y_j + (1 - \theta_{jR})T_{jR}]]$.

Dixit and Londregan show that, when the parties have no special relationships with any groups (e.g., $\theta_{jL} = \theta_{jR} = 1$ for all j), the parties' allocations are driven by the density of swing voters in each group—as in the Lindbeck-Weibull model. As larger and larger asymmetries in the parties' abilities to deliver benefits arise, however, the parties' allocations are driven more and more by the core voter logic of promising benefits to those groups to which the party can most effectively deliver benefits Essentially, where politicians can pigeonhole benefits and tax shares, they will favour loyal supporters with benefits and punish opponents with taxes. Where they cannot, due to the presence, for example, of a professional civil service, they will look to attract unattached swing voter groups with group-specific policy benefits. However, the underlying assumption in their model, when elections are highly competitive, is that the variation in the preference profiles of targeted swing voters is not large.

Dixit and Londregan also propose that groups differ in their willingness to compromise on ideological commitments in exchange for particularistic benefits. Less ideologically oriented groups are more likely to compromise ideology and thus should expect to receive greater rewards from incumbents. They argue that politicians will favour groups that respond with less variance to similar outlays only insofar as they promise the same rate of electoral return as other groups.

2.4 Introducing institutions

A more recent vintage of formal models (including Lizzeri and Persico 2001; Milesi-Ferretti, Perotti et al. 2002; Persson, Tabellini et al. 2002), which build upon the probabilistic voting models of Lindbeck and Weibull (1987) and Dixit and Londregan (1996), have explicitly introduced institutional differences in combining the provision of universalistic or private public goods with targeted transfers. The first distinction is generally whether the regime is parliamentary or presidential. Presidential systems such as the US, the birthplace of pork barrel theories, are often characterised as incentivising pork barrel, given that legislators are relatively free from control by the national party, there are large resources, and there is a strong committee system that underpins logrolling. Parliamentary systems, in contrast, have often been assumed to stymie constituency-level politics, given their foundations on party government, limited individual resources, and voter loyalty for parties rather than individuals (Mayhew 1975; Cain, Ferejohn et al. 1984; Bowler, Farrell et al. 1996). Individual legislators in parliamentary systems simply do not have the resources to which the government has access. Thus, parliamentary systems deny the individual legislator "both the incentive and opportunity" to construct a personal power base (Denemark 2000). In addition, parliamentary parties face a collective incentive to assure the victory of their most vulnerable colleagues in marginal seats. The models in Persson and Tabellini (Persson, Roland et al. 2000) also suggest that parliamentary regimes should provide more public goods than presidential regimes.

In general, empirical results for presidential regimes have been mixed. Some studies of distributive benefits in the US find that parties target pork projects to swing districts (Stein and Bickers 1994; Bickers and Stein 1996), while other studies find a bias toward core supporters (for example, Ansolabehere and Snyder Jr; Levitt and Snyder Jr 1995; Ansolabehere, Hansen et al. 2007). Others, including Strömberg (2002), have provided evidence suggesting that civilian employment in the US between 1948 and 1996 was affected by the joint probability of a state being pivotal in the Electoral College and having a close state race. Testing these models has not been limited to developed countries. In

the context of the Peruvian Social Fund (Foncodes), Shady (1996) finds that, controlling for poverty, core Fujimori supporters received disproportionate funding. His results on swing voters are more tentative, since they only achieve statistical significance when poverty is not controlled for. In the case of Mexico, Molinar and Weldon (1994) provide some state-level evidence suggesting that the PRI targeted its core supporters. Estevez, Diaz and Magaloni (Estévez, Magaloni et al. 2002) show, also in the case of Mexico, that core municipalities and places where the margin of victory was close both received disproportionate allocations of funds.

Results from parliamentary regimes have also been mixed. Dahlberg and Johansson (2002; 2004) directly test the competing hypotheses of core versus swing voters for the case of Swedish municipalities. They find strong support for the swing voter models and contradictory support for the core vote, since more funds go to municipalities where the measured core support is low. In the UK (Ward and John 1999), the mechanism is essentially seat rather than vote maximisation, and if a party can gain or retain power by winning a small number of marginal seats, then the government will attempt to allocate benefits towards electorally vulnerable or winnable areas. Khemani (2003) has tested whether the core or swing strategies prevailed in the central transfer of statutory, plan and discretional funds to Indian states. The study finds that plan grants are disproportionately allocated to states governed by the same party as the one in control of the federal government, but more resources are allocated when the party controls a lower proportion of legislative seats. This finding suggests a strategy of attempting to maximise seats in the federal legislature, rather than concentrating in core states, more akin to a swing strategy.

However, politicians seldom devote all of their budgets to attempting to buy swing voters: a fraction of discretionary expenditures is usually devoted to core supporters. There are three reasons why politicians might not devote all of their resources to swing voters. First, if an incumbent political party invested all of its transfers into swing voters, it would face a hard time sustaining the loyalty of its core voters. In a repeated play, core supporters would strategically learn that

opposition backers, not themselves, are the voter group most likely to be benefited by the incumbent. Second, political parties can't thrive by systematically representing the interests of voter groups other than their core, because their turnout cannot be taken for granted. Third, swing voters may have a commitment problem in terms of guaranteeing a vote to any particular party, making them risky bets. Private goods are hence employed (see discussion below on types of goods). The verdict as to whether incumbents allocate money to swing or core constituencies is still in the air, with recent contributions introducing further institutional differences, such as electoral systems and party strength.

Different electoral systems also provide different incentives for distribution, with the incentives varying significantly across systems. As Hix (2004) set out at one end of the spectrum, closed-list proportional representation (PR) systems represent the most *party-centred* settings. In these systems, parties present lists of candidates, and voters cannot influence the order of the candidates on them. Closed-list systems consequently allow party leaders to exert a high degree of control over their legislators. Without the strategic need to appeal directly to the electorate, candidates have no incentives to break ranks with the party line. In fact, an individual candidate has a positive incentive to go along with the party line to improve her position on the party list. Nonetheless, Tavits (2009) found that, even in the Nordic countries – in other words, a parliamentary system with strong parties and party-centred elections – there was evidence of pork barrel directed towards core supporters, leading her to postulate target spending as a reelection strategy followed by incumbent governments regardless of system features.

In the middle of the spectrum, single-member-simple-plurality (SMSP) (that is, first-past-the-post) and single-member-alternative-vote or double-ballot systems promote a mixture of partisan and candidate appeals. In these systems, voters choose individual candidates rather than lists of candidates from each party, an approach that encourages candidates to develop personal recognition and support in their district. These intermediate systems also allow voters to punish legislators by voting them out of office if they fail to represent their district's interests

effectively. However, these systems do not allow candidates to make direct appeals against rival candidates from their own party. Therefore, few voters are aware of the specific policy differences between the candidates in their constituency and their respective party leaderships and, consequently, the general level of support for the policies and personalities of the party leaderships has a significant impact on the electoral fortunes of the candidates in each constituency – even on those of incumbent legislators. So, even in these systems, candidates have incentives to support their parties' positions, so as to increase the overall electoral competitiveness of their party. In a sense, these systems are closed, party-list systems with district magnitudes of one. The exception where the lack of intra party choice does not hold true is when there are primaries, which underpins the focus on candidates in the US.

At the other end of the spectrum, fully open-list PR systems and singletransferable-vote (STV) systems represent the most candidate-centred settings. In fully open-list PR systems, candidates on each party's list are often presented in no strategic order – for example, the candidates can be listed alphabetically – and voters must pick an individual candidate. The number of personal votes each candidate receives then determines the final order on the list for the allocation of seats. Similarly, in STV systems, voters exercise ordinal preferences for the candidates in multi-member constituencies. To be elected, candidates are required to secure a quota of votes and, if not enough candidates meet this threshold, 'second preferences' are then taken into account and so on. In both systems, there are significant incentives for candidates to cultivate personal identification and support among the electorate and to compete with candidates from their own party, in addition to candidates from other parties. The general level of support for the policies and personalities of a party's leadership will have an impact on the number of votes cast for all the candidates from that particular party. And incumbent legislators may have a higher level of recognition than their rivals among the voters. In contrast to party-centred and intermediate systems, however, these systems provide candidates from the same party with positive incentives to differentiate themselves from other candidates in their party and, if their

constituents desire it, to demonstrate their independence from their party leadership (Hix 2004). Of course there is intra-party competition at the candidate selection stage regardless of the electoral system. It is possible that this may counter the effect of the electoral system, in that even in a closed list system candidate selectors are likely to be aware of the differences among candidates whether these have to do with policy, pork delivery or geography, for instance.

Essentially, rules that foster internal competition by allowing voters to choose between members of the same party – as with primaries, open lists and single transferable and non-transferable votes – create strong incentives for the party rank and file to focus on activities that allow them to differentiate from copartisans in order to get nominated or elected. These contrast with closed-list systems, where voters cast preferences for a party list rather than individual candidates. In candidate-centred systems, legislators seeking re-election have strategic incentives to cultivate personal support among the electorate (Carey and Shugart 1995). They argue that closed-list PR systems are the most effective at mitigating the politician's propensity to cultivate a personal vote through pork and other particularistic policies. By contrast, in systems in which voters cannot exercise preferences for individual candidates, legislators' re-election prospects depend on the general level of support for the policies and personalities of their party leadership (Hix 2004). In addition, most PR governments are multi-party and this impacts on how a party's preferences are aggregated. Party candidates in multi-member districts tend to target niche groups of voters (Cox 2006). In addition, because many PR systems are multi-party, how preferences are aggregated has a strong impact. Bawn and Rosenbluth (2006) argue that such particularistic policies are actually a hallmark of PR, where they are used to cement multi-party coalition governments.

Party strength is also an important determinant of the incentives towards pork barrel: strong parties ought to direct goods towards areas that will maximise seats for the party, while weaker party systems will allow individual legislators to maximise votes. Primo and Snyder (2007) argue that "strong" political parties will reduce the demand for pork-barrel spending and, in the process, reduce total

spending. They argue that, if parties in the electorate are strong, then legislators will demand less pork because of a decreased incentive to secure the "personal vote" via inefficient pork-barrel spending. In addition, party leaders, charged with attending to the collective electoral prospects of their rank-and-file members, have a much greater stake in national policy outcomes, including the provision of public goods. However, this ignores the interaction with the electoral system, where the degree of candidate centeredness has a potentially large impact, as we saw earlier.

The interaction of the electoral system with the party system is the basis of the typology set out by McGillivray (2004), who looked at proportional and majoritarian systems by party strength. The definition of party strength employed by McGillivray is whether the voter is choosing a party with an associated package of policies or the voter is choosing an individual who will enter the bargaining process to further constituency interests (McGillivray 2004: 45). In strong party systems the public votes for parties rather than for individual candidates and the electoral organisation is controlled by parties, not by candidates. Elected representatives toe the party line, voting with the party line when it is demanded. As a result the political actor is the party in government. In contrast, in weak party systems individual legislators are more important in policy formulation and are more beholden to their constituency for their political survival.

There are also two separate institutional features which affect party strength: party discipline and legislative agenda setting power. For example, in closed list systems party discipline is high as the party controls the candidates' position on the list. In majoritarian systems the outcome varies with countries such as the UK and Australia having high party discipline but low in the US where candidates are nominated by district primaries. In open list systems where it is the number of votes which a candidate receives that determines the order of election, party discipline is often low. In terms of legislative decision-making, in most parliamentary democracies the cabinet control over the agenda gives the government considerable power to push through bills. In contrast in a presidential

democracy, the legislature typically controls the agenda. For McGillivray this rubric means that the US slots neatly into a weak party system, while the UK ticks the boxes for a strong party system. The Irish case is more indeterminate, a problem which the following chapter focuses on.

McGillivray noted the fact that the relevant median voter is different in strongparty systems and in weak-party systems, as well as in plurality electoral systems and proportional representation electoral systems. As McGillivray (2004, 18) puts it, a dollar is best spent on a district where its impact is most likely to influence who wins that district. Policies that improve the popular vote, rather than maximise seats, may politically misallocate resources. Theoretically, she establishes that legislators in electoral systems with single-member districts, where political parties are internally cohesive, have incentives and capabilities to target local public goods to marginal electoral districts. Their counterparts in similar electoral systems with weak parties target safe districts. In this context, policy outcomes are determined by the majority coalition that comes together to pass legislation. The coalition that forms for one bill may be completely different to the coalition that forms for another bill. Thus, many bills are non-partisan and are the result of benefits being distributed to individually powerful congressmen or those that do deals with them. Legislators in PR systems with cohesive political parties tend to target government supporters.

However, McGillivray ignored the different impact on incentives produced by open list and transferable vote systems, which heighten intra-party competition (competition between co-partisans on the same ticket), amplifying their ambition to distinguish themselves and lessening the impact of national party oriented policy, which lifts all co-partisans. As Ames (1995|: 430-431) writes, Brazil's open-list PR and weak party system "hinders voter control" and "forces candidates to seek single-issue niches, to spend lavishly ... Brazil's electoral system motivates deputies to seek pork." Golden (Golden and Picci 2008) also found that, in Italy, where an open-list PR system generated high levels of intraparty competition and factionalism, the effects of particularistic policy were significant and measurable. Thus, McGillivray's rubric needs to be extended to

take account of the diverse types of PR system and the varying incentives that they produce. Golden and Picci (2008) did this extending it to weak-party open-list systems such as Italy. They assumed that the Italian powerful individual legislators were delivering to their own core supporters, at least in aggregate. However, certainly in Ireland, I argue that, rather than seeing a collective form of delivery to core supporters, we will find an individual method of partisan delivery where Cabinet ministers look after themselves but not the constituencies of colleagues. The classification of the party structure is also crucial. Golden and Picci (2008) argue that Italy can be fitted into the existing weak party proportional system. But other countries, such as Ireland, which we shall see in more detail in the following chapter, are generally categorised as strong party systems. One of the problems with this sort of classification is that it is often based on the legislative decision-making role of parties and not the extent to which it is candidate centred.

However, I argue that the parliamentary and the electoral role can, in reality, be conceived to operate independently of one another and that the electoral system operates fairly independently of other determinants of party strength, such as candidate selection rules and legislative-executive design. Thus, a party can be strong in a parliamentary context but weak in an electoral context. One of the crucial determinates of the decision as to whether a candidate will stand under a particular party label can be made centrally (by the national party executive or a national party congress) or at a lower level (by a regional or local party caucus) (Gallagher 1988). As Schattschneider (1942: 1) famously pointed out: "He who controls the nomination owns the party." This may be true when examining formal de jure rules, but it may not reflect the de facto and informal processes: there are likely to be multiple processes and thus no individual or body may actually control the processes (Gallagher 1988). Nonetheless, the more centralised the candidate-selection process is, the greater the ability of the party leadership to influence the behaviour of its legislators will be. In addition, as Hix (2004) points out, the structure of legislative-executive relations determines the extent to which parties in government can control their parliamentary supporters. In parliamentary systems, in which the chief executive is 'fused' to a parliamentary majority, governing parties can reward loyal backbenchers with ministerial seats, and the re-election prospects of parliamentarians from the majority party are closely associated with the performance of their party leaders in government. Governing parties can also use a vote-of-confidence motion and the threat of parliamentary dissolution to force their backbenchers to follow voting instructions (Huber 1996, Diermeier Feddersen 1998). In presidential systems, by contrast, parties controlling the executive do not have these resources. The executive does not depend on the support of a legislative majority and cannot dissolve the parliament. Hence, even if the party controlling the executive has a majority in the legislature, lack of party discipline in the legislature does not threaten the survival of the executive. As a result, legislative parties in presidential systems are less cohesive than legislative parties in parliamentary systems (Carey 2002).

What this analysis of party structures misses is that it is also possible to envisage a party that is cohesive in a parliamentary system, with members rarely if ever abstaining or voting against a party, yet being given ample scope to differentiate themselves back home and to appeal to candidate-centred voters. Essentially, where voters have the ability to order preferences among co-partisans, as in Irish multi-member districts, legislators have a clear incentive to enhance their personal reputations, which they do not have to share with the co-partisans with whom they are in competition. As individuals face competition from others from within their own party, and those who refrain from backing the party in the interest of their own constituents risk being defeated by challengers who pledge to do so, the incentive is plain. Since the party's national policy positions and reputations are common to all in terms of electoral appeal, it cannot serve as a means of internal differentiation. Internal differentiation requires behaviour that will differentiate the individual legislator back home. So long as that behaviour is largely irrelevant to the party's policy and the individual votes with the party when required, there are unlikely to be repercussions. Thus, individual legislators in some candidatecentric systems may well have the opportunity and incentive to set out distinctive policy positions back home and indeed even vocally disagree with national party

policy where it is not in their constituents' interests. (The next chapter has several examples of this when we turn to look at Irish behaviour.) As long as this does not impact on their voting record, the party nationally may well ignore it. Thus, while electoral systems generate stronger or weaker incentives for individualised behaviour, internal party structures condition the ability of legislators to realise a distinctive local reputation. Lyne argues that excessive pork barrelling that undermines party policy positions such as fiscal discipline, transparency and accountability can thus be damaging to party's reputation (Lyne 2008). Thus, behaviours designed to develop personal reputations can harm both the policy reputation of the party (fiscally conservative, for example) as well as the substantive pursuit of a given policy goal (balanced budget, tax reform). So excessively individualist behaviour could undermine the credibility of party electoral appeals based on collective voting and can provide ammunition for the party's opponents at the next election (Cox and McCubbins 1994). Much, of course, depends on rules. Rules like primaries or open lists, which deny leaders control over the ballot, reduce their leverage in managing individual behaviour, while party-centric rules have, of course, the opposite effect. However, the new literature on internal party organisation has increasingly challenged this view, particularly in Brazil (Lyne 2008). It argues that party leaders will seek to balance personalist electioneering with a national party reputation. According to this view, parties are unlikely to succeed in maintaining unity over time without leadership intervention. The party policy reputation is common to all, and no individual member can be excluded from the electoral benefits derived from such a reputation. And if voters look to the party label for information in their voting decision, all of the party's candidates will benefit or suffer electorally from the party's policy record – whether they were responsible for maintaining that record or not. Another way to conceptualise this is to argue that party strength may be thought of as the degree of candidate-centeredness of elections, as set out by Carey and Shugart, not as a measure of legislative behaviour. Thus, as we move along the continuum of party strength we envisage that where parties are strong, they will opt for a seat rather than a vote maximisation strategy, targeting to a greater extent voters in swing or marginal districts where an additional seat could

prove valuable (Figure 2-1). This is likely to be the case whether in a closed list system such as Israel or a plurality system such as the UK. On the other hand, weaker parties will be either unable or unwilling to control individual legislative behaviour in both plurality systems such as the US and in open list or STV systems such as Italy and Ireland, and thus core supporters are likely to be targeted.

Institutions and distributive spending		
	Strong parties	Weaker parties
MMD/	Party - Swing	n/a
SMD SMD	Party - Swing	Logrolling – Core
MMD	Party - Swing	Individual – Core
Open/ STV		

Figure 2-1 -Institutions and distributive spending

Crucially, however, these will not necessarily be the party's core supporters but rather the core supporters of individual decision-making legislators. In other words, individually powerful Cabinet ministers in open list parliamentary systems will be motivated by their access to their own particularities spending pot. They may also have an incentive to boost co-partisans in other districts whose return will boost their chances of returning to the Cabinet. Thus, when rules allow voters an intra-party choice, personalised electioneering that does not interfere with the party reputation becomes a net plus in terms of party electoral success, subject to vote management as necessary. In other words, effective party organisation is that which, within its given system, strikes the electorally optimal balance between maintaining the collective reputation for providing national polices and personalist electioneering. Where there is logrolling among legislators, this may result in core supporters of a large number of legislators being targeted, but where

there is no logrolling, it is likely to mean simply the core supporters of the relevant decision maker. It is to a discussion of this and other issues when it comes to how funds are actually apportioned that the next sections turns.

2.5 Partisan distribution – how is it achieved?

The ability to participate in pork-barrel spending depends on a number of factors, primarily access to legislative resources, but other systems also need to exist – for example, party structures that allow decision making, committee structures for logrolling, lobbying structures, and a sympathetic bureaucracy are all possible methods by which partisan funds may be allocated in different systems. In the US, this access is provided to individually powerful legislators, often those on senior committees and so on. In parliamentary systems, it is parties, which control access to the resources but generally through the involvement of individual Cabinet ministers who are in control of various government departments. In a strong party system, the assumption is that the party may decide how to spend any partisan discretionary fund and that this message would be communicated to the individual decision maker in the Cabinet. However, there are self-imposed limits, as an overreliance on discretionary expenditure can be directly damaging to the party's policy-based appeal. One assumption common to many of the formal models outlined above is that the politicians involved have the ability to allocate resources as they see fit. In what Bickers and Stein (1994; 2000), call the "traditional view" of grant allocation, political parties manipulate policies to their advantage "through their control of committees, the flow of legislation on the floor, and coalition building." This view emphasises the role of pork barrel in cementing bargains among individual legislators and in building cohesion within governing legislative coalitions.

A long-standing US-dominated literature emphasises that parties play a weak role in legislative matters, distributive politics is decentralised, and the seniority and committee assignments of individual legislators are decisive in the allocation of spending, while party electoral considerations matter correspondingly little. ¹¹ The committee structure itself facilitates the strategic distribution of pork projects (Weingast and Marshall 1988). Vote trading both within and across committees enables the successful passing of particularised benefits. Logrolling between committees and non-committee members when the issues under committee jurisdiction are not universally salient is "easiest to arrange" (Maltzman 1995). Committees that deal with narrow, homogenous issues tend to be considered to be constituency based. Non-committee members are likely to allow members of such committees more discretion in their allocation decisions because the programmes under their power are of little interest, or salience, to them (Maltzman 1995, 678). This committee-centred approach explains why pork programmes are able to pass in legislation, even when they benefit a minority. Non-committee members will want to support a committee's proposed pork-barrel programmes, even if they do not benefit from them, in exchange for support for the programmes that do benefit their district (Weingast 1994).

This US-centric logrolling strategy differs from the more universalistic, coalition-forming approach. Mayhew's (1975) characterisation of universalism is that legislators' common goal of re-election will act as an incentive to form large coalitions to bring geographically concentrated benefits to their own districts, with costs evenly dispersed throughout the legislature. However, as we noted above, universalism has not generally been supported by empirical evidence (Collie 1988; Bickers and Stein 1996) while projects will be successful due to the logrolling across areas of special interests (Weingast and Marshall 1988). Logrolling is not exclusively an inter-committee activity, as members can, and often do, trade votes within their own committees to provide for their own "district-directed" benefits (Weingast and Marshall 1988; Adler 2002). Members are likely to trade votes to help ensure that, when the time comes, their particular projects will get through. All members are driven by the desire to get their

¹¹ One exception is Levitt and Snyder (1995) who investigate the role of political parties in Congressional spending decisions. They find that spending is tilted towards districts controlled by the majority party in Congress.

district-specific benefits passed through Congress, so they can use those acquisitions to aid their re-election efforts.

An alternative perspective, set in the parliamentary arena, is set out by Dixit and Londregan (1995), who argue that pork-barrel programmes are "vote buying" schemes that mediate electoral competition among political parties. Spending decisions are centralised among party decisions makers, with little role for individual legislators. The core assumption is simply that politicians are bound only by resource constraints and not by any restraint on behaviour. Even the empirical studies of the political determinants of grant distribution generally assume rather than demonstrate that such targeting can be achieved. For example, Milligan and Smart (2005) argue that Canadian governments enforce strict party discipline in legislative procedures through confidence procedures and members of parliament (MPs) only rarely vote across party lines. The model, a version of Baron and Ferejohn (1989), is a formal game-theoretic one, where proposal power rests with the prime minister and MPs vote. They find that greater spending is allocated to Cabinet ministers and to swing districts held by the opposition than to core districts held by the governing party. Also looking at Canada, Crampton (2004) notes that individual MPs have a role explicitly written into the fundingapproval process, which make it easy for Crampton to apportion credit for the federal fund allocation. This, however, is specific only to the grants that he examines. Similarly, in Sweden, Dahlberg and Johansson (2002) specifically pick on one type of largesse, which can be distributed without regard to rules and regulations. Thus the grants they examine are temporary, are not intended to fulfil equity objectives, were made one month prior to an election, and had received much media attention. Dasgusta and Dhillon et al (2001), in examining federal grants to states in India, assume that lobbying power is limited to government MPs. Cadot et al (2006) introduce a lobbying variable. They argue that parties that have been in power for long uninterrupted stretches – such as the Gaullists in France in the 1960s or the PRI in Mexico, or indeed Fianna Fáil in Ireland become so cosy with domestic lobbies, not just because of the familiarity created by repeated interaction, but also because taking re-election for granted tilts

politicians' incentives away from electoral motives and in favour of lobbies. Again, there is little discussion of the specifics of the mechanism – whether, for example, there is a formal or informal mechanism at Cabinet. Golden and Picci (2008) simply states that it is "reasonable to assume" that the allocation of distributive benefits is under the control of national legislators and members of government. Ward and John (1999) argue that, given the decentralisation of power in Whitehall, it is "plausible to suggest" that the UK national government adjusts its financial allocation to local authorities for electoral advantage. They admit that ministers' ability to steer money to constituencies by allocating to local authorities may be imperfect, but they argue that this is simply because the geographic boundaries may not overlap. Again, they rely on a formal model of bargaining rather than setting out how the mechanism by which the ministers can achieve this allocation of funding operates.

One possibility that has been advanced is the involvement of the bureaucracy, given the recognition that "awards are made in the byways of bureaucracies" (Lowry and Potoski 2008). Nonetheless, little systematic work examines the role of the executive in distributive politics. In his seminal work on bureaucratic allocation strategies, Arnold (1979) provided empirical evidence from the House to substantiate his executive-legislative bargaining theory, in which bureaucrats strategically reward members of Congress through "allocations strategies" and an "exchange relationship" between bureaucrats and legislators. Essentially, in this view, administrative agencies strategically make allocation decisions as a way to gain favour with members of Congress. Stein and Bickers (1995) argue that agencies operate in a policy subsystem with Congress to secure political and budgetary support for an agency's portfolio programmes. Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni (2004) theorise that the multiple principals of bureaus mandate explicit consideration of the ideological preferences of legislators and executive actors. These cross-pressures are "strategically balanced on the margin by rational agencies when making distributive policy choices" – in other words, the perceived wishes of legislators and executive actors are taken into account in an informal manner. Pork-barrel spending augments the electoral chances of members of

Congress, and agencies reward ideological allies (and punish opponents) in Congress because they are most likely to support their programmes in the legislative process. At the same time, bureaus provide benefits to the president both through the relative strength of pork allocations to presidential co-partisans in Congress and by directing funds to electorally important states in presidential races. In a small part of the literature, legislators are also seen as delegating implementation decisions to agencies for grants (Evans 2004; Shepsle and Weingast 1981; Stein and Bickers 1994b; Weingast Shepsle and Johnsen 1981; Weingast 1994).

More recently, Bertelli and Grose (2006) have highlighted the importance of ideology. When considering the involvement of the bureaucracy, the starting point is that, when implementing policies, executive branch officials balance the interest and influences of political principals with their expert judgements about where, when and how to direct resources toward achieving policy goals. Bertelli and Grose claim that the policy competition between Congress and president engenders bureaucratic autonomy beyond that found in statutory language. The circumstances are, of course, different in a parliamentary system such as Ireland, and we shall look at this in the following chapter. Suffice to say that their core observation is that pork-barrel spending augments the electoral chances of politicians and agencies by rewarding allies and punishing opponents because they are most likely to support their programmes.

2.6 Distribution, redistribution and public and private goods

Even if a legislator has both the incentive and the opportunity to make partisan distributions, are there particular goods that he is more likely to target than others? The possibilities include manipulating macroeconomic policy variables and allocating funds in a geographic manner, which is the activity concentrated on here. Geographic allocations also come in a number of guises, from public to local to private. To turn first to macroeconomic manipulation, there is evidence that voters vote on the basis of aggregate economic performance. Lewis-Beck (1988)

argues persuasively that voters are in fact more likely to vote sociotropically than on their own pocketbooks. These political business cycle models, set out clearly in Tufte's (1978) *Political Control of the Economy*, demonstrate that economic conditions before an election significantly affect voters' choices and politicians attempt to take advantage of this. Indeed there is significant empirical support for both of these premises, many of which are summarised in Alesina and Rosenthal (1995). Goods utilised in this way are generally universalistic transfer payments. In other words, cheques may be brought forward in advance of an election, social welfare rates increased in advance or, in Ireland's case, special deals such as the Special Savings Investment Accounts, which provided for 12% returns on savings over a five-year period, paying out just in advance of the last general election in 2007.

In other models, opportunistic policymakers stimulate the economy before an election to reduce unemployment, with the inflationary cost of the policy coming after (Lindbeck 1976). In these models, set out clearly in Nordhaus, Alesina et al (1989), opportunism has no preference over inflation and unemployment and the structure of the economy is summarised by a downward sloping Philips curve yielding a trade off between unemployment and expected inflation. While voters have a preference for both low unemployment and low inflation, they have short memories, allowing opportunistic incumbents to manipulate macroeconomic time paths to their electoral benefit. In many of these models, governments utilise expansionary monetary policy, with unemployment falling due to high anticipated money growth. Nonetheless, the empirical evidence in support of these accounts is weak (Paldam 1979; Lewis-Beck 1988; Alesina and Roubini 1992). A largescale cross-national paper (Lane and Milesi-Ferretti 2001) examined two measures of public spending, general government final consumption and currents disbursements as a share of GDP in 20 OECD countries and found that the relationship implicit in the electoral business cycle is hard to find in parliamentary systems. However, more recently, a number of studies (Shi and Svensson 2006, Persson and Tabellini 2003) find evidence of an electoral deficit or expenditure cycle in a broad cross-section of recently democratised countries, an empirical finding that Brender and Drazen (2005) argue reflects electoral cycles in a subset of these countries. The 'new democracies' are characterised by increases in government deficits in election years in the first few elections after the transition to democracy. In contrast, in 'established' democracies, they find no statistically significant political cycle across countries in aggregate central government expenditure or deficits, a finding that is robust to various specifications.

In addition, with monetary policy increasingly under the control of independent central banks, governments are more likely to turn to fiscal policy – in other words, tax and spending projects¹². Transfer programmes targeted to sub-groups may be particularly useful in this regard – for example, an increase in social security benefits for the elderly or tax cutting that favours a particular socioeconomic group. As Drazen and Eslava (2006) argue, it is likely that politicians use election-year fiscal policy to influence voters in such a way that the overall government budget deficit is not significantly affected? This could occur, they argue, if some groups of voters are targeted at the expense of others. Groups whose voting behaviour is seen as especially susceptible to targeted fiscal policy may be targeted with higher expenditures and transfers, or by tax cuts, financed by expenditure cuts or tax increases on other groups whose votes are much less sensitive to such policy.

The initial distinction was between distributive goods, such as land, and redistributive goods, such as grants, but, with the introduction of partisan interests to distributive politics, this began to blur. In the first accounts of pork barrel, such as that of Lowi (1969), the main distinction was the non-partisan nature of distributive policies as opposed to the strongly ideological nature of redistributive policies. However, if distributive policies are used for electoral goals, then they become as contentious, which make the distinction drawn in the early literature a little artificial. This blurring is also obvious in both the Cox and McCubbins and

¹² Indeed, as already mentioned, Tufte (1978) argues that increasing transfers and cutting taxes before an election is the most robust empirical characteristic of the political business cycle.

Dixit and Londregan contributions, but to emphasise the possible partisan nature of the distributive goods, they are in general simply all labelled as redistributive goods. In general, and following Sacks (1976), however, we can argue that politicians can use public funds in three different ways: (1) they can provide universal public goods that can benefit everyone (extensive public goods); (2) they can target localities (local public goods); or (3) they can target individuals and specific groups (private goods) (Drazen 2000). The choice between local public goods and private ones is highly consequential for economic development, because private goods do not bring the social benefits that public goods, even if politically manipulated in their allocations, can. From a normative perspective, the poor (or a segment of the less well-off economically) are better off when private goods are offered than when they are not. However, they would probably be better served with extensive or local public goods.

The literature has not been very careful in distinguishing the types of goods that politicians provide in order to obtain electoral support (Díaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2004). The various types of goods might have very different effects in their capacity to change the outcome of an election. At one end of the spectrum are universal public goods are delivered to all, with no rivalry or excludability. Those goods are typically comprised of universal welfare state benefits, or universal education or health care. The intermediate category, local public goods, has its delivery circumscribed to local jurisdictions and comprises most of the projects that most have in mind when thinking about 'pork' or particularistic spending. The final category, private and club goods, are delivered to individuals and specific groups that can exclude others from the consumption of such goods. Those private goods are typically provided to core supporters, but they might also be the type of benefits that some swing groups who could be conceived of as special interests. These goods, which may include state-appointed positions on boards and so on, may also be used to reward small groups of core supporters, such as those who contribute to party funding.

As Cox and McCubbins hypothesise, legislators facing personal vote incentives will focus on providing 'private or local public' goods. These goods are the most efficient means of enhancing their personal reputations with constituents because they are 'targetable'. Policies of this type include geographically concentrated investment projects, expenditures and transfers targeted to specific demographic groups, or tax cuts benefiting certain sectors. It is also worth noting that many government programmes that are not explicitly redistributive, nonetheless provide benefits to some groups and impose costs on others, and hence have distributive implications. These can include tariffs, quotas or licensing requirements (Drazen 2000: 325). Other examples are public works programmes such as highways, dams and mass transit, or other construction projects where the redistributive effects are heavily geographical. To the extent that a programme targets some groups for net benefits, others for net costs, the general Dixit Londregan analysis is relevant. It is at these kinds of projects, where the geographic allocation across constituency boundaries can be measured, that this project is particularly targeted. Of course, there are many cases where there are disguised transfers. For example, a public works programme can be located in a specific area, which will increase the value of the surrounding land. Since voters probably do not have a strong sense of the optimal location, the implicit transfer of choosing one location over another is well hidden. In terms of the allocations that will be examined in this thesis, all are essentially local public goods, so that the consumption by an individual does not deter others from consuming it. Thus, if a sports club is built, everyone in that locality can potentially join and use the facilities. Children in an area all have the ability to apply to a particular school and all in an area will drive on the roads. However, these are all geographically targeted and hence local, and it is possible to conceive that their delivery in one area means that the funds will not be available in another area to deliver similar goods.

2.7 Conclusion

The central distinction in the distributive spending literature is whether parties and legislators will deliver to core or swing voters in a bid to enhance their electoral

chances at the next election. This choice, which delivers the maximum political benefits, depends on a number of institutional factors, such as regime type, electoral system and party system. In the US, where the bulk of the literature is derived, in a presidential, plurality, weak party system, we saw that it is likely that core voters will be targeted. That is, powerful individual legislators in a position to logroll in Congress will ensure that benefits are delivered home. In other circumstances, such as the parliamentary, plurality, strong party system in the UK, it makes sense for the party to target its swing voters – in other words, to try to ensure that those seats that may change at the next election go predominantly to it. In the parliamentary, proportional, multi-member and candidate-centred system such as Ireland, we can expect that Cabinet ministers will attempt to use their bureaucratic decision-making ability to distribute largesse. They may, of course, do the bidding of the party, looking after collective interests, or their interests may trump the interest of the ruling party, and powerful Cabinet ministers will ensure that they compete with their co-partisans by ensuring that goods are delivered home. In addition, unlike the Congressmen of US lore, they may not have the opportunity to logroll. It is thus possible that we will see a particularly individualistic delivery of partisan goods, which benefits the core voters of the relevant Cabinet ministers but not the collective interests of the party as a whole.

It is also an open question whether the party has the ability or the desire to ensure that its own needs are met and, indeed, the extent to which Cabinet ministers can direct funding. Indeed, it is vital to note that there are constraints on Cabinet minsters' ability to deliver funds to areas where they see fit. There are general reputational costs to the party of large-scale pork-barrel largesse, and the practice may be somewhat curtailed with legislators instead relying on more cleintalistic, less costly campaigning measures, such as helping with bureaucratic decision making and so on. We shall discuss this more in the next chapter when we turn our focus to Ireland. But suffice it to say that we can expect Cabinet ministers to allocate discretionary distributive goods from their own portfolios to voters in a way that they hope will maximise their election chances or maintain a coalition that is invulnerable to challengers.

It is also vital that we identify how any allocation of resources is done, given that the literature generally assumes it. In other words, who says what to whom? Do Cabinet ministers make each small decision, or do private secretaries or political advisers work on their behalf? Or perhaps it is the bureaucracy itself that serves to anticipate a minister's needs or wants? We will look at this in more detail in the following chapter and in detail in Chapter Eight. It is possible, for example, that he will engage in logrolling, trading favours with other members of the Cabinet, imitating the legislators of the US – this could be quite random or could be the glue necessary to secure a coalition. However, coordinated logrolling or systematic targeting of particular voters on behalf of the party is also likely to be burdensome in terms of organisational structures. Indeed, as we shall see in Chapter Eight, few agents, whether politicians or civil servants, believe that the mechanisms for the occurrence of significant coordinated logrolling among ministers exist.

Briefly, given that Ireland is a PR MMD system, we can expect that either the party interest takes precedence and swing voters are targeted, or that the interest of individually powerful ministers will trump the interests of the party, and core voters in his own bailiwick will benefit. It is to this discussion that we now turn. We will look in more detail at the institutional structures prevailing in Ireland, which make any of these outcomes more likely than any other.

Chapter Three: Irish Incentives

3.1 Abstract

The Irish party system's foundations on multi-member districts, strong constituency organisations, and localism makes for campaigns that are highly personalised, while STV makes candidate-centred voting compatible with party voting to a degree that is virtually unique. In addition, it provides a significant incentive for politicians to develop and seek support on a personal basis — thus, when a TD becomes a minister (or 'chieftain'), expectations rise enormously among his constituents that local projects will be delivered. We expect that the interest of an individually powerful minister will trump the interests of the party and his core voters will be targeted.

3.2 Introduction

We saw in the last chapter that the patterns in partisan spending depend on the interaction of the electoral and party system; in general, we should expect individual Cabinet ministers to act either in a collective or individual manner depending on the relative strength of the party and themselves. In order to delve into the likely patterns in Ireland, this chapter will first turn to an examination of the institutional context, including the electoral system, arguing that the single transferable vote in operation in Ireland incentivises candidate-centred voting and that intra-party competition means legislators want to deliver for their local area. Parties are also crucial and, while Ireland is often seen as having a strong party system, I argue that, because of intra-party competition, individual ministers have significant licence to act in their own interest when it comes to matters in their own constituency. I will then turn to a discussion of the abilities of backbenchers, ministers and parties to deliver, examining who has both access to the funds and the opportunity to engage in partisan distribution, before finally turning to look at which spending areas are most likely to be targeted and the targeting mechanisms.

3.3 Electoral system

One of the key institutional influences on the behaviour of legislators, and indeed a core assumption in contemporary political science, is that "electoral institutions matter" (Carey and Shugart 1995). Scholars have thoroughly theorised and investigated the effects of electoral rules on macro-level political phenomena, such as the proportionality of parliamentary representation, the number of parties in a multiparty system, the stability of cabinets, and the types of policy outcomes produced (see, for example, Duverger 1961; Douglas Rae 1971; Lijphart 1994; Cox 1997; Boix 1999; Taagepera 1998). As we saw in the last chapter, following Carey and Shugart (1995), different electoral systems provide different incentives for candidates. In systems in which votes are cast for individual candidates – as opposed to votes cast for a party list - legislators seeking re-election have strategic incentives to cultivate personal support among the electorate. By contrast, in systems in which voters cannot exercise preferences for individual candidates, legislators' re-election prospects depend on the general level of support for the policies and personalities of their party leadership. As we saw in the last chapter, fully open-list PR systems and single-transferable-vote (STV) systems represent the most candidate-centred settings. In fully open-list PR systems, candidates on each party's list are presented in no strategic order – for example, the candidates can be listed alphabetically – and voters must pick an individual candidate. The number of personal votes each candidate receives then determines the final order on the list for the allocation of seats. Similarly, in STV systems such as Ireland, voters exercise ordinal preferences for the candidates in multi-member constituencies. (See below for a thorough description of how STV in Ireland works.) In both systems, there are significant incentives for candidates to cultivate personal identification and support among the electorate and to compete on an inter as well as intra-party basis. Indeed in Ireland, more Fianna Fáil incumbents lose their seats to running mates of the same party than they do to challengers from another party (Gallagher 2000: 97). It is true that the general level of support for the policies and personalities of a party's leadership will have an impact on the number of votes cast for all the candidates from that particular party but, in contrast to party-centred and intermediate systems, these systems

provide candidates from the same party with positive incentives to differentiate themselves from other candidates in their party and, if their constituents desire it, to demonstrate their independence from their party leadership. Indeed, data from the 2007 Candidate Election Study bears this out, where some 22% of candidates felt that the biggest threat to their winning a seat came from candidates from their own party. Unsurprisingly, for the larger parties, it was far higher: some 40% of Fianna Fáil candidates felt that their biggest threat was from candidates from their own party, almost the same number who felt that the threat came from another party.

3.4 PR-STV

Ireland's electoral system, PR-STV, is not a system that is widely used, with Malta being the only other country where it is used to elect the lower house or parliament, although it is used in the Australian Senate and in some elections in Northern Ireland (for a good summary of how PR-STV works, see pp109-125 of Coakley and Gallagher 2005; Gallagher 2005). From a voter's point of view, things are relatively simple. The voter is presented with a list of candidates in alphabetical order and has to indicate his order of preference among the candidates. Voters can indicate as many or as few preferences as they wish, but they have only one vote, which means it is allocated sequentially to the candidates in the order indicated. Thus, from a voter's perspective, the process is simple – even if the actual mechanics of the transfer are not. In essence, PR-STV entails a quota, which is the number of votes that guarantees election. Once a candidate reaches that quota, she is declared elected. The quota is always the total number of

¹³ A recent review identified ten states with such strong preferential voting (Chile, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Poland, San Marino and Switzerland, plus a further four with candidate votes that are not automatically pooled at party level: Ireland, Malta, Mauritius and Vanuatu (Karvonen 2004: 208). Shugart also includes Brazil and Peru, but sees Estonia's list system as more strongly determined by party ordering. In addition, recent changes have increased the importance of the preferential vote in Austria and Belgium (Shugart 2005: 41-43) and in Sweden (Farrell 2003: 12).

valid votes divided by the number of seats in the constituency plus one, and a further 'one' is added to the total. This is the identical formula to that used in the French presidential election, except that there is only one seat in that election. However, rather than ask voters to come back two weeks later to register a second preference, as in France, PR-STV collects this information, as well as further preferences, at the time of the first election. The information is then used not only to eliminate the lowest ranked candidate, but also to transfer the surplus of those candidates who exceed the quota.14 However, one thing is clear: the system focuses on candidates rather than parties, so much so that there has been strong debate about its likelihood of producing a proliferation of parties. However, for our purposes, it is enough to note that the system focuses on the individual candidate, which may well predispose candidates to an excess of credit claiming and a general focus on constituency work rather than the legislative functions of a national representative. As Johnston (1998) notes the impact of geography is not removed in a (quasi-) proportional electoral system based on multi-member constituencies. PR-STV also allows electors to choose between candidates and parties and allows electors to rank order individual candidates. They can, of course, plump for a party list by rank ordering candidates of only one party, but the system itself does not presuppose or require party voting, and candidates have an incentive to seek support from voters of all parties. Under PR-STV, because votes are transferred from elected or eliminated candidates to those still in contention for a seat, candidates must give themselves an edge over their running mates. The most common, according to Gallagher (Coakley and Gallagher 2005: 121), is a record of service. Or as Basil Chubb (1982: 240-241) said even earlier, a candidate cannot fight his fellow candidate on policy, so he tries to seem a more assiduous and more successful servant of his constituents. Certainly, individual Irish TDs believe such service to be of crucial importance, and it remains central to the Irish system (Katz 1984; Gallagher and Komito 1999, Candidate Study 2007). Katz argues that the interpersonal competition between aspiring deputies tends to be on the basis of services rendered rather than policy differences. Carty,

¹⁴ Sinnott (2005) has a good worked example of this pp112-117.

too, stresses that the electoral system contributes to brokerage, but he also stresses the existing cultural impetus:

This dimension of electoral politics – local brokers competing for a party vote – has been institutionalised in Ireland by the electoral system ... With little to distinguish themselves from opponents (particularly party colleagues), politicians are driven to emphasise their brokerage services to constituents, thus reinforcing cultural expectations (Carty 1981: 134).

One of the other features of PR-STV is that voters cannot help an individual candidate unless they explicitly express a preference for him or her (Gallagher 1988). The result is that a voter can punish a candidate without having to abandon the party. Prominent politicians can and do lose their seats, and thus there are no real, or at least very few, safe seats. Where candidates are in competition with one another, they have an incentive to cultivate personal votes. In general, party platforms typically convey information for voters about the policy goals of parties, whereas the differing attributes of candidates may signal far more parochial and local considerations. Candidates thus have to keep an eye on their co-partisans, but voters do also usually vote across party lines. Gallagher (2005) notes that under PR-STV, even the fifth or sixth preference of a supporter of another party could be important, so that deputies need to be concerned about their reputation in every voter's eyes.

Indeed, some of the work appears to pay off. Some 26% of voters believe that their local TD was most responsible for any improvements in their local area, only slightly behind the number, at 33%, who believe that government policies in general were behind any improvements. In addition, some 66% of people believe that TDs providing a local service is a strength of the Irish political system, according to the Irish National Election Study.¹⁵ This combination then gives a

¹⁵ The Irish National Election Study, <u>www.tcd.ie/ines</u>, is an extensive five-wave panel survey of (initially) 2,663 respondents, carried out by the ESRI through the period 2002-2007 and encompassing the Irish general elections of 2002 and 2007, as well as the local and European Parliament elections of 2004. The analysis is the author's own.

true incentive towards brokerage and leads to an excess of credit claiming. In sum then, it appears that individual legislators, whether backbench TDs or senior ministers, have significant incentives to claim credit for and, if possible, deliver projects for their local area. Whether or not this credit claiming is plausible will be discussed later in this chapter. First, we will turn our attention to the party system.

3.5 The importance of the party system in Ireland

The Irish party system, as we saw in the previous chapter, has generally been regarded as one of strong parties, if not an example of a dominant party system. There are a number of reasons for this, including parties' historical antecedence, increasing central control over nomination contests, and the balance between legislative and executive relations. However, there is a counter-balancing factor – the leeway given to legislators to promote themselves at home. In general, parliamentary systems with strong parties have been assumed to stymie constituency-level politics, given their foundation on party government, limited individual resources and voter loyalty for parties rather than individuals (Mayhew 1975; Cain, Ferejohn et al 1984; Bowler, Farrell et al 1996). Theoretically, the Irish party system should not be too different. It has its origins in the pro and anti-Treaty sides taken by the Sinn Féin party after its victory in the 1918 Westminster election. In the Duverger tradition (Duverger 1964), the main opposition party, Cumann na nGaedheal, later Fine Gael, was a classic cadre party formed around a group of local notables. As Mair and Weeks (2005: 138) pointed out, it was founded while in office and without winning any election and, lacking an effective opposition in the Dáil until 1927, the party adopted a complacent attitude to electoral politics, with contempt for grassroots politics and a dislike of canvassing. The result was a party that relied on the personalities of notables to accrue votes.

In contrast, Fianna Fáil, formed in 1926 as an extra-parliamentary group, placed great emphasis on its grassroots organisation, with local branches providing good foundations. Its organisational skills also owed something to its militarism and its

addition of rural networks of the IRA arising from the War of Independence. In essence, these styles have lasted to the present day, with Fianna Fáil remaining a populist but professional political machine and with Fine Gael retaining its more casual attitude (Gallagher and Marsh 2002: 41-55; Mair and Weeks 2005: 141). It is thus arguable that, for the period we are looking at, the strong organisational focus of Fianna Fáil¹⁶ may lead to the party itself being centrally involved in the distribution of funds. The fact that Fianna Fáil is also in many ways a classical dominant party also underlines this possibility.

The concept of a dominant party assumes that parties are primarily interested in office – something that many agree is a feature of Fianna Fáil and indeed other mainstream parties. Indeed, one of the main features of the Irish party system has been the dominance of Fianna Fáil (Boullet 2005; Mair and Weeks 2005). Fianna Fáil has been one of the most successful parties in Western Europe in recent decades and, even though it has rarely managed to poll an absolute majority of voters, it has remained in office continuously for long periods of time between 1957 and 1973 and from 1997 to the present. The party also gives top priority to electoral strategy: winning votes is more important than representing a particular social group and the leaders and the groups around them make all the main decisions. Again, this underlines the incentive that the party would have to be involved in distributive politics. Whether or not it is has the ability to do so in a committed and organised fashion will be discussed in the next section.

Other factors also impinge on the degree to which a party system is strong. There is no shortage of literature identifying the centrality of nomination contests in intra-party power struggles (see Mair (1994) for an excellent literature review). Schattschneider (1942: 64) captured this dynamic when he observed that "the nominating process has become the crucial process of the party. He who can make

¹⁶ Fianna Fáil is the focus of this study as it was the party in power for the duration of the study having been in power from 1997 to date. Detailed data which is employed in the empirical chapters was not available prior to 2002.

the nominations is the owner of the party." Ranney (1981: 103) concurs in suggesting that what is at stake in candidate nominations "is nothing less than control of the core of what the party stands for and does".

Candidate nomination has also become an important test of the internal democratic strength of party organisations. Gallagher (1988: 1) has argued that "the way in which political parties select their candidates may be used as an acid test of how democratically they conduct their internal affairs". Crotty suggests that the party, in recruiting candidates, determines the personnel and, more symbolically, the groups to be represented among the decision-making elite: "Through recruitment, the party indirectly influences the types of policy decisions to be enacted and the interests most likely to be heard" (Crotty 1968: 308). Candidate recruitment, then, represents one of the key linkages between the electorate and the policy-making process.

In general, Fianna Fáil candidates are chosen at a selection conference attended by all the delegates representing the branches in the constituency. The conference chairman is usually a sitting TD, nominated by the national executive. The executive also decides how many candidates the conference can select. The executive then ratifies (or refuses to do so) the names on the list. It also has the ability to impose a candidate by adding a name to a list. By far the largest numbers of candidates are either voted onto a list by all local party members or by delegates from local branches. The primary objective for the local party selectors is to ascertain whether the candidate is part of the group and whether he or she will assume local service. This stands in contrast to the wishes of the national party, which is primarily considered with the calibre of its representatives. In recent years, a powerful central committee that oversees the selection procedure has evolved within each party, through which the centre exercises its power.

According to Weeks (2009), the key to understanding the candidate-selection strategy within Fianna Fáil is the party's Constituencies Committee. Its role is to seek out potential candidates, identify key marginal constituencies, and liaise with

the local party organisations. It also decides on how many candidates to run in each constituency and when the convention is to be called, and it can add or deselect candidates. Although the committee is answerable to the Ard Comhairle (the party national executive), the heavyweight nature of the committee's makeup – it included the party leader, deputy leader, general secretary, and director of elections –helps to ensure that few of its recommendations are ever rejected. Like its equivalents in Fianna Fáil and the other parties, Fine Gael's Organisation of Candidate Selection Committee (OCSC) tends to have a good idea of who it wants selected as the party's official candidates (Weeks 2009). Unlike Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael's rules do not allow the OCSC to cancel a convention. Nevertheless, in several constituencies where the local organisation was weak, it was the OCSC that in effect selected the candidate, because it provided the nominees. Overall then, argues Weeks, the pattern is of an increasingly centralised process. In all the parties, the national executive now has supreme control over the selection of candidates, but the extent to which it wields these powers varies a great deal – not surprisingly, the level of centralisation seems positively related to the size of the party. Although party strategists play down the increasing influence of the centre, its role very often took an interventionist nature. In addition, the majority of representatives still live in the constituency they represent. Until recently, most were also representatives to a local authority, boosting the importance of local connections. This possibility was abolished in 2002 with the demise of the so-called 'dual mandate', which allowed deputies to simultaneously serve on a local authority as well as in the national parliament. Candidates must now choose which body to represent (Weeks 2009).

Gallagher (1980: 652) also pointed out a further complication: the electoral system also means that parties must decide how many candidates to nominate in each constituency. This can be a tightly balanced calculation. Too many candidates, and you risk jettisoning a possible seat; too few, and you lose out on a good possibility. One crucial factor for the parties is to ensure that the candidates are spread out over the constituency, particularly in rural areas, once again incentivising the 'balliwicking' of constituencies. Crucially, the rank ordering

afforded to voters by the electoral system means that candidates must build up a personal following, usually by establishing a reputation as a diligent and successful local TD, as a number of studies have demonstrated (Gallagher and Komito 1999).

As we have seen, other institutions – notably the structure of legislative-executive relations - also affect the relationship between politicians and party leaders and the consequent strength of parliamentary parties. According to Mair and Weeks (2005), the structure of legislative-executive relations determines the extent to which parties in government can control their parliamentary supporters. In parliamentary systems, in which the chief executive is 'fused' to a parliamentary majority, governing parties can reward loyal backbenchers with ministerial seats, and the re-election prospects of parliamentarians from the majority party are closely associated with the performance of their party leaders in government. Governing parties can also use a vote-of-confidence motion and the threat of parliamentary dissolution to force their backbenchers to follow voting instructions. In Ireland, party voting is the norm, and penalties for voting against the party are severe, usually entailing instant expulsion from the parliamentary party. In Fianna Fáil, the rules are especially strict: any Fianna Fáil deputy who does not support the party line (that is, who either opposes it or even merely abstains) in a parliamentary vote automatically loses membership of the parliamentary party. Hardly surprisingly then, when asked in the 2007 Candidate Election Study about their allegiance, the clear plurality placed it with the national party. Overall, 64% of all candidates said they would vote with their party in the Dáil against their constituency interest, rising to an almost unanimous 90% of Fianna Fáil. A similar pattern emerges when asked if they would vote for the party if it was against their own view: some 62% of candidates said they would, but 83% of Fianna Fáil incumbents said they would. Widening out the question, when asked if individual TDs should be free to vote independently of their party, 80% of Fianna Fáil TDs thought not, compared with 60% per cent of representatives in general.

In addition, there is normally relatively little change in the amount of support won by each party from election to election. 'Volatility', measured by the so-called Pederson index, is often relatively low (Marsh 1985; Mair 1986) and the interelection constituency-level correlations between first preference votes cast for candidates of particular parties are high (Marsh 2000) and party remains an important voting cue. In general, the evidence (Gallagher 1978; Marsh 2006) points to the fact that transfer patterns indicate that almost half the people who give their first-preference vote to a candidate of one party go on to give a subsequent preference to another candidate from that same party, although not necessarily in order. In other words, they appear to vote for parties rather than candidates.

On the other hand, the structure of the party label is declining and the transfer pattern within the two largest parties has been breaking down (Gallagher and Komito 2009). In addition, looking at individual-level data, the importance of candidates becomes clearer. Marsh (2007) has suggested that, in fact, close to a majority of voters could be said to be primarily candidate centred, and Laver (2005), considering the same evidence, points to very clear candidate preference among the electorate. Almost 46% of voters said they would support the same candidate running for a different party, with about 40% being committed supporters of parties rather than candidates. Marsh (2007) found, using a simulation, that if candidates did not matter, only some 20% would change their vote.

In addition, clientalist practices at home are underpinned by the balance between parliamentary and electoral incentives. In Ireland, such a balance appears to be struck by many deputies, who will often say one thing in their local media criticising their party, yet vote the party line in the Dáil. Examples abound. For example, following the announcement from former national carrier Aer Lingus that it was moving its Heathrow slots from Shannon to Belfast, a national outcry ensued. Among the more vocal critics of the move was local TD and Minister for Defence Willie O'Dea, who rounded on Aer Lingus, insisting that it left the

region facing a crisis. "I have never seen the business community so exercised. This is what people are saying, and I am applying my own common sense as well," he said, (Sheehan 2007). Yet when it came to Dáil vote on an opposition motion to use the state's shareholding in Aer Lingus to call an AGM to reverse the decision, Minister O'Dea voted it down. Following an unpopular Budget in October 2008, many deputies were unhappy with the level of cutbacks proposed. Paul Gogarty, a government Green Party TD and his party's spokesman for education, went on the record to say that he could not "in all credibility" stand by the education cuts. But when it came to the crunch, Mr Gogarty voted with the government, claiming the party was neither backing out of government nor climbing down on the education issues. He added that he would remain a "strong critic" of cuts in education funding in general (Sheahan McDonagh 2008). Thus, while electoral systems generate stronger or weaker incentives for individualised behaviour, internal party structures condition the ability of legislators to realise a distinctive local reputation.

Overall then, the dynamic between party and candidate in Ireland is something of a balancing act. On the one hand, the Irish party system's foundations on multimember districts, strong constituency organisations provides a significant incentive for politicians to develop and seek support on a personal basis (Carey and Shugart 1995). On the other hand, parties exercise control over individual legislators from the nomination process to ensuring that individuals very rarely vote again party wishes - and those who do are immediately disciplined. Essentially, where voters have the ability to order preferences among co-partisans, as in Irish multi-member districts, legislators have a clear incentive to enhance their personal reputations, which they do not have to share with the co-partisans with whom they are in competition. This results in the idea of the Irish Dáil deputy or TD as being a 'local promoter', primarily concerned with making representations about the constituency's collective needs, which may be economic, environmental or social (Searing 1994). Also, voter and candidate loyalty to a national party label provides a counter-balancing effect. The result is electoral politics that are dominated by the local and the individual, and

parliamentary politics characterised by strong party discipline, with few legislators ever voting against party lines. Candidates thus have significant incentives to claim credit for delivering projects to local areas. However, having the incentive to do so is very different to having the ability. So while we know that such credit-claiming exists, we do not yet know whether it is plausible, nor its likely mechanism, and it is to that question that we now turn.

3.6 Legislative and executive factors

In much of the non-US pork-barrel literature, there is an assumption that individual legislators in parliamentary systems simply do not have the resources to which the government has access. In short, the literature depicts parliamentary systems as denying the individual legislator "both the incentive and opportunity" to construct a personal power base. In order to examine the mechanics of this in the Irish case, we need to first quickly sketch the composition and operation of Ireland's legislature, or 'Oireachtas'. The Oireachtas is bicameral, with a lower directly elected house, the Dáil, consisting of 166 members elected from 43 constituencies, although this number changes with constituency revisions. Over the period we shall be examining, the number of constituencies varied from 41 to 43. A member of the Dáil is known as a 'Teachta Dála' (usually abbreviated to 'TD'), or deputy. The indirectly elected Seanad (Senate) has some 60 members and little power. However, as Gallagher (2005: 523) points out, it has frequently been stressed that the Dáil is exceptionally weak, even given generally low expectations of how much power any parliament can really exercise over a government, as well as the notorious difficulty of measuring any power in parliament. Chubb saw it as a "puny parliament peopled by members who have a modest view of their functions and a poor capacity to carry them out" (Chubb 1992: 189). Given that it is also more realistic to see parliament as wielding power through government, rather than seeing it as checking the power of a government that has come into being independently, and that when TDs vote on issues, they do so as members of a party rather than as 166 individuals, it is clear where the idea of a particularly weak parliament came into being. As noted earlier, TDs

rarely vote against the party line or whip, and those that do so can generally find themselves expelled (Bowler, Carter et al 2000). Thus, as Gallagher (2005: 213) argues, the role of backbenchers, willingly accepted, is to sustain the government rather than act as independent scrutinisers of it, and government deputies do not seek additional means of holding their own ministers to account. Thus, Irish deputies cannot individually affect legislation or get items added to legislation, as can the US congressman. Their claim, then, to secure individual funding cannot be based on this.

Bax, writing in the mid 1970s, nevertheless depicted a certain level of corruption in Donegal (Bax 1976), painting a picture of politicians installing people in positions of powers and using them to deliver favours thereafter. However, Sacks concluded that politicians could accomplish very little. He talked about "imaginary patronage", where politicians convinced people that they had delivered something for them, when in reality they had not (Sacks 1976: 7). This perception is shared by Dooney and O'Toole (1998), who wrote that officials are not impressed by representations made to them and that such representations very rarely have the effect of having a decision reversed. Certainly, civil servants claim to be inundated with requests and lobbying from backbench TDs. One such, who worked in the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism allocating sports capital funding, insisted, however, that such lobbying made little difference. "We allocated the monies according to set criteria. The most crucial factor was that many applications had all the supporting documents and it was the lack of that which most often determined where on a list a project ended up." He did admit that projects were moved around on lists, but claimed that this was rarely at the request of a local TD. Nonetheless, TDs still persist in their roles as local promoter, lobbying for services on behalf of a community organisation such as a residents' association, community centre or GAA club (Gallagher and Komito 2005: 102). Activities include trying to persuade a local or town council to improve roads, water treatment or provide a sports grants. Overall then, given his or her very limited power, there is little that an individual TD can achieve. What they can do is lobby the particular ministers who actually make the decisions.

Indeed, the balance of power rests very firmly with the executive. Essentially, the government is not elected by the people, but chosen by the Dáil, which elects the head of government (Taoiseach), who then appoints his ministers, who sit at Cabinet and are collectively responsible to the Dáil for all aspects of the government's activities. The Dáil will also vote to endorse the Taoiseach's choice. The constitution sets out the basic parameters for the government, which must consist of between seven and 15 members. Up to two ministers may come from the Seanad, but the Taoiseach, the Tánaiste (deputy prime minister) and the Minister for Finance must all be TDs. In practice, almost all ministers have been TDs. The Taoiseach not only appoints his Cabinet, but also assigns them responsibilities and can fire them at will. If the Taoiseach resigns, all ministers are deemed to have resigned also. Theoretically, Cabinet supervision of each minister is also tight, with all policy proposals by individual ministers requiring the approval of Cabinet. However, in practice, this applies to broad matters of principle rather than to specific day-to-day decisions, which the Cabinet has neither the time nor the inclination to consider – allowing individual ministers considerable freedom to do as they see fit.

In addition, unlike many other systems, in Ireland all ministers are TDs— a principle unknown in the rest of Europe, where ministers who are not members of parliament are commonly appointed (Coakley 2009). In many other European countries such as France, the Netherlands and Norway, members of parliament must resign their seats to take up ministerial office. There is no provision in the Irish Constitution for this to happen but it does however allow two members of the Seanad to be appointed ministers, although this has happened on only two occasions. In 1957, Eamon de Valera appointed senator Seán Moylan as minister for agriculture. And in 1981 Garret FitzGerald appointed senator James Dooge as foreign minister. Indeed the ability of Cabinet ministers to distribute largesse arguably makes it even more difficult for the Taoseach to squander patronage by making appointments form outside the ranks of elected TDs.

Cabinet ministers control policy and have direct and indirect means of influencing civil servants. In addition, in Ireland, the Cabinet's control over parliamentary business is almost total (Laver and Shepsle 1994: 294). The Dáil may debate and enact legislation, but it is the Cabinet that decides what it will debate and the time allocated to it. Most bills, with the exception of private member's bills, originate with individual government departments that put a 'memorandum for government' to the Cabinet. This outlines the intended purpose of the bill, the views of the ministers concerned with the issue, and an outline draft of the bill. If accepted by the Cabinet secretary and the Attorney General (the government's lawyer), the latter requests that the appropriate legislation be drafted. On occasion, prior to the detailed drafting of the legislation, the government will publish a 'Green Paper', or discussion document, setting out ideas and inviting comment and views from individuals and relevant organisations. The bill is then put before the Dáil for a general debate on its principles. Members of the Dáil may make suggestions for amendments and additions to the bill but, in practice, these are not often implemented. The bill is then sent to committees to be examined section by section. TDs can raise points about specific sections, but not about the general principles. If the points raised are consistent with the general principles of the bill, the minister may well accept them. But only amendments accepted by the minister will get past. The final stage in the process is a debate in the Dáil, confined to the contents of the bill. The members of the Dáil will then vote on whether to pass the bill, although this can be practically guaranteed through the whip system. The bill will then be sent down to the Seanad to go through the entire process of debate and committee examination again. The Seanad has 90 days (or any longer period agreed by both houses) to consider the bill and do one of the following: pass the bill without any amendment, reject the bill completely, or return the bill to the Dáil with amendments. If the Seanad rejects the bill or returns it to the Dáil with amendments that the Dáil does not accept, the bill will lapse after 180 days. The Dáil may, within those 180 days, pass a resolution declaring that the bill is deemed to have been passed by both houses. This provision means that the Seanad cannot generally stop the Dáil from introducing legislation – it can only cause delays.

The legislature does theoretically have more responsibility when it comes to 'money bills', or bills that relate to taxation or relate to spending by the government. The constitution states (article 17.2) that no motion or resolution shall be passed or law enacted that involves spending public money unless the Dáil receives a written message, signed by the Taoiseach, recommending the measure on behalf of the government. However, in reality, the Oireachtas has few powers. Spending departments submit three-year projections on spending to the Department of Finance (DOF). De Haan Moessen (1999) set out the procedure. The DOF then issues a circular to spending departments, which explains the parameters in which the budget will operate and which seeks appropriate adjustments to spending plans. Departments then submit draft expenditure estimates to government, which decides on detailed expenditure allocations, resulting in the publication of the abridged estimates for the public service followed by a White Paper on Receipts and Expenditure. Following the announcement of the budget, the revised estimates are published, together with the public capital programme. This is followed by the enactment of the Finance Bill, which gives legislative effect to the tax changes proposed in the budget statement. The Dáil votes on individual spending estimates by way of financial resolutions before the Appropriations Bill is passed (de Haan et al 1999: 266) While the Dáil does theoretically have the power to amend legislation involving public monies, it is not, however, empowered to amend estimates – only to adopt them or reject them. Standing orders, or procedural rules of the lower house, preclude any addition or reduction in the annual estimates. However, the legislature can propose amendments on the taxation side. The upper house does not debate the budget per se, although it does consider the Finance Bill and Appropriations Bill, on which it may make recommendations that the Dáil may either accept or reject, and it has just 21 days to do so. Once both houses have passed the bill, the Taoiseach presents a copy of the bill to the President for signature. Once the President has signed the bill, it becomes an 'act' and has legal force.

In general then, we can say that the balance of power rests firmly with the executive and that individual Cabinet ministers hold considerable sway over their departments and all legislation emanating from them. While there is collective cabinet responsibility, the oversight or influence of ministers on one another is fairly negligible, with the exception of the Minister for Finance, whose department agrees budgets with each line department on an almost line-by-line basis. Individual Cabinet ministers thus have considerable discretion over their own domains.

3.7 The targeting mechanisms

As we saw in the last chapter, Cabinet ministers may act either in the collective interest of their party or in their own interest. If it were to act in its collective interest, the Cabinet would have a strong incentive to apportion significant pork barrel towards marginal seats where they perceive a need to either prop up a vote to guarantee a narrowly won seat next time round or where they see a real possibility of taking an additional seat, given that they face a collective incentive to assure the victory of their most vulnerable colleagues in marginal seats (Johnston 1976; Denemark 2000). As rational agents, ministers are likely to be at least partly motivated by collective goals, and if they govern rationally, they should act to increase their chances of being re-elected, and after that has been achieved, act to increase their chances of returning to power. This ought to be the case, whether the individual minister is motivated more by power, policy or ambition, as none can be achieved without first regaining a seat at the Cabinet table. After all, as Marsh (2006) points out, it is through party loyalty that governments are maintained in office, while parties provide the personnel and the policies that are central to distributive policies. However, in order to ascertain how a party could go about ensuring that its goals are met in terms of distributive policies, we need to look briefly at their structure in Ireland. Essentially, the parties are made up of the politicians who seek re-election, officials who serve the party on a full time paid basis, and members who comprise the bulk of the party. As Marsh (2005) sets out, the organisational heart of any party is its central office.

This provides support for TDs and coordinates local branches, which are scattered all over the country. Mostly full-time officials staff the central office, although part timers and volunteers boost these quite considerably at election time. Fianna Fáil employs between 30 and 35 full-time staff, who are primarily engaged in fundraising, press relations, research and coordinating the rank and file membership. In Fianna Fáil's case, almost every parish in the country has a Fianna Fáil cumann, or branch, although the vast majority are not particularly active. Fianna Fáil estimates that it has some 2,500 cumainn – in other words, one in almost half of all the 6,000 polling districts nationwide. Delegations from each cumann, as well as the national executive and other representatives, attend the annual ard fheis (party conference), which is – in theory – the policy-making body of the party. However, the reality is a little different to the theory, and the ard fheis essentially exists as a social occasion, which is used to rally the party faithful, rather than as a detailed policy-making body. From one ard fheis to another, the party is under the authority of the national executive, which is made up of elected members. However, this body does not deal with policy to any real extent at all. On being interviewed, one national executive member laughed at the notion that it could be used to direct ministers or civil servants to direct discretionary spending in any specific direction. In reality then, the central office feeds into policy making, but it is a subset of the politicians who comprise the executive of Cabinet that is the policy-making body.

However, in order for the party to determine spending decisions, there are conditions that must be satisfied: there must be a co-ordinating mechanism at the party level, which then informs Cabinet ministers where spending must be directed; and there must be a mechanism for deciding on which areas are marginal. A co-ordinating mechanism would have organisational consequences and would require a degree of co-ordination that has not been suggested in previous literature. Coalition government would make this even more difficult. Even deciding on which seats are marginal is difficult. Unlike the UK and other plurality systems, marginals tend to change from one election to the next, and

there is a case for arguing that almost every constituency is marginal to some extent – the incumbents in each would certainly argue that no seat is safe.

If Cabinet ministers were to act in their own personal interest, there are two possible mechanisms. First, they could simply divert a portion of their overall budget to projects in their own constituency. Of course, if this were to amount to excessively individualist behaviour, it too could undermine the credibility of party electoral appeals and provide ammunition for the party's opponents at the next election. The mechanism is far simpler: the minister or his adviser need simply alter plans in their own department. A former special adviser and a former minister in interviews with the author reported in Chapter Eight both suggest that there is an informal rule of thumb that a minister can allocate up to an additional 10 or 15% of a discretionary budget to his own constituency, and any more than that is frowned upon. At times this may not even be necessary, if there is a degree of bureaucratic collusion, with civil servants anticipating the needs of their minister. Indeed, the extent to which civil servants are responsible for policy outcomes has been a matter of some considerable debate. Zimmermann (1997) found that most senior civil servants did not believe that ministers played a direct role in the internal management of their departments, and ministers did not view their department secretaries as their principal advisers. In general, he found that most senior civil servants lay most emphasis on incremental policy making, with major changes in policy occurring only rarely. This, of course, serves to give civil servants their greatest influence. Nevertheless, over the past 20 or so years, the degree to which the government and the administration can be and are held accountable has increased. Some interviewees stress that the opportunity to seriously influence the distribution of benefits is simply no longer available. As one former senior civil servant put it: "It is likely that in pre-public-procurement days that projects were allocated according to party ties and links. However, this whole system is now far more open and transparent, and civil servants can always quote EU rules to any minister looking for preferment." Another chairman of a large state body corroborated this: "If I am asked, which I am occasionally, to favour a specific constituency for investment, I simply ask that the request be

made through ministerial order in writing. That has never been forthcoming." Perhaps the largest change is the Comptroller and Auditor General Act 1993 and, to a lesser extent, the Freedom of Information Act 1997. The C&AG is responsible for ensuring that all public money is properly accounted for. The C&AG had been hampered in his work by a number of factors, including a lack of resources, lack of interest, and civil service obstruction. However, all that changed with the new act, and the C&AG can now carry out value-for-money audits, one of which we look at in detail in Chapter Five. However, privately, the senior officials at the C&AG complain that they are still chronically underfunded and that many programmes simply do not get examined. The process is also perhaps too formulaic and accountancy based, with a focus on inputs, whereas outputs would give a far better idea of productive spending. Nonetheless, the belief in a Cabinet minister's ability to deliver is very widespread. According to findings in the Irish National Election Study, ¹⁷ some 75% of people agree or strongly agree that a constituency with a Cabinet minister as an incumbent will have more money spent on it.

It is also conceivable that we would see a form of logrolling, akin to the behaviour of individually powerful US congressmen. For example, the Minister for Education may agree to try to speed up or prioritise a project in another Cabinet minister's constituency in return for having, say, an application in his own constituency for a sports capital grant prioritised. However, such a system – whether formal or informal – runs the risk of alienating backbenchers and undermining the credibility of party electoral appeals (Cox and McCubbins 1994). Such behaviours would also disenfranchise the backbenchers. One minister who is likely to benefit from such behaviour is the Minister for Finance. There is a clear ranking in the perceived importance of ministerial portfolios (Connolly 2005: 331), with Finance being the most important after the Taoiseach. Indeed, Finance is undoubtedly the most overarching of the portfolios and, as we shall see, the Finance Minister has a say in the affairs of almost every other minister, at least so far as permitting their spending plans, often on a very micro-level. In effect, his

¹⁷ Irish National Election www.tcd.ie/ines

department must approve all spending plans. The Taoiseach ,as chairman of the Cabinet, also has considerable power, in that no item can be put on the government agenda without his approval. Gemma Hussey (1994), former Minister for Education, recalled of the 1982-1987 government that the "Department of Finance rarely agreed to any spending proposal and fought the battles out at full Cabinet". As we will see later, this may have the effect of motivating line departments to keep the minister sweet and provide ample projects for his own constituency.

While individual ministers set the policy parameters of their departments and are charged with taking all policy rather than administrative decisions ministerial advisers also play a key role. The advisers, who are generally recruited from outside the civil service, in many respects act as an extension of the minister (Mitchell 2003: 438) rather than as employees of the party. During the 1990s, a special breed of ministerial adviser, the programme manager, was instigated. Mitchell has argued that a key aspect of the programme manager's responsibility was to submit policy implementation to detailed tracking in order to overcome bureaucratic and political obstacles to policy delivery and to generally make sure that the minister's policies were being implemented. This was watered down to some extent in 1997, partly because the Progressive Democrats party argued that it was wasteful. Nevertheless, ministerial advisers are intended to correct the disadvantages faced by ministers, compared with their senior civil servants, in terms of detailed knowledge of policy areas. They also work much as the ministers' eyes and ears in a department and, as we shall see in Chapter Eight, they frequently act as a proxy, informing civil servants about the minister's 'wishes' or, more commonly, 'questions'. It is possible that ministerial advisers may talk with civil servants in their own departments, enquiring about the direction of a project or the position of a specific school or club on a list. The civil servants could then take this to be an unofficial instruction to pay the project special attention. In this way, there would be no formal process, but rather an informal system understood by both parties.

The process involved in delivering for specific areas at the behest of the party would be more complicated. First, there would need to an individual or committee working in the party who would draw up a list of key areas for Cabinet ministers to support in their funding decisions. There would then need to be a co-ordinating mechanism at Cabinet, which would coordinate different areas of spending for different ministers. The ministers themselves would then need to agree to participate in this favouring of these areas with decisions. Only at this point could the informal mechanisms mentioned have come into play. In Chapter Eight, some of these questions will be answered though interviews with former ministers, as well as advisers and civil servants.

To sum then, it would appear that it is Cabinet ministers who are in the best position to deliver partisan funding: they decide policy, their departments formulate the legislation, and they in effect get it passed. Thus we should expect the rational use of funds in safeguarding their own seats first, and possibly ensuring victory of colleagues in marginal seats in order to ensure that their party returns to power. In effect, ministers may be expected to feather their own nests, as well as those of their colleagues who may be under pressure or who could be seen as good possibility to win an additional seat in multi-member constituencies. Thus, the most likely explanation may be that Cabinet ministers simply look after their own bailiwicks. So long as they keep within the possible aforementioned range of 10 to 15% of the discretionary budget, discipline is unlikely.

3.8 Credit claiming and delivery

As we saw in the last chapter, the areas of government spending that are most susceptible to particularistic spending are local public goods. In the literature, the most common areas to examine are those arising from rivers and harbours legislation. The iconic example is perhaps the 'Bridge to Nowhere'. ¹⁸ In Ireland,

¹⁸ The most common example is Gravina Island Bridge (never built), a proposed road bridge over the Tongass Narrows to the town of Ketchikan in Alaska. This was a controversial topic of the 2008 US presidential election campaigns.

there are fewer bridges, and this project will examine capital allocations to sports facilities, schools and roads instead (for the justification see discussion below). In order for a legislator to able to benefit from pork, he needs to able to claim credit, on the assumption that members claiming credit for that spending receive electoral benefits. The research literature has supported this belief, starting with Mayhew's seminal 1974 work and followed by over 30 years of research that has documented a connection, albeit often qualified, between Federal benefits targeted to individual Congressional districts and electoral support for incumbents (Fiorina 1977, 1981; Rundquist and Griffith 1976; Ray 1980; Johannes and McAdams 1981; McAdams and Johannes 1988; Fiorina 1981; Evans Yiannakis 1981; Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1987; Parker 1986; Stein and Bickers 1994, 1995; Alvarez and Schousen 1993; Alvarez and Saving 1997; King 1991; Owens and Wade 1984; Serra and Cover 1992), although admittedly a minority have not found a connection between pork-barrel benefits and election outcomes or have found mixed effects (Feldman and Jondrow 1984; Frisch 1998; Evans et al 2007). While there is disagreement in the US about district service, including distributive benefits (Fiorina 1981; Yiannakis 1981; Fiorina 1989; Evans 2004), legislators themselves believe that district service is helpful in building their reputations. In a study taking a comparative look at the Westminster system (including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, and the UK), Heitshusen (Heitshusen, Young et al 2005) found that even strong party systems are home to many MPs who highly prioritise constituency activity, Ireland included.

Indeed, in Ireland, credit-claiming is part of the political culture. The 2007 Candidate Study reveals the areas that candidates themselves believe they can claim credit for. When asked "what sort of local benefits are the most likely for a TD to be able to claim credit for?", many of the candidates mentioned more than one category and these provide justification for the three policy areas mentioned above. Almost 33% mentioned schools and, in particular, school buildings at least once, amounting to some 22% of all mentions. Just under that (29%) mentioned sports facilities and lottery grants, making up about 19% of total mentions. Roads and infrastructure were next, and were mentioned by 22% and 6% respectively. In

contrast, transport, social services and playgrounds were all mentioned by less than 5% of all respondents. Thus, sports clubs, schools and roads are the three areas that legislators themselves believe it is worth claiming credit for.

Certainly, local service is top of many TDs' priorities. When asked how strongly they emphasise service to their local constituency, we find that 64% of 2007 candidates said that they emphasise this service strongly. Among Fianna Fáil candidates, that rises to 75%, and among Fianna Fáil incumbents, it comes in at some 86%. In contrast, only 29% of Fianna Fáil incumbents said that policy was very important compared with 41% of non-Fianna Fail incumbents and 100% of the incumbent Green Party TDs. This is borne out by the numbers who, in the last election, raised issues locally that were not raised by the party nationally. Overall, some 72% of candidates did so, rising to 88% of Fianna Fáil incumbents. Most of these were local hospital and school-related matters.

The second condition for pork to work effectively is that voters need to believe that the credit-claiming is legitimate and that benefits will be secured. Gallagher and Komito (2007: 250) argue that ministers are expected to secure largesse for their home base or indeed for their constituency as a whole and that, if a TD becomes a minister, constituents' expectations rise accordingly. Examples abound, such as junior minister Tom Parlon putting up posters around his constituency reading "Welcome to Parlon Country" after the surprise announcement that the government planned to decentralise government departments from Dublin to towns around the country. It was later alleged that he had played no part in the decision, but simply got wind of it before it was announced. Unlike the US, the expectations that a minister will deliver are not confined to one party. Parlon, after all, was a Progressive Democrat minister, a party that prided itself on its fiscal probity. Fianna Fáil is perhaps most synonymous with the expectation that benefits will be delivered, with former ministers such as Padraig Flynn in Castlebar and Ray MacSharry in Sligo often

¹⁹ Candidate Study 2007

spoken of in those terms. But the expectations do not stop there. One infamous pork-delivering minister, former Fine Gael minister Michael Lowry, was returned to the Dáil with massive majorities after being expelled from the party in disgrace over improper payments from a supermarket tycoon. And former Labour leader Dick Spring is widely renowned for the many benefits he is said to have brought back to his home constituency of Tralee, including a leisure centre, a heritage park, a marina, hotels, a sewage treatment plant and so on (Gallagher and Komito 2007: 251).

Irish voters appear to both believe that pork is delivered and also that local work by their TD is important. When asked in the 2007 Irish National Election Study whether a constituency represented by a Cabinet minister would have more money spent on it, some 85% of respondents agreed, with over 70% agreeing or strongly agreeing. Underlying this belief in local delivery, some 60% of respondents agreed completely, choosing point 10 on a ten-point scale that TDs should primarily work for their local area.

The anecdotal evidence bears out the idea that the impulse towards creditclaiming and brokerage exists. Even a cursory glance at the press releases of candidates shows the extent to which they think this is important. Thus, not only do most TDs hold regular clinics, attend meetings of residents' associations, and ensure they are seen at local functions and funerals and so on, but they also do their best to claim credit for projects delivered to their local area. For example, many TDs have statements on their websites welcoming various sports capital grants or new roads and even school projects that have been granted to their constituency. Sean Haughey, a Dublin North Central TD, has several statements on his website announcing the onset of a new grants programme and welcoming individual projects to his area.²⁰ Another junior minister, Wicklow's Dick

²⁰Sean Haughey homepage (2009), viewed July 16 2009,

http://www.artesys.net/seanhaughey/content.php4?id=1&article=570&title=Major %20Sports%20Capital%20Grants%20For%20North%20Central%20Area.

Roche,²¹ whose site is headlined "Always at Your Service", makes a point of welcoming sports capital funding that is directed to his constituency. One headline in June 2007 welcomed "€1.63 Million Funding as a great Day for Sport in Wicklow". Countless other examples abound. Even more blatantly, Michael Moynihan, TD for Cork North West and chair of the Oireachtas Joint Committee for Education and Science,²² announced that he had delivered Summer Works Scheme funds to many schools of Cork North West. "But I will not stop there," said Deputy Michael Moynihan, "I shall continue to lobby Cork County Council, along with relevant government departments, to allocate maximum funds to ensuring that North Cork facilities and public areas are made accessible to all as a matter of urgency."

3.9 Conclusion

The aim of this project is to test whether distributive politics in Ireland fits with the general theory of parliamentary pork barrel. In other words, does the Cabinet seek to distribute an unequal amount of resources to constituencies it wants to target — marginal and swing seats or the constituencies of core voters, as the literature would predict? Or is Irish pork more particularistic, with Cabinet ministers looking after themselves? Or perhaps is it rather based on stated policy, with the government targeting areas according to need?

As we saw in the last chapter, in a PR system such as Ireland, if the party's wishes were to predominate, we should expect that marginal constituencies or swing voters would be targeted. In an Irish context, these would be areas where the party narrowly won last time and feels a need to boost support, or those that it narrowly lost, where it believes that a little more work could deliver the extra votes needed

http://www.dickroche.com/article.php?sip/id=958

http://www.michaelmoynihantd.ie/news

²¹ Dick Roche homepage (2009), viewed July 16 2009,

 $^{^{22}}$ Michael Moynihan homepage (2009), viewed July 16 2009 ,

for victory in the next election. Ministers do, of course, also have an incentive to deliver for swing voters, in that the more seats the party wins, the more likely it is that they will return to their jobs post-election, rather than returning to the opposition benches. Nonetheless, whether the ministers act in the party's interest or not, they are also likely to want to appeal to, and perhaps reward, their core supporters. We have seen that the Irish party system's foundations on multimember districts, strong constituency organisations, and localism makes for campaigns that are highly personalised, while STV makes candidate-centred voting compatible with party voting to a degree that is virtually unique (Marsh 2000). In addition, it provides a significant incentive for politicians to develop and seek support on a personal basis (Carey and Shugart 1995). Essentially, where voters have the ability to order preferences among co-partisans, as in Irish multi member districts, legislators have a clear incentive to enhance their personal reputations, which they do not have to share with the co-partisans with whom they are in competition. The anecdotal evidence, as well as the scholarly literature, backs up the consequent idea of the Irish Dáil deputy or TD as being a 'local promoter', primarily concerned with making representations constituency's collective needs, which may be economic, environmental or social (Searing 1994). During campaigns, each TD naturally stresses how much he has done for the constituency, while opponents will usually talk about how a particular incumbent has failed to deliver. One way to cultivate voters in a candidate-centred system is to bring home the goodies. However, an individual TD has very little power unless they happen to be an independent holding the balance the power. Of course, having the incentive is not the same as having as the ability, and thus it is those candidates with access to resources who are most likely to divert the largest proportion of resources to their home ground. Ordinary backbenchers can merely lobby ministers to ensure that their constituency gets a look in. In general, those with both the incentive and the opportunity are likely to be the so-called 'spending' ministers with access to the largest budgets and the widest range of discretionary projects. Thus, if and when a TD becomes a minister (or 'chieftain'), expectations rise enormously and there is a belief that a minister can really deliver in a big way – and ministers help foster this impression. We saw

earlier that this is a general expectation of the Irish public. The question is, do ministers seek to reward only their own home supporters in their own bailiwick, or do they feel a wider sense of responsibility to reward the core supporters of the party in general? Both of these scenarios require different degrees of coordination, with delivery to home supporters easier to achieve. Thus the most likely explanation may be that Cabinet ministers simply look after their own bailiwicks. This may be partly because the parties are simply not able to discipline their senior members sufficiently, or it could be because of the lack of organisation. Our expectation, then, is that the political interest of powerful individual legislators such as Cabinet ministers is likely to trump the interest of the governing party. If ministers do deliver, which spending areas are they most likely to choose? The three areas where legislators are most likely to claim credit are sports facilities, schools and roads, and thus these are the three areas that this project will examine. However, first we need to set out our hypothesis and outline the data and methods that will be used. It is to this that the next chapter turns.

Chapter Four: Hypotheses, Data and Methods

4.1 Abstract

This chapter derives four hypotheses where Cabinet ministers either (a) behave in their individual interests looking after their own personal re-election concerns, or (b) behave in their collective interests, looking after swing voters or (c) behave in their collective interests, looking after swing voters or (d) behave in their collective interests, looking after citizens generally. These hypotheses are tested employing data from three government departments, covering the areas of sports spending, primary and post-primary education capital spending, and roads spending in the years 2001-2007. The data are at the level of the individual grant and are allocated to its constituency. This allows data analysis at a number of levels, including the success and failure of individual grants, grants to individual clubs or schools, and constituency level grants. The dependent variable is regressed on measures of policy and on measures of political influence in order to test each hypothesis.

4.2 Introduction

This project breaks new empirical ground in the study of redistributive politics, focusing on the Irish case and analysing patterns of capital expenditure in areas from roads and education to sports grants. Who wins and loses in these areas is not just of academic concern: it can make a difference to the real lives of citizens. For example, distributive policies will make a difference to the quality of roads in an area, to the quality of the school buildings in which a child studies, and to the types of infrastructure and recreation available to a family after work and school.

This study differs from existing Irish-specific as well as other comparative and US-orientated literature in at least three ways. First, the data employed have been

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gathered for the first time using the Freedom of Information Act. It covers a number of complete capital allocations across various spending areas from 2001 to 2007. Second, all the spending data have been allocated at constituency level for the first time. A small part of the data, sports capital grants, has been examined before, but they have never been broken down into constituency level, being examined only at the county level. Third, it differentiates between the collective and the individual interests of Cabinet ministers, arguing that the latter may trump the former. In what follows, I will briefly rehearse the relevant theoretical literature and derive testable hypotheses suitable for a context of partisan fragmentation and proportional representation. I will then lay out the empirical model and detail key variables and the dataset before outlining the methods employed.

4.3 Hypotheses

To briefly recap, in Chapter Two we saw that the core theoretical debate in distributive politics is whether political parties allocate targetable goods to core or swing voters in order to optimise their electoral prospects. Briefly, the debate pits those who lean towards Cox and McCubbins's (1986) "core voter model" against those who lean towards Lindbeck and Weibull's (1987) "swing voter model". In a parliamentary context, both models envision parties competing by promising to distribute targetable goods to various groups. Cox and McCubbins argue that vote-maximising parties will allocate distributive benefits primarily to their core voters. Lindbeck and Weibull argue that it is more beneficial to target voters at the margin who can be persuaded to change their minds, and thus rational politicians will target these and perhaps even take their core voters for granted. As we have seen, patterns of American pork-barrel distribution reflect the structure of its governmental system: non-party based, individualistic, and dominated by power brokers in safe seats. In contrast, parliamentary pork is seen as fusing executive governmental authority with partisan power (Denemark 2000). This creates a powerful incentive for a centrally dictated, collective form of pork. It is typically argued that parliaments deny the individual legislator both the incentive and the Chapter Four: Data and Methods

opportunity to construct a personal power base. However, this is ignoring the interaction of varying electoral and party systems.

Effective party organisation is that which, within its given system, strikes the electorally optimal balance between maintaining the collective reputation for providing national polices and personalist electioneering locally. Individual candidates must seek personal identity in their campaign and incumbents must routinely credit claim. Thus the incentives facing individual legislators are separate and different to the incentives facing political parties. Individuals seek reelection and cultivate votes in their home district, whereas parties seek more votes, as these translate into seats, and therefore cultivate their swing voters. The individual legislators build personal bailiwicks to distinguish themselves from competitors within their own parties and pork barrel and a focus on the local area are likely to be part of this. And, as Ministers have less time to spend providing constituency service (Studlar and McAllister 1996), they may also secure benefits as a sop for their sometimes ignored local constituency. In this way, individual self-interest would prevail over the Cabinet's overall tactical priority of winning seats in marginal constituencies. As a consequence, an incumbent legislator will, like many a US congressman, attempt to direct resources to his home district.

However, unlike the Congress, individual legislators in parliamentary systems have less power and influence. The Irish parliament, Dáil Éireann, displays many of the characteristics of the Westminster parliamentary model, at least in theory. It possesses powers of appointment and dismissal, a scrutiny function and, according to article 15.2.1 of the constitution, Bunreacht na hÉireann, "the sole and exclusive power of making laws for the state". Dinan (1986) notes that the "difference between constitutional theory and political practice in the case of parliamentary powers and prerogatives is striking". Twenty years later, this remains the case and Murphy (2006) notes that debates are invariably poorly attended, with the chamber only filling up once votes are called and after the whip has ushered deputies in. This perception of an arrogant executive and subservient parliament is further compounded by the increasing tendency for major

government announcements to be made outside of parliament (Murphy 2006; 440). But it is when it comes to lawmaking that the weakness of the house's powers can be seen. The Dáil has sole and exclusive responsibility in lawmaking, effectively allowing deputies to propose, amend, pass or reject legislation. In reality, however, the process of lawmaking is not monopolised by the national parliament. Constitutional reform is subject to popular referenda, statutory instruments permit Irish ministers to make laws that are not subject to any serious degree of parliamentary scrutiny, and the civil service is on occasion in a position to affect policy change and policy implementation in the absence of direct parliamentary input. Further constraints on Dáil Éireann's legislative function are reflected in the fact that the vast majority of Irish legislation starts life as a government proposal. Private member's motions are not a significant source of Irish law. The government dominates even control of the legislative agenda. The political executive takes charge of the legislative programme, meaning the activities of the Dáil are dictated to it as opposed to decided by it. Even the parliament's power to affect the outcome of the executive's legislative proposals is restricted, due to the rarity of government defeats. Members of the majority party or coalition are unlikely to object to legislation being proposed and pioneered by party colleagues in government. In fact, over the period in question, not one government deputy voted against a budget measure.

In addition, those most likely to see their legislation adopted and, by inference, those with access to the resources are those with the greatest access to these goods (Laver and Shepsle 1994, 1996) – in other words, Cabinet ministers. Ministers with access to resources would have the most opportunity to ensure that their own home area is looked after. In particular, this is likely to be the so-called 'spending' ministers with access to the largest budgets and the widest range of discretionary projects. According to the matrix in Chapter Two, the minister acts out of individual rather than collective interest and, given the party's relatively weak role in the local arena as opposed to the parliamentary one, we would expect individual ministers to deliver for their home constituencies. It is possible that these actors engage in logrolling within the legislature, as do their counterparts in

Congress, in which we could expect to see the core districts of all Cabinet ministers in general, rather than the specific core districts of individual legislators, being targeted. More likely is perhaps the possibility that, given the centrality of the Minister for Finance, his individual needs - and perhaps those of the Taoiseach - will be looked after by the line departments. In all of these cases, the political imperative of individual minister should trump the imperative of the ruling party. As the matrix outlined in Chapter Two set out, the interaction of open-list or STV systems with a party system that allows legislators considerable freedom at home allows the interests of the individual legislator to trump the interests of the party²³.

However, it is also conceivable that ministers would act in the collective interests of their party. The party, whether strong or weak, faces different incentives and seeks to maximise the number of votes they receive, regardless of constituency, because PR will result in a close match between votes won and seats gained. Thus, parties will either target their areas of core electoral strength, since more voters who are weakly predisposed rather than opposed towards the party should be located there (Golden and Picci 2008). The bailiwicks of individually strong legislators may or may not be located where the party is strong, and thus there is a tension between where the party would like resources to be directed and where the legislator would. Parties will also have some incentive to try to ensure the safety of individual legislators where the candidate is in a marginal position and again the boundaries of swing districts will not necessarily conform to the same boundaries as those for minsters.

Finally, an alternative view, also put forward by Cox and McCubbins (1986), is a universalistic party-centred notion of delivering to the country as a whole rather than simply buying votes in an individual constituency or electoral area, although

²³ Of course the ministers actions in delivering pork may also boost the party vote in their constituency, helping gain or retain and additional seat for their party ('bringing in a running mate'), which both benefits the reputation of the minister within the party as someone whose personal popularity paid dividends for the party

they did not find much evidence for this approach. In theory, they argue that many bills, which are not targetable, benefit all voters or at least a significant sector of the population – for example, child benefit, pension provision, or free travel or heath care for the over-70s and so on. Because their proposed beneficiaries are widely dispersed, the bills reflect well on all deputies from a party, and thus are an efficient way for a party to build its reputation (to advertise the party's policy product). Working in groups on such initiatives, legislators build a collective reputation they can share. This does not mean that all distributive spending is public good provision rather than pork, but simply that spending is shared between constituencies and is not geographically based. In addition, there are of course risks and reputational costs involved in delivering pork, as we saw in previous chapters. If the party was strong and was to take these seriously, then we could expect a form of universalistic distribution targeted in general rather than at any specific groups. More likely, however, there is a limit to the extent to which they can prefer their own constituents, with a balance being struck between increasing their own popularity and potential damage to the party reputation nationally.

The discussion thus far generates the following core hypotheses. In subsequent chapters, I will empirically test these hypotheses to falsify or validate each.

- Cabinet ministers will act in their individual interests, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to their home districts.
- Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest of the party, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to geographic areas of greater electoral strength for the party.
- Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest of the party, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to geographic areas with maximum numbers of swing voters for the party.

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 Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest generally, directing expenditure at all constituencies on a universal basis, targeting groups as set out by government policy.

4.4 Model

Thus, we expect different influences on the dependent variable: one emanating from the individual powerful legislators or Cabinet ministers, another from the political party and the last from needs based variables. I argue that the former is likely to be more important in an STV context, even though the party is strong. Following Golden and Picci (2008), a way to represent this is:

$$INV_{it} = f(CAB_{it}, GOV_{it}, MARG_{it}, CONS_{it})$$

INV is the amount of money spent on capital projects in constituency i at time t (year). CAB is a composite measure representing the political influence of particular Cabinet ministers (detailed shortly). GOV is another composite, measuring the strength of governing party; MARG is the marginality of the party in a district; and CONS are the socio-economic characteristics of the constituency. Several variables potentially capture the influence of Cabinet ministers, including a dummy variable for whether or not each constituency is represented by a Cabinet minister as well as dummy variables for the finance minister (perhaps the most individually powerful minister in terms of the allocation of discretionary expenditure) and Taoiseach, as well as particular spending ministers, for example, the ministers for education, for transport and for arts, sports and tourism. These dummies are included in order to test whether individually powerful ministers such as this target disproportionate allocations to their home constituencies.

The variables composing GOV include the raw number of seats held by the governing party in a constituency, a measure of the vote for the party at the previous election, as well as a measure of the vote of the two main opposition parties at the previous election. The number of seats held by the governing party

is included because research shows that the size of the legislative delegation may be important in securing resources (Ansolabehere, Gerber et al 2003; Golden and Picci 2008). The vote at the previous election is included, since I seek to estimate the importance of the extent of electoral support for the parties in government in discretionary allocations to constituencies. MARG is made up of a variable denoting the absolute swing to or from the party between the previous two elections and a dummy variable denoting whether the constituency was considered marginal during the upcoming election campaign. These variables are included in order to test whether swing districts or marginal seats are targeted by partisan allocations.

Socioeconomic characteristics of the constituencies in which investments are made are also controlled for. These include the number of residents as well as the numbers in various age cohorts, such as 0-4, 5-12 and 13-18. The expectation is that the government ought to target greater resources for school building at areas with greater numbers of children, while those in the upcoming cohort are included as a measure of where future resources for primary schools should be targeted. The 5-12 class represents the current cohort of children at primary school as well as the cohort that will be entering post-primary school, while those aged 13-18 are currently attending post-primary school. Some change variables, denoting the percentage change in the relevant age cohort between the two census points of 2002 and 2007, are also included. These variables allow the policy response to changing demographics to be captured. The numbers of adults in various age cohorts may explain the allocation of some sports funding. In the education chapter (Chapter Six), there are other specific variables, such a dummy for whether a school is Irish language or not, another that accounts for religious affiliation, and a dummy for whether or not a school is on a specific disadvantaged list, as well as the number of children enrolled in the school and a gender variable that denotes whether it is a boys', girls' or mixed school. In the roads chapter (Chapter Seven), there are a number of other variables denoting the length of roads in a constituency and the number of car drivers. Further variables will be outlined in specific chapters.

Operationalising the concept of governing party is, in this case, straightforward. Fianna Fáil had come to power, forming a coalition with the Progressive Democrats (PDs) in 1997 – this coalition was returned to power in 2002. Thus, for the entire period in question²⁴, the coalition was extremely stable, with only Fianna Fáil (the dominant party) and the PDs being in power. The PD ministers were not in charge of any of the spending areas that we measure and thus have not been singled out. They are, of course, counted in the overall Cabinet minister designation, where appropriate. However, I do measure the seat share of Fianna Fáil in each constituency. This ranges from one to three, and is expressed as a percentage of the total number of seats in that constituency.

4.5 The data

A key impediment to developing a unified test of pork barrel has been disagreement on how best to operationalise particularistic spending as a dependent variable. Many studies have focused on easily available central government spending data, using transfer programs (Milesi-Ferretti, Perotti et al 2002), government consumption (Bradbury and Crain 2001), public employment, and even overall government spending (Persson, Tabellini et al; Persson, Roland et al 2000; Baqir 2002) to measure pork. Yet many of these variables either fail to capture general notions of pork or include too many non-pork items, such as universal benefits. Others choose to utilise capital expenditures at all levels of government as a good proxy of particularistic spending (Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2004). Capital expenditures are typically large physical infrastructural projects, such as buildings, bridges, and roads, which are visibly located in a place and usually impossible to relocate or withdraw. Because they are geographically located, they can be used a reasonable proxy for pork spending. The largest capital spending areas in Ireland in the years covered are transport, energy, health and education. One area of transport spending that is amenable to partisan

Due to restrictions on data availability from individual Government Departments the time period for which data was available was limited to the 2001-2007 period

geographic allocation is roads spending, as each constituency has a roads network. Energy spending, in contrast, is concentrated in large generating sites in a few locations around the country. Health spending is to some extent amenable to geographic allocation, particularly for smaller regional and local hospitals and daycare centres and so on. Education spending is also amenable to geographic distribution, with both primary and post-primary schools in each electoral constituency. In addition, as we saw in the last chapter, education and roads are among the top credit-claiming opportunities for candidates. Thus I will examine both of these areas. Health also represents a credit-claiming opportunity, although not as popular as either roads or education. However, until 2006, health spending was the responsibility of a myriad of local and regional health boards. I obtained information from these, but it was inconsistent and not amenable to being analysed in any consistent manner. In addition, as we have seen, sports clubs are the most popular credit-claiming opportunity. The level of spending is smaller, and these do not appear in the largest areas of spending, but they are nonetheless worth examining. In many ways, if we do not find evidence of partisan spending in sports grants, we are unlikely to find it anywhere. Thus, in all the forthcoming analysis, I will be examining various headings of capital expenditure, from sports clubs to schools and roads. I will outline the reason for looking at these areas in their own chapters, but all were listed among the top credit-claiming opportunities in the 2007 Candidate Survey.

4.6 Dependent variable

The data on the dependent variable was obtained under the Freedom of Information Act from each individual government department and includes all items of capital expenditure within the relevant area in the years 2001-2007, when suitable data was available in an electronic format. On the one hand, that date range means that the same two governing parties were in power for the duration, however, it also ensures that two general elections are included, as well as one local and European election. In most departments, this means that around three ministers had been in charge over the period, allowing for some variation. I will

discuss this more in the section outlining the independent variables. Each individual grant – whether a new window or a new school, a new sports pitch or a refurbishment, a pavement improvement or new road – is then allocated to its specific constituency. As a result, all datasets contain thousands of individual observations. Most datasets are thus at the level of the individual grant, although this is consolidated to the individual institution, such as school or sports club and further to the constituency in order to avoid as far as possible any problems of ecological inference. I used the reports of the Constituency Commission in order to ascertain which constituency each address was in. This was done manually and took thousands of hours of coding. For example, in Chapter Five on sports grants, all the grants are allocated under the sports capital programme from National Lottery funding in the Departments of Arts, Sports and Tourism (DAST). In the years examined, this amounts to some 6,243 grants amounting to €403 million. The DAST makes this data available by county. However, in many cases, counties do not map into constituencies. In Dublin, for example, there are 12 constituencies, while in Cork there are four. I separately allocated each observation to its constituency in the year in question. I set out the constituency revisions during the period in question below.

The education data has also been collected from the Department of Education under the Freedom of Information Act. It incorporates all capital spending on the primary and post-primary education sectors in Ireland from 2001-2007. The original dataset contains the name of each school, as well as its address, the amount of each individual grant, and its purpose. From 2001-2003, data were at the level of the grant and thus any school could have a number of entries in each year. From 2004-2007, the data were supplied at the level of the school. Again, I manually allocated each to its constituency. While the data cover every capital payment to every school over the period, as we will see in Chapter Six, the Department of Education has a growing number of schemes – such as the Small Schools Accommodation Scheme, the Permanent Accommodation Scheme and the Summer Works Scheme – which are aimed at different types of projects and were introduced in 2003 and 2004. Where appropriate, these schemes are dealt

with separately and, at other times, are included in the general analysis. In the years examined in this chapter, this amounts to some 9,386 primary grants amounting to \in 940 million. At the same time, there were some 18,136 post-primary grants, amounting to \in 1.2 billion.

The roads data was collected from the Department of the Environment, also under the Freedom of Information Act. It incorporates all capital spending on non-national roads in the republic from 2001-2007. The dataset contains the name of each section of roadway on which funds were spent and the programme under which it was spent - that is restoration, EU-co-financed, strategic grants programme or miscellaneous grants. Again each specific stretch of road was allocated to its constituency. Further information is available on the allocation of funds to city and borough councils, as well as town councils. In addition, I collected information from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs about CLAR funding, or specific funding for disadvantaged areas, which is outlined in greater detail below, on roads projects. This includes data on the amount spent, the stretch of road, and the electoral district in which it was located. I then allocated each to its constituency. In many cases, these were stretches of between 1km and 2km and thus can be allocated to within specific electoral districts, at least where CLAR co-funding was obtained. In other cases, the funding has been allocated to the constituency where the road was located. In cases where the county council and constituency border are in the same place, this was a simple matter. In other cases, the stretch of road had to be allocated to a specific constituency. In very few, the stretch of road crossed constituency boundaries, in which case the amount was divided equally between the various constituencies. In total over the time period, there are 3,718 observations amounting to over €2 billion in funding. Further details about specific programmes are outlined in the relevant chapter.

Because the size of the grants varies hugely, there are a large number of outliers, which skew those data. For example, in the sports data, amounts involved are

small, ranging from €500 to €3 million – the median value of grants is €30,000 and the mean is €64,570. In the schools data, the amounts involved range from €50 for glass replacement to €8 million for a new school. Again, as with sports grants, most grants are small, with the mean grant coming in at €64,362. The median grant is only €12,708, and 90% of all grants are below €139,675. At the same time, there were some 18,136 post-primary grants, ranging from €50 to €11 million. Here a similar pattern emerges: the mean post-primary grant was €69,925, while the median grant was €14,141. Some 90% of grants were under €312,987, while 75% of grants were below €58,714. In the roads data (see Figure 4-1), the amounts involved range from €4,000 for pavement improvements, to small stretches of road for over €12 million. In total, there are 3,481 observations amounting to $\in 5.8$ billion, with the mean at $\in 1.7$ million, only slightly above the median at €1.6 million. For illustrative purposes, Figure 4-1 shows a box-plot distribution of roads grants, showing a large number of outliers. A similar picture also emerges for sports and education grants, as we shall see in Chapters Five and Six.

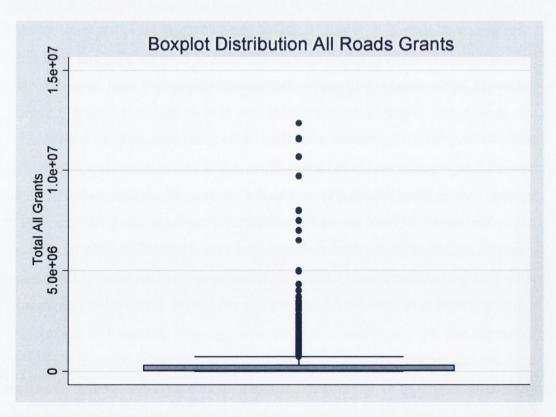


Figure 4-1: box-plot distribution of all sports grants

However, it is not simply the amount of grants allocated to a particular constituency that we can envisage as pork – the number of such grants may also be important. After all, a minister or party may prefer to spread around a large number of smaller grants rather than focus on a few larger ones. Thus, in each chapter, there is analysis where the dependent variable is a count variable – that is, the number of grants allocated to that constituency. In the sports data, there is also a dummy variable indicating success or failure for all applications. This allows me to examine the likelihood of success or failure in this dataset, in which case the dependent variable is a binary denoting success or failure to win a grant.

4.7 Level of analysis

There are three levels of analysis employed across the various categories of grant. First, the individual grant, where the success or failure of applications is analysed in terms of sports grants. Second is the level at the individual projects, where the amount of money allocated is analysed. This level of analysis allows a very detailed look at spending patterns. In the schools data, it makes it possible to distinguish between spending on different types of school, whether disadvantaged or not, as well as the number of children enrolled. In sports data, it means that we can observe variation between various types of sports club (whether GAA or soccer or boxing and so on) and, in roads, it means that we can look at spending in specific electoral divisions that are designated under special schemes for extra funding. Third, there is also a case for examining the data in a reduced format, where the unit of observation is the constituency, where both the amount of money allocated and the number of grants allocated is analysed. After all, the central argument of this thesis is that ministers or parties will use their ability to direct resources to areas of perceived electoral advantage for themselves.

4.8 Constituency-level variables

All grant data are manually allocated to their appropriate geographic constituency. In 2002, there were 42 constituencies in the Republic of Ireland. In 2004, the

report of the Constituency Commission proposed major changes to Dáil constituencies, and five new constituencies were created: Longford/Westmeath, Meath East, Meath West, Roscommon/South Leitrim, and Sligo/North Leitrim. They replaced the four existing constituencies of Longford/Roscommon, Meath, Sligo/Leitrim and Westmeath. The only Cabinet minister affected was Noel Dempsey, whose constituency changed from Meath to Meath West while he was Minister for Education and Science (2002-2004) and Minister Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (2004-2007). These new changes resulted in the creation of a 43rd constituency and the removal of the provincial boundary breach between Leinster and Connacht. At the same time, the number of seats was reduced in two constituencies, where Cork North Central fell from five seats to four and Dublin North Central from four to three. In addition, two threeseater constituencies, both represented by Cabinet ministers, gained an extra seat, where Dublin Mid West and Kildare North both went from three to four. There were further smaller boundary changes to 11 constituencies outside Dublin, almost all resulting in the transfer of less than 1,000 voters. These were Clare, Cork North West, Cork South Central, Cork South West, Donegal North East, Donegal South West, Kerry North, Kerry South, Kildare South, Limerick East, and Limerick West. At the time, boundaries for ten of the 12 Dublin constituencies were also revised: Dublin Central, Dublin Mid West, Dublin North, Dublin North Central, Dublin North East, Dublin North West, Dublin South, Dublin South Central, Dublin South West and Dublin West. Following the revision, the lower house of the Oireachtas currently contains 166 Teachtaí Dála (TDs), representing 43 parliamentary constituencies. All monies that were allocated after the boundary changes were announced in 2004 are allocated to their new constituency.

The constituency-level independent variables are divided into two sections, one dealing with political factors and the other with policy. The key political independent variables are Fianna Fáil vote share at the previous election, as well as a number of dummy variables representing the marginality of a constituency and whether or not a Cabinet minister represents it. Fianna Fáil vote share refers

to the proportion of the overall vote that Fianna Fáil candidates garnered in the prior election. Thus, in the years prior to the 2002 general election, the 1997 elections are used and, post-June 2002, the general election results of that year are utilised. Fianna Fáil vote share in individual constituencies ranges from 24.5% to 56.4%, with a mean of 41.5%.

Summary statistics constituency variables		
Variable	Mean	Std Dev
FF Vote	41.68	5.83
FF Swing	.055	5.88
FG/LAB Swing	35.37	8.18
Number Seats	4.01	.84
Number Seats FF	1.96	.558
Population	98,344	22,385
Population 0-19	28,287	6,847
Population 20-45	37,145	8,588
Distance from	185	84.89
Dáil		

Table 4-1: summary statistics constituency variables

The simple argument is that the higher the votes share in any constituency, the more core voters in that constituency. In other words, the higher the Fianna Fáil vote share, the more solidly Fianna Fáil the constituency is. Thus, if the party were to reward its core supporters, as predicted by the core-supporter hypothesis put forward by Cox and McCubbins (1986), we would expect that constituencies that had a higher percentage vote for Fianna Fáil at the last general election would attract more funds. The swing to or from Fianna Fáil at the previous election is also included. This is simply the absolute deviation from the previous election. The greater the swing, the more volatile is the electorate in that constituency. The dummy for whether or not a constituency is marginal was garnered from following Noel Whelan, a well-known political commentator, who, in a book published three weeks before polling day in 2002 and in an interview on RTÉ radio just before the 2007 election, ²⁵ gave his predictions for what might happen given a variety of scenarios. In each case, such as a big win for FF, he suggested how many seats each party would win in each constituency. I have taken these

²⁵ RTÉ Radio One, *Today with Pat Kenny*, May 1st 2007.

predictions and distinguished seats that would go to the same party, whatever scenario is adopted, from those that would not. The latter are considered marginal, meaning a party might win a seat here, or lose one, or both. This should summarise what would have been the conventional wisdom of the time. Of course Whelan was writing at the start of the election campaign and his predictions may not be the same as the perception in the immediate aftermath of the previous election. Another way of describing a marginal constituency is as a swing constituency. The swing voter hypothesis of Dixit and Londregan (1996) predicts that, on average, more funds are allocated to swing voters, and therefore the swing vote is expected to be positive and significant. In addition, the marginality of a constituency should be positive and significant.

In order to examine the impact of Cabinet ministers, there is also a dummy variable indicating whether or not a Cabinet minister represented a constituency. If Cabinet ministers were to engage in logrolling with one another, then we would expect this to be positive and significant. In addition, the individual spending ministers are separately coded, which will allow an examination of whether they act in their own individual interests, delivering to their own constituencies. Thus, there is a variable for the Minister for Finance. In general, the Irish Minister for Finance is the second most important ministerial position in the Irish Cabinet, after that of the Taoiseach. He or she is in charge of the Department of Finance (An Roinn Airgeadais), responsible for all financial matters. Gemma Hussey (1990: 12), a former Minister for Education, said that the Department of Finance rarely agreed to any spending proposal and fought the battles at Cabinet level, often on a line-by-line basis. The finance minister changed a few times over the period. Charlie McCreevy was minister from 26 June 1997 to 29 September 2004. Brian Cowen became minister on that day, until 7 May 2008. There is also a dummy for the Taoiseach. If ministers do look after the MoF in order to curry favour, then we would expect the dummy to be both positive and significant.

In order to examine whether the line ministers act in their own individual selfinterest, the relevant spending minister has also been coded. Thus in Chapter Five, Chapter Four: Data and Methods

we have the Minister for Arts, Sports and Tourism – from 12 July 1997 to 6 June 2002, Jim McDaid held the post, then called 'Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation'. In 2002, the department's responsibilities were changed, and it became the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism. The first minister was John O'Donoghue, who remained in situ for the duration of the time, from 6 June 2002 to 14 June 2007. The Minister for Education and Science from 27 January 2000 to 6 June 2002 was Michael Woods. From then until 29 September 2004, Noel Dempsey took over and, until 7 May 2008, it was Mary Hanafin. The Cabinet minister hypothesis states that a constituency belonging to a Cabinet minister or to a key agenda-setting minister should receive more funds. Thus we would expect these variables to be both positive and significant.

4.9 Independent policy variables

While the political variables mentioned above may have an influence on spending, they will not determine the allocation of all monies. Governments should also allocate funding in line with overall policy. In general, the greater the local need and the less the local services, the greater the contribution from central exchequer should be (Johnston 1978). For schools spending, for example, the department states that disadvantaged schools will be prioritised, as well as new schools in areas of rapidly growing population. More generally, we would expect that schools funding might be determined by the number of children in a school or, at the constituency level, by the number of children in the appropriate or upcoming age cohort in an area. In terms of sports funding, again the department specifies that facilities in disadvantaged areas will be prioritised and, more generally, we can expect that funding for sports facilities may also be determined by demographic factors such as the number of young people in an area. In terms of roads spending, there is again a priority for disadvantaged areas but, more generally, funding is on the basis of road length in an area rather than usage. There is more detail on each of these in the appropriate chapters.

Summary statistics for all the variables are given in Table 4.1.

For each area, there are variables denoting disadvantage, both of which come from the government's own measures. The civil service uses two primary measures of disadvantage, one allocated by Pobal, which looks after the RAPID1 and RAPID 2 allocations, and the other by CLÁR. Pobal is a not-for-profit company with charitable status that works on behalf of the government to support communities and local agencies towards achieving social inclusion, reconciliation and equality. The RAPID Programme is a government initiative that targets 46 of the most disadvantaged areas in the country. The programme aims to ensure that priority attention is given to the 46 designated areas by focusing state resources available under the National Development Plan. The programme also requires government departments and state agencies to bring about better co-ordination and closer integration in the delivery of services. The CLÁR programme (Ceantair Laga Ard-Riachtanais, or 'Underprivileged Designated Area of High Necessity'), launched in October 2001, is a targeted investment programme in rural areas. The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs coordinate both programmes. CLAR areas were selected on the basis of population decline between 1926 and 1996, and the programme is intended to combat the negative effects of this depopulation, such as withdrawal of services and loss of development funding. Following an analysis of the 2002 census data, the CLÁR areas were reviewed and extended. RAPID1 is confined to the major urban areas and RAPID2 focuses on certain provincial towns (see Appendix for details of areas covered). In addition to these geographic-based measures of disadvantage, the Department of Education has designated certain individual schools as disadvantaged, and these are also included as a dummy variable.

Other policy variables include demographics, which come from the Central Statistics Office and, in particular, the census results in 2002 and in 2007. Many of these variables are not perfect measures for policy outcomes, but do act as reasonable proxies. In sports funding, the majority of sporting facilities are utilised by the under-35 age cohort, with a few exceptions, such as golf courses.

²⁶ The CSO data was obtained from the Small Area Population Statistics and contains 68 tables organised into 15 themes. I utilised the economic theme by constituency.

There is thus an argument that funding to sports facilities in an area might be related to the number of people under 45 in that area. However, it is also conceivable that spending may be related to older age cohorts, who may be more likely to apply and lobby for funding. Thus, in the sports chapter, there are variables to control for a number of age cohorts, including 0-18, 18-45, over 45 and so on.

For primary schools, there is an argument that spending should be related to the number of children in the 5-11 age cohort. For medium-term planning, it may also be related to the numbers in the 0-4 cohort, who will be entering the system in the coming years. Of course, populations are not static, and some areas have experienced particularly rapid population growth over the past decade and thus, if the department is involved in planning, the spending may be related to the change in population levels rather than the levels themselves. In order to capture this possibility, there is a variable denoting change in the relevant age cohorts. In postprimary funding, similar arguments apply. There is a variable measuring the number of children in the 12-18 age bracket, while the numbers in primary schools act here as a predictor of future spending. Again, there are variables measuring change in the numbers in the different cohorts. For roads spending, there is a variable denoting the road length in each constituency. However, there is also an argument that roads funding would be determined by the number of cars in an area, the number of commuters, and so on. Thus there are variables measuring each of these.

4.10 Qualitative data

As a complement to the empirical chapters, qualitative techniques and, in particular, a range of interviews are also employed. As King, Keohane and Verba (1994) set out, qualitative research can often act as a complement to quantitative methods. In general, qualitative interviewing tends to be flexible, responding to the direction in which interviewees take the interview and perhaps adjusting the emphases in the research as a result of significant issues that emerge in the course of interview. At the most basic level, interviews are conversations (Kvale 1996).

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Kvale defines qualitative research interviews as "attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations."

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	N		
Grant	64570.7	119586	6243		
Log Per Cap	.0001154	.0000306	4518	4518	
Grant					
Sought	207495.2	550709	6243		
Cost	392661.7	1270732	6242		
Log Grant	10.75	1.23	4566		
Success	.7313	.443	6243		
Fail	.2686	.443	6243		
Γable 4-2 : summary stat	istics sports variables				
Summary statistics	for non-dummy	education variable	es		
Variable	Mean	Std Dev	N		
Grant Primary	9386	100138	9386		
Log PC Gra	ant .0001005	.0000295	7579		
Primary					
Grant Post Primar	y 69925	69925 220981			
Log Grant P Prima	ry 9.57	1.93	17990		
Summer Works Sc	93952	109421	875		
Devolved Scheme	115440	160309	241		
No Enrolled Prima	ry 190	155	9386		
No Enrolled	P 517	258	14712		
Primary					
Children 0-4	35420	45802	9295		
Children 5 – 12	38159	43908	9295		
Children 0-4 % ch	-93.27	1.21	8830		
Children 5-12 % cl	-867.02	173.54	8830		
Table 4-3: summary stati	stics education variable	es			
Statistics for man d		iablas			
Statistics for non-d Variable	Mean	Std Dev	N		
variable	IVICAII	Sid Dev	IN		

Statistics for non-dummy roads variables						
Variable	Mean	Std Dev	N			
Grant	253427	660295	3718			
Log Per Cap Grant	.0001198	.0000332	3360			
CLÁR Grant	22482	26901	1574			
CLÁR Per Cap	.0001056	.0000256	1503			
Grant						
Total Grant to	1680000	9455923	3481			
Cons						
No Grants in Cons	690	333	3565			
Cars per household	35513	7818	3322			
Commuters	24853	6328	3686			
Road KM	377	170	3777			
Table 4-4: summary statistics roads variables						

Essentially, the interviews followed a semi-structured approach, with a list of topics to be covered, but the interviewee had a great deal of leeway in how to reply. The benefit of this approach is that questions may not follow on exactly in the way outlined on the schedule. Questions that are not included in the guide may be asked, as they pick up on things said by interviewees. But, by and large, all of the questions were asked and a similar wording was used from interviewee to interviewee. I interviewed each person once. The interviews were not taped, as many interviewees expressed a preference not to be taped. I did, however, take extensive contemporaneous notes of all interviews.²⁷ Many of the interviewees also asked not to be specifically named and, when this is the case, I give them a general description.

Interviews were generally divided into two broad sections. The first was a 'soaking and poking' in the Fenno tradition, where interviewees were generally asked what their expectations would be for the research and also for any examples of particularistic spending that they could recall. In the second, more structured part of the interview, interviewees were asked to talk about the process of decision making when it came to allocating funds and about the business of lobbying and writing letters, and whether these practices made a difference. The interviews focus on whether the mechanisms that would be required for a party-wide tactical apportioning of funds exist. These mechanisms could be seen as the observable implications of some of the macro hypotheses. This is essentially a 'process tracing' approach rather than the 'soaking and poking' of the earlier part of the interview, and involves searching for the evidence consistent with the overall causal theory about the decisional process by which the outcome was produced. In Chapter Eight, I will discuss in greater detail the format and style of the interviews. These interviews are an integral part of the project. Interviewees include former Cabinet ministers and governmental advisors, as well as public servants and chief executives of semi-state bodies and civil servants.

²⁷ In most instances, no names are given, as many interviewees spoke on an off-the-record basis.

4.11 Methodology

In general, I will employ multivariate regression and, in particular, OLS. The central empirical strategy is to regress per capita spending for each policy area and for each electoral district and year on measures of political factors, together with economic and demographic controls that may influence funding decisions. In the regression model, the dependent variable is assumed to be a function of one or more independent variables, plus an error introduced to account for all other factors. The procedure has strong theoretical justification if a few assumptions are made about how the data are generated. The starting point is the regression equation, which describes some causal or behavioural process. The independent variables play the role of experimental or treatment variables. The error term captures the effects of all omitted variables. I have made a set of assumptions, known as the Gauss-Markov assumptions, which are sufficient to guarantee that ordinary regression estimates will have good properties. First, we assume that the errors u i have an expected value of zero: E(u i) = 0. This means that, on average, the errors balance out. Second, we assume that the independent variables are non-random. In an experiment, the values of the independent variable would be fixed by the experimenter and repeated samples could be drawn, with the independent variables fixed at the same values in each sample. As a consequence of this assumption, the independent variables will in fact be independent of the disturbance. For non-experimental work, this will need to be assumed directly, along with the assumption that the independent variables have finite variances. Third, we assume that the independent variables are linearly independent. That is, no independent variable can be expressed as a (non-zero) linear combination of the remaining independent variables. Fourth, we assume that the disturbances u i are homoscedastic:

$$E(v_2^i) = \sigma^2$$
 for $i=1,...,\Pi$

This means that the variance of the disturbance is the same for each observation. Fifth, we assume that the disturbances are not auto correlated:

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$$E(v_iv_i) = 0$$
 if $i \neq j$

This means that disturbances associated with different observations are uncorrelated. If the first three assumptions above are satisfied, then the ordinary least squares estimator b will be unbiased: E(b) = beta. Unbiasedness means that, if we draw many different samples, the average value of the OLS estimator based on each sample will be the true parameter value beta. Usually, however, we have only one sample, so the variance of the sampling distribution of b is an important indicator of the quality of estimates obtained. Although the preceding theorems provide strong justification for using the OLS estimator, a few large outliers can influence the OLS estimates. As we saw earlier, in each of the datasets, there are a large number of outliers in each of the dependent variables, which measure the amount of grant. Transforming the data by logging the dependent variable yields a model that fits the data quite well and hence a logged version of the dependent variable restores the reliability of the estimates. In general, the e log transformation is necessary to take account of the non-normal residuals. Thus the primary dependent variable is the logged grants per capita, 28 expressed in euro amounts, measured to each sports club, school or road in each year.

For the most part then, the OLS model that I shall utilise takes the following form:

$$\begin{split} Y_{ij} &= _0 + \! X K_k \! \! = \! 1 _k X_{kij} \! + \! M X_m \! \! = \! 1 _m X_{mj} + e_{ij} \left(1 \right) \\ ei \, _ \, N(0, \, _2) \\ for \, i &= 1, \, \ldots, \, 10,\! 000 \text{ and } j &= 1, \, \ldots, \, 48 \end{split}$$

²⁸ For information on how to properly assess the effect of interval and dummy variables on log-transformed dependent variables, please refer to Halvorsen and Palmquist (1980). For interval variables, the coefficient is multiplied by 100 to get the percentage change in the untransformed dependent variable. For dummy variables, the following formula needs to be applied to get the percentage change in the untransformed dependent variable caused by the dummy variable: 100[exp(coef)-1].

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The bulk of the data in the upcoming chapters fits into this set of assumptions.

In addition, as pointed to earlier, there is an argument that it is the number of grants, rather than the value of the grants, that may be important to those allocating partisan funds. After all, a legislator or party may get more credit for providing a large number of small projects in an area, which may benefit more people. These smaller projects may also be easier to target specifically to projects in subdivisions of the constituency. There is an argument (Bickers, Evans et al; Bickers and Stein 1994) that the pattern of credit is similar when the focus is on the number of grants or awards. However, one problem with analysing count data is that it is likely to be over-dispersed, which can result in problems. In general, in each dataset, the number of grants is skewed, while there are also signs of overdispersion, as the variance is about 50 times greater than the standard deviation, ruling out a standard Poisson fit, which is in general the model of choice when analysing count data. The negative binomial distribution is often more appropriate in cases of over-dispersion (Gardner, Mulvey et al 1995). Thus, in the count analysis, I have employed a negative binomial regression to best fit the dependent variable. The negative binomial is a discrete probability distribution. It arises as the probability distribution of the number of failures in a sequence of Bernoulli trials needed to get a specified (non-random) number of successes. If one throws a die repeatedly until the third time a '1' appears, then the probability distribution of the number of non-1s that appear before the third 1 is a negative binomial distribution. The negative binomial probability distribution of Y is:

$$P(Y=y) = (r/r + \lambda)^r \Gamma(r+y)/\Gamma(y+1)\Gamma(r) (\lambda/r + \lambda)^y$$

where Γ is the gamma function. The mean of the negative binomial distribution is λ but the variance is $\lambda + \lambda 2/r$, where r is called the dispersion parameter.

In the sports chapter, there is an additional level of information. As well as revealing how much grant was paid to each project, there is also information on whether or not a project was successful – that is, received a grant. In this model,

we are estimating a dichotomous dependent variable (success, failure, which takes only two values, say zero and one.) We will be interested in the probability that the dependent variable takes the value one (success). The probability that the dependent variable equals zero is, of course, one minus the probability that it equals one. Now probabilities are required to fall between zero and one, so a linear regression model is not appropriate to the modelling of probabilities since, for extreme values of the independent variables, the predicted value of the dependent variable will be either less than zero or greater than one, which is impossible for a probability (Walkling 1985). Moreover, use of linear regression with a binary dependent variable can be shown to cause heteroskedasticity. What is needed is a model that ensures, for all values of the independent variables, that the predicted probability of the dependent variable equalling one is admissible. Logit analysis maps the predicted probabilities to the meaningful zero one range. Logistic regression makes no assumption about the distribution of the independent variables. They do not have to be normally distributed, linearly related or of equal variance within each group. As a result, I have employed logistic regression here. The dependent variable in a logistic regression is the log of the odds ratio: ln(p/(1p)).

4.12 Conclusion

In a weak party system, it is clear (Golden and Picci 2008) that the interest of the individual legislator will trump those of the party. I argue that this is also possibly true in an ostensibly strong party system such as Ireland, due to the operation of STV and the resulting strong focus on individual candidates. Essentially, the intraparty competition that STV generates is so intense that parties must allow individuals a considerable degree of freedom to compete locally. Even government ministers have been known to criticise government policy in local areas; so long as this does not feed into parliamentary voting behaviour, it is tolerated by the parties. There is thus a disconnect between the party in a parliamentary and an electoral arena, with parties in STV being strong in the former and weak in the latter. If this is not the case, and the party's interests also

dominate in the electoral arena, then we should find that it is possible that these powerful legislators will, after looking after themselves, seek to look after their colleagues in the most marginal seats. Given that the resources to which the Cabinet has access are finite, it makes sense for it to pick and choose where they support carefully, and the greatest incentive will be to target marginal seats where the electoral return is greatest. Nevertheless, this again would imply that party control of ministers is high, that there is a coordinating mechanism for such a result at Cabinet, and that the ministers do not fear a reputation backlash at the prospect. These marginal seats could be either seats that the governing party is hoping to gain at the next election or those that it is in danger of losing. It is possible that these actors engage in logrolling within the legislature, as do their counterparts in Congress, in which case we could expect to see core districts of all Cabinet ministers in general, rather than specific core districts of individual legislators, being targeted. According to my matrix, if the party system at the electoral level is weak, as I have outlined, this will not be the case.

In the next three chapters, which examine sports grants, schools and roads respectively, the same four hypotheses are tested. Essentially, either Cabinet ministers behave in an individual or a collective fashion, looking after their own personal re-election interest, those of the party or of citizens generally. If they look after the party's interests, they may target either core or swing voters. Each of these hypotheses will be tested using data on individual grants garnered under the Freedom of Information Act. The first estimate is an OLS regression where the dependent variable is a logged per capita transformation of the amount of grants. This is examined at both individual club or school levels and at a macro constituency level. In addition, the hypotheses are re-tested using count data – that is, the number of grants in each of the areas to constituencies – and this is examined utilising a negative binomial. Finally, in the case of sports, a grant and count model is utilised, which predicts the likelihood of success or failure of individual grant applications. To begin then, we turn next to sports club data.

Chapter Five: Sports Capital Grants

5.1 Abstract

This chapter examines the extent to which allocations of sports capital were made on the basis of partisan, electoral or demographic criteria. Of course, not all sports grants are pork,²⁹ but I would argue that, because the spending is typically discretionary rather than formula driven and because the impact of the spending is highly visible to voters, sports grants often have the smell of pork about them. I find that the interest of the individually powerful ministers frequently trumps the interest of the ruling party in making the partisan allocations.

5.2 Introduction

Government spending on sports grants is one area where we might expect to find evidence of pork barrel spending, as we discussed in Chapter Three. There are a number of factors that make the study of sports grants worthwhile in terms of pork expenditure. First, there is considerable anecdotal evidence that sports pork exists and widespread allegations of sports pork in the national press, not only in Ireland but also internationally. Second, sports pork is the only area that has been found in an empirical analysis in Ireland (Considine et al 2004), although this was on a county rather than a constituency basis. Third, sports spending is in general discretionary and the amounts involved are generally small, potentially allowing a minister considerable discretion when it comes to allocating funding. Indeed, it is likely that if there is no evidence of partisan delivery in sports allocations, then there is unlikely to be evidence of it elsewhere.

²⁹ There are many definitions of pork barrel; however, I will utilise the broad-based definition by Ferejohn that it is any geographically targeted spending aimed at electoral gain.

This chapter will first look at the international picture, finding evidence in the US and Australia, before looking at the strong media perceptions about the existence of sports pork, outlining some of the charges made. It will then turn to a discussion of the Sports Capital Programme, which is responsible for the allocation of the grants under scrutiny here, examining how it operates, the application and the decision-making process. At this point, it will turn to a brief excursion through past reports into the programme, examining their recommendations, before setting out the expectations and hypotheses and data – in particular, the independent variables relating to policy, which the preceding discussion will have illuminated. At this point, it turns to some descriptive statistics, before proceeding to some in-depth techniques to examine not only the amount of grants awarded, but also the number and the likelihood of success of an application.

5.3 Sports pork – the background

'Sports pork', as it is called, is rife in the US (Fort and Quirk 1995; Quirk and Fort 1997; Keating and Cato 1999; Siegfried and Zimbalist 2000; Zaretsky 2001) and evidence has also been found in Australia (Denemark 2000). Certainly across much of the world, sports pork – in other words, money spent by the government on sports, from stadiums to local community initiatives - has an inglorious history, likely driven by its discretionary nature and the associated populist and credit-claiming advantages. Attention in the US is generally on the costly relationship between major league sports and government (Keating and Cato 1999). During the 20th century, more than \$20 billion was spent on major league ballparks, stadiums and arenas, including a minimum of \$15 billion in government subsidies. The major beneficiaries were major league baseball, the National Football League, the National Basketball Association and the National Hockey League. Keating argues that sports organisations sometimes pursue taxpayer dollars off the field with greater tenacity than they do victories on the field. However, most of the analysis is on the relationship between the owners of the sports clubs and their lobbyists with Congress. Little scholarly work has yet been done on the electoral mechanics behind the grants. It is unclear, for example,

if legislators respond to lobbying in return for campaign finance donations or whether there are other mechanisms at work.

In contrast, in Australia, the evidence is that there is an electoral relationship between sports grants, their timing and their destination. Denemark (2000) found evidence that the Labour government had disproportionately benefited its own supporters in marginal seats with sports grants ahead of both the 1990 and 1993 general elections. In the so-called 'sports rorts' affair in 1994, federal Labour minister Ros Kelly was accused of directing the bulk of sporting and community grants to vulnerable Labour-held seats in advance of the 1993 election. The auditor general later criticised Kelly for failing to document the decision-making process (Young, Tham et al 2006). Kelly had given twice as much money to sports facilities in marginal Labour seats as she gave to marginal seats held by the coalition parties. She later admitted that she had assessed over 2,800 submissions for funding on the basis of verbal advice from her staff. She had apparently written down the names on a "great big whiteboard" in her office, which she had later rubbed out. She also conceded that she had put through at least one grant even after her staff advised her it would not be appropriate. Kelly resigned shortly after the report was published.

In Ireland, there has been much discussion and many newspaper headlines on the destination of sports capital funding, with numerous reports of the counties that ministers represent receiving disproportionate allocations. The subject has also received some scholarly attention. The conventional wisdom is that the allocation of grants is influenced by political and electoral considerations. Considine and Coffey (2004) provide some evidence that, from 1999 to 2002, the county of the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation received the highest per capita allocation of all 26 counties. The second highest per capita allocation went to the county of the Minister for Finance. It is worth noting, however, that this analysis was done on the basis of county rather than constituency, and that neither of these ministers' constituencies actually matches county boundaries. Yet there must be something there. The then Minister for Arts and Sports, John O'Donoghue,

speaking on national radio,³⁰ insisted that it was the job of a minister to look after his constituents, although he also tried to suggest that this did not mean that this was treating individuals elsewhere unfairly. As a headline in the *Sunday Tribune* put it, "Sports funding looks a lot like notes for votes". The article is worth quoting:

In a productive few hours last Saturday, the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism John O'Donoghue opened extensive new facilities at Killarney Legion and Laune Rangers GAA clubs. At both, he spoke about how these cornerstones of his own constituency had now received near enough £700,000 between them through the sports capital grants system. In Killorglin, he even went a step further, teasing the crowd about more potential largesse to come.

"I understand an application for funding under the 2007 scheme has been received in respect of pitch development, floodlighting and renovation of existing juvenile dressing rooms," said O'Donoghue to the Laune Rangers' faithful. "Applications are being assessed, and I hope to be in a position to announce allocation of grants in the near future."

Five days later, he was as good as his word. When his department released the latest figures on Thursday (the announcement is usually a summer affair, unless there's an election), both clubs were put down for another ϵ 100,000 each. The minister didn't forget his own either. St Mary's of Caherciveen ... of which he is former chairman ... trousered ϵ 170,000, taking its haul over three years to an impressive ϵ 650,000. Other outfits from his patch lucky enough to complete a throughput of successful applications were Waterville (ϵ 390,000 since 2005) and Glenbeigh Sports Hall (ϵ 395,000.) (Hannigan 2007).

Or as *The Irish Times* reported: "Minister's county gets twice as much sports funding" (Reed 2006). The article pointed out that "since Mr O'Donoghue took office as Minister for Sport in 2002, Kerry has enjoyed one of the highest rates of funding for any county. This has been consistently above €3.3 million." It went on to quote a spokesman for Mr O'Donoghue saying that the high level of funding for Kerry was not linked to the fact that the minister was from Kerry. He said the

³⁰ The minister was on *The Right Hook*, presented by George Hook on Newstalk 106 on 8 March 2007.

level of funding for any county was based on the quality, number and size of the applications. He added that Kerry's overall share was likely to fall when a further €22 million for regional sporting facilities was announced in the coming weeks. That is a statement that we shall empirically test later in this chapter.

There have also been direct accusations of political patronage, also denied by the minister. According to another *Irish Times* report, the headline noted: "Minister rejects 'slush fund' remark". Again it is worth quoting:

Mr Paudge Connolly (Ind, Cavan-Monaghan) alleged that some grant aid smacked of "political patronage" and that "three concerns in the south Kerry area received more grant aid than allocated to eight counties, namely Cavan, Monaghan, Laois, Sligo, Carlow, Limerick, Longford and Westmeath". He added that Cavan and Monaghan were not getting "their fair share" of the capital grant funding.

However, the Minister for Sport, Mr O'Donoghue, rejected the claim and pointed out that there had been substantial transfers to Mr Connolly's constituency since 1997.

"That is a fact," he said, adding that Deputy Connolly should not focus only on the Sports Department, but should look at the entire spectrum of Government supports.

He pointed out that "it is also the case, and little can be done about this, that in many circumstances the people living in the county where I come from submit many applications for funding under the sports capital programme [and therefore] the proportion of applicants can be higher than the number in other counties".

However, Fine Gael's leader in the Seanad, Brian Hayes, called for a review of the current system, describing it as "the personification of political patronage". (O'Halloran 2002)

But it was not just Minister O'Donoghue. The newspapers also noticed a pattern when his predecessor Dr Jim McDaid was in situ from 1997 to 2002. One headline³¹ reported "Donegal fares well as McDaid announces €76m sports grants". Nonetheless, it may be that O'Donoghue's spending habits were in a league of their own. A former adviser to the government claims, as we shall see in

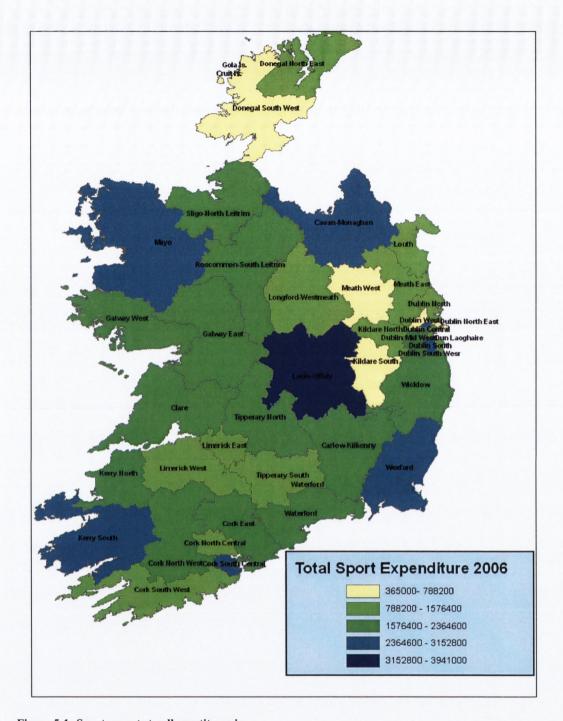


Figure 5-1: Sports grants to all constituencies

Chapter Eight, that his prolificacy with the sports money was one of the reasons he was demoted from Cabinet in 2007 to become Ceann Comhairle (Speaker of the Dáil). While this could be perceived to undermine the hypothesis that ministers will engage in pork delivery to their home constituencies it is likely that O'Donoghue simply went beyond the balance of what is considered acceptable

and was perceived to have damaged the party reputation nationally. Looking at the map, Figure 5-1, we can see that his constituency in Kerry South and the constituency of then Minister for Finance Brian Cowen (Laois Offaly), in the centre of the country, both received more funds than other areas. However, in order to investigate this, we need not only to empirically examine the data, but also to understand the process behind the decision making and the nature of the grants, which I shall turn to next.

5.4 Background to the Sports Capital Programme

The Sports Capital Programme comes under the auspices of the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism (DAST). The department has only had a significant spending role in relatively recent years. The Sports Capital Programme was first introduced in the early 1970s and, up to 1987, its average annual spend was in the order of €1.5 million (DAST annual report 2006). The introduction of the National Lottery in 1987 saw a major increase in funding for the programme. A crucial point worth noting is that the percentage of National Lottery funds allocated to sport is at the discretion of the Minister for Finance, a point to which I shall return later. To begin with, two separate schemes were introduced: the Recreational Facilities Scheme and the Major Facilities Scheme. The Recreational Facilities Scheme assisted voluntary and community organisation in providing, improving and equipping recreational, leisure and community facilities. The maximum grant was limited to €50,000. The Major Facilities Scheme was a multiannual sports programme assisting in the provision of major sports facilities at a national, regional and local level. In the first decade of their existence, some £67 million was allocated – approximately £48 million under the Major Facilities Scheme and approximately £19 million under the Recreational Facilities Scheme. In these early years, Gaelic games were the main beneficiary outside community sports and recreation, receiving 25% of all monies, compared with 7.5% for soccer and 6.5% for athletics. Over the years 1987 to 1997, Longford, Westmeath and Sligo received the largest per capita allocations. At the time, Mary O'Rourke was the decision-making minister at the Department of Education (1987-1991), and her constituency was Westmeath, although both Sligo and Westmeath's

figures were distorted by the allocations of £1.5 million and £2.5 million respectively for the development of regional centres. Longford was the home constituency of Albert Reynolds, who served both as Taoiseach (1992-1994) and as Minister for Finance (1988-1991) over that time period. Indeed, Reynolds is mentioned frequently by those musing about pork, and particularly his winning of a significant slice of limited roads funding to secure a bypass for Longford, which returned many tourists through the town rather than bypassing the town to decrease journey times as the funding intended. Cork and Kilkenny received the next highest allocations:³² In 1994 Fine Gael returned to government and Fine Gael's Bernard Allen, a representative for Cork North Central, was appointed as Minister of State at the Department of Education and the Environment with special responsibility for Youth and Sport (1994-1997). However, it is not possible to be definitive that any of these exercised political influence, as the figures are not available on anything other than a county basis. Meath, Louth and Wicklow received the lowest per capita allocations of funding. The administration of the programme transferred from the Department of Education and Science to the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation in September 1997. The first minister where we can allocate the grants by constituency was Dr Jim McDaid of Donegal North East and, during his tenure, the largest individual grant went to Letterkenny UDC, in the minister's hometown.

Overall since 1998, over 7,400 projects have received sports capital funding, bringing the total allocation in that time to over ϵ 725 million, with a further ϵ 107 million allocated towards the redevelopment of Croke Park. Indeed, since 2002, the GAA has continued to be favoured, having received £5 million under the scheme for the first phase of its Croke Park development in 1994/95. In addition, four other national governing bodies were allocated grants for the development/upgrading of their national centres. These were in athletics (Morton Stadium, ϵ 1.7m), basketball (National Arena, ϵ 1.8m), hockey (UCD pitch, ϵ 0.7m) and boxing (National Stadium, ϵ 0.26m) and an amount totalling ϵ 400,000 was provided for the development of an International Youth Sailing Centre at Schull,

³² Report of the Review Group 1999, p28

Co Cork. The department insists that, while Gaelic games would appear to have received a high percentage of overall grants,³³ it should be borne in mind that the largest number of grant applications are received from GAA clubs and the level of funding allocated reflects this.

Anecdotally, then, it would appear that there is at least a widespread perception that sports capital grants are a form of Irish pork. Later in the chapter, I will test this empirically, but first it is important to outline the process by which grants are distributed in order to ascertain where it is that ministers can intervene.

5.5 Application process

Of course, it is one thing to say that ministers direct funds at their own constituencies. If they do, it is also important to ask how they do it. To answer this, I shall trace the process from application to funding decision. The annual allocation of grants under the programme commences by inviting applications from relevant bodies, normally over a six-week period following advertisements in the national press. The timing of this invitation has varied in recent years, commencing any time between November and March. For projects to be considered for funding, completed application forms must be submitted with accompanying documentation before the stated deadline. The accompanying documentation would typically include details of the proposed project and its cost, a copy of statements from financial institutions, a copy of planning permission, a solicitor's letter confirming title to the proposed site, and evidence of consultation with other local clubs, groups, schools and so on. Applications are typically submitted by, or on behalf of, voluntary and community organisations, including sports clubs and, in certain circumstances, schools, colleges and local authorities seeking support in respect of capital projects. Applications from national governing bodies of sport and third-level education institutions are also accepted where it is evident that the proposed facility will contribute to the regional and/or national sporting infrastructure. Interviewees say that this process itself is a

³³ 2006 Annual Report into Sports Capital Scheme.

considerable disincentive to many of those applying. However, one interviewee noted that the crucial function of a minister or an adviser was to check that all the documents had been received in time for a remedy to be found.

Grants are allocated towards the cost of eligible work of up to 50% cent in respect of regional facilities, 70% for local facilities, rising to 80% where such a project is located in a disadvantaged area. The first stage of the scrutiny of applications is to identify those deemed ineligible, which are then ruled out immediately. The main reason that applications were deemed ineligible was due to the lack of the required local funding or evidence submitted in support of it.

This combination of a detailed application process and the requirement to have local funding means that applications may be more likely from clubs that have an active membership, whether in more middle class or rural areas. In 2002 alone, almost 300 out of the 1,370 applications received under the programme were deemed ineligible and most of them were ruled out due to inadequate local or matching funding. This may be due in part to their location in areas of low population or disadvantage, limiting their capacity to raise local funding. In other cases, it may be that such clubs are without existing capital assets, which would also help their efforts to generate funds.

5.6 Assessment and decision making

The assessment process on individual applications is carried out by officers from the Sports Unit of the department, who carry out the assessments on a county-by-county basis. Each application is scored between 0 and 5 under the assessment criteria, depending on the extent to which they meet the criteria. Different 'weights'(from 1-4) are attached to the various criteria, depending on their importance (See Table 5-1). One problem, as the department's 2005 review pointed out, is that many of these are difficult to assess and are even subjective. On the first assessment criterion — an increase in the levels of active participation/improved standards of sporting performance — more points are

awarded for good sporting projects, catering for different sports and increasing participation levels. Non-sporting projects are scored zero here. Apart from the clear sporting dimension, it can be hard to adequately judge one project from the next in the absence of clear information on specific facility needs in an area or sport facility deficit. On the current and planned levels of sport and/or recreational sport facilities in the area, even greater difficulties exist. Points are awarded based on levels of current applications and previous awards from the same area, taking account of the need to achieve an equitable geographical distribution of funds. This is very difficult for the department to assess, especially in the absence of complete information on existing facilities and needs. The extent of consultation is also difficult to assess.

Points are awarded based on information supplied on the application form and supporting documentation detailing commitments by other groups to use the facility. It is difficult to assess and compare the 'extent' of consultation from one application to the next. Following assessment, scores are allocated to each eligible application, which determine an order of priority within each county. Each county is given a minimum allocation in respect of local projects based on their population, thus taking into account the need for a geographical spread of funds. This is an area that interviewees feel needs to be revisited and is one that leads to a political dimension. Grants in respect of regional and national projects are not taken into account for the purposes of county ceilings. Recommendations based on this process, taking into account the indicative amount of funding available for allocation, are submitted to the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism along, with the entire list of the applications. Crucially, the minister, who has responsibility for making the final decision on all grants, can make amendments to the list of grants to be allocated before it is finalised. According to the department's official spokesman, the minister would normally exercise his discretion to support projects that seem to him to be "particularly meritorious", although this is questioned by a former civil servant, who thought that "political considerations" also applied.

Assessment sheet

	Selection Criteria Point	Score Weight	Total	Score	Comment
1	Increase in the levels of active participation/improved standards of sporting performance	0 to 5	4		
2	Level of socio-economic disadvantage in the area		4		
3	Technical merits of the project		4		
4	Financial viability of project		4		
5	Level of local funding available		4		
6	Extent to which applicant will be able to maintain project after completion		3		
7	Current & planned levels of sport and/or recreational sport facilities in the area		2		
8	Extent of consultation with other clubs/groups etc & the outcome of the consultation		2		
9	Strategies to be used to attract people from disadvantaged areas		3		
10	Priority of proposed improvements/ facility in relation to existing facilities		4		
11	Priorities as identified by the NGB		3		
Total					

Table 5-1: Assessment sheet

Sanction for the total amount allocated each year is obtained from the Minister for Finance. The final list of projects to be funded is published in the national press and on the department's website, www.arts-sport-tourism.gov.ie. The department also points out that, while it attempts to allocate a fair geographical spread of funds along county lines, it is limited to the actual pool of applications received. "Consequently, it would be unrealistic to expect that a perfect geographical distribution could be achieved." According to the 2005 review, to place this analysis of county-by-county allocations in its proper context, a couple of factors should be taken into consideration. In addition to individual project grants, which are allocated on a county basis, a sizable amount of funding is provided through national and regional projects, which are not allocated across counties on an equal basis. Therefore, a large national or regional grant could significantly skew the per-capita grant allocation for some counties. In addition, each county is given a minimum allocation in respect of local projects, based on its percentage of the national population. I will be thus controlling for population in the empirical part of the chapter. This is based on the expected total funding available for allocation, as it is projected at the time of decision making. The Sports Unit strictly observes the minimum level of allocation during the assessment of grants. Crucially, however, from time to time, the minister, subject to the agreement of the Minister for Finance, may make additional funds available for extra Sports Capital Programme projects, and it is this additional funding that tends to skew the county distribution. This, perhaps undue, ministerial influence has been the subject of attention in official reports into the grants, and I shall outline some of the issues next.

5.7 Reviews and ministerial influence

Crucially, as I pointed out, the Minister for Finance decides on how much National Lottery money will be allocated, while the Minister for Sport has to sign off on all individual projects. Former officials at the Department of Sports say that this led almost inevitably to political influence on the destination of grants in favour of the constituencies of both ministers. The influence was reportedly both direct and indirect. In some case, the ministers' programme managers would mention that the minister was wondering about the status of a particular project, while at other times, he would make decisions when he was presented with the final list. The detail of these interviews is reported in Chapter Nine. This interference in the grant-making process has been subject to a number of reviews over the past decade.

However, an internal expenditure review of the programme from 1999-2002 did make some findings. The publication was part of the Expenditure Review Initiative³⁴ (ERI), a process of evaluating public expenditure programmes administered by government departments. The objectives of the ERI are to analyse government programmes in a systematic manner to determine what was actually achieved by the expenditure and to provide a basis on which more informed decisions could be made on priorities within and between programmes. The results were quite revealing for this research. The review set out the four specific objectives of the Sports Capital Programme: (1) to develop an integrated and planned approach to the development of sport and recreational facilities; (2) to assist voluntary and community organisations to develop high-quality and sustainable facilities in appropriate locations that will maximise use in terms of

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³⁴ In general, an expenditure review seeks to examine the extent to which the stated objectives of the programme have been met in the period under review and so attempt to measure its effectiveness. The outputs and outcomes from the programme will be looked at to determine what the programme has actually done or produced and what impact has it had on the target population or on the wider community/region. In conjunction with this, the evaluation will also seek to measure the extent to which the programme has operated efficiently with the resources available to it and so provided good value for money. Reviews are usually undertaken by spending departments under the aegis of steering groups representing the relevant departments. The whole process is overseen by the Central Steering Committee on Programme Evaluation, chaired by the secretary general at the Department of Finance. The Sports Capital Programme Expenditure Review is one of a number of reviews carried out by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism under its 2003 expenditure review programme.

participation in sport and recreation; (3) to prioritise the needs of disadvantaged areas in the provision of facilities; and (4) to encourage and prioritise the multipurpose use of facilities at all levels by all groups.

It found that objective 1 (to develop an integrated and planned approach to the development of sport and recreational facilities) had only been met in a very limited way, being severely hampered by the absence of a strategic plan. I argue that the absence of plans likely incentivised minsters to view the fund as a personal slush fund. Indeed, this has been acknowledged, and attempts at political influence were so blatant that the 1999³⁵ review recommended that the Sports Council, following the enactment of the Irish Sports Council Bill, should be the primary decision-making authority on the allocation of funding under the new programme, and any funding earmarked for the programme should be assigned to it. The group argued there was "an element" of strategic development in the initial 1988-1993 periods but, since then, the focus has been less strategic and more demand-driven, with local projects, geared more towards individual sports, predominating. The review pointed out that "while recommendations are made by Sports Capital Unit of the department to the minister who makes the final decision on projects to be grant-aided, generally, decisions on the allocation of grant-aid are made following discussions between the minister and officials from Sports Capital Unit on the merits of the individual cases. However, while every effort is made by all involved to allocate funding having regard to the merits of each case, the Review Group found that the decision-making process was not altogether satisfactory for a number of reasons" (emphasis added). One observer said that this was considered strong language at the time and left those involved in little doubt that they were talking about overt political influence from the minister.

The report itself drew particular attention to the absence of comprehensive data on existing facilities around the country, which made it difficult to identify the areas of greatest need or where there was an overlap or duplication of facilities. "These shortcomings in the decision-making process have led to duplication and over-

³⁵ Sports Capital Programme, Report of the Review Group, December 1999.

provision in some areas and serious under-provision in others. The results can be seen in many towns and villages throughout the country where there is a dearth of facilities in some areas while, in others, different elements of a leisure or sports complex are in place but situated at different sites, often in close proximity to each other and usually in different ownership." And in a controversial and strongly worded recommendation, the review group found "that this approach to facility provision is inefficient and ineffective and is not achieving best value for state funding, as it is encouraging overlap and duplication. It highlights the need to develop a planned approach to facility provision in the future, with clear aims, objectives and assessment criteria." It specifically called for the Sports Council to be given the task of allocating grants, taking the decisions out of the ministers' hands, but this was overruled in the Oireachtas, ³⁶ after the government decided in 1999 that the Minister for Sport should be the competent decision maker. The Oireachtas also debated this issue during the passage of the Irish Sports Council Bill and the then minister, Dr Jim McDaid, insisted that the decision making should remain within the government's remit³⁷ and thus decided against the function being transferred to the Sports Council. This combination of factors makes the Sports Capital Programme an ideal vehicle for pork-barrel politics.

In 2005, the review group (DAST 2005) report revisited the possibility of removing funding decisions from the minister. However, perhaps unsurprisingly, it concluded that:

"As the minister has final responsibility for all funding provided to his department's vote and that as he is answerable to the Oireachtas for all decisions made by him, he should continue to be the ultimate deciding authority in respect of allocations under the Sports Capital Programme. The minister is accountable through the various processes of parliamentary procedure, including oral and written parliamentary questions, adjournment debates, appearances before select committees and so on. The transfer of the decision process to another body or committee would not necessarily lead to a more equal spread of grants across geographical areas. Indeed, it would not be easy to change

³⁶ Irish Sports Council Bill 1998, second stage.

³⁷ Ibid.

the perception that external factors are brought to bear on grant decisions, no matter what process was applied." (Review Group DAST 2005)

Nevertheless, the report went on to argue that the assessment criteria should be clearly defined and that decisions on allocations should be made in an open and transparent manner. It is worth quoting at length.

The process by which representations are made to individual ministers in relation to a wide range of issues provides a useful channel of communications for individual citizens and groups through their local representative. Transferring the decision function from the minister to a separate independent committee might create a perception of independence, but it is doubtful that such a committee would be better placed to have regard for the wider remit of government policies on disadvantaged, spatial strategy, rural development and children's strategies, and in addition there would no longer be as effective a channel of information as is frequently provided by political representatives about their local areas. A significant improvement could be achieved in matching need with supply if detailed information was available on the existing level of sports facilities in each county. Such information could enable the production of a clearly defined strategy setting out the priorities for future public funding of such facilities. This could provide a solid basis for future decisions. In the meantime, the allocation of grants in respect of local projects should in the short term continue to be guided by thresholds set for each county. Not only should there be a minimum allocation of funding based on population levels, but also some consideration should be given to setting limits on the amount of disparity between counties, in order to iron out the any disparity and to ensure that differences in allocation levels are minimal. This policy would need to be reviewed in light of the results of the planned audit of sports facilities, which would highlight counties, or areas of critical need. In addition, there should be a clear separation between the distribution of funding among local sports projects and strategic projects of regional or national significance, so as to avoid the skewing of grant allocation data, when analysed on a county basis.(DAST 2005)

The other measures proposed at that time are also still to be put in place. A steering group was established in March 2003 to oversee the review, with representatives from the DAST, the Department of Finance and the Irish Sports Council. The DAST then commissioned a group of consultants, Holohan Leisure, who were due to have a draft report completed by mid 2007. At the time of

writing in June 2009, this has still not been delivered. The Programme for Government in 2002 also included a commitment to complete a national audit of sports infrastructure, but again this has not been completed. In June 2009, DAST told this researcher that:

"The long-term strategic plan for sports facilities ... the National Sports Facilities Strategy review is currently being carried out by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism. This five-year strategic plan will inform the future development of necessary sporting facilities throughout the country. The aim of the strategy is to provide high-level policy direction for future investment and grant assistance at national, regional and local level. The strategy will also identify the wider economic, health and social case for continued investment in sports facilities. It will aim to prioritise areas for future investment and to ensure continued impact on participation in the relevant areas, including those in lower socio-economic groups. The strategy will address future sports facility funding and provision and will inform decisions on future rounds of the Sports Capital Programme." (Interview DAST June 2009)

However, there was still no confirmation of when this report would materialise.

5.8 Expectations

Given the continued absence of a long-term plan and the anecdotal evidence, it is likely that the individual legislators – that is, the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Arts and Sports – are likely to have a disproportionate influence on the allocation of monies. However, there are also likely to be significant incentives for the governing party to become involved. Because much of the spending is highly discretionary, the DAST receives a large volume of representations from many legislators. While there does not appear to be a mechanism for the party to actually direct funding, the minister could ensure that party objectives such as targeting core voters or indeed swing voters are met. This would also be in the minister's self interest, as he would be enhancing the chances of his party returning to power after the next general election. There is also a possibility that the minister will do deals with fellow Cabinet ministers, offering perhaps a swimming pool in return for a school. Before he became minister, John O'Donoghue certainly seemed to do so (O'Halloran 2004). In 2004, Labour's

sports spokesman, Mr Brian O'Shea, charged that the sports funding was operated like a "slush fund". He referred specifically to the controversial funding of the Killorglin rowing club, in O'Donoghue's constituency, which received funding in 2001 from the then minister, Dr Jim McDaid. Mr O'Donoghue said he had sent two letters to the minister. "I did what any deputy would do in the normal course of events, whether on the government or opposition benches. I made representations on behalf of my constituents. That is what I am elected to do and it is my constitutional function. If I did not make such representations, I would not be here this afternoon talking to the deputy." However, most interviewees felt that deals between Cabinet ministers happen on an ad hoc scale only, and such patterns are likely to be hard to find in the data.

One of the programme's four objectives is to "assist voluntary and community organisations to develop high-quality and sustainable facilities in appropriate locations that will maximise use in terms of participation in sport and recreation". Population data in relation to children and young adults who are most likely to make maximum use of such facilities is a proxy to measure this. The programme also contains specific measures to assist disadvantaged areas, including a higher grant percentage ceiling and the availability of additional weighting based on the level of disadvantage. A second is to "prioritise the needs of disadvantaged areas in the provision of facilities". However, the absence of a strategic plan may mean that objectives such as targeting disadvantaged areas may not be met. The 2005 review found that, even with these measures, applications in respect of projects located in disadvantaged areas had a lower success rate than those for non-disadvantaged areas. I will include an examination of this in the following section.

5.9 Hypothesis and model

As I set out in Chapter Four, there are a number of competing hypotheses, which I shall test:

1. Cabinet ministers will act in their individual interests, directing

higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to their home districts.

2. Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest of the party,

directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to geographic

areas of greater electoral strength for the party.

3. Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest of the party,

directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to geographic

areas with maximum numbers of swing voters for the party.

4. Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest generally, directing

expenditure at all constituencies on a universal basis, targeting groups

as set out by government policy.

All of the above hypotheses can fit a simple model where spending is a function

of political and/or economic factors. Spending can be measured in a number of

different ways. Our primary measurement is the amount of grants allocated or

total sports grants per capita.

One way to represent this is: Spend_i = $f(Pol_i, Strengt_h, Eco_i)$

See Chapter Four for more detail on methods. I shall also outline each in more

detail as I employ it in the following section.

5.10 Data and measures

The data comprise all sports grants allocated under the Sports Capital Programme

from 2002 to 2007. As I outlined in the previous chapter, choosing these years

allow two general elections to take place, with up to three changes of minister,

allowing for some variation in the dataset. All the grants are allocated under the

Sports Capital Programme from National Lottery funding in the Department of

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Arts, Sports and Tourism, and the data were obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. In all, they contain entries for some 6,243 different grants, some 73% of which were successful, amounting to €403 million over the period. The data contain the name of the sports club, its address, and the amount it applied for and won. In some cases, the total amount applied for was granted; in other cases, a portion of the sum was granted and, in still others, no grant was forthcoming. The DAST issues data that break down the grants by county. However, in general, constituency and county boundaries are not coterminous. Indeed, some constituencies contain two counties, while other counties have as many as 12 constituencies within their borders. Using a constituency map and address information, I have allocated each grant application to the constituency in which it is located. National and regional projects – where these could be identified – have been omitted, on the basis that they are not constituency-specific grants. Nevertheless, some are still included if they contributed to infrastructure in a defined geographic location. Where clubs changed constituency due to boundary revisions, this has been accounted for, and I have also coded areas that are classified as disadvantaged.³⁸ This method of classifying disadvantage throws up a few anomalies. For example, yacht clubs in the ultra-expensive West Cork resort villages of Schull and Glandore have received targeted disadvantage funding (see Appendix for details of areas covered).

The grant amounts vary widely, from €500 to €3 million. The mean grant was some €64,570, while the median was €30,000. As a result, the distribution is very skewed (see Figure 5-2). In general, the dependant variable employed, again as explained in Chapter Four, is the per capita logged grant, which has a more normal distribution (see Figure 5-3). In the second stage of the analysis, the dependent variable becomes a dummy for the success or failure of a grant. In the third part of the analysis, the dependent variable is a count variable, which counts the number of applications in a constituency. At this point, the dataset is collapsed to the constituency level, with 260 observations accounting for the total sum of

³⁸ See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the measures of disadvantage the CLÁR and Rapid programmes.

grants to each constituency in each year.

The independent variables as set out in Chapter Four include a dummy for whether or not a constituency is marginal³⁹ as well as one measuring the absolute swing to or from Fianna Fáil at the previous election. There are also measures on the Fianna Fáil vote at the previous election, the Fine Gael/Labour vote, as well as the number of seats in each constituency and the number held by Fianna Fáil. In addition, there are dummy variables denoting the Taoiseach, the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Arts Sports and Tourism. The demographic variables come from the Central Statistics Office and, in particular, the Statistics Yearbook for 2005 that is largely based on the 2002 census, and from the small area population statistics available from the CSO for both 2002 and 2007. I have included population variables for the number of under-18s and the number of 18-45s, as well as a general population variable. Finally, there is a control variable for disadvantage, which indicates whether a project is in a CLÁR or Rapid area.

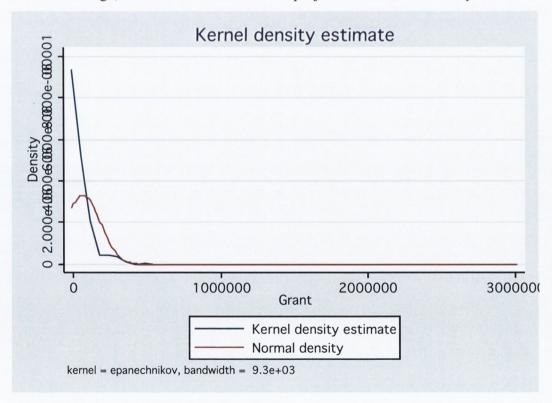


Figure 5-2: Kernel density distribution sports grants

³⁹ RTÉ Radio One, *Today with Pat Kenny*, 1 May 2007.

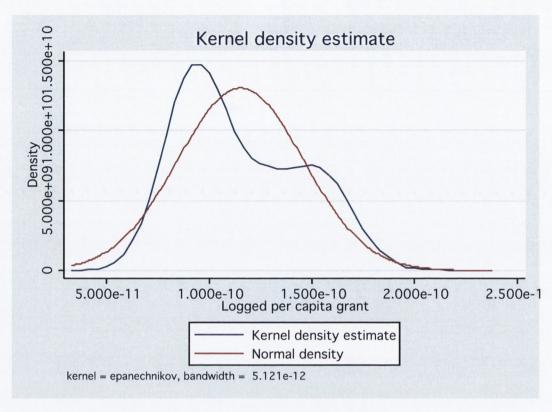


Figure 5-3: Kernel density distribution logged per capita sports grants

5.11 Descriptive statistics

I start with a simple examination of the number of grants awarded in each year (see Figure 5-4). As we discussed in Chapter Four, there were three elections during this period, 2002-2007. In May 2002, there was a general election to the Dáil or parliament; in 2004, there were local elections to local councils, as well as elections to the European Parliament; while a second general election was held in May 2007. We can see a clear pattern here, with a significant number of more grants awarded in all three election years. In 2002, there were 1,400 grants awarded – just above the number awarded in 2004. In 2007, the number reached 1,500, and it is worth noting that this is for the first six months of the year before the general election. While the numbers of grants increased in line with election years, so did the value of grants (see Figure 5-5), at least in line with general election years.

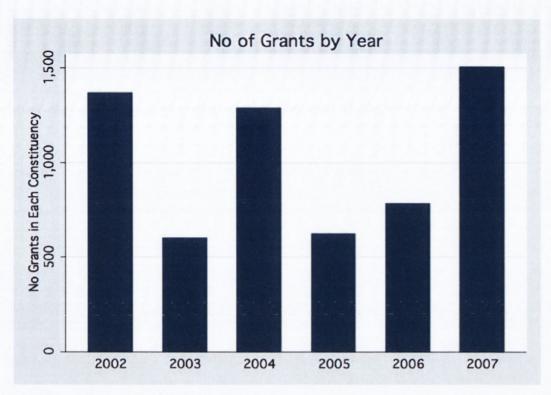


Figure 5-4: number of primary schools grants by year

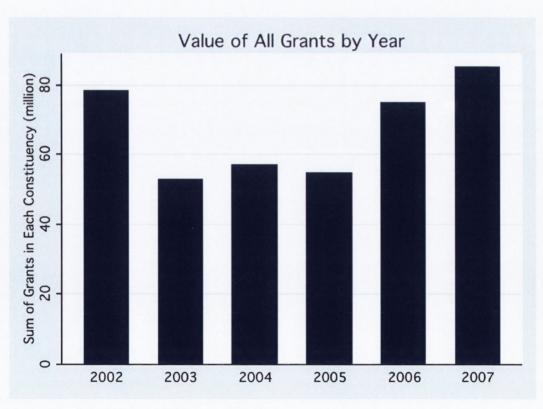


Figure 5-5: value of primary school grants by year

In 2002, the total value of grants was \in 75.8 million, falling to just around \in 53 million from 2003-2005. In 2006, the year before the next election, the value of local grants amounted to \in 53.7 million, with a further \in 21.25 million in regional and national grants. In 2007, the total had reached just over \in 81 million by the end of May, climbing only to \in 85 million by the end of the year.

It is now worth turning to the grants in individual constituencies (See Figure 5.6). In 2002, the Minister for Sports was Dr Jim McDaid, whose home constituency was Donegal North East. As we can see, this is the constituency with the highest levels of funding in 2002. The Minister for Finance at that time was Charlie McCreevy, whose home constituency was Kildare North, which came in fourth place. Dublin West had a large regional sports campus spend that year. If we now look across the years, we can see that, by the time of the next election, when Dr McDaid was no longer in the Cabinet, Donegal North East had fallen towards the bottom of the rankings, as had Kildare North. Dr McDaid was replaced by John O'Donoghue of Kerry South following the 2002 elections, while McCreevy remained in place as Minister for Finance. As we can Kildare North retained its rankings close to the top of the table while Donegal disappeared to be replaced by Kerry South. In 2004 McCreevy went to Brussels as EU Commissioner he was replaced by Brian Cowen of Laois Offaly. That constituency then retained its place towards the top of the rankings in each year up to the next general election in 2007. Thus at first glance it would appear that there may be something to hypothesis three that key agenda setting ministers will receive disproportionate resources.

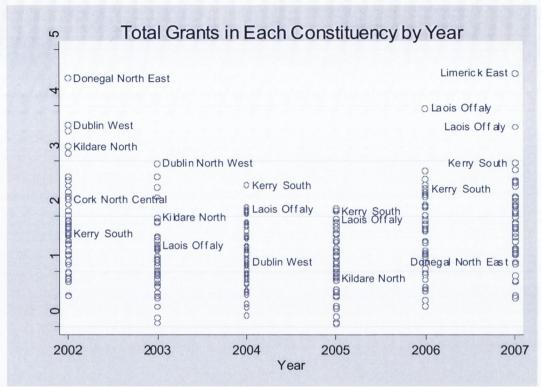


Figure 5-6: distribution of grants to constituencies by year

A further descriptive test, which should prove useful, is an examination of the influences of political consideration over spending based on simple comparisons of conditional means. The average per capita level of grants in all constituencies is around €16, approximately the same level as in marginal or swing constituencies. However, the average grant in the Minister for Sport's and Minister for Finance's constituency is significantly higher, at €22 per head. Initial indications are thus that the key ministers involved with a particular allocation have the most influence, or at the very least that the civil servants anticipate their needs and allocate the funds disproportionately and in their favour. The differences between the amounts allocated on average and to marginal and cabinet ministers' constituencies are relatively small and are not statistically significant. However, we are going to require more sophisticated analysis to be clearer on which mechanisms are at work. This initial excursion into the data implies that, despite the theoretical expectations, the Irish government did not appear to strategically target either marginal constituencies or its own core supporters with additional

funds. However, there is clear evidence that key ministers did win significant

additional funding for their own constituencies.

5.12 Estimates

I return to the model in the hope that the additional explanatory power of simple regression will allow me to shine a more penetrating light on the data. I will present a number of alternative ways of viewing the data. The first is ordinary least squares results for a number of specifications, assuming the effects to be linear. In these cases, the dependent variable is logged per capita sports grants to each club – as discussed in the last chapter, this mitigates the impact of the large number of outliers in the data (see Table 5-2). The control variable includes the political controls and economic controls. All equations are of the form:

Spendi= $\beta_1 + \beta_2$. Pol_i + . Eco_i + δ_i + ϵ_i

Where i indexes constituencies and δ is a vector is of constituency fixed effects. Visual inspection implied that the model suffers from non-constant variance of the residuals. Thus we report robust (Huber/White) standard errors, as these are less likely to mislead about the significance of the independent variables.

Looking first at the political variables column (See Table 5-2), we can see that sports clubs in the constituencies of the Ministers for Arts and Sports were statistically likely to receive more in grants than other clubs, and this is significant at the highest level. However, the additional amount of grants that clubs in the Minister for Finance's constituency can expect is not statistically significant and indeed has the wrong sign. Interestingly, clubs in other Cabinet ministers' constituencies are statistically likely to receive a lower amount of funding, underlining the thesis that Cabinet ministers do not engage in logrolling on any systematic basis. There is also no evidence that core voters are systemically targeted, with the proportion of the seats being held by Fianna Fáil in a constituency predicting significant less funding. This is corroborated by the lack

of statistical likelihood that clubs in areas where the Fianna Fáil vote at the previous election was high would receive more grants. Likewise, there is no evidence of systematic targeting of swing voters.

Turning now to the demographic controls, we can see that demographic factors account for a greater proportion of funding than purely political variables, with an r-squared of 0.72 compared with 0.18. In addition, sports clubs in areas with more children under 19 are statistically less likely to receive additional funding. This is true too of those in the 20 to 45 age group. Indeed, it appears that clubs in areas with a greater than average proportion of over 45s are more likely to receive additional funding, and this is significant at the highest level. In addition, clubs in designated disadvantaged areas are not likely to receive additional funding. There are a number of possible reasons for this, all which suggest that a greater focus on outputs on the part of the department may prove worthwhile. It is possible that a greater proportion of the over-45s in a district makes lobbying more likely, as older people may be those with the time to spend lobbying, or those with children in the relevant cohort. It is also possible that this is partly an urban/rural impact. Again, rural areas in general have older age profiles but have more people with time on their hands, and indeed perhaps even a greater expectation of delivery by their politicians.

Grants to Sports C	lubs 2002-2007		
Sports Minister Constituency	Political 4.86e-05*** (1.10e-05)	Demographic	All 8.51e-06*** (3.04e-06)
Finance Minister Constituency	-1.19e-05 (1.28e-05)		1.23e-05*** (3.06e-06)
FF Cabinet Minister	-1.50e-05** (6.68e-06)		-6.00e-06** (2.34e-06)
Proportion FF Seats	-9.20e-06* (4.89e-06)		-1.24e-06 (1.52e-06)
Swing To/From FF Last Election	-1.02e-07 (7.97e-07)		2.16e-07 (1.96e-07)
FF Vote Previous Election	-5.53e-07 (8.35e-07)		2.36e-07 (1.94e-07)
Age 0-19		-2.92e-09*** (3.66e-10)	-2.95e-09*** (3.31e-10)
Age 20-45		-8.70e-10*** (2.73e-10)	-8.17e-10*** (2.42e-10)
Disadvantaged Area		-1.92e-07 (1.24e-06)	-1.94e-07 (1.19e-06)
Constant	0.000163*** (3.81e-05)	0.000233*** (4.79e-06)	0.000226*** (9.25e-06)
Observations	4444	4444	4444
R-squared	0.183	0.720	0.737
Robust standard		eses	
*** p<0.01, ** p<		-laka	

Table 5-2: OLS sports capital grants to clubs

Further qualitative work would be needed to explore this and for now the reason remain somewhat speculative. Once again, the exponentiated coefficients show a per capita decrease of around 10% for clubs in areas with younger populations. Looking across the column for the full model, including all the independent variables, the effect for clubs being in the sports minister's constituency remains statistically significant, and indeed, once the other control variables are in place, the impact of being in the finance minister's constituency is statistically significant. The impact of other Cabinet ministers remains statistically significant, with a negative sign underlining the absence of systematic deal-making among

colleagues at Cabinet, at least in terms of capital grants for sports clubs. Because the dependent variable is logged, we must take the exponentiated coefficients into account rather than the reported figures when analysing the data. Doing this, it appears that clubs in both the Minister for Finance's constituency and in the Minister for Sport's constituency can both expect to receive just over 10% more than clubs in other areas. In addition, clubs in disadvantaged areas remain statistically less likely to receive additional funding.

A similar picture emerges when the data is collapsed to the constituency level (see Table 5-3). The constituencies of the sports minister and the finance minister both receive more funding. There is mixed evidence for the core-voter hypothesis, with the Fianna Fáil vote at the previous election and the proportion of seats held by the party having different signs. This time the swing-voter hypothesis looks to be significant, while constituencies with younger populations and with disadvantaged areas receive significantly less funding. However, as we saw earlier, former Minister John O'Donoghue argued that his constituency received greater allocations because more clubs applied. It is thus interesting to also look at both the number of applications (see Figure 5-7) per constituency, as well as the success rate of those applications (see Figure 5-8).

As we can see, many Dublin constituencies made a low number of applications. However, clubs in the constituencies of the relevant line minister and Minister for Finance made many applications. Laois Offaly, for example, had the largest number of applications, while Kerry South also stands out among the top few. Donegal North East, which had a Minister for Sports, also stands out, as do one or two other largely rural constituencies, such as Cavan/Monaghan and Mayo. In other words, it does appear at first glance that constituents' expectations rise when they have a minister in situ, and the rate of application increases. In addition, at first glance, it appears that more rural constituencies have a higher number of applications than urban constituencies. What is important, however, is whether the success rate of applications differs across constituencies.

	Political	Demographic	All
Sports minister constituency	1.47e-05***		7.75e-06**
	(4.18e-06)		(2.99e-06)
Finance Ministe	r 1.52e-05**		8.95e-06***
Constituency	(5.88e-06)		(3.01e-06)
FF Cabinet Minister	11.31e-05***		-6.42e-06***
	(3.38e-06)		(1.55e-06)
Proportion FF Seats	-3.17e-05***		-6.53e-06***
	(2.79e-06)		(1.65e-06)
FF Vote Previous Election	2.23e-06***		7.75e-07***
	(2.69e-06)		(1.84e-07)
Swing to/From FF Previou	s 1.30e-06***		6.67e-07***
Election	(3.80e-07)		(1.64e-07)
Age 0-19		-2.80e-09***	-2.55e-09***
		(1.99e-10)	(2.04e-10)
Age 20-45		-1.11e-09***	-1.09-09***
		(1.32e-10)	(1.55e-10)
Disadvantaged Area		-1.23e-05**	-1.21e-05**
		(5.39e-06)	(5.42e-06)
Constant	0.000102***	0.000241***	0.000215***
	(1.03e-05)	(3.68e-06)	(7.16e-06)
Observations	254	254	254
R-squared	0.415	0.815	0.847
Robust standard errors in p	arentheses		
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<			

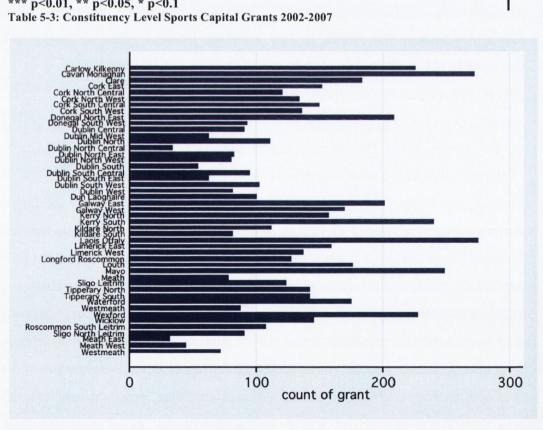


Figure 5-7: number of applications by constituency

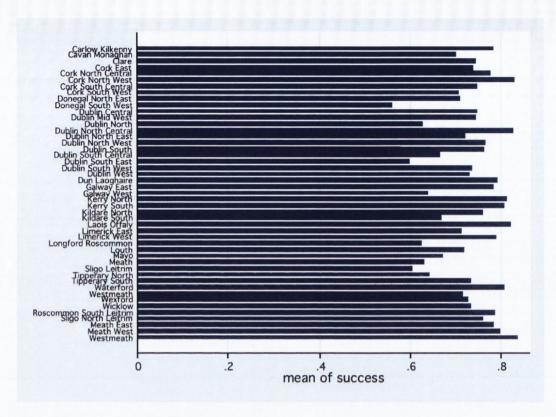


Figure 5-8: success rate of applications

It is clear that the success rate for applications varies less than the number of applications, with all constituencies having between a 60% and an 85% success rate. However, there are still reasonably marked differences. Kerry South, Laois/Offaly, Kerry North and Donegal North East all have among the highest success rates, while some of the Dublin constituencies have among the lowest. Again, looking at Table 5-4, there are more applications from clubs in the sports minister's constituency and from the finance minister's constituency. But they both also have a higher success rate, particularly the finance minister at 82%.

In order to drill into the figures further, it is necessary to run a logit analysis on the success rate, where 1 is for a successful application and zero for an unsuccessful application. Here (see Table 5-5) we can see, when examining the political variables, that applications from clubs in the Minister for Sport's constituency are significantly more likely to win funds, as are clubs in the

constituency of the Minister for Finance. This is the case even controlling for the amount of applications.

Success Rate of Applications						
	All Constituencies	Sports Minister Constituency	Finance Minister Constituency			
Average No of Applications	131	289	240			
Average no Successful	96	222	196			
Success Rate	73%	77%	82%			

Table 5-4: Success rate of applications

There is no evidence that the success rate in other ministers' constituencies is significantly different to others, again underlining the apparent absence of logrolling among ministers. There is some evidence in favour of the coresupporters hypothesis, with constituencies with larger Fianna Fáil votes significantly more likely to win funding; however, the proportion of seats belonging to Fianna Fáil is not significant. If the Fianna Fáil vote is removed from the list of independent variables, then the impact of the proportion of seats becomes a little larger, but is still not significant. There is, however, no support for the swing-voter hypothesis. A similar pattern emerges for the core-voter hypothesis, with some evidence that clubs in areas with a higher Fianna Fáil vote are more likely to win additional funding. Examining the exponentiated values, which are reported in Table 5-5, we can see that clubs in the Minister for Sport's constituency are up to 12% more likely to be successful, while those in the Minister for Finance's constituency are over 15% more likely.

Turning to the demographic factors in column 2, we can see that, once again, young populations do not increase the chances of winning grants. However, clubs in designated disadvantaged areas are significantly more likely to be successful in grant applications. In other words, it would appear that disadvantaged clubs are

less likely to apply for funding than clubs in other areas or those with older populations.

Success in Achieving Grants					
	Political	Demographic	All		
Sports Minister	1.222***		1.154		
	(0.0912)		(0.104)		
Finance Minister	1.555*		1.762**		
	(0.416)		(0.499)		
FF Cabinet	0.969		1.016		
Minister					
	(0.109)		(0.115)		
Proportion FF	1.109		1.131		
Seats					
	(0.0768)		(0.0914)		
FF Vote Previous	1.017**		1.019**		
	(0.00875)		(0.00920)		
Swing To/From	1.008		1.014		
	(0.0104)		(0.0111)		
Population		1.000	1.000		
-19					
		(1.04e-05)	(9.30e-06)		
Population 20-45		1.000	1.000		
		(7.81e-06)	(8.09e-06)		
Disadvantaged		3.444***	3.576***		
		(0.427)	(0.450)		
Constant	0.673	1.456	0.609		
	(0.299)	(0.390)	(0.304)		
Observations	4146	4164	4146		
Pseudo R-	0.0544	0.077	0.0251		
squared					

Table 5-5: success rate in achieving grants

Looking at the complete model, we can see, however, that the impact of the sports minister's constituency falls away, although the signs remain positive. Clubs in the Minister for Finance's constituency remain significantly more likely to have a successful application. Disadvantaged clubs and clubs in areas with a higher vote for Fianna Fáil at the previous general election remain more likely to have a successful application. It is possible that one of the reasons that success rate for clubs in the Minister for Sport's constituency is not higher is the sheer number of applications. As we saw earlier, Minister O'Donoghue argued that one of the reasons more money went to his constituency was that more clubs made applications. In order to examine this in more detail, it is necessary to collapse the dataset, making the unit of observation the constituency and analysing a count

variable for the number of grants. As discussed in Chapter Four, the most efficient way to do this is to employ the negative binomial regressor (see Table 5-6).

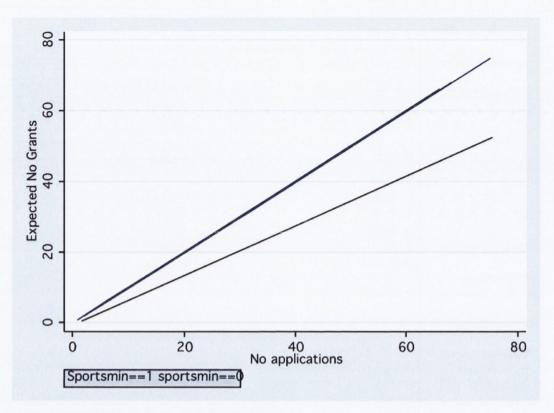


Figure 5-9: effect of sports minister on grants as vote changes

Turning first to the political variables, we can see that, once again, both the Minister for Sports and the Minister for Finance are significant predictors of the number of grants awarded in their constituencies and that this relationship holds when the full model is specific. Both constituencies are significantly more likely to receive more awards than other constituencies. There is no evidence for the core-voter hypothesis, as constituencies with a greater number of Fianna Fáil voters or TDs do not predict a higher level of grants. However, there appears to be a negative relationship between the swing at the previous election and the number of votes. Coefficients in negative binomial regressions are difficult to interpret, but we can see the impact of a greater swing in the sports minister's constituency (see Figure 5-9) other political variables do not show up as significant in either model. Turning to the demographics, constituencies with larger numbers of

younger people will in fact receive fewer awards, although those with disadvantaged areas will receive more.

Number	Snorte	Canital	Crante	2002	2007
Mumber	Sports	Capitai	Grants	4004-	400/

	Political	Demographic	All
Sports Minister	0.714***	3-1	0.997***
Constituency	(0.222)		(0.149)
Finance Minister	0.597**		0.449
Constituency	(0.268)		(0.211)*
FF Cabinet Minister	-0.361		-0.105
	(0.103)		(.085)
Proportion FF Seats	-0.531		-0.082
	(0.931)		(0.071)
FF Vote Previous	-0.003		-0.003
Election			
	(.011)		(0.011)
Swing To/From FF	-0.18*		-0.015*
Last Election			
	(.01)		(0.008)
Age 0-19		-4.13e-03***	-4.38e-05***
		(8.95e-06)	(2.22-06)
Age 20-45		-1.57e-05***	1.31-05***
		(5.07e-06)	(4.48-05)
Disadvantaged Area		0.662*	0.669
		(0.031)	(.052)
Constant	3.13***	2.531***	2.6999***
	(0.583)	(0.246)	(0.469)
Observations	254	254	254
Log likelihood	-1000.7683	-977.86	-952.70
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05,			
Robust standard errors			

Table 5-6: number sports capital grants 2002-2007

5.13 Conclusion

There is evidence that the payment of sports capital grants is politically motivated. Not only do we have anecdotal evidence from numerous newspaper reports, as well as interviews with those involved, but we can also see a clear political timeline. Essentially, more individual grants are awarded in election years and more money is allocated, at least when a general election is being held. In terms of the hypotheses, hypothesis 1 is strongly supported. Individual legislators who have the greatest influence in parliament, Cabinet ministers, will act in their personal interest, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to their home districts. This analysis found that sports clubs in both the Minister for Finance's constituency and the Minister for Sport's constituency received significantly more funding than other clubs in other areas. Both constituencies received about 10% more per capita than other constituencies. In addition, the clubs were significantly more likely to win funding under the Sports Capital Programme. Clubs in the Minister for Sport's constituency were 12% more likely to have a successful application, while clubs in the Minister for Finance's constituency were 15% more likely to be successful in their application. Finally, each constituency was significantly likely to have a larger number of successful projects than other constituencies. Overall, these constituencies (see Table 5-7):

- 1. Receive more money in total,
- 2. Receive a greater amount per application,
- 3. Are more likely to make successful applications, and
- 4. Are more likely to have more successful applications.

The first and the third findings are subject to the political excuse that more applications are received, but not the second and last.

However, there was little evidence for hypothesis 2, that governing parties will direct higher levels of expenditure or more benefits at areas of greatest electoral strength of the party.

S	Sports Pork S	ummary				
	Hyp 1 Individual Sports min	Hyp 1 Individual Fin min	Hyp 2 Core FF vote	Hyp 3 Swing Swing	Hyp 4 Policy Age 0-45	Hyp 4 Policy Disadvan
Value Grants to Clubs	***	***	11 1010	Swing	_ ***	Disactan
Value Grants to	**	***	**	_***	_***	_**
Constituencies Success Rate of		**	**			***
Applications Number of	***	*		_*	_***	*
Grants						

Table 5-7: sports pork summary

This hypothesis was measured using two variables, one measuring the strength of the party vote at the previous election and the other measuring the proportion of seats held by the governing party in a constituency. Neither variable predicted larger grants, nor the number of grants that a club would win, but there was some evidence that it may predict the overall amount to a constituency. There was also some evidence that clubs in areas with a high Fianna Fáil vote were more likely to be successful in their applications. Hypothesis 3 suggested that parties will direct higher levels of expenditure to areas that swung most to or from the party at the last election. Again there was scant evidence in this regard. Clubs in areas with the greatest swing at the previous election were not more likely to get more funding, nor were they more likely to be successful in applications. In fact, areas with the greatest swing actually received significantly fewer grants than other constituencies.

In terms of policy, the picture is more mixed. Hypothesis 4 set out that expenditure would be targeted according to a set policy. We saw earlier that there are four areas of policy for the Sports Capital Grants Programme, two of which would be measured using this analysis. The policy stated that the maximum number of people should be encouraged to use the facilities provided and that specific disadvantaged areas should be targeted. In fact, it appears that the greater the proportion of under-19s in a constituency, the less money its clubs will win in funding. This is also true of the 20-45 age groups. In fact, the greater the number

of over-45s in a constituency, the more likely it is to win additional funding. This is also true of the likelihood to have a successful application. Clubs in areas with large numbers of young people are also less likely to be successful in funding applications and, overall, fewer grants will be awarded to such constituencies. The picture is a little more positive in terms of targeting specific disadvantaged areas. Clubs in disadvantaged areas do not receive more money; in fact, there is a negative sign on these variables, so clubs in these areas win less money. Indeed, constituencies with disadvantaged areas will receive less funding. However, the clubs are more likely to be successful in their applications than other clubs, underlining the possibility that they apply less.

Pork-barrel politics, as we discussed in Chapter Three, is the product of opportunity structures and incentives in the electoral and party systems within which parties and individual politicians seek to win and maintain power. At least with regard to so-called 'sports pork', the Irish system appears more analogous to the fractured, individually based American system, which promotes a gulf between the interest of the representative and the party, than it is analogous to the Westminster model, which fuses partisan power with executive authority. The result is that, at least, sports-pork-barrel awards are above all in the gift of the powerful politicians or ministers who control the relevant purse strings and are not primarily used as rewards or carrots for party supporters. An absence of information on which to make objective decisions hampers efforts to make decisions based on need. In addition there is a case that the geographic, demand led basis for much existing decision making be looked at again with a focus rather on outputs and delivering to where facilities are needed would also do much to ensure more optimal outcomes. In the next chapter, we will see whether the same logic applies to education funding.

Chapter Six: Education Capital Spending 2001-2007

6.1 Abstract

Capital spending on post primary and particularly primary schools is a key area for credit claiming for national politicians of all hues. Indeed the volume of parliamentary questions asked of the Department of Education (DoEd) is one of the largest of any Department. But is this perception that education allocations are is pork based on reality? I test both the amount of capital spending going to individual schools and each constituency as well as the number of grants allocated to each. It appears that key ministers direct resources towards their own home constituencies while swing voters are also targeted. Policy needs are not always met and disadvantaged schools and those in areas with large numbers of children in the appropriate age cohort often do not receive appropriately higher levels of spending.

6.2 Introduction

In general, scholars of pork have tended to focus on infrastructure spending or social welfare policy, or indeed locally targeted discretionary grants such as those examined in the last chapter. We saw that a version of Irish pork is present in the allocation of sports capital grants. However, as we noted, that was a relatively easy test. A harder test is to find evidence of pork barrel in capital grants to schools, although there are three reasons why it may be expected. As we saw in Chapter Three, when asked what sort of benefits a TD is most likely to be able to claim credit for, some 33% mentioned schools and, in particular, school buildings at least once, amounting to 22% of all mentions. Thus TDs themselves believe that there are ample credit-claiming opportunities in delivering monies to schools. Second, and more particularly, there is anecdotal evidence that ministers do also behave as if allocations may be made on a political basis, and in particular to boost their own or their party's electoral chances.

One interview given by a Fianna Fáil TD, Ned O'Keefe in Cork East in July 2009, was particularly revealing. O'Keeffe told the local paper⁴⁰ that Rathcormac National School, which is in his constituency, should not be a priority for funding and that it had a "fabulous" layout of portakabins. Deputy O'Keeffe said that he was being honest with the parents' council of Rathcormac when he said that he would not lobby the Minister for Education, Batt O'Keeffe. He explained that he had not received votes in the area when he ran for election to the Dáil in 2007. "I was contacted by a representative for the parents' council and told her straight out my position. Donagh O'Malley used to do the same. All things being equal, I asked her why I should look after the people of Rathcormac if they didn't look after me? I told her there was no funding available." The radio transcript is worth quoting in full:

Politicians don't build schools; schools are built by the parents' associations and activists. We only provide the funding, and funding is very scarce as you know. The people of Rathcormac have not put their house in order. They have a theory that they were top of the list – they were no such thing. They might have been misled at the last general election by politicians and people, but I usually tell the truth and am factual and very right on things I've said the last five to seven years. But I will prioritise as a politician my own area and where I get support from, and I would not be in Dáil Éireann if I don't get support, and I will prioritise where I get support from and not areas from where I don't get support. There is an old theory around this country, and the late Donagh O'Malley, one of most progressive ministers in this country, always claimed, equals being equals, you look after your own and give priority to your own people. I have to look at my own situation, and I would not in be in Dáil Éireann if I didn't get support. I'd be very far down the list if I was depending on Rathcormac. I haven't been top of the list for Rathcormac: if they want me to support them, they should support me. (Morning Ireland 06 July 2009)

Third, while the literature tends not to focus on education as an instrument that politicians can focus on for particular ends, and few pork-barrel papers specifically study capital spending to primary and post-primary schools, Balla,

⁴⁰ Evening Echo, 2 July 2009.

Lawrence et al (2002) did find a pattern in congressional earmarks⁴¹ to US institutes of higher education. Hicken and Simmons (2008) point out that education spending, like all budgetary categories, can be allocated in particularistic ways, even if it is typically denoted as a 'public service'. They found that, where the electoral system provides incentives for political particularism, resources are allocated less efficiently and the effect of increased spending on literacy is diminished. As they note, given that education spending makes up a sizeable share of total government spending in most democracies, it would be surprising if politicians did not try to particularise at least some aspects of education policy.

In this chapter, I shall be examining capital expenditure on both primary and secondary schools from 2001-2007, as well as taking an excursion through the demand side, looking at the number of children in the system. I will then delve into the workings of the DoEd Planning and Building Unit, probing how it operates and how decisions are made. Next, I will turn my attention to a number of reviews conducted both by the department itself, the Comptroller and Auditor General, and outside consultants into the operation of the unit, drawing out the various recommendations that have been made to improve efficiency in capital spending. I will then briefly outline the various schemes under which monies are allocated, before turning to the hypotheses and data employed here, with particular reference to the policy-related independent variables that are drawn out as a result of the preceding discussion. At this point, we can take a brief look at some summary statistics before delving deeper and employing multivariate analysis to examine the amount of money awarded and negative binomial

⁴¹ The most commonly used definition of earmarks was developed by the Congressional Research Service, the public policy research arm of the U.S. Congress: "Provisions associated with legislation (appropriations or general legislation) that specify certain congressional spending priorities or in revenue bills that apply to a very limited number of individuals or entities. Earmarks may appear in either the legislative text or report language (committee reports accompanying reported bills and joint explanatory statement accompanying a conference report) (Streeter 2006)

regression to interrogate the count data. I will then summarise the main findings of this chapter in a conclusion.

6.3 Education in Ireland

Education accounts for around 10%⁴² of the total capital budget behind public transport, roads, environmental services and housing in terms of capital spending. It does account for a higher proportion of current expenditure, at 17%, but that is, by and large, salaries – and thus less amenable to geographically specific pork. Historically, many Irish schools were in poor condition and in need of considerable upgrading. As with a good deal of Irish infrastructure, the problems harked back to 1987 when, in reaction to a major crisis in the public finances and as part of a wide-ranging review of exchequer spending, the government decided to cut back the level of funding for school capital projects. Funding fell from £40 million in 1987 - when commitments made to projects already underway resulted in only a slight reduction in spending – to around £20 million a year from 1988 to 1992. In 1994-1995, there was a one-off spike in spending, before it fell back again to £30 million in 1996. Thus, by 1996, the level of expenditure was only around 57% of the 1986 level. As a result, the existing stock was in a state of considerable disrepair. In addition, the demographic changes throughout the 1990s and the expectation that the population would continue to grow underlined the need for the government to spend money upgrading the state's school stock. In the period from 1997, the level of spending rose quickly, from just under £100 million for primary and post-primary combined, to €545 million in the election year of 2002 – an increase of some 445%. In the years after, spending fell back slightly before building again in 2006 and the election year of 2007, when levels rose to €664 million and €806 million. This study will focus on primary and post primary expenditure solely. Total enrolment increased significantly over the past few decades, as a result both of population growth and of increasing participation at secondary school. By 2007, there were almost 80,000 pupils at 3,200 primary and 750 post-primary schools, the highest number of pupils since 2000.

⁴² Estimates for Public Expenditure and Summary Capital Programme 2008.

Nationally, enrolment in second-level school increased up to 1997/1998 and then tailed off.

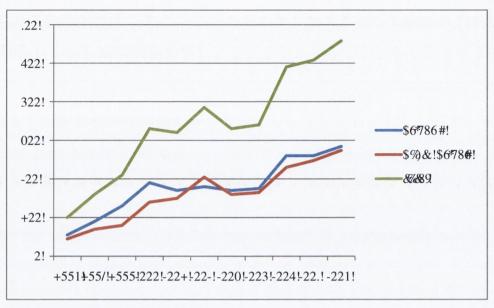


Figure-6-1: Amount of grants (millions)

However, within the national trend, different patterns of change in enrolment will occur. Even within each catchment area, trends in enrolment in different schools will vary. This may be due to local perceptions of the relative quality of the education or indeed the subjects provided, for example, a greater demand for schooling through Irish. While the data I will be employing later in the chapter are at the level of the individual project at the individual school, they are aggregated up to the constituency level for the basis of most of the analysis. Thus, any differences in funding and/or demand for school places between individual schools ought to be averaged out. Parents are unlikely, after all, to travel far outside their home area for their children's education, and fewer, particularly in rural Ireland, go to school outside their constituency, although in Dublin more do. However, the pattern is likely to be dispersed and thus ought to average out. Thus, the number of children in the appropriate age groups ought to control for this factor.

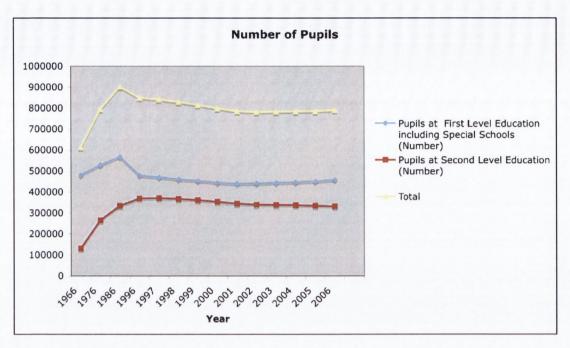


Figure 6-2: Full time enrolment in all schools

We can expect to see significant geographic variation in school-spending programmes. However, increases ought to be in areas where the population is growing and housing is being built. Of course, other changes apart from enrolment will also affect the level of spending. Officials from the department point out that the condition of existing accommodation, proposals for amalgamations of schools, and policies for curriculum expansion and development will all play a role. I have assumed that the demand created by these factors averages out and is not statistically different between different constituencies.

6.4 The Planning and Building Unit

The Planning and Building Unit (PBU) of the DoEd has responsibility for planning education accommodation provision and managing the capital funding allocated by the government each year for upgrading, replacing and expanding school and third-level college buildings and infrastructure. This includes the purchase of sites, provision of new buildings (including furnishing and equipping) and extending and refurbishing existing buildings. A total of 35 staff are employed

in the section, including general, professional and technical grades. According to the DoEd's website, the key tasks of the unit include determining accommodation needs; delivering a capital programme for each level; ensuring value for money; safeguarding the minister's interest; providing advice and guidance on accommodation issues to schools/colleges; evaluating the quality and effectiveness of capital expenditure; research; and policy formulation. As we shall see, the unit is not equally effective in all these various roles and, in fact, a number of factors appear to inhibit it from effective planning.

An assistant secretary general, who is part of the Management Advisory Committee of the department, heads the unit. The unit is divided into seven business units, each headed by a principal officer. These principals from the Senior Management Group of the PBU. The professional and technical staff comprise architects, engineers, quantity surveyors and architectural assistants. Their role is to provide the department with expert technical advice, to supervise projects where the design work is carried out in-house, and to offer advice and guidance to external design teams. There are no specific statisticians, economists or other policy advisers within the unit. According to the DoEd, (DoEd 2007) the School Planning Unit is charged with planning the provision of suitable costeffective accommodation to underpin the delivery of first and second-level education. A key task of the section is to ensure that there are sufficient pupil places available at first and second-level schools and that the use of existing accommodation is optimised. The section processes applications for the recognition of new schools at first and second level and applications for capital funding. It claims that planning decisions are "based on issues such as school rationalisation, optimal utilisation of existing provision, diversity, population shift, demographics and best value for money, while ensuring that the accommodation needs of the individual child are predominant". However, as we shall see in the following section, this process has been beset by criticism and is by no means functioning flawlessly, making proper planning difficult.

The school building section authorises primary and post-primary school building

projects to commence design, approves the appointment of design teams, and drives projects through the various stages of design and construction. The section also deals with applications for contingency funding in respect of emergency works such as burst boilers and so on. Thus our attention will be predominantly on the planning section, which, after all, is the section that allocates the funding and is thus central to our question of how resources are allocated.

6.5 Approach

The ownership of primary schools is quite complex⁴³. In general, they are privately owned and state funded. While the owners decide the school ethos, the operating rules are largely set by the State. The vast majority of primary schools in Ireland are privately owned and supported by the different church authorities and to an overwhelming degree by the various congregations of the Roman Catholic Church. The State pays the bulk of the building and running costs and a local contribution is made towards these running costs. In the case of Catholic schools, the owners are usually the diocesan trustees; the same is true for Church of Ireland schools. Other denominational schools usually have a board of trustees

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⁴³ The national school system was established in 1831. The national schools were originally meant to be mixed religion or multi-denominational as we would describe them today. In practice, that did not happen and virtually all national schools are under the management of one church. The Education Act 1998 does not use the term "national school" and instead uses "primary" school. The name is not particularly significant except that national school clearly denotes that the school is state aided while a primary school can be private or state aided. Most relevant schools actually describe themselves as "national" schools. The following initials are frequently used to describe schools NS - National School
GNS - Girls National School BNS - Boys National School SN - Scoil Naisiúnta (appears before the name rather than after it). Some schools use the Irish form of their name but that does not necessarily mean that they teach through the medium of Irish. Gaelscoileanna are schools that do teach through Irish and they usually, but not invariably, include Gaelscoil in their title. Multi-denominational schools sometimes include that description in their title.

nominated by the church authorities. A limited company or board of trustees usually owns multi-denominational schools. Gaelscoileanna (Irish language schools) may be denominational and come under the same patronage as Catholic schools but some have their own limited company. The post-primary school system includes secondary schools, vocational schools, community or comprehensive schools and private secondary schools. Again the majority of secondary schools are privately owned and managed and often run by Catholic congregations, although the teachers in these schools are generally lay staff.

The DoEd has traditionally adopted a reactive approach to the provision of school accommodation in that it responds to demands for school places and building rather than formulating and implementing a long-term strategic plan. Officials say that historically, most school building projects usually result from local or private initiatives. In essence, the Department sees itself as being a partner together with local promoters. What this may mean in practice is that areas where promoters and school boards are more active will receive greater funding than perhaps more disadvantaged areas which often raise less money for matching funding and may be more inactive when it comes to lobbying the Department. Indeed one official went so far as to suggest that the schools in the constituency of the Minister may have an expectation that they would be looked after and thus engage in more fund raising initiatives, lobbying harder and perhaps thus gaining a slight edge in funding.

6.6 Capital Expenditure Reviews

One of the key arguments of this chapter is that it may be difficult to find clear patterns based on policy when it comes to educational capital expenditure. This is largely down to the lack of detailed forward planning engaged in by the department, as well as the absence of examination of inputs. The department, for example, has no inventory of stock, despite a number of reports from at least 1988 calling for such an inventory to be drawn up. In this section, I will briefly outline each of the previous reports into spending at the department in order to outline

how hard it would be, and indeed is, for the department to engage in much systematic or targeted expenditure at all.

Over the period 1988 to 2000, the DoEd engaged in a review of the provision of schools accommodation. In 1996 a further major report was undertaken as part of the 'Value for Money Series' by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG). This study focused on the adequacy of the DoEd's systems for planning and managing the provision of second-level school accommodation. In 1988, an interdepartmental committee of officials recommended that the DoEd should undertake the following tasks as an input to the planning of the provision of school accommodation: "The rationalisation of second-level schools should continue to be pursued actively. An inventory of school accommodation, detailing the location, size and condition of all school buildings should be prepared as a matter of urgency. Projects of school enrolments for 15 to 20 years ahead on a local area basis should be prepared annually." (C&AG 1996: 7) It also called on the DoEd to identify criteria to facilitate the establishment of a clearly defined order of priority for school building projects and a clear queuing system for projects. Finally, the provision of accommodation in prefabricated or semipermanent form should be considered in all cases, except where it can be demonstrated that the long-term needs of the school demand that all accommodation be of a permanent construction. These recommendations have not yet been met.

In general, many of these criticisms were repeated in a series of later reports (bar the call for more prefabricated buildings, which went out of vogue as a priority policy choice). The 1996 C&AG report issued many similar policy prescriptions to the initial report almost a decade earlier. Specifically, the report recommended adopting a more proactive approach to the amalgamation and rationalisation of school accommodation, taking an inventory of accommodation, monitoring occupancy levels, and looking at local area enrolment projections. All of these items had also been proposed by the 1988 committee. The 1988 committee and the C&AG called for the DoEd to monitor the level of occupancy in second-level

schools generally in order to help it to identify areas or schools where accommodation problems may exist or may be likely to arise. In the same vein, they called for projections for individual school catchment areas to be produced. "The availability of these projections would assist the department in planning its accommodation programme by pinpointing areas with potential accommodation difficulties in time to allow for considered action" (C&AG 1997: iv). As we shall see, the DoEd did act on this recommendation, but not in a completely satisfactory way.

Indeed, while the C&AG study was being undertaken, the DoEd simultaneously engaged in a consultation process about all aspects of education policy, leading to the publication of a White Paper entitled Charting our Education Future. At the same time, a number of key policy decisions in relation to planning school accommodation were taken. A Commission on School Accommodation Needs was established in March 1996 to examine and make recommendations about school accommodation issues at first and second-level. The commission was to undertake comprehensive statistical and demographic analysis to assist in policy formation and the rationalisation of accommodation. It was also to provide information on the current and projected position in relation to school provision and to recommend criteria and procedures for school provision and planning. It consisted of a secretariat, a technical group supporting the work of the secretariat, and a steering group representative of the partners in education. However, in the 13 years since it has been in existence, the commission has published a total of just 12 reports. It is in the process of conducting and publishing a series of area development plans for specific areas. Six such studies have been completed at the time of writing, for Westport, Limerick, North Kerry, East Meath, South Galway and North Dublin. Thus, 13 years after its establishment, there are no mediumterm plans in place for the vast bulk of schools in the state.

Even those that are published are of limited use. The reports do not include a breakdown of the population by age, simply detailing the growth or decline of the population in general. Yet the Central Statistics Office's Small Area Population

Statistics, which are utilised widely in this study, actually give a breakdown of children of every age by sex. The predictions made by any model using this detail ought to be superior to one using a general population number, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to call the latter comprehensive statistical and demographic analyses. In any case, as officials have pointed out, there is no obligation on the building unit to follow the recommendations in these reports, and they can and are often overruled by senior officials and/or the minister. The White Paper also posited the establishment of regional education boards. Draft legislation was in place as far back as 1996, but it was 2002 before it was implemented. They were to take over from the Commission on School Accommodation Needs but, to date, that has not been implemented.

In 2000, Sean Cromien (Cromien 2000: 47), former secretary of the Department of Finance, was asked to evaluate the DoEd's operations, systems and staffing needs. Once again, the same issues turned up. In particular, he highlighted the fact that detailed day-to-day work was given priority over any long-term strategic thinking and there was a lack of adequate planning. In particular, in relation to the Planning and Building Unit, he pointed out that it needed to devolve activity in individual cases and focus on forward planning, monitoring and policy formulation. This would involve relinquishing immediate control of projects, a real devolution of responsibility for certain functions, and a readiness to encourage the use of compliance mechanisms, including financial penalties, withholding of payment and legal action as required. The report also questioned whether the operational aspects of the Planning and Building Unit's work are appropriately located in the department:

An alternative approach considered in the Deloitte & Touche⁴⁴ report was the devolution of this area from the department. One possibility in this regard would be to establish an executive agency. This option is attractive and offers scope for a more efficient service for several reasons. The department would be relieved of its involvement in detailed operational work, allowing it to focus on monitoring, evaluation, forward planning and major policy issues. Devolving funding to a statutory agency would allow more flexibility

⁴⁴ Organisational review of Department 1999

on funding, particularly in terms of carry forward of unspent moneys. This is important, given the irregular cash flow of construction projects. The recommendations outlined in previous paragraphs should enhance the effectiveness of the department's operations, leading to a reduction in Parliamentary Questions and representations. (Cromien 2000: 87)

This suggestion has never been taken any further. Officials suggest that individual ministers have been reluctant to move on this, seeing it as inhibiting an aspect of the department that enables them to react directly to their constituents.

6.7 Database of accommodation

In 1988, the interdepartmental committee called for an inventory of school accommodation, detailing the location, size and constitution of all schools, to be prepared as a matter of urgency. In 1996, according to the CAG, a comprehensive current inventory of second-level school accommodation would enhance the department's ability to assess the extent of current needs and to plan and evaluate the ongoing building programme. The extensive amount of information held in the department's paper files cannot in practice be used for this purpose because it is not readily accessible and some of it is out of date. This call was echoed by the Comptroller and Auditor General in 1996 and reiterated by the *Cromien Report* in 2000:

It is understood that preparatory work has been undertaken to establish a database of accommodation in schools. This will cover not just the quantity of accommodation but also qualitative matters such as age, type and condition and the capacity of schools to cater for special needs. We consider that such a database would be of great value to the Planning and Building Unit and the department in terms of identifying aggregate resource needs, determining priorities for investment and analysing proposals for funding. It could be used as a basis for evaluation of particular initiatives and to facilitate measuring the effectiveness of the department's capital investment programme generally. We therefore recommend that the development of the database should be accorded priority by the department. It would also be vital to put in place effective mechanisms to ensure that it would be updated on a regular basis. (Cromien 2000: 51)

In 2002, the Planning and Building Unit initiated the EU tender process for a pilot project involving the organisation and undertaking of a comprehensive inventory of accommodation – including the production of site and building survey drawings and general building condition reports – of approximately 115 primary and post-primary schools in Co Kildare and the compilation of the resulting information on a geographic information system (GIS) database. However, this was never published and no further effort was made to expand the inventory nationally. Six years' later, in 2008 (Kerr 2008), the DoEd's general secretary, Brigid McManus, told the Oireachtas Public Accounts Committee (PAC) that it would be "highly desirable" to be able to quote from an inventory. Thus she admitted that the government had no detailed view of the school network it is responsible for – including how many rented prefabs are in use, school equipment, or the size of school sites. However, she said that the creation of such an inventory would have "high resource implications", because an inventory of all school accommodation in Kildare in 2002 cost the state £1m in consultancy fees.

6.8 Prioritisation of projects

In terms of the prioritisation of projects, the CAG pointed out that, since the total estimated cost of projects approved in principle exceeds the available annual funding, choices have to be made about which projects have the highest priority. At that time, building projects were recommended for funding on the basis of consensus judgments by department officials, having regard to a number of factors, including the availability, adequacy and safety of existing accommodation. However, no formal set of fixed quantified criteria existed. A list of recommended projects was simply submitted for senior management and ministerial approval, and amendments were made to the selection at this stage. As the C&AG pointed out, without a proper prioritisation system based on predetermined objective criteria, the department could not demonstrate that the building programme addressed the areas of greatest need among the many projects proposed. The DoEd did commence a more formal prioritisation procedure, involving a points system based on relevant factors for ranking projects. However, as we shall see, once again this system still leaves ample room

for manoeuvre for specific projects to jump ahead of others that may be on a similar or higher points score.

The Planning and Building Unit assigns a priority code to each major capital project once it is approved in principle. Prior to 2004, these were Priority 1 (essential and very urgent projects), Priority 2 (replacement of bad accommodation), Priority 3 (desirable but less urgent), Priority 4 (major projects not yet prioritised) and Priority 0 (projects not being prioritised). Officials assign priority codes on the basis of consensus judgments but, as the CAG pointed out in 1996, there were no set quantified criteria for assigning priority coding and no basis for distinguishing between projects within priority categories. These were introduced in 2004, and the bands criteria changed. Band 1 projects are for schools in rapidly developing areas. In order of priority, it is for those that are structurally unsound, need additional special needs facilities, or are the result of an amalgamation. Band 2 projects are for extensions and new builds. These are subdivided by size. Band 3 is for ancillary and remedial rooms, resource rooms and PE halls. Band 4 is for storage or office space. The difficulty is that the band ratings do not include any measure of demographic need unless in a rapidly developing area. There is also no formal process by which the decisions are integrated into the recommendations of the Commission on School Accommodation in the few places where such reports have been prepared.

6.9 Capital schemes

Prior to 2002, all monies were allocated and overseen centrally through the department. This was problematic, and the overly-centralised nature of the department at that time was criticised in all the same reports, namely the interdepartmental committee in 1988, the CAG in 1996, and the *Cromien Report* in 2000. As the *Cromien Report* pointed out, there was a lack of clarity between many of the schemes the department operated. The report also noted that, even where persons or schools are notified that, under the departmental regulations, they are not considered eligible for a particular scheme, there are endless appeals

to the department for special consideration. "As defined or, at least, as operated by the department, these schemes seem to be sufficiently flexible for persons to believe that it is worth their while to appeal against them. This appeal is often accompanied by a request to a Dáil deputy to make representations to the minister on their behalf or ask parliamentary questions." (Cromien 2000: 51)

The report also noted that the system of grant payments to schools was fragmented and inefficient and was in need of a major overhaul. "There are inconsistencies in the manner in which such grants are processed and an absence of coordination." (Cromien 2000: 51) These criticisms were made to some extent by the DoEd making greater use of self-certification and by more standardisation of designs, as well as the greater delegation of responsibility to schools to undertake minor capital works, thus enabling them to set their own priorities within a defined budget. Thus, in 2003, the DoEd introduced two pilot initiatives, the Small Schools Initiative (SSI) and the Permanent Accommodation Initiative (PAI), devolving funding and responsibility on school management authorities to enable them to manage and complete their own building projects. Both were then extended to become full programmes. The schemes have devolved a lot of day-to-day work away from the department. However, it is likely that there are inconsistencies in the manner in which such grants are processed and allocated.

A review of the pilot projects found that the schools taking part in the scheme successfully managed the design and construction of projects, that the accommodation provided was compatible with educational requirements, and that building projects completed provided value for money for the taxpayer. However, there is a glaring gap in this analysis. The expenditure review did not examine the geographic basis of the allocation of the monies or indeed examine the input side of the equation. Rather, the focus was on examining whether the money that was allocated was spent well rather than on whether the allocation itself was appropriate. This absence of focus on outputs means that there is ample scope for spending to be directed in a partisan political manner. Every decision is in some way political — as a former Minister for Education says, "it's incredible, but every

file on school building actually got onto the minister's desk". Different schemes offer different opportunities, as we shall see below.

6.10 The Small Schools Scheme

The Small Schools Scheme is aimed at funding long-term accommodation needs of up to ten years. Once a school applies, the department will not generally entertain any other application for major capital funding. The schools manage these works with minimal intervention from the department. In addition, it does not require a local funding element. The scheme is aimed at schools with no more than four teachers and is thus primarily targeted at rural schools, although a few, particularly minority-faith based, urban schools also qualify. The first priority for funding is health and safety, followed by provision for pupils with special needs, mainstream classroom accommodation, ancillary accommodation and, finally, works to improve external play areas. These funds are, as with others, open to political direction – much may depend on whether the Minister for Education at the time is a rural politician.

6.11 The Permanent Accommodation Scheme

The Permanent Accommodation Scheme is aimed at providing classroom accommodation solutions to schools, where an absolute need is demonstrated. This scheme is focused on schools that are not in need of an immediate major extension or building project, but that require additional classroom accommodation. The other larger projects are funded through the traditional large capital scheme. Crucially, approval will only be given where there is increased enrolment in the catchment area. Because post-primary schools often have greater notice of an expected increase in numbers and can deal with it more easily, this scheme is only available to them in exceptional circumstances. In general, in primary schools, a mainstream classroom is costed at €120,000 and a special needs or other classroom at €60,000. In post-primary, a mainstream classroom is costed at €85,000 and a special needs one at €42,500. The scheme is targeted mostly at national schools located in areas of population growth – thus we should

expect that this money should be related to population parameters and, in particular, to areas that have seen the greatest growth in the relevant age cohorts.

6.12 The Summer Works Scheme

The Summer Works Scheme was introduced in January 2004, shelved after the general election in 2007, and not available for summer 2008. Another devolved funding scheme, it allowed schools to undertake small building works over the summer months or at other times that avoid disruption to the school. Again, under the terms of the scheme, school authorities are empowered to manage these works with guidance from and minimal interaction with the department. Funding is allocated under a set order of priority – gas, electrical, mechanical, special needs, toilets, roof, windows, curricula, other structural needs and, lastly, external environment. Under this scheme, the DoEd pays 90% of the costs of capital projects for primary and secondary schools. The Summer Works Scheme accounts for the vast bulk of cases each year. In 2006, for example, 17 new schools were completed and there were 43 large scale school extension or refurbishment projects, 20 purchase agreements for new sites, 778 projects under the Summer Works Scheme, 58 under the Small Schools Scheme and 51 under the Permanent Accommodation Initiative. In monetary terms, the division is somewhat different. In the same year of 2006, all recognised primary schools received a basic grant of €5,500 plus €18.50 per mainstream pupil and €74 per special needs pupil under the Grant Scheme for Minor Works, and a once-off grant of €2,000 to meet PE equipment renewal requirements. As a result, all primary schools are in the data, as all received this basic allowance. According to one former special adviser, the Summer Works Scheme is the one he most heard of in relation to currying favour locally. Interestingly, it was reinstated in spring 2009, ahead of the local elections.

6.13 Implications

While the department has undoubtedly implemented many of the recommendations of a series of reports over the years, it has failed to implement most of the core recommendations, including annual forward planning to take into

account demographic changes, drawing up a database of accommodation, and making the awarding of contracts independent from the department. I argue that these failures mean that strategic coherent planning and awarding of grants at the DoEd is difficult. This is likely to allow special interest groups and well-organised school bodies to lobby harder for funding, again undermining the notion of a planned distribution of funding in line with policy. The resulting noise is likely to mean that it will be difficult to uncover patterns of need in the quantitative analysis in the next section of this chapter. It seems clear that, the DoEd still largely sees itself as a partner that responds to initiatives, although these are examined within a more comprehensive framework that is more likely to ensure value for money than heretofore. In general, the DoEd appears to be more focused on inputs, and in particular the allocation of money following approval, rather than on the selection of individual projects for approval and on measuring the outputs of its decisions.

The DoEd also stresses that tackling disadvantage is a priority⁴⁵. Four initiatives were gradually introduced, commencing with a Disadvantaged Areas Scheme in 1984, which initially covered 33 schools in areas of high deprivation. This scheme was gradually extended as additional resources became available. To cater for liaison between the school, home and community, coordinators were appointed from 1990 onwards. A 'Breaking the Cycle' initiative, introduced in 1996 and covering 152 schools, was subsumed into another scheme – 'Giving Children an Even Break' – in 2001. Finally, in 2002, a cluster-based School Completion Programme was introduced, designed to combat early school leaving. Minister Woods set up the Educational Disadvantage Committee in 2002 to advise on policies and strategies to be adopted to identify and correct educational disadvantage. Relative disadvantage is assessed by reference to certain criteria like accommodation status, medical card entitlement and parental unemployment.

⁴⁵ DoEd press release, 22 December 2005, "Hanafin says tackling disadvantage in education at all levels continues to be priority",

www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?maincat=&pcategory=40100&ecategory=40272 §ionpage=12251&language=EN&link=link001&page=1&doc=29863.

Different qualifying criteria were used for each scheme, and the picture presented was of a patchwork of schemes, each attempting to address aspects of disadvantage (C&AG 2007). The C&AG, in a Value for Money report in 2007, found numerous problems, including that the scheme was spread too thinly, that schools with relatively few disadvantaged pupils benefitted disproportionately, and that some of those with high levels of disadvantaged pupils (over 80%) were left out of the scheme entirely. The department has begun a consolidation process, with the introduction of a new 'Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools' programme from 2006 onwards.

Another problem that is endemic for the DoEd is the sheer volume and nature of parliamentary questions addressed to the Minister for Education and Science, which is quite exceptional by any standards. 46 As the *Cromien Report* pointed out, asking parliamentary questions is an integral part of a lively democracy and vital in making the executive accountable to the Dáil. "However, one can reasonably wonder whether the purposes of democracy are really being served by the asking of questions in the national parliament which are often of as minor a nature as the repair of the windows of a particular school or arrangements for a particular child to be given school transport. Taking up the time of the Dáil on these matters suggests a failure on the part of the department to have adequate systems and responses available to clients at appropriate administrative levels." (Cromien 2000: 3) Partly in response to the report, a number of regional offices were set up in April 2002. Nevertheless, the volume of parliamentary questions is virtually undiminished, underlining the essentially Dublin-centred way that many TDs, ministers and indeed citizens view the department. In 2008, there were questions not only on larger issues like the timing of extensions, but also on the provision of fire extinguishers, replacement windows, and so on, for individual schools.

Given the large amount of work that the department has to do and the difficulty it appears to have in longer-term planning functions, as well as the ongoing problems with data, with no database of accommodation, few long-term local

⁴⁶ Cromien Report, op cit, p 3.

projections, and no separation of planning functions, we can probably expect that much of the distribution of monies will be random. However, while we can expect that the education capital budget may be randomly distributed, given that such capital spending is a policy for which politicians can claim personal credit and where a minister can directly and personally control the distribution, there may well be scope for pork-barrel spending on their own core voters. Hicken and Simmons (2008) explored the ways in which incentives to cultivate a personal vote affect the efficiency of education spending in developing democracies. They are argue that where electoral systems provide incentives for political particularism, resources are allocated less efficiently and the effect of increased spending on literacy is diminished. They found that clientelism seems to affect the *allocation* of education spending rather than the *level* of education spending. We shall be examining both in the upcoming section.

6.14 Hypothesis and model

As I set out in Chapter Three, there are a number of competing hypotheses that I shall test:

- 1 Cabinet ministers will act in their individual interests, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to their home districts.
- 2 Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest of the party, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to geographic areas of greater electoral strength for the party.
- 3 Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest of the party, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to geographic areas with maximum numbers of swing voters for the party.

4 Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest generally, directing expenditure at all constituencies on a universal basis, targeting groups as set out by government policy.

All of the above hypotheses can fit a simple model where spending is a function of political and/or economic factors. Spending can be measured in a number of different ways. Our primary measurements are the monetary amount of grants allocated and the number of grants allocated.

6.15 Data

The data that I am using in this chapter are as set out in Chapter Three. However, there are clearly some education-specific measures, which I shall outline here as well as briefly reviewing the other variables. The primary data have been collected from the Department of Education under the Freedom of Information Act. They incorporate all capital spending on the primary and post-primary education sectors in the Republic of Ireland from 2001-2007. The original dataset contains the name of each school, its address, the amount of each individual grant and its purpose. It also records whether it is a girls' or boys' national school or indeed a Gaelscoil (Irish language school) as well as the number of children enrolled. This is thus a school level dataset, and each individual school is then allocated to its constituency - these changed in years where the boundaries changed – and subsequently the demographic and political variables described below are attached to each observation. The data for each sector are not strictly comparable; thus, I have broken the original relational data in two, one covering primary schools (which generally educate children from age 5 to age 12), and the other for post-primary schools, which educate children from age 13 to 18. The data as supplied by the DoEd contained multiple entries for schools for the years 2001-2003, where each grant was set out. However, in the years 2004-2007, each school had merely a single entry. In addition, the explanatory variables are at the school rather than grant level, so I have utilised a collapsed dataset with one observation for each school each year, or 9,386 observations. In general, per capita school spending is fairly evenly distributed, but there is an area on the periphery of Dublin where spending is much higher. Examining Figure 6-3, we can see that constituencies with the higher levels of spending are on the outskirts of Dublin, particularly Kildare North, which had been the constituency of Charlie McCreevy, the Minister for Finance, until a year earlier. There was also higher spending in Dublin West. All of these areas were experiencing rapid population growth at the time, and we will control for that in the estimations below.

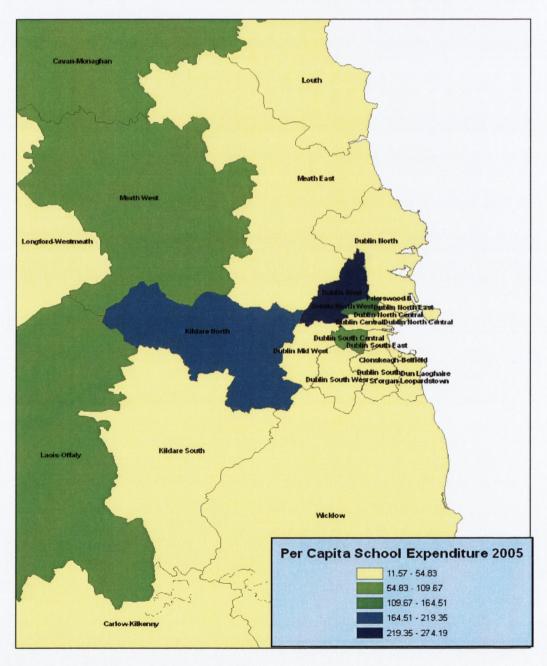


Figure 6-3: Map Focussed Primary Schools 2005

Every primary school is an observation due to the grants delivered to each school under the Summer Works Scheme detailed earlier. The amounts involved are small ranging from €50 for glass replacement to €8 million for a new school.

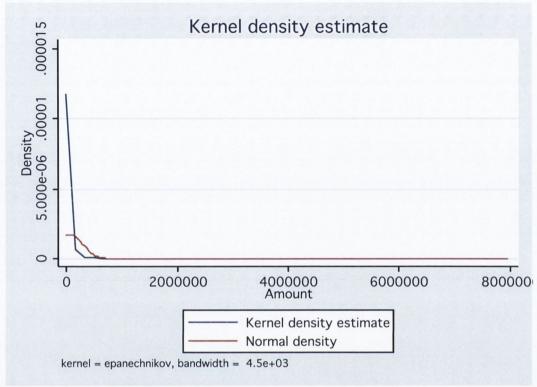


Figure 6-4: Density Distribution For All Grants

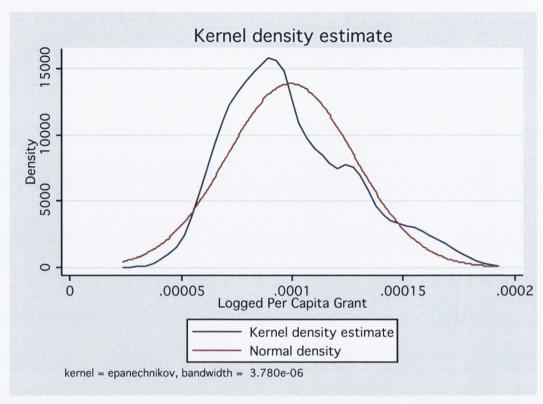


Figure 6-5: K Density Distribution Per Capita Logged Primary Grants

In the years examined in this chapter this amounts to some 16,864 primary grants amounting to €1.09 billion, in the years where there were no grants the data is missing. Most the grants are small, with the mean grant coming in at €64,362. However, the median grant is only €12,708 and 90 per cent of all grants are below €139,675.

Other variables as set out in Chapter Four include a dummy for whether or not a constituency is marginal. Key ministers coded are the Minister for Education in that period and the Minister for Finance, as well as the Taoiseach. In general, the period is broken into three sections. In the years 2000-2002, Michael Woods of Dublin North East was Minister for Education and Charlie McCreevy of Kildare North was Minister for Finance. From 2002 to 2004, Noel Dempsey, then of Meath, was Minister for Education and McCreevy was still Minister for Finance. From 2004 to 2007, Mary Hanafin of Dun Laoghaire became Minister for Education and Brian Cowen of Laois/Offaly was Minister for Finance. In years where a new minister took over midway through the year, the grants are allocated

to the first minister in situ that year on the assumption that she will have had the most opportunity to put funding for that year in place. Very broadly, Dublin North East and Dun Laoghaire are both urban Dublin constituencies, the latter very prosperous. Kildare North and Meath are both historically rural constituencies, which saw a massive housing boom over this time period as parts of the constituencies became a commuter hinterland for Dublin, while Laois/Offaly is still essentially a rural constituency in the Midlands. Thus, the data in this period we are examining is not reliant simply on the abilities of an individual minister, but on an array of different ministers from very different constituencies, both urban and rural and both fast growing and static in demographic terms. Other political variables set out in Chapter Four are also included in this analysis. These include the vote for Fianna Fáil and of the main opposition parties, Fine Gael and Labour, at the previous election. The swing to or from Fianna Fáil at the previous election is also coded.

The demographic variables come from the Central Statistics Office and, in particular, the Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) available from the CSO for both 2002 and 2007. The SAPS break down the population in each constituency in the country by individual age and sex. Thus we can see exactly how many children there were in each of three age cohorts: those aged 0-4, whose numbers as pre-schoolers may have some impact on the location of large-scale building projects; those aged 5-11, who, as the children in the primary school system, may partly determine the jobs being done on primary schools and the larger jobs planned in post-primary; and those aged 12-18, whose numbers may partly determine the jobs being done on post-primary schools. As well as these variables denoting the absolute number of children in each constituency, I have also computed a change variable, which is the percentage change in the relevant age cohort between the two census points for 2002 and 2007. The intuition is that planning of school buildings ought to involve not only spending more money where there are more children, but also spending more money where the numbers

⁴⁷ For a far more in-depth discussion of the characteristics of these constituencies, see the IPS data handbook 2008 (Farrington and Weeks 2008)

of children in a particular cohort are rising. The DoEd also supplies additional variables, such as whether it considers a particular school to be disadvantaged and the total number of children enrolled in the school. In general, I argue that spending should respond to changes in the demographics if partisan allocations are not happening here. If a constituency experiences an increase in the number of children in a cohort, then we would expect that spending on school accommodation ought to increase. Likewise, if a constituency experiences a decline, then we could expect that it would receive relatively less funding. Of course, schools that are designated as disadvantaged ought to receive more funding than other schools in order to comply with the DoEd's stated policy objectives as discussed earlier.

6.16 Descriptive statistics

According to the Public Capital Programme set out each year by the Department of Finance, there would appear to be an electoral cycle to allocations for primary school buildings (see Table 6-1). In other words, there is a spike in funding in 2002 (the year of a general election), a small spike in 2004 (coinciding with local and European elections) and again in 2007 (coinciding with a second general election). However, these figures do not match the figures from the DoEd in terms of what it actually spent. According to the department, the gap between the amount spent under the Public Capital Programme and the outturn is accounted for through grants to the Office of Public Works for asbestos removal programmes and site acquisitions, as well as allocations to young offenders' institutes, which are included in the PCP but not included in the data for this analysis. The gap here appears very large, with €32 million in 2002 rising to some €152 million in 2007. In other words, according to the Department of Education, it spent more than the total primary school capital budget on land acquisition for new schools and asbestos removal. Examining this is, however, beyond the scope of this research.

Public Capital Pro	gramme and Actual Outputs 2001-20	007
Year	PCP (€ millions)	DoEd Output (€ millions)
2002	173	141
2003	168	118
2004	201	100
2005	270	171
2006	277	169
2007	305	153

Table 6-1: Public Capital Programme V DoEd Output

Looking at Table 6-2, we can see that, in the period from 2002-2004, the Education Minister targeted a mean of $\in 116,943$ to each school in his constituency, very similar to the amount that went to schools in the Finance Minister's constituency (then Charlie McCreevy). This was a good deal more than the amount which went to Cabinet ministers' constituencies in general and to the average constituency which came in at $\in 88,440$. In the 2005-2007 period the Minister for Education sent an average $\in 175,011$ to each school. However, the amount going to the constituency of the Minister for Finance under Brian Cowen fell to $\in 75,673$.

Constituency	2002-2004	2005-2007	
	€	€	
Education Minister	116,943	175,011	
	(19,573)	(35,865)	
Finance Minister	116,451	75,673	
	(32,254)	(18,972)	
All Cabinet Ministers	93,409	11,932	
	(27,828)	(31,035)	
All	88,440	10,806	
	(25,022)	(32,631)	

Table 6-2: Mean Funding to Schools by Constituency

This fits with the comments of one former adviser who said that Cowen had his eye on the Taoiseach's job at that point and specifically asked not to be targeted in a specific way. On average schools received €108,816 in funding over the period. Similarly, looking at Figure 6-6 we can see that five constituencies stand out in

terms of the number of grants awarded. These are Dublin South West a fast growing outer suburb of Dublin as well as Wicklow again a fast growing commuter county. Also included are Meath and Laois Offaly, which were fast growing, as well as being the respective homes of the Minister for Education and the Minister for Finance and Kerry South. We will need to turn to some estimation in order to control for demographic and other effects.

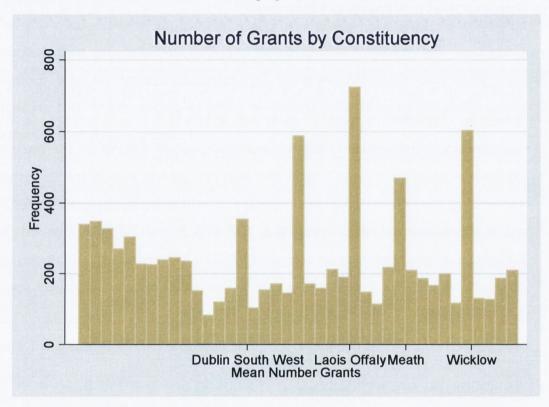


Figure 6-6: Number of Grants by Constituency

6.17 Estimation: Primary school funding

To begin with, I estimate three models: a purely demographic policy or needs model, with simply the number of children in the relevant age cohort or about to enter it; a model with purely political variables; and a full model including both demographic and political variables. I estimate the most constrained model first and the following models were then constrained to the same sample. The dependent variable, unless otherwise stated, is the logged per capita grant to each school, which means that the results are not intuitive to interpret. To begin with,

however, we can examine the direction of the effect and its significance. The results are given in Table 6-3.

Turning to the first column of political variables, we can see that a number of variables appear to hold explanatory power in explaining the amount of money granted to schools winning funding. As expected, the amount of money going to schools in the constituency of the Minister for Finance is significant at the highest level and remains significant when population effects are controlled for in Column 3. Schools in the Minister for Education's constituency can also expect to receive more funding, but it is not significant under this specification. However, it becomes significant under the complete model. The Taoiseach's constituency also turns up as significant, but with a negative sign. The clear implication here is that Bertie Ahern, who was Taoiseach for the entire duration of the study, did not win significant additional capital funding for primary schools in his own constituency. While it is not reported in the table, I also controlled for the impact of Cabinet ministers and it did not appear to be significant under any specification, and for reasons of space I did not include it in the final model. However, it does seem clear that, at least in terms of primary school grants, ministers do not do consistent deals with one another for reciprocal projects, or 'logroll' in the US terminology. Interestingly, there is also some support for the core voter hypothesis, with areas with higher Fianna Fáil votes at the previous election winning significantly more funding and those with higher Fine Gael/Labour votes receiving significantly less, although it is important to remember that all constituencies had at least one Fianna Fáil deputy after each general election. There is also a significant impact for districts that had a large swing either to or from Fianna Fáil at the previous election.

The demographics are a mixed picture. The argument is that more money should be spent in areas where there are a greater number of children in the relevant age cohort and in areas where that number is rising most rapidly. If planning systems are working, more money should also be spent in areas where there are more children in the incoming age cohort and, indeed, in areas where the numbers in that cohort are increasing most rapidly. Money should also be related to the number of children in a school – in other words, the total enrolment of that school. The primary-school data only include 25 designated disadvantaged schools, so few that the dummy is dropped in the estimations.

oiseach -3.49e-05*** instituency (1.25e-06) cucation Min (2.39e-06)		-1.52e-05*** (1.53e-06)
ucation Min (1.25e-06) 2.39e-06		(1.53e-06)
ucation Min (1.25e-06) 2.39e-06		(1.53e-06)
ucation Min 2.39e-06		
		1.28e-05***
(3.11e-06)		(2.73e-06)
ance Min 1.50e-05***		4.03e-06**
nstituency		
(1.87e-06)		(1.77e-06)
Vote Previous 1.30e-07*		6.47e-07***
etion		
(6.99e-08)		(6.36e-08)
Lab Vote -3.74e-07***		-4.25e-07***
vious Election		
(4.90e-08)		(4.29e-08)
ng To/From FF 1.41e-06***		4.09e-07***
v Election		
(8.44e-08)		(8.43e-08)
dren 0-4	6.60e-09***	6.60e-09***
	(5.04e-10)	(4.45e-10)
dren 5-12	-7.98e-09***	-7.93e-09***
	(4.97e-10)	(4.44e-10)
wth 0-4	1.09e-05***	1.35e-05***
	(7.73e-07)	(7.63e-07)
vth 5-12	-4.91e-08***	-5.19e-08***
	(3.65e-09)	(3.59e-09)
al Enrolment	1.51e-08***	1.73e-08***
	(2.19e-09)	(2.19e-09)
stant 0.000114***	-0.000830***	-0.00108***
(3.84e-06)	(6.89e-05)	(6.80e-05)
ervations 7067	7067	7067
quared 0.085	0.326	0.364

Table 6-3: Grants to Primary Schools by School

Looking at the second column, then both the number of children in the primary age cohort and the change of the number of children in that cohort has a statistically negative impact on the amount of funding. If just one of these variables is included, the picture remains the same.

However, both the number of children in the upcoming age cohort of 0-4 years and the change in numbers in that cohort has a positive impact. The r squared is fairly high at 0.326, implying that demographic variables explain a lot more than political variables. Much of this, however, has a negative impact in the relevant age cohort, underlining the fact that basic policy outcomes are not being met. Interpreting the coefficients is not straightforward with a logged dependent variable. The most intuitive way to do this is to interpret the exponentiated regression coefficients, $\exp(\beta)$, since exponentiation is the inverse of logarithm. The exponentiated coefficient for the Education Minister is 1.000018, while for the Minister for Finance it is 1.000622 – thus we can see that having the Education Minister or the Finance Minister in your constituency leads to about a statistical 10% increase in the geometric mean of the amount of a grant for a primary school, while an additional 10 children in the school will lead to an expected 1% additional grant.

Of course, it is not simply the amount of the grant that is important; arguably, whether or not a school receives a grant at all is more important. Politicians can claim credit for small grants, and it may be the overall number of credit-claiming opportunities that is most important. I have thus generated a variable that counts the number of awards to each school in each constituency and have inserted that into the basic model (see Table 6.4). These data are only available until 2003 as, after that point, the DoEd has merely provided the data as a single amount per school per year. In this estimation, I have employed the negative binomial, as the distribution of count data is notoriously unreliable for OLS, because the count variable has a double peak. This is a problem that can be overcome with the negative binomial, a Poisson distribution with a random effect to represent unobserved heterogeneity. We can see that in Column 1, all variables are significant at 1%. However, many have an unexpected sign, particularly the Minister for Education, where schools in his constituency received fewer grants than schools in other constituencies. Yet we saw already that they can expect a larger amount of money. The political calculation here would appear to be to focus on fewer larger projects rather than a scattergun approach. On the other hand, the schools in the constituencies of both the Minister for Finance and the Taoiseach appear to receive a greater number of grants. In fact, the Minister for Education received 269, the Minister for Finance 304 and the Taoiseach 300 for their constituencies over the period. Interpreting the coefficients in a similar manner to above, we find that the exponentiated coefficient for the Minister for Education is 0.752 – thus there is a 7.5% decrease in the geometric mean of the amount of per capita grants going to schools in that minister's constituency. Likewise, there is a 15% increase for the Minister for Finance, while a 1 percentage point increase in the Fianna Fáil vote at the last election can be expected to mean a 1% per capita increase in the amounts for grants going to primary schools in that constituency.

Number of Primary Capital Grants Awarded 2001-2003 By School

	Electoral	Demographic	All
Taoiseach Constituency	0.144**		0.113**
	(22.32)		(15.27)
Education Min Constituency	-0.408**		-0.284**
	(39.82)		(61.34)
Finance Minister Constituency	0.153**		0.424**
	(30.52)		(38.50)
Swing To/From FF	-0.043**		-0.029**
	(79.24)		(72.93)
FF Vote Previous Election	0.024**		0.014**
	(44.71)		(36.44)
FG/Lab Vote Previous Election	-0.000		-0.001**
	(0.52)		(4.56)
Children Aged 0-4		-0.000**	-0.000**
•		(19.97)	(18.11)
Children Aged 5-12		0.000**	0.000**
		(29.07)	(27.06)
% Change Children 0-4		-0.002**	-0.001**
		(27.69)	(20.93)
% Change Children 5-12		0.002**	0.001**
		(25.30)	(19.95)
Total Enrolment		-0.000**	-0.000**
		(12.79)	(8.34)
20% plus population growth		-0.099**	-0.242**
		(11.66)	(24.05
Constant	5.249**	5.809**	5.337**
	(183.24)	(235.56)	(159.30)
Observations	8634	8634	8634
Log Likelihood	-13212.66	-14208.62	-14875.6
Robust z statistics in parenthesis			

Robust z statistics in parenthesis

* significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Table 6-4: Number of Primary Capital Grants Awarded 2001-2007

Looking at Column 2 in Table 6.4, we can see again the mixed results for demographic factors. This time, the number of children under four and the percentage change in the number of children under four – in other words, the incoming cohort – both have a significant negative influence on the number of school grants. However, both the number of children aged five to 12 and the percentage change in that age cohort both has a significant impact. The total number of children in a school is, however, negatively related to the number of grants. Fast-growing areas also receive fewer grants than other areas. The overall picture, then, for the number for grants awarded is that demographics do matter and that the vote at a previous election also appears to matter, with areas with larger Fianna Fáil votes receiving more grants, and areas with larger Fine Gael and Labour votes receiving fewer grants.

6.18 Post primary

When examining the post-primary dataset, the same hypotheses apply. The data is at the level of the individual grant for all years. The advantage of this is that it allows us to allocate specific amounts to the various schemes outlined earlier, including the Summer Works Scheme and the devolved grant. However, again no grant-level explanatory variables are available and thus the dataset is then collapsed into school level. Once again, the distribution of the grant is skewed, and thus the dependent variable is the logged per capita grant, which has a close to normal distribution (see Figure 6-7). In the post-primary dataset, the same logic applies. However, the grant sizes are a little different.

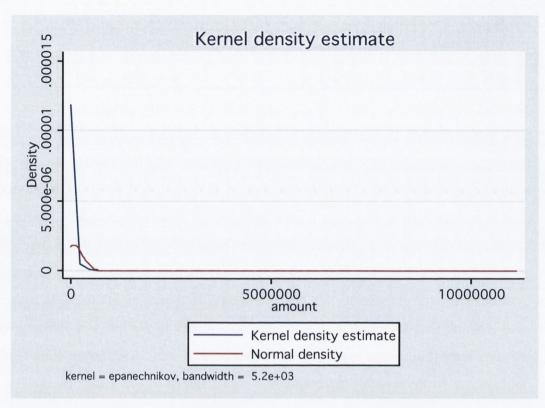


Figure 6-7: K Density Post Primary Grants

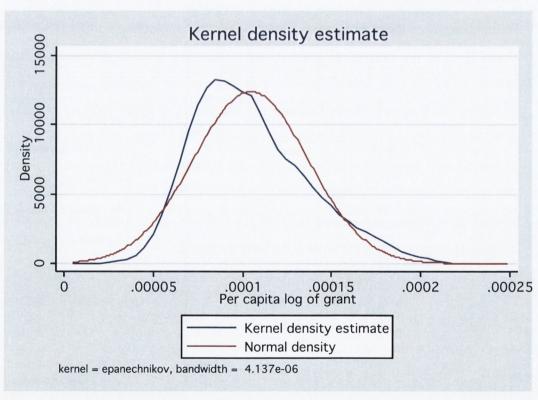


Figure 6-8: K Density Estimate Per Capita Logged Post Primary Grants

There are some 18,136 individual grants to post-primary schools in the dataset, ranging from \in 96 to \in 11 million, again with a high degree of skewness. The mean grant over the period was \in 70,225, while the median was \in 14,282. I have collapsed this data into a school-level dataset by roll number of the school and by year. This results in a dataset with one observation for each school that received a grant in each year and, as a result, there are some 2.394 observations with a mean grant of \in 50,343. Again, there is a high degree of skewness and, as a result, I have again logged the dependent variable. The density estimates for the distribution are very similar to those we saw earlier pertaining to primary grants (See Figure 6-8).

The independent and control variables are as set out in the primary data section. If we look first at Column 1 (See Table-6-5), the political model, we can see that there is support for the hypothesis that post-primary schools in the constituencies of the Minister for Finance and Minister for Education will benefit from greater funding than other schools. Schools in the Taoiseach's constituency, however, get significantly less funding, and that is significant. There is no support for the core voter hypothesis, with schools in areas with higher Fianna Fáil votes actually receiving less funding. Schools in areas with the largest swing to or from Fianna Fáil at the previous election do appear to garner more funding. Looking across to the full model in Column 3, we can see that the same pattern obtains for key ministers, although the effect is far stronger for the Minister for Finance, while schools in the Taoiseach's constituency still get significantly less funding. The signs have turned around for the core voter variables, underlining the need to be cautious in their interpretation. Schools in areas with large swings do, however, appear to attract greater amounts of funding, although in the full model the sign is not significant.

Looking at Column 2, we can see that there is no positive relationship between the number of children in a constituency and the amount of money going to post-primary schools in that constituency. In fact, there appears to be a significant negative relationship between the two, and this holds for both the more parsimonious demographic model and the full model. However, if the model is

run simply for the number of children in the constituency and not the change there is a positive rletaionship. There is, however, a relationship between the total enrolment in a school and the amount of money in grants it is awarded. However, there is no significant relationship between a school being classified disadvantaged and receiving additional funding. There is a scheme of 'Assistance to Schools in Designated Areas of Disadvantage'.

	Electoral	Demographic	All
Taoiseach	-2.36e-03***		-000012**
Constituency	(3.98e-06)		(4.64e-06)
Education Min	3.81e-04***		1.24e-06
Constituency	(3.39e-06)		(3.74e-06)
Finance Min	3.01e-03***		0.000014***
Constituency	(3.96e-06)		(3.43e-06)
Fianna Fáil Vote	-3.56e-07		6.23e-07***
Previous Election	(2.07e-07)		(1.35e-07)
FG/Lab Vote	-1.07e-06***		1.35e-07
Previous Election	(1.58e-07)		(1.24e-07)
Swing To/From FF	1.37e-07		2.93e-07
Previous	(2.15e-07)		(1.55e-07)
Children 5-12		1.06e-09***	-5.36e-09**
		(2.04e-10)	(1.77e-09)
Children 13-18		1.00e-09***	-6.85e-09***
		(2.03e-10)	(1.99e-09)
Change 5-12		-3.92e-08***	-4.52e-08**
		(1.06e-08)	(1.53e-08)
Change in 13-18		3.59e-08***	-2.21e-08
		(9.55e-09)	(1.27e-08)
Total Enrolment		-2.19e-09	8.47e-09**
		(2.68e-09)	(3.09e-09)
Disadvantaged		2.68e-06	-3.37e-07
School		(1.35e-06)	(1.53e-06)
Constant	0.000163***	0.000106***	0.000257***
	(0.103e-04)	(3.24e-06)	(0.00001)
Observations	489	1918	413
R-squared	0.152	0.0657	0.7494

Table-6-5: Capital Grants to Post Primary Schools

At the post-primary level, this scheme benefits 203 schools, serving approx 93,000 pupils, by providing over-quota teaching posts, additional funding to launch book rental schemes, additional capitation grants of €38 per pupil, and a home/school liaison grant to develop links with parents. However, in terms of capital grants, disadvantaged schools actually received less money than others, and this is highly significant statistically. In general, disadvantaged schools can expect to receive some €4,800 less than another school, even when the number of children enrolled is taken into account. It must be stressed that it is highly unlikely that officials in the department seek knowingly to award less funds to disadvantaged schools. Rather, it is more likely that lobbying from parents and others on their behalf is less, and thus they receive less. Again, the coefficients (Table-6-5) do not lend themselves to easy interpretation, and we must look at the exponentiated numbers. Once again, it would appear that schools in the key ministers' constituencies can expected to receive over 10% more funding than schools in other areas, while schools in disadvantaged areas can expect to receive about 10% less.

We can now turn to the number of capital grants awarded to each school. As before the data here has been collapsed down to the constituency level by year. The dependent variable is a count variable of the number of grants awarded to each school in each constituency over the period. As with primary schools the preferred estimation is the negative binomial (See Table 6-6). As was noted earlier the post primary dataset includes multiple entries for many schools in each year and thus can be analysed in terms of the number of grants being allocated to individual schools. We can see from looking at the first column that a similar picture to the amount of grants is also pertaining here. However, more grants did go to schools in the Taoiseach's constituency, but it is worth noting that there are a relatively high number of post primary schools in this city centre densely populated location and indeed the impact falls away when the number of children in the school is controlled for. Once again the impact of the Minister for Education is significant in both the political and full models, more grants to schools in his or her constituency than to other districts.

Number Grants Post Primary by School						
	Electoral	Demographic	All			
Taoiseach	0.552***		0.750			
Constituency	[0.0959]		(0.177)			
Education Min	0.610***		0.678**			
Constituency	[0.0914]		(0.115)			
Finance Min	0.892		0.910			
Constituency	[0.139]		(0.154)			
FF Vote Previous	0.993*		1.011*			
	[0.00433]		(0.00557)			
FG/Lab Vote	1.005		1.010*			
Previous	[0.00416]		(0.00585)			
Swing To/From	0.989*		0.979***			
FF	[0.00562]		(0.00670)			
Children		1.000**	1.000**			
5-12		(8.49e-06)	(7.42e-05)			
Children 13-18		1.000***	1.000***			
		(1.02e-05)	(8.72e-05)			
Change 5-12		1.000***	1.000			
		(8.33e-05)	(0.000696)			
Change in 13-18		1.000***	1.000			
		(7.10e-05)	(0.000603)			
Total Enrolment		1.000	1.001***			
		(1.47e-05)	(0.000151)			
Disadvantaged		0.991	1.107			
School		(0.00745)	(0.0849)			
Constant	60244***	0.000485***	19840***			
	[14404]	(1.71e-05)	(8771)			
Observations	5634	3817	3817			
Lnalpha	2.390***	2.275***	2.215***			
	[0.0321]	(0.0345)	(0.0362)			
Robust standard er	rors in naren	theses				

Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6-6: Number Grants Post Primary

The sign is positive for the Minister for Finance but there is no statistically significant effect. There is also some evidence for the core voter hypothesis with a statistically significant number of grants going to areas with a higher Fianna Fáil vote and this effect remaining even when the number of children and other demographic effects are controlled for. There is also evidence for the swing hypothesis with more grants going to areas with a large Fine Gael/Labour vote at

the previous election and to areas with the largest swings to Fianna Fáil at the previous election; these remain statistically significant predictors of more grants even when demographics are controlled for.

Turning to the demographic impacts it appears that the number of grants going to post primary schools in any constituency is significantly predicted by the number of children in that constituency in the relevant age cohorts. Both the current cohort of 13 to 18 year olds is a significant predictor as is the upcoming cohort of 5 to 12 years olds. Unsurprisingly, the change in these is also a significant predictor of the number of post primary grants going to different constituencies.

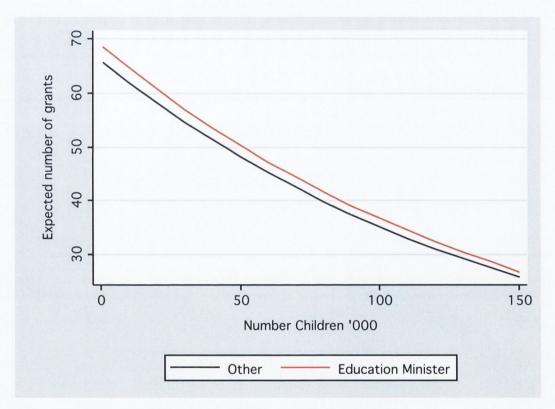


Figure 6-9: Impact Education Minister on Number Grants by No Children

The coefficients are not open to easy interpretation and I have thus run them through *Clarify*, a program that uses Monte Carlo simulation to convert the raw output of statistical procedures into results that are of direct interest to researchers,

without changing statistical assumptions or requiring new statistical models. As Clarify simulates quantities of interest, allowing the researcher to predict the impact that changes in any of the explanatory variables will have on the variables of interest, the count of the number of grants. The graph (Figure 6-9) shows the impact that the Education Minister has on the number of grants in a constituency, varying the number of children of primary school age in the constituency (measured in thousands). It shows that no matter how grants if the Education Minister was to be in the constituency, more grants would be delivered; however, the number of grants reduces with the number of children, again benefitting rural constituencies.

If we now collapse the dataset, so that the unit of observation is the constituency, we can see that many of the same patterns occur (see Table 6-7). Looking at Column 1, we can see that fewer grants of less value go to the Taoiseach's constituency as a whole, while significantly more grants in value go to the constituencies of the Minister for Education and Minister for Finance. This pattern remains in both the political and complete models. The impact of previous vote is once again mixed, while there is still evidence that grants do go to constituencies with large swings to or from Fianna Fáil at the previous election. In terms of demographic variables at the constituency level, we can see that the impact of the number of children in the relevant age cohort remains negative to a significant extent. In addition, the change in the number of children in these cohorts also remains negative to a significant extent. In addition the change in the number of children in these cohorts also remains negative to a significant extent.

⁴⁸ The program, designed for use with the *Stata* statistics package, offers a convenient way to implement the techniques described in Gary King, Michael Tomz, and Jason Wittenberg (2000), "Making the Most of Statistical Analyses: Improving Interpretation and Presentation", *American Journal of Political Science* 44, no 2 (April 2000): 347-361.

All Grants to Post Prin	nary 2001-2007 -	Constituency		
	Electoral	Demographic	All	
Taoiseach	-2.98e-05***		-1.52e-05***	
Constituency	(1.90e-06)		(2.44e-06)	
Education Min	3.23e-05***		-2.47e-06	
Constituency	(1.99e-06)		(2.11e-06)	
	2 2 2 2 5 4 4 4		7.10	
Finance Min	2.29e-05***		7.12e-06***	
Constituency	(2.37e-06)		(2.33e-06)	
Fianna Fáil Vote	-4.79e-07***		5.91e-07***	
Previous Election	(6.86e-08)		(5.39e-08)	
FG/Lab Vote	-1.04e-06***		2.53e-07***	
Previous Election	(5.68e-08)		(5.65e-08)	
Frevious Election	(3.086-08)		(3.036-08)	
Swing To/From FF	3.98e-07***		3.52e-07***	
Previous	(7.73e-08)		(6.59e-08)	
Children 5-12		-4.44e-09***	-7.87e-09***	
Children 5 12		(6.72e-10)	(7.84e-10)	
Children 13-18		-6.44e-09***	-3.30e-09***	
Children 15 16		(7.97e-10)	(8.85e-10)	
Change 5-12		-5.31e-08***	-5.38e-08***	
omingo o 12		(6.79e-09)	(7.30e-09)	
Change in 13-18		-1.74e-08***	-1.37e-08**	
		(5.86e-09)	(6.08e-09)	
Constant	0.000163***	0.000275***	0.000247***	
	(3.46e-06)	(3.45e-06)	(4.28e-06)	
Observations	5607	5116	5116	
R-squared	0.108	0.521	0.539	
Robust standard error				
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05,				
F, F,				

Table 6-	7 All	Grants	to	Post	Primary	by	Constituency
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6.19 Conclusions

To briefly recap (See Table 6-8), we can see that there is a good deal of evidence for Hypothesis 1, that key ministers will deliver significant resources to schools in their own home constituencies. Both primary and post-primary schools in the Minister for Education's constituency received more funding than schools in other areas, on average about 10% more in the geometric mean in both cases. In addition, schools in the Minister for Finance's constituency did almost as well. However, the lack of direct decision making by the Taoiseach appears to mean that his theoretical influence does not mean that additional resources are targeted at his constituents; in fact, it would appear that less resources were targeted at the Taoiseach's constituency from both primary and post-primary budgets than at other constituencies.

	Hyp 1 Key	Hyp 1 Key	Hyp 2 Core	Hyp 3 Swing	Hyp 4 Policy
	Ed Min	Fin Min	Vote	Swing	Pop ¹
Primary Grants	***	**	***	***	_***
(School Level)					
Number Primary	_**	**	**	_**	**
(School Level)					
Post Primary Grants		***	***	***	_***
(School Level)					
Number P Primary	**		*	***	***
(School Level)					
Post Primary Grants	***	***	***	***	***
(Constituency Level)					

Relevant age cohort 5-12 primary and 12-18 post primary. Only significant results reported. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6-8: Summary Tables Education

Examining the number of grants, a more mixed picture emerged. The constituencies of the Minister for Education and the Minister for Finance (who received a 15% increase in the mean of additional grants) are both winners when it comes to the amount and the number of capital grants allocated but in only one category – primary for those in the constituency of the Minister for Finance and post primary for those in the constituency of the Minister for Education.

Turning to Hypothesis 2, there is also evidence that schools in areas with a high core vote for the ruling party will receive more funding, and this holds for both primary and post-primary schools. Of course as we have noted earlier the time period for the data in this thesis limits the ruling party to Fianna Fáil, but it is likely that the findings would be generalisable to other parties such as Fine Gael which we will see in the qualitative chapter. Core voters are also likely to receive more grants than voters in areas with a lower vote for the governing party. Hypothesis 3, that ministers or parties will direct resources at swing voters, is a slightly weaker predictor of funding. Both primary and post-primary schools in areas that had the largest swings to or from Fianna Fáil at the previous election, received more funding than schools in other areas, and this too is statistically significant. However, primary schools in these districts cannot expect to receive a larger number of grants.

Turning to Hypothesis 4, that policy will drive expenditure decisions, the evidence is a little mixed. It appears that the number of children in the appropriate age cohort in both primary and post-primary does not predict spending. However, there is no evidence that the upcoming age cohort predicts spending either. In primary schools, it appears that the numbers and the change in the upcoming age cohort are both significant. However, when it comes to post-primary schools, the planning appears to be poorer, and the impact of the number of children in the relevant age cohort as well as the change in the number of children in that cohort are both negative. In other words, the more teenagers broadly speaking there are in an area, the less money is spent on post-primary schools. This is also the case for disadvantaged schools, which receive less funding than other schools. It is of course likely that these findings are the result of lobbying by parents rather than of specific policy decisions to give these schools or areas less funding. Nonetheless, a focus on outputs of policy rather than inputs would do much to remedy the situation.

Overall educational capital spending appears to be in the gift of the powerful politicians or ministers who control the relevant purse strings. However, they can

also be used as a reward for loyal party supporters, and swing voters may also be targeted to some extent. In addition, it appears that disadvantaged schools also receive less funding than others, despite special projects to target them. Furthermore, there appears to be at best patchy evidence of planning in terms of targeting schools in areas with large numbers of children. As with sports grants it would appear that in order for the DoED to move towards optimal policy outcomes an inventory of schools on which to base decisions is vital. In addition, a move away form the ingrained demand led process to one where evidence-based decision are taken should improve optimal policy outcomes and reduce the ability of the minister to direct funds at his or her own constituency. In the next chapter, we will examine whether the same logic applies to roads funding.

Chapter Seven: Local and Regional Roads Capital Spending 2001-2007

7.1 Abstract

Roads' spending is a harder test of partisan spending with much of the funding allocated on a road length basis and the minister detached from many decisions on individual funds. Nonetheless, politicians have a history and reputation for claiming credit for local roads spending, while in the past so-called "pot hole" candidates have even been elected. In this chapter I subject spending on local and regional roads to econometric analysis and find that political factors do indeed play a part in the allocation of monies. It would appear that a portion of the roads capital budget is utilised as a bonus for decision-making ministers in the area and to keep independents supporting the government on side.

7.2 Why study roads?

The third spending area which this thesis examines in roads expenditure, and particularly spending on local and non-national routes, which is under the direct control of the Minister for the Environment. Roads spending ought to be a harder test for pork barrel than either sports clubs or schools. As we shall see, funds are allocated to a large number of town, city and county councils, which then allocate the funding to particular projects. This means that the Minister is less involved with day to day decisions on specific projects than the Minister in charge of either education or sports funding. The funding is also theoretically designed to be allocated to every district regardless of need, as well in some circumstances to be allocated according to the length of the road network in that area. These factors may combine to make the job of partisan allocation in roads funding more difficult. On the other hand, the various local councils, which allocate the funding, are all political, with local councillors informing much policy. In addition, as we saw in previous chapters, local roads are a major source of credit-claiming for

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national politicians while anecdotally there is also evidence that Ministers consider roads to be targetable partisan goods. A former minister points out, roads spending is political at the national level. "If you look at every major route in this country it is simply a series of bypasses around towns, we do not build motorways between major cities along the best route but rather linking towns that politicians want to claim credit for."

Until June 2007 the Department of Environment and Local Government (DoELG) had overall policy responsibility for non-national roads, while the Department of Transport had responsibility for national roads. When Green Minister John Gormley became Minister for the Environment, following the 2007 general election, the responsibility for non-national roads was removed from his department and allocated to the Department of Transport. Some interviewees argue that the reasons behind this were twofold. First, as a Green Minister Gormley's focus is not on roads but rather in public transport. Second, because roads funding is a potential source of partisan allocations it was preferred to keep it with the main party. Roads' spending is also seen as a key area for pork barrel in discussions between Government and independent TDs over the past decade (Coughlan 2000). As a result we may well find that there is scope for political influence determining roads spending.

Roads capital spending is also an important area to examine as it constitutes a non-trivial amount of the overall capital budget and spending levels have increased significantly over the past decade. The spending has a crucial role to play in supporting both regional and national economic development. According to the current National Development Plan (NDP) (2006), which covers the period 2007-2013 the promotion of regional and national development through the provision of infrastructure including roads, are key national priorities. In addition the roads network is of importance to people and local business. The NDP notes, for example, that 98.3 per cent of internal merchandise are carried on the road network, both national and non-national (NDP, 2007, p130). Furthermore, there is a wide ranging although by no means unanimous view that public infrastructural provision is a key element in promoting economic growth (Rauch 1995). In a

specific Irish context Forfas (2007) argued that an increase in road investment improves national productivity growth and that local roads can have higher than expected rates of return, justifying public investment. In addition the view of IDA Ireland is that investment in transport infrastructure is particularly crucial for success in attracting foreign direct investment (IDA 2007). However, this assumes that the investment being made is being made on a value for money basis with the most productive areas of the road network being targeted. Simply investing for mainly political considerations may not ensure the same level of economic or productive return.

Historically in Ireland, according to the Department of Finance (DoF), the national policy focus of road expenditure had more to do with the alleviation of unemployment through the creation of seasonal jobs, than on the provisions of transport infrastructure. For many years, the idea that roads could play a key role in economic development was simply not countenanced. However, the DoF insists that this has completely changed and that infrastructural provision linked to economic growth is a fundamental principle. If this were the case then we would not expect to find that political variables explain roads funding over the period from 2002-2007. For the purpose of this project I shall concentrate on nonnational roads both because this is an area, which has been mentioned by many interviewees as one that is amenable to discretionary spending at least to a small extent, and because local roads are mentioned by candidates⁴⁹ themselves as a possible area in which to claim credit. In addition some 90,400 kilometres or 94 per cent of the country's roads are in the regional and local category with regional roads making up some 11,500 kilometres and local 78,900 kilometres.

7.3 Format of this chapter

This chapter will first of all examine the historical background to roads expenditure in Ireland before looking in more detail at the various programmes including restoration, maintenance, EU co-financed projects, strategic and

⁴⁹ Candidate Survey TCD 2007

miscellaneous grants and the CLÁR programme. It will then turn to the decision making process at the local authorities and the Department in order to ascertain how grants are awarded, before looking at what policy tells us about where grants should be allocated including a review of the National Spatial Strategy. At this point I will undertake a brief examination of a number of earlier reports into roads funding, then turn to the anecdotal evidence which points to patronage and pork in roads funding before turning to the data with some discussion of the hypothesis, model and expectations before finally undertaking some quantitative analysis.

7.4 Irish roads spending – the background

The Local Government Act, 1898 was the first Act following the appearance of cars and it created county and district councils and made them roads authorities. The county council also had the power to declare which roads were main roads. Later the designations still pertaining came broadly into force. The Local Government Act 1925 divided roads into main roads, county roads and urban roads with the minister declaring main roads himself. The next important revision of roads law came in 1974 with the Local Government (Roads and Motorways Act) allowing for the construction of motorways. While local authorities retained responsibility for the entire road system they were subject to strong ministerial direction and control in relation to arterial routes. National primary and secondary routes were also designated. The first centrally coordinated programme for the development of the national road network appeared in 1979 spurred on by the availability of financial assistance from the EU (then the EEC).

The focus of much policy at this point was on large national roads, which would win EU funding. Simultaneously non-national roads fell into increasing disrepair, primarily because the government decided to abolish road tax on private vehicles at the same time as abolishing rates on homes and the Road Fund was terminated in January 1978. By the mid 1980s a report from the County and City Engineers' Association found that one third of roads were structurally inadequate. This marked deterioration in the roads led to considerable political lobbying and in the 1990 local government elections a number of "pothole" candidates were elected

and local roads emerged as an area ripe for clientalism. In a bid to improve the situation the Roads Act 1993 split Ireland's road system into three categories, national, regional and local with some targeted aims for spending. Each of these types of road is funded in various ways with differing degrees of political control over the destination of funding. The National Roads Authority (NRA) was formally established as an independent statutory body under the Roads Act, 1993 with effect from 1 January, 1994. This effectively removed specific allocations for national roads from the direct political influence of a relevant minister leaving non-national roads or regional and local roads under his control. The money is allocated under a number of programmes including:

- Restoration Programme to supplement local authorities' own resources for maintenance and restoration of local and regional roads;
- EU Co-Financed Specific Improvement Grants to develop and upgrade nonnational roads, which are important to balanced regional development;
- Non-National Roads Miscellaneous Grants this includes a series of grant schemes.

I shall outline the characteristics each of these in turn below.

7.5 The Restoration Programme and the Miscellaneous Grants Scheme

The Restoration Programme provides grants to local authorities as a supplement to their own resources, for maintenance and restoration of local and regional roads. The grants are available in two forms, a maintenance element to meet expenditure on surface dressing and an improvement element to meet expenditure on surface restoration and road reconstruction within the existing fence lines. In both cases the DoELG laid down project selection criteria allowing local authorities discretion within parameters set by the Department. The DoELG also sets out engineering standards, which must be adhered to by local authorities. The road schemes themselves were selected on the basis of overall needs/priorities, criteria that reflect their importance (level of usage, category of vehicles served, and so on.) and the extent of their deterioration. The local authorities prepare

multi-annual restoration programmes outlining details of schemes, and the justification for them, in accordance with criteria set out by the DoELG. The Department, in turn, allocates funding to the local authorities on an annual basis on the basis of the programmes submitted to it. However, primary discretion remains with local authorities in relation to selection of individual projects for inclusion in the programme.

Local councils vary widely in which factors they consider when allocating funds. According to the Fitzpatrick report⁵⁰ (Fitzpatrick Associates 2002), 38 per cent of local authorities quote level of road usage as the primary criterion for project selection, while 51 per cent quote pavement condition as the primary criterion. The remaining 11 per cent quote development plan criteria as priority for project selection. In general, local authority engineers undertake an assessment of the pavement conditions, and make recommendations for the five-year programme. This is then submitted to area council meetings, who agree the programme, with or without amendments; the Draft Programme is submitted to the full council for adoption and submission to the DoELG; and finally the DoELG approves the Programme and issues allocations to the local authorities annually. The DoELG, however, operates the scheme on a demand-led basis with the Minister having the final say in how much any local authority would be allocated. I shall outline this in more detail below. County councillors thus influence both of these schemes at a local political level. However, it is not clear whether the amounts allocated to each county council are influenced by political variables at the DoELG, which is more central to this investigation. I shall look in more detail at the mechanisms used to decide on allocations later in this chapter.

7.6 The EU Co-Financed Specific Improvement Grant Scheme

In 1994, the EU Co-Financed Specific Improvement Grant Scheme was launched to assist the development and upgrading of non-national roads, important to balanced regional development. The scheme meets 100 per cent of

⁵⁰ Fitzpatrick Associates Review and Evaluation of the Roads Programme 2002

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the approved cost to local authorities of individual road improvement projects and is funded by the EU and the Exchequer. These co-financed projects must have a significant impact on employment and promote rural development/agriculture or economic activity in industry, tourism, fisheries or forestry. In addition, these projects should improve the quality and reliability of the region's economic and social infrastructure, remedying capacity deficiencies and bottlenecks; and facilitate more balanced and diversified development and growth within the regions, while ensuring a high level of environmental protection.

Thus in the time period relevant to this thesis the DoELG had responsibility for the expenditure in question. As we have seen the DoELG laid out the guidelines for all staff in the local authorities when dealing with non-national roads. Local authorities were also been asked by the DoELG to prepare their own procedures manual in respect of implementation of the non-national road schemes. The manual is a formal outline of individual responsibilities, and seeks to ensure that duties are clearly segregated within the local authority and that no one person is responsible for all stages of the process. The other key allocation dimension of the programme is that of allocations of funds across the local authorities; this will also help determine what individual projects do or don't merit selection.

The DoELG issued local authorities with eligibility requirements for works eligible for funding under this scheme. The scheme is very inclusive and the following works are eligible for funding:

- The provision of links to strategic transport infrastructure and facilities, particularly the national road network;
- The improvement of roads providing access to industrial production facilities and indigenous raw materials, including food and forest products;
- The improvement of designated tourist routes, roads within tourism areas and providing access to tourism areas;
- The improvement of roads providing access to regional ports, fisheries

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harbours, regional airports and public transport facilities;

- Road improvement works which make a significant contribution to local development or the attraction of economic development to an area; and
- The improvement of road pavements and the replacement, reconstruction or strengthening of bridges to cater for increased EU vehicle weight limits.

Works which fulfil the eligibility criteria, are identified annually by local authorities and prioritised on the basis of the contribution they make to the achievement of the objectives. The DoELG issues detailed guidelines for selection of non-national road improvement projects to the local authorities together with questionnaires in respect of each applicant scheme. Local authorities must outline their justification for selection of projects. Crucially, and unlike other schemes, they must make a case for the economic impact and traffic flows associated with the projects selected. The DoELG reviews the proposals from all local authorities and decides on the schemes to be funded. In general the DoELG practice is to review the proposals submitted on a county-by-county basis, ensuring that each county receives an element of EU co-financed funding. Larger projects in various counties are funded over a period of a number of years. Nonetheless, the stringent requirements of the EU funding are likely to ensure the minimum possible level of political interference in the process. In addition the focus on ensuring each county gets an allocation may make it more difficult for an incumbent minister to deliver disproportionate amounts of funding to his own constituency. While the general set of justifications would appear to be very wide the vast majority of local roads are not covered under this justification with EU-co-financed projects making up around 20 per cent of the volume of all overall applications.

7.7 The Strategic Grants Programme

A further major programme to provide funding for strategic non national and regional roads is the non national roads grants to support housing and other related developments which were set up in 2002, primarily because such

constraints on housing were seen as impediments to its supply. applications were invited from July 2000 from 15 local authorities in, or adjacent to, the main urban centres and allocations for 43 projects were announced in December 2002 with an initial Exchequer commitment of €247.6 million. A key objective of the programme was to provide infrastructure to facilitate the supply of housing as well as to facilitate the provision of lands for industrial and commercial development. Thus we would expect these monies to be concentrated along the major national routes or close to towns identified in the National Spatial Strategy (see below for details on so-called gateways and hubs). The specific improvement grants which generally fund smaller scale projects to support local and regional development generally have an annual budget of around €100 million with a further €55 million being committed to county council discretionary grants where the local authority decides how the funds are expended. The core policy objective is contained in circular letter RW 13/00 of 3 July 2000. It stated that the "Government recognises that rapid economic development is generating a need for targeted investment in non national roads area. The key objective of this scheme is to provide grant assistance to relevant local authorities, particularly in the Greater Dublin Area, for certain strategic non national roads to support housing, industrial/commercial developments." These grants should demonstrate a specific skewness towards Dublin thus counterbalancing some of the other schemes, which will be targeted largely at rural areas.

7.8 Miscellaneous grants

A range of grant schemes is available to local authorities under this heading as follows:

- Discretionary Maintenance Grants;
- Discretionary Improvement Grants;
- Block grant to City, Borough, and Town Councils;
- Dublin Traffic Management Grant Schemes;

- Regional Traffic Management Grant Schemes;
- Low Cost Safety Improvement Grant Schemes;
- Local Improvement Grant Schemes;
- Grants to Support Housing and other related development.

In addition there are funds for carriageway and footpath repairs of around €16 million per year and around €15 million for a local improvement scheme for non-public roads as well as a number of allocations towards smaller programmes. These grants are not subject to the same level of assessment as the aforementioned grants, primarily because they are smaller amounts. Discretionary maintenance and improvement grants are allocated on a pro-rata mileage basis to individual local authorities, with the exception of the three Dublin county councils, which receive somewhat higher allocations because of greater traffic volumes, wear and tear and management needs and so on in their areas. These are also the grants which interviewees say are most often used as credit claiming opportunities by politicians. However, primarily because they are allocated on a road length basis it is unlikely that any patterns of influence to an individual Cabinet minister will be seen.

7.9 Other central government funding - CLÁR programme

Central government funding is also available for non-national roads through the CLÁR Programme. This was initially managed by the Department of Agriculture and Food but during the entire duration of our time period was managed by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DCRAGA)⁵¹. CLÁR was launched in 2001 with the aim of tackling depopulation, decline and lack of services in rural areas. In total 16 areas are eligible for funding. On average these areas have experienced a population decline of over 50 per cent in the past 75

⁵¹ Or Craggy Island as many civil servants in other Departments call it in a nod to the now infamous island of Father Ted fame

years. Many of the road schemes funded under CLÁR are for small amounts and often spent on local roads. There is a possibility that the destination of these funds is open to political influence. However, in this case the relevant minister would be the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs Éamon Ó Cuív. The 16 areas originally selected for inclusion in the CLAR programme were those that suffered the greatest population decline from 1926 to 1996, with the exception of the Cooley Peninsula (which was included based on the serious difficulties caused there by Foot and Mouth Disease). Following an analysis of the Preliminary 2002 Population Census data, the CLÁR areas were reviewed and extended in January 2003 arising from a commitment in the Agreed Programme for Government. The total population covered increased to 362,000 (from 284,000) across 18 counties with part of one other county added. The programme was extended again in April 2006 to include areas with an average population loss of 35 per cent per county between 1926 and 2002. Parts of five new counties were added, increasing the population who could benefit from the programme to nearly 727,000. The programme covers parts of 22 counties and all of Co. Leitrim.⁵² All of the areas are in the Midlands or on the Western seaboard (See Figure 7-1) again with the exception of the Cooley peninsula. The programme supports physical, economic and social infrastructure in rural areas of special disadvantage across a variety of measures - such as electricity conversion, roads, water and sewerage, village, housing and schools enhancement, health, coastal and sports and community projects. In this chapter I will focus solely on the roads funding. The stated aim of CLÁR on the Department's website is that it "acts as a lever to elicit money from other sources through funding and co-funding arrangements with government departments, state agencies and local authorities." In the years 2002 – 2006, €71m was expended on investments under the programme with related public and private expenditure in the region of €61m. The result is that many of the CLÁR

⁵² CLÁR includes parts of counties Carlow, Cavan, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Kilkenny, Laois, Limerick, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wicklow and all of County Leitrim.

areas potentially receive substantially more funding and projects than those in other areas. I will discuss this in more detail in the data section.

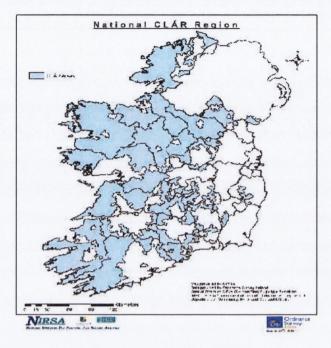


Figure 7-1: CLÁR Target Areas (source Pobal)

7.10 Local authorities and roads spending

The local authority system is made up of elected and non-elected bodies with elected bodies being responsible for the dispersal of roads funding. These include town commissioners, boroughs, urban district councils, county boroughs and county councils. Almost all of the functions of local authorities derive from legislation emanating from the DoELG. While there is a sharp legal distinction between the reserved functions of elected members, including the adoption of the annual estimate of expenses, and the executive function of the county manager and his staff in practice they work in close cooperation (Dooney 1998). Roads are an important part of the policy over which councils have some control, accounting for about 30 per cent of all expenditure. The various local authorities are road authorities under the various road legislation Acts and are responsible for maintaining the roads system. However, the state through the National Roads Authority has accepted responsibility for the national primary routes and the national secondary roads. The local authorities have responsibility for non-national roads, which account for 24 per cent of the roads network. The upkeep of

the rest of the roads is financed from central government and local authorities' own resources. In this analysis I will be looking at the centrally funded amounts delivered from the DoELG in Dublin.

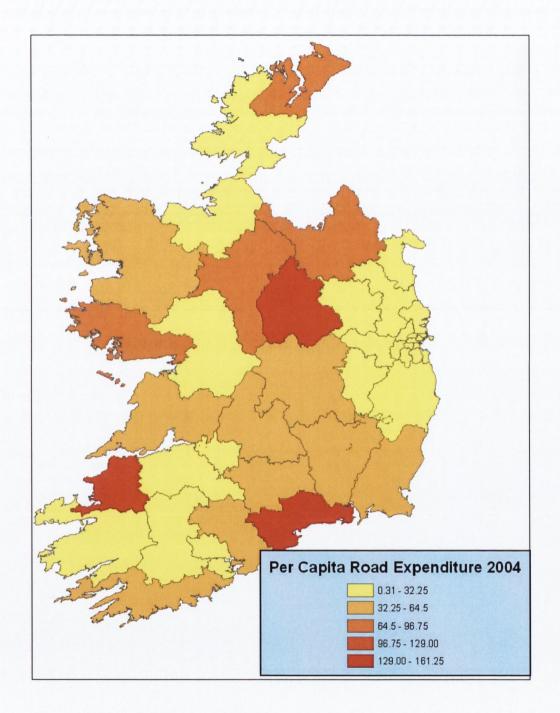


Figure 7-2: Map Per Capita Roads Expenditure 2004

Of course simply because a local authority applies for funding under any of the specific headings mentioned above does not mean the funding will be granted. The DoELG is crucial in allocating the bulk of the funding with DCRGA also important in terms of the CLÁR funding. Answering a Dáil question in 2006 then Minister for the Environment Dick Roche said that non-national road grants including discretionary maintenance, discretionary improvement and restoration maintenance grants are determined predominantly on a pro rata non-national road length basis (Dail Debate, 9 February 2006, Vol no 1614 No 3). Road length is thus a key explanatory variable which I shall detail more later. However, this decision to allocate funding on a road length basis rather than on a per capita basis is arguably political. After all with a greater density of population and more vehicle journeys it is possible that roads in cities will require far more maintenance per kilometre. There are also questions of equity here. We can see looking at Figure 7-2 53that roads' spending is concentrated away from the Dublin area. Is it correct that the taxpayer should be asked to support rural roads where there are perhaps two or three dwellings on the same basis as urban roads? The Minister added that restoration improvement grants, which are based on multiannual restoration programmes submitted by local authorities take account of previous allocations and the results of the recent pavement condition study and review of pavement management systems. Block grants and special block grants for carriageway repairs to city, borough and town councils, are based on the population of each urban area and its environs. Other grant categories which are project specific such as the EU co-financed specific improvements grant scheme and the strategic non-national roads grants scheme, under which projects are submitted by local authorities for consideration and allocations are determined following an assessment of their individual merits, compliance with eligibility criteria, the needs of all areas and the total funds available. The restoration improvement grants are allocated on the basis of identified special needs. This approach they say is designed to ensure that funds are allocated on a mileage basis and is in line with suggestions of the City and County Engineers Association in

 $^{^{53}}$ In 2004 no constituency received the highest level of per capita funding of over epsilon129 and thus only four colours are visible on the map

their comments on the Road Pavement Condition Study. In addition, officials point out that allowance has been made to the six county councils around Dublin City on a population basis in recognition of the fact that their roads experience higher than normal traffic levels and hence greater wear and tear than other counties. I will discuss this in more detail in the data section but I will be controlling, where possible, for these variables in the quantitative component of the thesis.

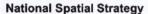
7.11 The National Spatial Strategy

Apart from the characteristic of specific areas as set out above all capital spending is to be targeted broadly in line with objectives in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). The strategy was published in 2002 and operates within a 20-year framework. It sets a national context for spatial planning, which then informs regional planning guidelines, and county and city development plans. These guidelines operate on a statutory basis and therefore ought to be the focus of local and regional roads spending. The NSS envisages the emergence of spatial clusters, particularly focussed around the city regions and other strategic locations with easy access to transport and key infrastructure. By definition then roads spending ought to be targeted at these clusters. The larger of these were called gateways with the smaller clusters being called hubs. The emphasis was ostensibly on sustainability which it defines as matching where people live with where they work in order to sustain a better quality of life, a strong competitive economic position and an environment of the highest quality. While the National Development Plan 2000-2006 identified Dublin, Cork, Limerick/Shannon, Galway and Waterford as existing gateways, the NSS designated four new national level gateways - the towns of Dundalk and Sligo and the linked gateways of Letterkenny/(Derry) and the Midland towns of Athlone/Tullamore/Mullingar. In addition, the NSS identified nine, strategically located, medium-sized "hubs" to support, and be supported by, the gateways and to link out to wider rural areas. The hubs identified were Cavan, Ennis, Kilkenny, Mallow, Monaghan, Tuam and Wexford, along with the linked hubs of Ballina/Castlebar and Tralee/Killarney, working together to promote regional development in their areas. I shall include a

measure for the NSS including hubs and gateways in the quantitative part of this chapter in order to examine whether this stated policy target was in fact met with Exchequer funding for roads.

7.12 Evaluating roads spending

Despite the new focus on roads spending as a key component of economic policy there are problems in evaluating the benefit of roads spending in Ireland. For one, the processes in allocating spending, while developed a good deal over the past decade, are not as specific as in other countries. The Department of Finance (VFM 2009 p29) points out that a similar rationale underpins regional roads infrastructure development in Scotland as in Ireland (Page 2005). Both countries have comparable population sizes with a mixture of dispersed and concentrated settlement patterns. However, the Scottish Executive publishes Transport Appraisal Guidelines, which are more specific than those available in Ireland. In particular, detailed advice is given on the appraisal of the economic activity and location impacts of transport infrastructure investment. These recommend that information drawn from the business community, along with employment and economic data should be used when appraising the case for project specific investment.



Map 2: Gateways & Hubs

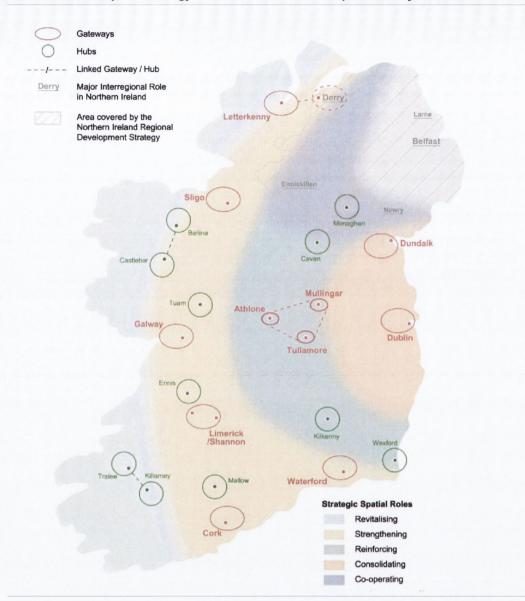


Figure 7-3: Gateways and Hubs

These indicators or equivalent ones, are not used in Ireland and thus I argue that there is more room for the discretionary allocation of some expenditure subject to subjective criteria, which may include political variables. This combination of the social and economic together with the historical development for roads funding in Ireland may also lead to greater incentives towards particularistic spending. I will now turn to a brief overview of various government sponsored reports into roads spending over the past 11 years in order to ascertain whether there are or have

been any official concerns about the destination or efficiency of spending programmes.

7.13 Previous reports into non-national roads: a Review of the Efficiency of County Councils Operations in the Non-National Roads Area

The first value for money report into regional and local roads was undertaken by KPMG and commissioned by the Department of the Taoiseach in 1997. Its main terms of reference were to "examine the efficiency and effectiveness of county councils' operations on non national roads with the aim of securing value for money and maximum outputs from expenditure on public roads by county councils (KPMG 1997). At this time KPMG proposed that the Department should prepare national standards and guidelines for local authorities in their work on non-national roads. A greater strategic focus was also recommended. Specifically non-national roads were to be linked with objectives in county development plans. Since then, seven best practice documents have been published, most technical in nature, but by 2004 a working methodologies set of guidelines had been produced. It set out clear procedures in relation to tendering in order to encourage transparency, greater competition and value for money (DEHLG 2004). A significant part of the guidelines concern quality control but in common with the other areas we have examined there is little on outputs or the consequences or efficiency of any of the spending. However, the Department does now collect more information than other departments examined earlier in this thesis, which could be used as the basis for future performance indicators.

7.14 Fitzpatrick Associates Review and Evaluation of the Roads Programme and Mid Term Review of the NDP

In 2002 in its report into the roads programme Fitzpatrick Associates found that "the non national roads programme is being operated on a reasonable and efficient basis. We do not see scope or reason for major changes in how it is operated." (Fitzpatrick 2002: 15). However, the report did find the evidence of actual allocation in practice was biased in favour of rural counties and recommended a

more needs based approach. It recommended that the procedure for allocating non-national road expenditure by county should be adjusted to allocate higher percapita monies to the more urban counties. It also recommended that the Non-National Roads Unit in the DoELG should monitor the extent to which local authorities are following the various procedural guidelines that are provided to them. The authors were also concerned about the geographic location of the projects being funded and suggested that priorities ought to be redirected in line with the National Spatial Strategy. In the empirical part of this chapter we will examine the extent to which actual monies were directed at areas targeted at the National Spatial Strategy and towards urban areas. The Mid Term Review of the NDP by the ESRI (Fitzgerald 2003) also questioned the quality of improvement on non-national roads. "While the non-national roads measure does well the actual targeting of the expenditures does not explicitly take into account the National Spatial Strategy. Furthermore, in at least some cases, the quality of the road improvements and maintenance can be questioned."

7.15 VFM Report Strategic and Local Roads 2008

This report found that the programme had been effective in so far as it met its objectives, which were to "facilitate the construction of housing and open up development land". There were some concerns that some developments were small and that the next phase should focus on larger scale projects consistent with wider strategic developments. In addition, it found that costs data was not widely available in enough detail and that a new structure for the appraisal of project should be introduced. However, it does not examine the distribution of funding spatially and no mention was made of balance between rural and urban areas for example nor is any mention of political involvement in the process. Until June 2007 the DoELG had overall policy responsibility for non-national roads, while the Department of Transport had responsibility for national roads. In the time period relevant to this thesis the DoELG and thus the Minister for the Environment had responsibility for the expenditure in question. According to Tim

O'Brien⁵⁴ regional development correspondent who covers the area for *The Irish* Times, the perception is perhaps that significant funding is decided on the basis of political influence. One now noteworthy case referred to by successive interviewees was the series of roundabouts in Castlebar in Mayo delivered when local TD Padraig Flynn was Minister for the Environment in 1989. More recently O'Brien recounts a number of episodes of apparent political patronage when Dick Roche was Minister for the Environment. At one point the Minister took credit for facilitating a slip road off the N11 close to Greystones, the main route through his constituency, to allow the development of Charlesland a scheme being built by developers and Fianna Fáil supporters Sean Dunne and Sean Mulryan through a joint venture company Zapi development. In the event the developers agreed to lend the council the money to build the road. As part of that development, Zapi lent the council the money to build the Greystones Southern Access Route connecting the N11 with Greystones. It also built the 2.5km-long dual carriageway through its own lands and those of Wicklow Co Co/IDA, connecting Greystones with the N11 at the new interchange. On another occasion at a press conference as Roche was launching the annual non-national roads plan, O'Brien asked if the level of funding for the Minister's constituency of Wicklow meant he was feathering his own nest. "The Minister made it very clear that it would be perfectly acceptable if I wrote up that he was delivering excessive amounts to his constituents, but absolutely not the other way around," he recalls.

Other examples abound. Many interviewees mention Albert Reynolds who as Taoiseach ensured that the Longford bypass would actually run through the town in order to keep local traders happy. As a former Labour minister points out⁵⁵, almost all former ministers of the environment, with the exception of Ray Burke who was exposed as being involved with planning corruption by the Flood Tribunal, are rural deputies. "In general patronage in Dublin does not involve roads spending in the same way as in rural communities so it is a better gift for a rural deputy," the former minister says. Indeed the first Dublin City Minister for

⁵⁴ In an interview conducted as part of the qualitative component of this thesis

⁵⁵ In an interview conducted as part of the qualitative component of this thesis

the Environment is the incumbent Green Party Minister John Gormley but local roads spending was removed from his Department and given to a rural Fianna Fáil politician Noel Dempsey Minister for Transport.

The Irish Times' Tim O'Brien recounts examples of patronage, involving the National Road Authority even now, which many felt to be rather more remote from political influence than non-national roads under the control of local authorities. In the tight funding environment of 2008/2009 only one new bypass scheme was passed for funding (O'Brien 2009). The NRA chairman, says O'Brien, had a plan to build a bridge at Newlands Cross which would alleviate a notorious traffic snarl up point on the primary orbital route around Dublin, the M25. However, following alleged lobbying from the Tánaiste Mary Coughlan that project was shelved and later tendered as a PPP and a bypass for the small town of Castleisland in Co Kerry was put in its place. The implication was clear, the Government is once again reliant on the votes for a small number of independents, for Castleisland is in the home constituency of pivotal independent Jackie Healy-Rae and indeed in the local electoral area for his second son Michael running in the local elections of 2009 and he had lobbied hard for that particular project. I will discuss Mr Healy-Rae in more detail below. Even the front page of DoELG site on the NDP priorities appears clear. The top two documents are not about policy but rather entitled "Grants Under the Restoration Programme 1995-2007" and "2007 Non-National Road Grant Allocations". The press release section makes the point in even more stark terms. The top four in 2007 were

31/05/07: Roche addresses the Engineer's Ireland Annual Seminar for Local Government Engineers

29/03/07: Record Funding of €542,525 for the Local Improvements Scheme in Wicklow County Council

29/03/07: Batt O'Keeffe Announces Record Funding of €2.4 million for Local Improvements Scheme in Cork

18/01/07: Non-National Roads Budget Tops €600 million

7.16 Ministerial bounty: non-national roads expenditure 2000-2006

The amounts involved in roads expenditure rose significantly during the years of the National Development Plan 2000-2006. The sums concerned escalated every year while non-national roads expenditure accounted for a good deal of the total monies in that plan amounting to €2.43 billion. This was a step change from previous funding levels. In 1999 non-national roads only attracted funding of €237 million, representing central grant expenditure of over €2,626 for every kilometre of non-national road in the state. The bulk of the money was to be spent on the restoration programme for regional and local roads, while county councils received €210 million. By 2000 the amount had increased to €348 million including €264 million in government grants and €84 million from council resources. By 2002 the then Minister Noel Dempsey said the aim of the nonnational roads building programme was to "restore the entire network of regional and local roads in county council areas by 2005," (O'Brien 2000) and it would appear he did not forget his own constituency. In 2002 Dempsey's home constituency won €7.86 million of restoration funding more than all other counties except Cork, Mayo and Kerry, which had substantially more road surface. The following year following a reshuffle when Dempsey was no longer Minister, Meath won only €811,000 in funding. By February 2003 the new minister Martin Cullen was announcing funding of €434 million which he noted was just shy of the 2002 allocation of €455 million or €4,346 for every kilometre, a 92 per cent increase on 1997 levels. Minister Cullen announced that he had commissioned a county-by-county study to identify potholes and sub standard roads around the state. "It will help prioritise investment to ensure value for money for every cent invested," he said at the time (O'Brien 2003) However, the €348 million programme he announced was due to target only 3,836 kilometres, less than half the amount targeted with a far smaller sum just a few years earlier, thanks to an explosion in construction inflation. Yet the pattern of diverting funds to his home constituency continued. The Irish Times (Duffy 2003) report into the 2003 funding allocation pointed out the following:

Lusk by pass, Naas ring road, and Enfield Edenderry ring road, Castletroy Distributor Roads, Trim Dublin Improvement Scheme. South Dublin Outer Ring Road, Tramore Ring Road, Waterford, Wicklow Town Relief and Port Access Road, Ballybeg Ring Road, Waterford, and the Outer Ring Road, also in Waterford.

The Minister, of course, represented Waterford. Out of nine larger schemes announced that year some three were in his own home constituency. This was not even remarked on by the journalist who wrote up the report. In 2004 the Minister allocated some €477 million with €220 million for the road restoration programme. Again the strategic non national roads contained a large number of Waterford schemes, including the Tramore Ring Road, the Port Access Road and the Outer Ring Road in Waterford (O'Brien 2004). Only12 per cent of the total was allocated to urban areas in Dublin and Cork and indeed Waterford. In fact of a total €36 million being allocated to city councils some €10.6 million was allocated to Waterford City Council.

Following a Cabinet reshuffle the 2005 plan was set out by another new minister, Dick Roche representing Wicklow. Once again the programme was reviewed and a follow up study concluded that the programme needed to take account of changed road use patterns and refocus priorities to areas of greatest need (RPS et al 2005). Minister Roche admitted it would take 15 years and €2 billion to repair Irish roads (Labanyi 2006). That year some €205 million was made available to deal with the defects with a further €75 million under the restoration maintenance scheme, out of a total spend in 2006 of €558 million on non-national roads. Once again the Minister's constituency benefitted as Wicklow immediately won a 15 per cent increase in funding or €13 million (O'Brien 2005). At a press conference to announce the plan the Minister defended his decision and claimed that the county was one of several to receive special funding aimed at bringing roads up to an acceptable standard. At the same time Waterford city and county councils saw their allowance cut by almost 13 per cent. Pressed on the size of the increase for Wicklow the Minister insisted the area had been neglected.

7.17 Clientelism/Lobbying – Jackie Healy-Rae

It is not just the Minister for the Environment who appears to be rewarded, but other politicians, particularly independents, also appear to view roads funding as welcome pork for their districts. Certainly roads funding has been a key area in the discussion between Government and independent TDs over the past decade (Coghlan 2000). Local politicians believe that credit claiming on delivering local roads projects delivers votes. Indeed some 43 out of 152 respondents to the 2007 candidate survey following the 2007 election explicitly mentioned roads in response to a question asking on what areas do they most often claim credit. The politician perhaps best known for his credit claiming ability, particularly in the areas of roads, is the aforementioned South Kerry independent TD Jackie Healy-Rae. The TD for Kerry South is intensely pragmatic about what he demanded in return for his vote in 1997, chiefly money for non-national roads, a new pier and other projects. During the campaign he told reporters that he intended to kick up "blue murder" about the state of county roads in Kerry. "This a sort of a Gregory 56" deal, if I hold the balance of power I'd vote for Bertie Ahern if there was funding for the county roads and some guarantee of jobs for young people," (Cleary 1997). In the event Healy-Rae did a deal with Fianna Fáil after the election and he claimed to have won funding for extensive repairs to roads in his constituency, costing several million pounds as well the construction of a new pier in Cromane costing almost €7 million and remedial work on other small harbours and piers and bridges. For Healy-Rae, however, it may be about more than pork barrel. As another article pointed out, "Kerry people smile a little wryly when they hear of the construction work that needs to be done, considering the Healy-Rae family business is plant hire. Healy-Rae does not deny it.

⁵⁶ Referring to the deal independent TD Tony Gregory did with then Fianna Fáil leader Charles Haughey in 1982. In return for supporting Haughey as Taoiseach, Gregory was guaranteed a massive cash injection for his inner-city Dublin constituency, an area beset by poverty and neglect

"Sure my son Danny runs the business. He always seems to have enough work and is involved all the time. He is involved more or less around the Kenmare area. I don't have to put any work his way. If we get the funding he would not be the only person who could do the work'," (O'Connor 1997).

Indeed one of the first roads to be completed under the scheme was a road from West Cork to his hometown of Kilgarvan. The DoELG paid almost €400,000 a year for three years for repairs to that road, much done by Healy-Rae construction. He also received "very large sums" for the Killarney to Killorgan Road (Lucey 2000). "Politics is a practical, unsentimental business," he says. Kerry County Council paid nearly €475,000 to a son of Healy-Rae for hiring of plant equipment in Kerry. Indeed his son Daniel Healy-Rae was the highest paid plant hire contractor to Kerry during the years of the agreement. He was paid €474,556 in 2001; most of the hire was for road works and a small amount for sewerage schemes according to the council. Many of these projects are those that his father claimed to have garnered for the county. Later Danny as a local councillor sat in at council meetings, which decide on the specific allocation for roads funding to individual roads. Despite protests from others on the council a Senior Counsel provided written opinion that this should be allowed. As one report (Myers 2002) noted wryly at the time:

The quality of the roads will tell you whether an area supports Jackie Healy-Rae: as for those around his home place of 'Kilgarvan, you could iron silk knickers on them. Happily his son Daniel has profited enormously from their construction. Last year with a contract worth €475,000 Daniel Healy-Rae was the highest paid plant hire contractor to Kerry County Council. Merely a matter of the most competitive tenders insists the county council, and you can be very competitive indeed if the road you are building is outside your front door. Kerry looks upon such shenanigans with beaming approval. Sure isn't being paid to build a roadway to your own front door what politics is all about?

7.18 The data

The data that I am utilising in this chapter is broadly as set out in chapter Four. The primary data has been collected from the DoELG under the Freedom of Information Act. It incorporates all capital spending on non-national roads in the Republic from 2001-2007 and is a road level dataset with details of individual road grants. The dataset contains the name of each section of roadway on which funds were spent and the programme under which it was spent - that is restoration, EU-co-financed, strategic grants programme or miscellaneous grants. Each road has been coded to its specific constituency. This is straightforward for many smaller and local roads, which are unambiguously in one constituency. Where this is not the case I have allocated the road to the constituency where the bulk of the road is and where this cannot be ascertained I have divided it between all relevant constituencies. In other cases there is simply an amount allocated to a specific county council. Many of these are conterminous with constituency boundaries, but where they are not I have allocated in line with approximate proportion of road kilometres. However, in larger cities, particularly Dublin and Cork, one county council can incorporate several constituencies. Where this is the case I allocate the specific stretch of road to a constituency. Where the road traverses the boundary between constituencies I allocate it to the constituency in which a longer part resides. Further information is available on the allocation of funds to city and borough councils as well as town councils. In each of these it is a straightforward to allocate to a constituency with the exception of Dublin and Cork. In addition I collected information from the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht affairs about CLÁR or regional funding of roads projects in areas which have suffered a population decline (see Chapter Three for more detail). This includes data on the amount spent, the stretch of road and the electoral district in which it was allocated. Where CLAR funding applies nonnational roads are funded equally between CLAR and the DoELG. Thus most years the DoELG funding was in the region of €1.9 million which was matched by CLAR in these areas. In addition CLAR provided funding for Local Improvement Scheme Roads. In many years for every €2 allocated by the local authority to roads in a CLÁR area from its county LIS

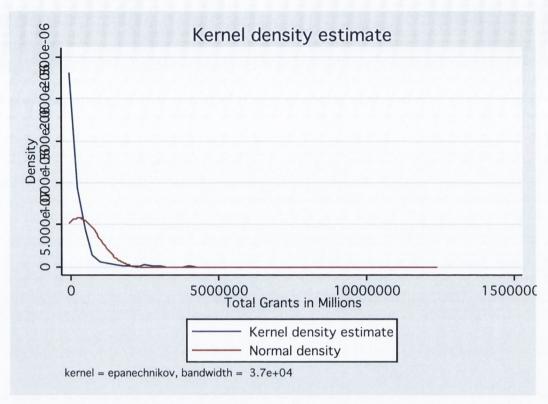


Figure 7-4: Probability Distribution All Grants

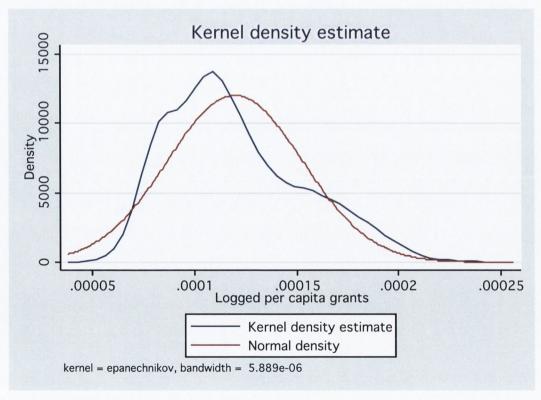


Figure 7-5: Probability distribution logged per capita grants

allocation, another $\[Emmath{\in}\]1$ was provided from the CLÁR fund thus increasing investment on LIS roads in these areas by 50 per cent. In 2006 this was 100 per cent with CLÁR providing matching funding. Finally CLÁR provided between $\[Emmath{\in}\]3$ million and $\[Emmath{\in}\]6$ million every year for class two and three local roads and bridges. One result is that the number of projects is increased by a large number of relatively small projects and most of these are concentrated in the western seaboard. In total over the time period there are 3,718 observations amounting to over $\[Emmath{\in}\]2$ billion in funding. The amounts involved range from $\[Emmath{\in}\]4$,000 for pavement improvements to small stretches of road to $\[Emmath{\in}\]1$.3 million for new stretches of road.

In this analysis because there are no road specific variables the dataset is collapsed by home district and by year. It thus has some 240 observations. The primary dependent variable is the total amount of grants allocated to each constituency. However, the grant variable was not normally distributed (Figure 7-4) and thus I have taken the logged per capita version (Figure 7-5) which has a more normal distribution. At other times in the analysis the dependent variable is a count of the number grants allocated to each constituency in each year. The independent variables follow the pattern of previous chapters with measures or marginality and swing to or from Fianna Fáil at the previous election. In addition the relevant ministers are included. From 2000-2002 Noel Dempsey from Meath was Minister for the Environment and Charlie McCreevy from Kildare North Minister for Finance. From 2003 to 2005 Minister Martin Cullen from Waterford took over as Minister for the Environment while Minister McCreevy remained in Finance. After that point Minister Dick Roche from Wicklow took over in Environment while Minister Brian Cowen from Laois Offaly took over at the Department of Finance. Taoiseach Bertie Ahern representing Dublin Central was in office for the entire period in question. I have also included a dummy variable representing Minister Ó Cuív given his grant-allocating prowess through the CLÁR programme.

The policy related independent variables again include demographics taken

from the Central Statistics Office and in particular the Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) for both 2002 and 2007. These statistics include measures of the number of cars in each household, the number of commuters and the number of passengers in each household as well as population. The insight here is that roads spending should be related to the number of vehicles using that road, with roads in more densely populated areas with more commuters and more cars per household needing a greater level of repairs than those in less densely populated areas. In addition, I have included a measure of the number of road kilometres in each district taken from the 1997 Ove Arup Pavement Condition Survey. As we saw earlier, spending according to the length of the road network is Government policy. I have included this in the policy variables although there is an argument for rather including it in the political model as the decision to spend according to length is arguably a political one to satisfy voters in rural constituencies. Further dummy variables representing both gateway and hub towns as set out in the NSS are also included. The National Spatial Strategy set out a number of parameters for these towns to be successful among them that the roads network to the town would be developed.

7.19 Expectations

Given that the Department deliberately sets out to ensure that funding is allocated on a county by county basis even for core infrastructure investment and EU co-financed projects we can expect that much of the distribution of monies will be random. However, given the patterns we saw above and the available survey evidence and the fact that local roads spending is an area on which politicians can personally claim credit and where a Minister can at least in some instances control the distribution there may well be scope for pork barrel spending. This may be the case both for the amount for money allocated and for the number of projects granted. We shall be examining both in the upcoming section.

7.20 Hypothesis and model

As I set out in Chapter Four there are a number of competing hypotheses which I shall test:

1 Cabinet ministers will act in their individual interests, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to their home districts.

- 2 Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest of the party, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to geographic areas of greater electoral strength for the party.
- 3 Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest of the party, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to geographic areas with maximum numbers of swing voters for the party.
- 4 Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest generally, directing expenditure at all constituencies on a universal basis, targeting groups as set out by government policy.

All of the above hypotheses can fit a simple model where spending is a function of political and/ or economic factors. I will utilise two separate models. When examining the amount of money allocated I will, as in previous chapters, utilise an OLS model. The second model utilising a count variable, that is the number of grants allocated to each constituency. When a model with a dependent count variable is estimated using linear OLS regression, the count nature of the dependent variable is ignored. This leads to negative predicted counts and to parameter estimates with undesirable properties in terms of statistical efficiency, consistency, and unbiasedness. Thus when examining the number of grants allocated to each area I will employ the negative binomial which utilises maximum likelihood estimation. With this model, a Poisson distribution determines the probability of an event count, where the conditional mean of the distribution is a function of a vector of covariates. However, the basic Poisson regression model is limited because it forces the conditional mean of the outcome to equal the conditional variance. This assumption is often violated in real-life data and indeed is so in the data here. Thus the negative binomial in which the

conditional variance may exceed the conditional mean is appropriate (Cameron and Trivedi 1986) and that approach is what shall be employed.

7.21 Descriptive statistics

I start with a simple examination of the number of grants awarded in each year (see Figure 7-6). As we can see the numbers of grants appear to follow an electoral cycle with peaks in 2002 coinciding with a general election, in 2004 coinciding with local and European elections and again in 2007, although at a slightly lower level than 2006.

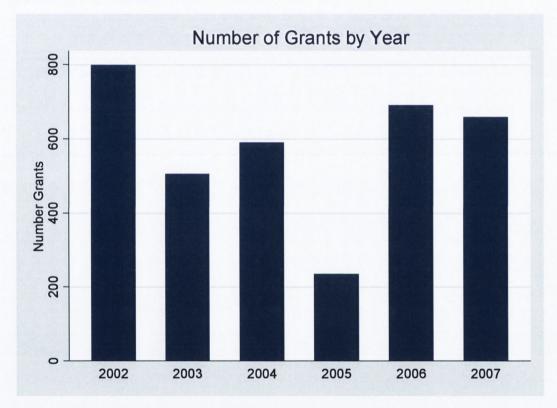


Figure 7-6: The Electoral Cycle: No Grants by Year

7.22 Estimation of all funding

To begin with I estimate three models on the sum of total grants allocated to city and county councils: a model with purely political variables including road length as discussed earlier; a purely demographic model with population and the number of cars per household; and a full model including both demographic and political variables. I estimate the most constrained model first and the following models

are then constrained to the same sample. All models are estimated with an interactive term for each year in order to take into account the impact of different years.

The dependent variable in this first model is the logged per capita grant. The results are given in Table 7-1. If we turn to column 1 we can see the influence of political variables. We can see that the Environment Minister's constituency can expect to receive more money in grants than other constituencies and that this is statistically significant. However, it appears that unlike other areas we have looked at the amount of money going to roads in the Minister for Finance's constituency is less than that going to other constituencies. Looking across to column three and the full model we see that the constituency of the Minister for Finance still receives less money in grants but the result is not statistically significant. The significance also falls away for the Minister for the Environment, although the sign remains positive. There is some evidence for the core voter model with constituencies with a higher level of voting for Fianna Fáil at the previous election receiving a greater amount of funding, although this too falls out in the full model. There is more evidence, however, for the swing voter model in both the more parsimonious political model and in the full model.

Unlike the other areas of spending the policy model has a very high r-squared of 0.94 indicating that policy indeed dictates a good deal of the roads funding allocations. However, it also demonstrates that the only policy variable that appears to predict spending in a constituency is the road length in that constituency, while spending is negatively related to population. For example the mean grant per person in Dublin is &115. However, in Mayo it is &57.13 and in Kerry South it is the highest at &62.86.⁵⁷ None of the other policy variables for the number of cars, or those identifying hubs or gateways are significant. This remains the case for the full model.

⁵⁷ The result for Kerry South is open to interpretation. It is the home constituency of both former minister John O'Donoghue as well as independent TD with a focus on roads Jackie Healey-Rae.

Turning to Table 7-2 we can see how the picture changes when examining the grants administered under the CLÁR scheme for disadvantaged areas. This grant package is administered as noted before by the Minister for Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and thus a dummy for Éamon Ó Cuív the Minister for the duration of this project is included as an independent variable. Once again we see that Minister for Finance can expect significantly less funding. However, this time the Minister who is significant is Ó Cuív whose impact in delivering funding to his own constituency is significant at the highest level in both the political and full models. Again there is little evidence for either of the core or swing voter models .

OLS Annual Grants	to Constituence	cies		
		Electoral	Policy	All
Environment	Minister	0.429***		0.0041
Constituency		(0.011)		(0.003)
Finance Minister Constituency		-0.411***		-0.0003
		(.0137)		(0.004)
FF Seats Prop		-0.492***		0.0003
		(0.005)		(0.001)
FF Vote Prev Election		0.0035***		-0.0001
		(0.0004)		(0.000)
FF Swing Prev Election		0.0007*		0.0005***
		(0.0003)		(0.000)
Cars per Household (,000)			-0.00017	-0.0005
			(0.000)	(0.000)
Hub in NSS			-0.0012	0.0005
			(0.002)	(0.002)
Gateway in NSS			0018	0.0025
·			(0.002)	(0.002)
Road Length in KM	(.000)		0.0492***	0.053***
8			(0.0041)	(0.004)
Population (,000)			-0.0018***	-0.0018***
- · F			(0.0001)	(0.000)
Constant		0.1257	0.3366*** (0.003)	0.3362* (0.006)
		(0.0149)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Observations		230	230	230
R-squared		0.3662	0.9443	0.9489
Robust standard err	ors in parenth	•		
	F			

Table 7-1: OLS Annual Grants to Constituencies

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

OLS Annual CLÁR Grants to Constituencies

OLD Minual C	CLAR Grants to Constitu	cheres	
	Political	Policy	All
Environment Minister	-0.650* (0.331)		-0.272 (0.323)
Finance Minister	-1.723*** (0.444)		-1.546*** (0.434)
Minister Ó Cuív	1.091*** (0.158)		1.069*** (0.354)
FF Seats Prop	-1.055*** (0.384)		-0.797* (0.446)
FF Vote Previous	0.0251 (0.0217)		0.00611 (0.0237)
Election Swing To/From FF	-0.00598 (0.0185)		-0.0188 (0.0217)
Prev Road Length KM	0.00454*** (0.000746)	0.00472*** (0.00111)	0.00491*** (0.000809)
Cars per Household		-0.0047 (0.0006)	-0.0072 (0.0006)
(,000) Hub in NSS		0.786 (0.867)	-0.141 (1.115)
Gateway in NSS		0.375 (0.438)	0.569 (0.344)
Population (,000)		-0.00037 (0.002)	0.0008 (0.002)
Constant	0.206 (0.926)	0.982 (0.946)	1.888* (1.052)
Observations	131	131	131
R -Squared	0.505	0.400	0.549

Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 7-2: Annual CLÁR grants to constituencies

Turning to the policy model in column two we can see that once again the km road length in any constituency is a significant predictor. The other policy variables are once again not significant.

Turning to Table 7-3 we can see the results for the analysis of the count data, in other words the number of grants given to each constituency.

	Political	Policy	All
Environment Minister Constituency	0.481***		0.691***
	(0.136)		(0.229)
Finance Minister Constituency	-0.209		-0.868***
•	(0.344)		(0.314)
Minister Ó Cuív	0.556***		0.787***
	(0.160)		(0.111)
FF Seat Prop	-0.0635		-0.134
•	(0.231)		(0.222)
FF Vote Previous Election	0.0249		0.0136
	(0.0241)		(0.0160)
Swing To/From FF Prev Election	-0.0530***		-0.00946
	(0.0134)		(0.0120)
Cars per Household (,000)		-0.00038	-0.00048
1		(0.0003)	(0.0004
Hub in NSS		-0.941*	-0.821
		(0.521)	(0.577)
Road Length KM (,000)		0.341***	0.327***
		(0.0465)	(0.0486)
Population (,000)		0.00013	0.00016
		(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Constant	1.793**	1.695***	1.449**
	(0.799)	(0.414)	(0.677)
Ln Alpha	-0.320***	-0.612***	-0.732***
	(0.136)	(0.119)	(0.126)
Observations	224	224	224

Table 7-3: Number of Grants to Constituencies

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Of course this ignores whether the grants are large or small, but that is taken into account in the previous table. Looking at column 1, the political variables, it appears that the Minister for the Environment's constituency is likely to receive significantly more grants than other constituencies. This holds for both the political and the full models. The Minister for Finance's district is, however, likely to receive significantly fewer. Galway West, the constituency represented by Éamon Ó Cuív, is also likely to receive significantly more grants and this holds in both models. There is some evidence in the political model that swing areas receive fewer grants but again this falls out in the full model. Turning to column 2, the policy model, we can see that once again the only variable predicting the number of grants to a constituency is the length of the road network in that area, underlining once again the urban/rural divide in terms of grant allocation.

Interpreting negative binomial coefficients is not straightforward. What we can say is that for a one unit change in the predictor variable or number of grants, the difference in the logs of expected counts of the response variable is expected to change by the respective regression coefficient, given the other predictor variables in the model are held constant. However, this does not lend itself to an intuitive interpretation I have thus run an incidence rate ratio which will give us a multiplicative impact of a change in the expected number of grants. Thus we can that in column three (the combined model) the expected number of grants for the environment minister's constituency is 1.32 times the number for other constituencies. However, the expected number in the Minister for Finance's constituency is only 0.64 times the amount elsewhere.

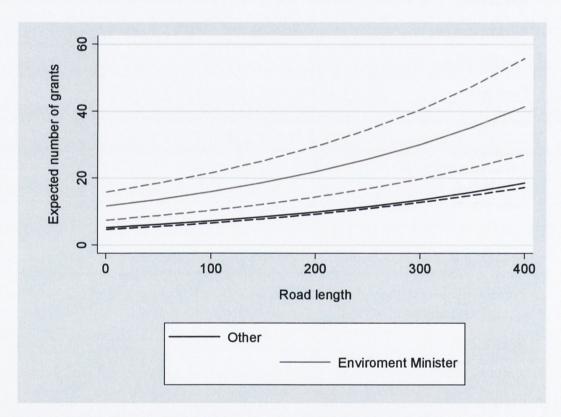


Figure 7-7: Impact of Environment Minister on Number of Grants by Road Length

We can also use Clarify (King, Tomz et al. 2000), which estimates the model and then simulates 1000 vectors of parameters (rather than basing its confidence intervals on the standard errors of coefficients). Overall the effect on a constituency's collective roads funding in having the Environment Minister is to

make it 35 per cent more likely to win additional funding, the opposite is true for the finance minister where the effect is to make it 2 per cent less likely. The impact of the Community Rural Minister is also large at 34 per cent while a swing from 0 percent to Fianna Fáil to plus 8 per cent (1 std) would make grants 1 per cent more likely. Increasing the road network from 267km to 446 km makes grants 12 per cent more likely.

7.23 Conclusions

We can see then that there is evidence for hypothesis one that the individual legislators who have the greatest influence in parliament, Cabinet ministers, will direct higher levels of expenditure and more projects to their home districts. Here both Ministers with agenda setting ability in terms of roads spending, the Minister of the Environment and the Minister in charge of CLÁR projects, had significantly more expenditure arriving in their home districts. This was the case both in the aggregate amount of spending and the number of grants. However, this evidence was not as strong as in the two previous areas and there was no evidence that the Minister for Finance won either additional finance or more projects.

Summary Table: Roads Funding							
	Key	Key	Key	Core	Swing	Policy	Policy
	Minister	Minister	Minister	Voters	Voters		
	Env	Finance	DCRGA			Road	Pop
Value All					***	***	_***
Grants							
Value		_***	***			***	
CLÁR							
Number	***	_***	***			***	
Grants							

All taken from complete models in preceding tables

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 7-4: Summary Table: Roads Funding

There was no evidence for the second hypothesis that governing parties will direct higher levels of expenditure or more projects to areas of greater electoral strength for the party. In our model looking at the amount of grant on a constituency basis

neither the level of vote for Fianna Fáil nor their percentage of seats held in any constituency proved significant. When examining the number of grants allocated both had a negative sign. There is also little evidence for hypothesis three that governing parties will direct higher level of expenditure or more projects to areas with the maximum numbers of swing voters for the party. There is some evidence in the first model examining the value of grants at the constituency level that swing voters were targeted as constituencies with larger swings at the previous election won more funding. Finally, in terms of hypothesis four there is also some evidence that the governing parties do direct expenditure at all constituencies on a universal basis targeting according to a set policy. This is particularly the case for the length of the road network where areas with more kilometres for roads get more roads funding, this proving statistically significant at the highest level for the value of grants in general and to disadvantaged areas as well as the number of grants allocated. However, spending is not targeted at areas of greatest population or at areas with more road users despite repeated recommendations from earlier reports that policy be changed in this direction.

To sum when examining roads' funding we do find evidence of partisan allocations. However, in line with our expectations given that this is a harder test than previous areas examined the evidence is less consistent. Nonetheless, it is clear that as with schools and sports facilities key ministers or chieftains do deliver for their home area. Thus we find the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs both delivering in areas where they have decision-making powers. Interestingly, however, and unlike the other areas examined the Minister for Finance does not benefit. There is little evidence that funds are allocated consistently at either core or swing voters. In addition, it is clear that policy making is to some extent based on evidence. The funding is clearly targeted at the length of the road network in an area. However, it does not appear to be based on population or usage, underlining a strong bias in favour of eth rural over the urban. Further emphasis on outputs may thus be desirable. The qualitative evidence so far is very firmly in favour of hypothesis one that key ministers will deliver to their own bailiwicks. However, we are still

unsure how this happens or indeed why it does not happen in ways which the literature would predict. To attempt to answer this the next chapter turns to qualitative evidence reporting the views of a number of interviewees.

Chapter Eight: The Qualitative Story

8.1 Abstract

We saw in the quantitative chapters of this thesis that the overwhelming pattern across a range of types of spending is that individually powerful ministers tend to look after their own constituents. This chapter, employs qualitative evidence gleaned from a wide range of interviews - from Cabinet ministers to advisers and civil servants – in order to discover the processes and practices operating in the real world. It discovers that, while the civil service finds it frustrating that recommendations for reform often go unheeded, in many ways the culture of the minister as chieftain appears to be embedded. Not only do ministers appear to be able to move a project off, onto or up a list but, at other times, civil servants acting in what they perceive to be their minister's interest do so without any direct request. These informal requests and pre-emptive moves, combined with a lack of expertise/evidence to objectively assess funding claims, means that ministers can ensure 'their' claims are acted upon, even if they do not have complete discretion. There is some evidence that a minister can allocate as much as 15% or 20% of his overall discretionary budget to his own constituency without attracting the ire of colleagues. While specific projects are targeted at both core and swing voters, the expectation is that these will not be systematic enough patterns to be observed in the data.

8.2 Introduction

This thesis was initiated with three broad questions about pork-barrel politics in Ireland. First, does it exist and, if so, which voters are targeted, core or swing? Second, do the state's institutional structures mean that there will be alternative structures, not outlined in the literature, of powerful ministers ensuring goods go

to their own bailiwicks? Third, how is this accomplished? Employing qualitative methods and, in particular, interviews allows us a more in-depth description, outlining not only the processes involved, but the patterns behind the observable evidence. Through the use of quantitative techniques in previous chapters, we have found that pork barrel does indeed appear to exist in Ireland. We have seen that individually powerful ministers tend to direct disproportionate resources to their home constituencies. However, we have uncovered less systematic evidence of any strategic targeting of either core or swing voters than theory would lead us to expect. We can now ask whether this is because of deficiencies in the data or whether these findings coincide with reality. We have also looked in detail at three very different areas - sports grants, school capital spending, and roads spending - and found evidence of pork barrel in all three. Again, we can ask whether this is likely to be a finding exclusive to these three areas, or is it likely to be demonstrable across different areas of spending? We have seen that, in the rules, ministers tend to have the final say on all spending in their districts. Now we can ask if, on occasions, they may change a project's position on a list or if their civil servants may act pre-emptively to look after a specific minister's needs.

In other words, interviews allow questions to be asked that explain these patterns and attempt to answer these questions. Much of the following interview evidence is more in line with the 'soaking and poking' of scholars like Fenno (1978), rather than using structured questionnaires. Interviews with front-line civil servants, more senior policy-setting civil servants, ministerial advisers and indeed politicians themselves are employed here to attempt to answer these questions.

8.3 Format

This chapter begins with a discussion of the value of using qualitative methods in order to enhance the quantitative component of this thesis. I will discuss the methods involved in qualitative research before discussing interviewing in general and setting out the form of qualitative interviews employed here. Following that, I

will turn to the content of the interviews themselves⁵⁸, setting out the norms that might or might not exist about behaviour, the organisational elements that might or might not be there that would allow partisan spending to serve the party and not the individual, and views on why such institutions do not exist. All of these questions will be looked at from a variety of perspectives, including civil servants, political advisers and politicians. This section will be broadly marshalled into answers to, or thoughts around, a number of questions. First, is partisan spending happening generally? Many interviewees agree that the practice is normal and well tolerated, although a few point to individual public servants being able at times to say 'no'. Second, in terms of scale, what is the proportion of it? Is partisan spending something that happens on an ad hoc basis and on the margin, or is it more systematic? Is there any rule of thumb by which politicians operate? Third, how do the allocations happen? In other words, are there any Cabinet, party political or democratic institutions or practices that enable partisan spending? Or, indeed, are there any mechanisms in place that should prevent it and ensure that policy is the main determinant of spending? Fourth, are some ministries more amenable to or more prone to discretionary expenditure than others? Here, it is also opportune to ask if there are any notable transgressors, ministers who either appear to benefit more than others from partisan allocations or indeed whether there are ministers who notably avoid such behaviour? Are there any differences between urban and rural ministers or other explanatory factors? Fifth, is partisan spending predominantly individualistic or coordinated? What is the role of individual ministers vis à vis the role of political parties?

8.4 Why use qualitative methods?

The focus of this thesis to this point has been on using quantitative methods in order to ascertain the extent of pork-barrel spending in Ireland. The statistical analysis of quantitative spending data has allowed me to draw inferences about

⁵⁸ Broad background and a timeframe for all interviews are set out in Appendix 2. As all interviews were off the record no names are recorded. However, the identities are known to Professor Michael Marsh of TCD.

the actions of ministers in spending departments. However, there are limits to the ability of such data to tell the whole story, and it can be usefully augmented with a qualitative component. Qualitative analysis can add traction in two separate ways: exploratory and confirmative. The exploratory analysis allows an examination of the role of factors such as personality and context, which are extremely difficult to quantify. It can also set up hypotheses to test. However, in this case, interviews were conducted following the initial quantitative work, primarily so that interviewees could be confronted with specific results. Nevertheless, the interviews that follow do shed considerable light on the mechanisms and motivations of many of the main protagonists and can elucidate the norms that permit a degree of inequality in spending. In addition, in terms of confirmatory analysis, it allows a check on whether the experts agree with what the quantitative analysis appears to indicate. With quantitative analysis in political science, there is always the possibility that an important variable has been omitted or that there is an alternative story that could explain the findings. Employing qualitative analysis allows a more robust argument to be made. It is also crucial to note here that the qualitative and quantitative methods should not be viewed as opposing approaches to research; rather, both can and should be seen as part of the political researcher's toolkit. The emphasis is often on pragmatism in choosing the appropriate method for addressing specific research questions, rather than focusing on the underlying philosophical debates (Seale 1999) Or, as King et al (1994: 1) point out, these differences are mainly ones of style and specific technique. The same underlying logic provides the framework for each research approach. This logic tends to be explicated and formalised clearly in discussions of quantitative research methods. But the same logic of inference underlies the best qualitative research.

8.5 Qualitative interviews – methods

Individual interviews are probably the most widely used method in qualitative research (Ritchie 2003). Interviews take different forms, but a key feature is their ability to provide an undiluted focus on the individual. They provide an

opportunity for detailed investigation of people's personal perspectives, for an indepth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomena are located, and for very detailed subject coverage. Interviews are also very well suited to research that requires an understanding of deeply rooted or delicate phenomena, or responses to complex systems, because of the depth of coverage and the opportunity they offer for clarification and detailed understanding.

Rubin (2004) believes that qualitative interviewing projects are especially good at describing social and political processes – that is, how and why things occur and change. Thus, interviewing allows us to elucidate important questions set out earlier in this thesis. How do politicians go about allocating additional funds to specific constituencies? Why do they do this and, indeed, why do they *not* behave in some of the ways that theory tells us we should expect? Which areas are more amenable to pork barrel? I deliberately chose to conduct the interviews after the bulk of the quantitative work had been completed. The idea was to test the findings that the data had led me to draw. It also enabled me to tentatively introduce my results and, on occasion, even gently contradict an interviewee who may have been sure that I would find no discernable patterns whatsoever.

8.6 Interviewing method employed

Essentially, the qualitative interviews employed here are akin to journalistic interviews, in which I gently guided each interviewee in an extended discussion. Bearing in mind Fenno's adage that "you need to be patient, come on slow and feel your way along" and his three handy hints – "go where you are driven; take what you are given; and, when in doubt, be quiet" (Fenno 1978: 75) – these interviews were essentially open-ended and exploratory. In general, I was guided by Charles Morrissey's oral history interviewing (Morrissey 2006), with its focus on interviewing political figures and 'playing it by ear' and letting the interviewee talk. All of the interviews were non-standardised, beyond an attempt to elucidate their thoughts about whether and how pork is delivered to districts. I believe that asking follow-up questions during the discussion, rather than employing a

predetermined set of questions, elicited detail and depth. In general, I began with an open-ended question to get a flavour of the interviewees' knowledge – for example: "I am looking at the geographic pattern of expenditure in Ireland in order to ascertain whether there are political influences. What would you think I might find?" Later, as I discover patterns and the extent of the person's knowledge, I ask specific questions and ask for examples - "can you think of a minister who acted in this way?"; "why do you think it appears that swing voters are not targeted when we would think that maybe they should be?" I kept tough questions for towards the end of the interview, after the interviewee had opened up. "Some people say that that such and such a building was built purely for partisan motivations." Much of the time, however, I relied on the old-fashioned journalistic techniques of who, what, why, when, where and so on. Altogether, over a 12-month period, I interviewed some 16 people, carefully chosen for their ability to speak with authority on their relevant area. I tried to find a variety of interviewees, with six Cabinet ministers one of whom was current, four former special advisers, four civil servants and two public servants included in their number. There is some variation among them in terms of ideology, political party, age and terms when served, but I cannot claim that the group is ideally balanced among any of these respects. Thus, in no technical sense do I have a sample, but each person added to the range of expertise on offer. These interviews took place between January 2007 and January 2009. Most interviews lasted about one hour. I took notes but did not employ a voice recorder, as I believe people - and particularly politicians – are far less likely to be forthcoming when they are being recorded⁵⁹ and indeed many expressed a preference not to be. Civil servants would have simply refused to be interviewed, citing the Official Secrets Act. With the same motivation, all interviews were 'off the record', as asking for comments

⁵⁹ In 1990 former Minister Brian Lenihan was at the centre of a media storm over allegations of improper interference with the presidency and allegations that he had put pressure on then president, Patrick Hillery, a close friend of Lenihan's, into refusing then Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald a parliamentary dissolution in January 1982. Lenihan had insisted he had "no hand, act or part" in any phone calls. However, a politics masters student Jim Duffy had a tape recording which was released in the aftermath where Lenihan said he had made the phone call. The resulting furore led to Lenihan's resignation.

for attribution can only be inhibitory. Again, this allowed interviewees to speak freely, although some agreed, on completion of the interview, that some of their comments could be attributed. Where this is the case, I have used the person's name in the following sections. I agreed with each how he would be referred to, and all except one were men. I made contact with each by telephone; all interviewees I approached agreed to meet. Some were then more helpful than others. But most went beyond what I had expected in terms of their openness about the processes involved, essentially engaging in commentary for private rather than public consumption (Fenno 1978). Serving politicians of all hues were noticeably more recalcitrant than their advisers and even than their civil servants. Most of the latter, however, were approached purely for information. How does the process work? Who would be sitting there? Most I met in coffee shops and hotel bars, although I met one or two in the Dáil and in their offices. I transcribed the notes that evening in order to ensure that I did not forget the context for the questions.

We also need to bear in mind that there are factors that we can expect to influence a person's reporting of a situation in an interview (Dean 2006). First, are there any ulterior motives that an informant has that might alter his reporting of the situation? The answer is 'yes', of course. For example, three out of four advisers are still active, if at a distance, in advising Fianna Fáil. Brian Cowen was Taoiseach at the time of interviewing, and all went out of their way, to one extent or another, to stress his lack of involvement or at least the greater culpability of other ministers. Nonetheless, I found all to be remarkably open about the realities of political life as they had found them. The current and former Cabinet ministers were less open. These came from three different parties, the majority of whom had served with Fianna Fáil at some stage in their careers, while one was a Fianna Fáil politician. Many of these, one would imagine, would have the motivation to be negative about a competing party but, in general, these were the most supportive, with many admitting that they would do the same thing if given the opportunity. The civil servants may also have ulterior motives, but these are harder to discern. It is possible, of course, that one or more could have had a

preference for a political party, but I found that they were in general helpful but scrupulously unpartisan. They talked in general and were not judgemental.

The second concern centres on whether there were any bars to spontaneity that might inhibit free expression by the informant. An example might be where an interviewee might feel that the affairs of his organisation should be seen in a good light and thus hesitate to spontaneously bring up more negative aspects of the situation. Prior to doing the interviews, this was one of my larger concerns and is one of the reasons why all were off the record, although, as we shall see, a couple opted to waive that right and be quoted in whole or in part. In addition, I found that, while nearly all interviewees began rather formally, most relaxed and were willing to bring up negative issues. Again, the politicians were least likely to be explicitly negative and the advisers most likely. Civil servants were generally scrupulous in insisting that they and their current or former colleagues in various departments always maintained proper standards.

The third concern is whether the informant has a desire to please the interviewer, so that his opinions will be well thought of. Dean and Whyte (2006) give an example where an interviewer known to be identified with better race relations may find informants expressing more favourable opinions on minority groups than they might with their own peer group. As a neutral academic and former journalist, I do not think that this had an impact on any of the discussions and is not really a relevant concern. Some of the interviewees have well-thought-through ideological positions that they have argued for over a number of years and were unlikely to change for my benefit. Others including the public servants would not have publically argued for ideological positions but as scrupulously non-partisan I do not believe this had an impact. The fourth concern is whether there are any idiosyncratic factors that may cause the informant to express only one facet of his reaction to a subject. Idiosyncratic factors such as mood, the wording of the question, or extraneous factors can all have an impact. I cannot, of course, rule any of these out, but each person was interviewed on a separate day at a time of their choosing. None said that they had to rush or were continually looking at their

Chapter Eight: Qualitative

watches. All were interviewed in a place of their choosing, whether a local hostelry or their offices, and, as such, I believe that idiosyncratic factors were ruled out as far as possible.

Distortion is another possible problem with interviews – in other words, can we take what the interviewee says at face value? Often the answer is 'no', and this may be true too of elite interviewing particularly for those who are serving at the time of the interview. The major way we deal with distortion is to compare the account given with one informant to the accounts given by others. Thus, in the sections that follow, I shall recount the perceptions of a number of Cabinet ministers, several of whom were Ministers for Finance during their time in office, as well the accounts of a number of civil servants from both line departments and the Department of Finance and senior public servants from a number of organisations and, of course, advisers, all of whom had worked for Fianna Fáil. Most of the quotes in the following sections are unattributable but the general job description of the interviewees has been included in Appendix 2. Where the interviewee has agreed I have quoted them on the record.

8.7 Pork barrel – ad hoc or pattern for the political class?

In an interview, former Fine Gael Taoiseach Garret Fitzgerald says that ministers will always look to represent their constituencies, and particularly in an election year.

"The minister is seen primarily as representing his constituency, and not as a member of Cabinet, by both their constituents and by themselves. The electoral system underlines this and leads to abuses; after all, two thirds of seats which FF has lost since the 1960s were lost to their own party. That heightens intra-party competition. Where the minister has the money to spend locally, he will use that power either blatantly or sometimes subtly." (Garret FitzGerald January 2007)

Former Tánaiste (deputy prime minister) and leader of the Labour Party Dick Spring broadly agrees: "There are always things you want to achieve in your own constituency, the hospitals, the schools, the third-level institutions. It is simply expected of ministers — everyone calls their candidate if they want something done. If the minister does stuff, it is not forgotten. I sourced £26 million for a water scheme in Tralee and someone said to me afterwards could I not make sure that if I ever won funding for another to make it over ground so people could see it. Niamh Bhreathnach tried to bring some order and fairness into the schools building programme to avoid favouritism being shown, but ended up satisfying no-one and losing her seat. It is just creating a stick to beat yourself." (Dick Spring November 2008)

Indeed, Minister for Education under the Reynolds/Spring government Bhreathnach concurs, saying that it is regrettable but that everyone expects it:

"Given our PR system, elected members strive to stay in touch with their constituents between elections. Your own party and your Cabinet colleagues expect Ministers to host deputation meetings, listen to constituents and give the appearance of responding positively to any suggestions. I even met a deputation once, from Castlebar, who were lobbying for a local university. I found it all terribly political. I took the decision not to use school visits to announce new capital investment programmes. Because I wanted to concentrate on delivering the education promises in the programme for government, publishing the White Paper and passing legislation I tried to avoid clientalist politics perhaps that's why I lost my seat. But all spending decisions were political. Given the shortage of cash any decision to spend money was the Minister's own. Locating the Teachers' Centres, across the counties of Ireland was agreed in principle but of course the Kerry one had to be placed in Tralee, Dick Spring's political base. Rural TDs were different in their attitude to their constituents to most urban TDs. While Ruairi Quinn never looked for extra to be spent in his own constituency, Albert Reynolds like Dick Spring expected his constituents to be looked after. Early on a small amount was released for capital expenditure, enough to fund four building projects; one school had to be built in Manorhamilton for Albert. Incredibly because decision making is so centralised, all school projects land on the Minister's desk and the Minister chooses the order of spend." (Niamh Bhrennock November 2008)

A senior civil servant simply shrugs and says that there has "always been" political interference in spending.

"It is obviously not best practice, but there are local and political priorities. Unfortunately, most of the allocations are not technocratic or evidence based. We are moving more now to looking at outputs rather than simply focusing on inputs, but you will never eliminate it." (Interview 10)

Or as a party adviser puts it:

"It is really true that the minister is, above and beyond everything else, simply interested in his own constituency, he is worried about himself and his office. They are all, always, in a constant state of worry and trepidation, fearful of losing their seats. They also tend to support their personal interests – just look at the support given to racing by Charlie McCreevy." (Interview 13)

Some argue that, in the 'old days', patronage was even more rife, particularly revolving around TACA, Fianna Fáil's fundraising arm and even that this could be the source of the acceptance of partisan allocations today.

When Ballymun was being built, it was one of the state's largest ever projects and it was controlled by guys who were in TACA. Senior fundraiser Cubitt Hannen with Sisk built it. Eoin O Cionnaith, a consulting engineer in the mechanical services field and the vice-present of TACA, designed the heating systems and the boiler room. The mechanical contractor was HA O'Neil, which was owned by the Jones brothers, who were also members of TACA. The quantity surveyor McCreevy was also a member. The electrical work was Leo Lynch and Garry Jones, both members. To my knowledge, every bit of that project, even down to the agency to run the lifts, was given to a member of TACA. The place was totally stitched. (Interview 7)

Another public servant also bemoaned TACA:

It was a disgrace and was widespread. In the programme for community schools, for example, you would never be employed by the state as an architect unless you were in TACA. You must remember that this was an overt organisation, totally arrogant, and quite willing to say that you would not get a job from the state unless you were in TACA—it could not happen today because of EU procurement rules. That culture is still there underlying behaviour today. To some extent, many politicians and adviser who lived through it believe that, because the behaviour is not so overt these days, partisan allocations are acceptable behaviour. It would be interesting though to look at EU

structural funds spending: that is very unlikely to have the same partisan patterns as less-researched allocations. But it is possible that the whole culture which sees partisan allocations as acceptable derives from TACA. Would de Valera or Lemass⁶⁰ have engaged with this behaviour? We may never know but it seems unlikely. (Interview 8)

Indeed, we saw that in the EU co-financed schemes that were part of the data for Chapter Six, there were few discernable political patterns. However, a wider project looking at all EU structural funding for roads could be interesting in this regard.

8.8 Pork – what is the scale?

Many interviewees felt that much spending was generally political, if not deliberately targeted at specific constituencies – for example, large infrastructure projects such as Metros North and West. "It is great politically to have big ticket, high-profile items, though we won't have the capacity for it." (Interview 7) In addition, many believe that spending ramps up in election years. "Expenditure tends to go wild and is not controlled – this was particularly the case with McCreevy, and he threw caution to the wind." (Interview 15) More specifically, however, most also agreed that specific partisan expenditure is targeted geographically for electoral reasons. They did, however, disagree to some extent on how rife the practice is. Estimates range from an adviser and a former minister saying that, in general, a minister is allowed a certain leeway to deliver to his constituency of as much as 15% or even 20% of the discretionary budget, to others insisting that allocations are ad hoc and denying knowledge of any rule of thumb.

Dick Spring points out that, in 2008, half of the Western Development Commission Development Fund went to Minister Ó Cuív. "I simply don't understand how his colleagues can allow him away with 50%. The general rule of

Eamon De Valera and Sean Lemass were both veterans of the 1916 Easter Rising and the War of Independence. Both were founder-member of Fianna Fáil in 1926. De Valera served as Taoiseach (1937-1948; 1951-1954; 1957-1959) while Lemass succeeded him (1959-1966).

thumb is 15%, with a maximum of 20%," he says. He is corroborated in this by a former adviser to the Taoiseach, who agrees that there is a 'rule of thumb' that a minister can spend up to about 15% of a discretionary budget on his own constituency. "But this can be exceeded. John O'Donoghue, for example, was allowed to go stone mad in McCreevy's day." (Interview 13)⁶¹

Niamh Bhreathnach, Minister for Education under Spring, says that:

"There were guidelines in place for approving expenditure but projects could be front loaded by the Minister. For example during my term a five year building programme for third level colleges including monies for the College of Art in Dun Laoghaire (now the IADT) was drawn up. It was possible for me to begin the Dún Laoghaire project in year 1. I did have a number of disagreements with Ruairi Quinn when he became Minister for Finance, more than I had had with Bertie Aherne in the Fianna Fáil Labour Government.. I was pushing for more investment, free 3rd level fees but the civil servants in the Department of Finance were there to say no. While I could deliver a new school to replace the wooden school in Sallynoggin in my own constituency, I did stop another Sallynoggin project when I discovered plans included outdoor toilets for the boy pupils, a left over project from Ray Mc Sharry's time. But no matter what I did do for my own constituents, it didn't save my seat. Eithne Fitzgerald certainly didn't appreciate a decision I took about a promised project for Knocklyon in her constituency. Seamus Brennan, the previous Minister for Education, had promised this project but official advice suggested that Jobstown in Tallaght had more need and so I pushed the Dublin South project down the list; something Eithne believed contributed to her defeat at the polls. A lack of money caused so many problems, as many as 40 projects could be approved at any one time but sometimes there was only money to allow three projects commence." (Niamh Bhreathnach November 2008).

However, another former finance minister is dubious of the extent to which office holders will intervene.

"The job is essentially all about balancing books and inputs only. If it is not working, the minister is called in, but generally everything is decided by principal officers; for officials to be able to argue, they need to be knowledgeable. It's a war of attrition, which

⁶¹ See Chapter 4 on sports for examples.

culminates in a bilateral between the Minister for Finance and the line department: there is a double lock – you need to get approval in general and then in particular for big projects. The minister cannot give money ahead of an application: you need the site and the application. Projects can be accelerated but cannot fall from the sky." (Interview 6)

Others also deny the existence of a 'rule of thumb', insisting it is really at the discretion of individual ministers and much depends on personality. I shall discuss this in more detail in a later section.

8.9 The mechanisms – how partisan funds can be allocated

So, if ministers are directing spending at their own constituencies and occasionally at those of their colleagues, how does this happen? Is it that the civil service knows the wishes of the minister and delivers? Or perhaps ministers or their advisers directly intervene in order to allocate partisan spending in a particular direction? Perhaps it is parties that make the decision and instruct the minister? According to Dr Fitzgerald, it works two ways: civil servants try to please ministers, and ministers and their advisers talk to civil servants.

"There is always interaction between ministers and civil servants, so Fianna Fáil [which has been in power for 18 of the past 20 years] gets close to them, and there is always that danger of over-identification. When a party is in too long, many civil servants tend to be sycophantic, to feel it's their duty to try to please. When I was in office, one adviser said 'yes' to me no matter what; the other, in contrast, would ask if I had considered the full implications." (FitzGerald January 2007)

Another former minister, who believes that much of the allocation will be ad hoc, nonetheless admits that much depends on "the personality of a minister, his political assertiveness and political cuteness. A party like Fianna Fáil has been in government so long they are well versed intervening with the lowest ranking person, and finding soul mates in the civil service." (Interview 3)

A former civil servant at a line department explains:

"We allocated the monies according to set criteria. The most crucial factor was that many applications had all the supporting documents and it was the lack of these which most often determined where on a list a project ended up. However, projects were moved around on lists, but rarely at the direct request of a minister. Often, the minister's advisers would appear by our desk. He might simply ask how a certain application was getting on, or double check that we had received it. This would sometimes result in movement up a list. Or we might get a phone call from a colleague in another department asking why a project was not on the list. Depending on which department it was, we might then get onto it, particularly the Department of Finance." (Interview 12)

However, as we saw in previous chapters, that list will end up on the minister's desk. Niamh Bhreathnach says the decision on every item of school spending is on the minister's desk. This is true of other areas, too. Perhaps ministers simply notate documents or move projects up or down the list once they arrive at their desks? Not so, say many interviewees. "Simply making a decision when it landed on your desk happened, but only to the time that Freedom of Information was introduced," says one civil servant. "Now it is more difficult, and you always have to assume that any document showing annotations could be released to the media or other interested parties under FOI." (Interview 11)

A senior public servant says, in general, when a minister wants something, he will sound you out with an adviser. "It is always the minister who asks for the favour. Local guys have a word with him. He'd put the overtures out though. Someone might be asked if they could be favourable towards building a new facility in a specific location." However, he insists that, unless this fits with policy, it may not get a favourable response from a semi-state agency, and he simply warns that requests will have to put formally in writing. "If the head of a semi-state did not want to do a particular project, they would simply ask them to write a letter saying 'A chara, you are instructed...' and that letter never arrives." (Interview 7)

At other times, a civil servant said:

"A programme manager will talk to a principal officer in a section and say 'my minister is interested', or they would ask for a progress report – ask how a project is doing or if it

has qualified. That way, if there was an impediment, you would know about it and so on. This gives a very clear message to the civil servants that such and such a project should be moved up a list; not all will act on that, but most will." (Interview 12)

All interviewees dismiss the notion of semi-formal Cabinet or party committees allocating spending. But there are exceptions. The Western Rail Corridor, for example, was decided on at Cabinet. "Seamus Brennan [then Minister for Transport] stacked the committee, McCann⁶² never showed the report to CIE. CIE had no choice, and we are going ahead with a €100-million political investment for less than €3 million in revenues."(Interview 8) For the most part, however, almost all agreed that the processes are informal and, to an extent, ad hoc. One civil servant puts it neatly:

"Brian Lenihan will ask to see the schools building programme and notice that a particular school is not there, say Castleknock Educate Together. The civil servant will then ring the guy in Education and ask why that school is not on the list and he'll likely say 'Jeez, is it not? Must have dropped off. I'll put it back on'." (Interview 10)

Overall, the processes involved make it relatively simple for a minister to divert funds for partisan gain. Indeed, some interviewees believe that, after a brief respite in the 1990s, partisan allocations may be increasing again. A former minister agrees, arguing that one reason why the problem may be increasing is that, until recently, all big chunks of money had to be vetted under EU procurement rules. Now that EU funding has diminished, this is no longer the case, and a lower quality of project can get through. "Finance", he says, "is constantly fighting a rearguard action against political considerations" (Interview 4). Indeed, a few recall that, when Alan Dukes introduced the notion of cost/benefit analysis in 1983, it was greeted with consternation and was considered a terrible imposition. A couple of interviewees argue that the problem is that data is not available and people do not know how to do the analysis. "We

⁶² Report to the Minister for Transport from the Chairman of the Expert Working Group on the Western Rail Corridor, 13 May 2005 – Pat McCann was the chairman.

simply don't have the people to do it; the corps of advisers are not of high enough quality." The official admits that:

"Obviously, it would be better if this was not occurring, but it is very difficult to have objective structures. I'm sure the overall money goes to areas that need it; it is simply never going to be exact. But we are beginning to look more at outputs rather than focusing on just inputs." (Interview 10)

Indeed, an incentive to pork spending is surely the absence of processes set up to inhibit it. The government is just now (November 2008) setting up a financial control programme to vet programmes. "What they need is some simple model, and see it in real time" (Interview 13). Other public servants say that no monies should be distributed on a county basis, which only serves to focus ministers and their advisers on their own areas. "The money in sports, for example, should be given to governing bodies to distribute in terms of need" (Interview 9). Others say that the Department of Finance is only concerned with the volatility of spending and that it is up to individual spending departments to measure outputs for the most part, but that this does not happen.

"The DoEd should know which schools need what, but they have no inventory and are purely reactive: the money cannot go to where it is most needed or at least it cannot be assured that it is. There should be formal structures around all grant giving, so the degree of political discretion is reduced." (Interview 9)

8.10 Who matters – chieftains and finance ministers?

So far, we have seen that individual ministers in charge of spending departments appear to have the ability to earmark significant partisan funds for their own bailiwicks. But does this depend on the minister involved? Perhaps there are differences in personality, or whether the deputy represents a rural or an urban constituency? Or perhaps other ministers also benefit. We saw in the quantitative chapters that there is evidence, although mixed at times, that the Minister for

Finance also benefits from significant partisan allocations of funding, yet there was little evidence that the more powerful Taoiseach did so. Is this borne out in experience, or can the interviewees shed any light on the reason for this pattern? There is also considerable anecdotal evidence that individual independent TDs may benefit from partisan allocations in order to assure their support in legislative votes. Perhaps we can expect that all the above will benefit disproportionately?

Perhaps the most common observation among interviewees along these lines is that much depends on the personality of the minister involved. As a former senior civil servant notes:

"Some are far more forceful than others, and some are better at getting their own way than others. Generally, the further you go from Dublin, the more forceful they are. It's all about being seen to be the local chieftain and bringing home the goods. Dublin ministers are not all that interested; they will deliver a few projects, but they tend to be ad hoc and individual. It's the old political culture and is really a form of clientelism; some are more culturally adept at it than others. At the end of the day, the Irish model is about chieftains – it is always the minister, after all, who makes the announcement. You have to ask what would happen if there was no comment about outsize partisan distributions, and the answer is you would get a very strong pull to political power. It is damaging and it smacks of pork barrel." (Interview 9)

Other former civil servants agree that directing spending to their home patch is more common among rural politicians. "To my best recollection, I am only aware of a handful of times where a Dublin minister has asked for a sports project to be moved up a list, but it happened as a matter of course with rural ministers." (Interview 12) Another says that sports grants are among the worst areas. "The local clubs will make sure that the minister knows when their application is in and he will then prioritise it, saying 'I will have x and x and x'. Interestingly, they do not tend to keep to their own bailiwicks, but will ensure that they deliver to all areas of the constituency" (Interview 15).

In many ways then, the 'personality' of a rural minister and the separate incentive to act as a local chieftain is intertwined in many people's heads. Certainly, some individuals are more associated with the whiff of pork than others among their peers, advisers and former civil servants, and most of these are rural ministers. For many, the example that appears to first leap to mind is Padraig Flynn who, when Minister for the Environment, delivered a series of roundabouts to his hometown in Castlebar. "There has always been political interference in spending. Just look at Pee Flynn: the best roads in the country for a good while were around Castlebar," says one former senior public servant (Interview 9). "Neil Blaney, when he was local government minister, built the roads around Donegal, while Mary Hanafin 4 always kept something in her handbag" (Interview 9).

Éamon Ó Cuív, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, is also singled out as a minister who "comes under a lot of pressure" to deliver, according to other ministers (Interview 4). Indeed, one former minister points specifically to the Western Rail Corridor and says the decision to build it results from "unjustifiable political interference" Interview 6). Ó Cuív's department − commonly called 'Craggy Island' after the *Father Ted*⁶⁵ island of the same name − is often perceived as a 'slush fund' by both civil servants in Finance and other ministers. "Ó Cuív is a very nice guy, but he has access to a pure slush fund," says one minister who has worked with him (Interview 3). Others say he has "excessive discretion" (Interview 4). However, this is not to say that urban politicians are immune. One former minister (Interview 3) recounted the story of the former Minister for Justice, the PD's Michael McDowell, arriving at a local community centre in Ringsend in his constituency and personally presenting a cheque of €40,000 for a crèche. The money, he said, had been left over in the department's budget at the end of December. Garret Fitzgerald claims that Ruari

⁶³ Castlebar is one of the larger towns in Co Mayo, one of the more remote western seaboard counties, and home to Flynn's powerbase.

⁶⁴ Mary Hanafin was born in Thurles, Co Tipperary, although she represents the Dublin constituency of Dun Laoghaire.

⁶⁵ A popular TV show that depicts the lives of three Irish Catholic priests on the remote fictional Craggy Island off the west coast of Ireland.

Quinn⁶⁶ ensured that money was spent in "this electoral area and in this constituency.⁶⁷ They were small amounts, and I was amused by it: he was boosting my own and his vote." However, Fitzgerald insists that he himself made only one political decision. "The only political decision I ever made was the pier in Schull. Paddy Mullarkey [secretary at the Department of Finance] was on to me so much, I eventually said to get it built to get him out of my hair." Others, however, say that even Fitzgerald did occasionally engage: "Garret organised a new school for Michael McDowell's brother-in-law when he was in charge of his constituency operation," says one member of Fine Gael (Interview 14). Fitzgerald also recalls that, in his last administration, individual deputies made demands.

"In my last administration, I had six deputies who said they would not support me unless I delivered specific items to them. I would have called an election in June 1986⁶⁹ to avoid this, but had to hang on until January 1987 in order to get extradition through with Maggie, so I stayed in power when I shouldn't have been." (FitzGerald May 2008)

Nonetheless, the pattern appears reasonably consistent: urban ministers will deliver to home on a more ad hoc basis than their rural counterparts, probably because of a differing weight of expectation from both sets of constituents.

Citing more recent examples, a number of interviewees point specifically to John O'Donoghue, TD for Kerry South, as a minister who they believe to be a blatant example of one who seeks pork for his constituents (See Chapter Four, sports). The picture for Kerry South is also complicated by the fact that it is home to Jackie Healy-Rae, an independent politician who has done a number of deals with

⁶⁶ A constituency rival and member of the Labour Party and Minister for Finance, 1993-1997.

⁶⁷ Dublin South East, the home constituency for both TDs.

⁶⁸ As a senior civil servant there were very unlikely to be any electoral motivations behind this, perhaps a reason for FitzGerald citing it

⁶⁹ Others question this. In June that year, Fitzgerald's government had suffered a defeat in the divorce referendum, so it may not have been the best time to go to the polls.

Fianna Fáil in return for his support (See Chapter Six). A former public servant (Interview 9) says that roads' spending is skewed towards Kerry South. "If you visit, you will find Healy-Rae construction vehicles at the side of the road. It brings rent seeking to a new level, but the difference is that the locals there love it." Indeed, such is the extent of the influence of Healy-Rae on roads spending that the only Exchequer funded national road project to get the go-ahead in 2009 was in Kerry South (O'Brien 2009), and not the bridge over the main inter-urban motorway close to Dublin, which the agency had been planning. It is not just Healy-Rae - other deals include the 'Gregory Deal', arranged between independent TD Tony Gregory and then Taoiseach Charles Haughey, where Gregory decided to back Haughey's nomination as Taoiseach, as the latter promised him a raft of particularistic benefits for his constituency. Again in 1997, falling four seats short of a majority, the Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrats coalition initially formed separate deals with three independents, including Jackie Healy-Rae, and, a year into the administration, negotiated the support of an additional independent. Each of the independents presented a 'shopping list' of concerns to the government (Weeks 2008). Other advisers suggest it would be interesting to look at bye-elections. "People lost all reason in bye-elections, even if there was no hope of winning it. You will find really stupid expenditure there" (Interview 13) . Bhreathnach corroborates this. "Money was always found for bye-elections. During my time in Education there were two bye elections, one in Wicklow, the other in Cork and money was found to deliver."

As we saw in previous chapters, after the relevant line minister, the minister most likely to benefit is the finance minister. The constituency of the finance minister will often receive more grants than any other, but he does not benefit in as systematic a way as the line minister himself benefits. Indeed, there was more division among interviewees over not only the existence of these phenomena but also the reason for it. As we saw in some earlier chapters, there is evidence that the finance minister appears to win significant additional funding across a range of areas. Many interviewees think the effect will be less strong than for the individual spending minister and, again, that much will depend on the personality

of the individual ministers. For example, Fitzgerald believes that "Alan Dukes⁷⁰ would have been way above that kind of thing, although John Bruton⁷¹ may have been more sensitive. McCreevy,⁷² though, was a highly political animal and would probably have said to another minister that he expected some payback – Punchestown,⁷³ for example, was totally improper."

Indeed, Mr Dukes himself insists that a finance minister would rarely get down to the level of allocating individual monies. But sometime Department of Finance civil servants disagree. "There will be money directed at the minister's constituency, both by the line department in a bid to curry favour and by the minister himself questioning why one of his own pet projects is not on a list," says one senior civil servant (Interview 10). Asked why the Taoiseach would not benefit to the extent of the finance or line minister, one said: "It is simple: he who pays the piper calls the tune. They all go and whinge to the Taoiseach, but he always says 'talk to the Minister for Finance, it's his job'" (Interview 9). A former adviser to the Taoiseach also corroborates this:

"I'm sure if you examine it, you will find that a Minister for Finance will do well. But he will not have always asked for it. Another minister might open a conversation with the notion that 'we sorted you out', in an attempt to soften him up, but it is not the driving force." (Interview 13)

⁷⁰ Dukes was finance minister under Fitzgerald from 1982-1986 and was later leader of Fine Gael. Author of the 'Tallaght Strategy'.

⁷¹ Bruton was finance minister from 1981-1982 and 1986-1987 and was Taoiseach from 1994 to 1997. Now EU ambassador to Washington.

⁷² McCreevy was finance minister from 1997-2004. Now EU Commissioner for the Internal Market and Services.

⁷³ The reference here to Punchestown is to a long-running scandal: when McCreevy was Minister for Finance, he gave a €14.8 million grant to an agricultural and equestrian event centre in his home constituency. It later emerged that there had been no proper evaluation of the project before McCreevy and agriculture minister Joe Walsh agreed to fund its entire cost with taxpayers' money.

He also insists that Brian Cowen, as Minister for Finance, laid down the law and told people they had to stop putting money into Laois/Offaly. "Sometimes they kept doing it as they were keeping doing it on themselves, so it would not look as bad if he was also getting it," he claims, perhaps a little disingenuously (Interview 13). Another suggests that one of the reasons why finance ministers may have had a larger impact on the data in this investigation is that the finance ministers involved all hailed from rural constituencies, while the Taoiseach was from an urban constituency where people simply do not expect to be looked after to the same extent.

"Bertie will do the whole knocking on doors, keeping people involved, but his schools were in s*** and so were the community centres. It was only the big projects, such as bringing the Children's Hospital to Drumcondra and, of course, the millions to Croke Park that he really cared about in terms of delivering spending locally." (Interview 13)

Despite this, Ahern himself has claimed that delivering local spending was the purpose of politics.

"All politics is local. The reason why politics is worthwhile is being able to do stuff for your local community, delivering local services, working for your areas. It's what makes the hard slog of politics either nationally or locally worthwhile. I love Drumcondra." (Bertie Ahern 2009)⁷⁴

8.11 The power of parties or politics as usual?

If ministers do look themselves, then surely the next step would be to look after one another or engage – as do powerful Congressmen – in logrolling? This bargaining could result in mutual benefit: a school for one and a sports project for the other, perhaps? However, as appealing as this notion is, most interviewees felt that it did not happen on a systematic level, the overall impression being that there is some logrolling and deals between ministers, but that this happens on an

⁷⁴ Bertie Ahern on 29/4/09, speaking at the launch of *All Politics is Local* by Liam Weeks and Aobh Quinlivan in Buswells Hotel, Dublin.

individual ad hoc basis. Logrolling, says Dick Spring, is the exception, but can happen. "Ministers would do ad hoc deals around the table: they might trade a water project in Mayo for sports/tourism project in Wexford, for example." According to Dr FitzGerald, it would be difficult for ministers to engage in logrolling, looking after one another's constituencies, except on an ad hoc basis.

"Ministers will generally not do deals with other ministers. For one thing, Cabinet does not work well together, most haven't either the capacity or knowledge to comment, and it is mostly memos by civil servants. In addition, the Cabinet secretary is also there, and party political decisions such as spending would not happen at Cabinet." (FitzGerald 2007)

A former adviser to the Taoiseach argues that it would be very difficult for the party to organise expenditure apart from on an ad hoc basis. Ministers, he says, in general do not trust their advisers, who are likely to be "leftovers from the Fianna Fáil press office". "There are only two exceptions – Colin Hunt and Peter McDonagh," he says (Interview 13). Another former minister recalls junior minister for the environment Ger Connolly asking the education minister for a school in return for a road (Interview 3). A civil servant recalls one occasion when McCreevy struck out a budget social welfare increase, saying Ahern⁷⁵ could not object, as he was getting a swimming pool in Dundalk (Interview 10). But these appear to be the exception rather than the rule – a project here or there rather than a systematic bias in favour of others around the Cabinet table. This supports the findings in the earlier quantitative chapters.

Another former adviser (Interview 15) says that the reason logrolling is not systematic, although it does of course happen, is that it would disenfranchise the backbenchers.

⁷⁵ Dermot Ahern, then Minister for Social, Community and Family Affairs and TD for Louth, where Dundalk is located.

"If they thought all projects were just going to the 15 Cabinet ministers, they would be pissed. It is more than the odd bit. O'Donoghue and Micheál Martin (Minister for Foreign Affairs and TD for Cork South Central) are the exception." (Interview 15)

Nonetheless, he says it would be interesting to look at patterns between particular ministers, as it could give a clue as to where they see support for their own leadership ambitions. Another former adviser agrees (Interview 13): "Brian Cowen may not have understood what was happening, but he was also cultivating political friends while Minister of Finance to take over from Bertie Ahern."

So if ministers do not engage in systemic logrolling, perhaps they look after the party's interests and target spending at marginal or swing seats rather than their own constituents? Dick Spring, for one, is dismissive, saying he cannot recall anything as "Machiavellian" as directing money to specific marginal or swing constituencies. Interestingly, no interviewee says that they would expect any sign of systemised delivery to marginal seats, although a few say it happens on an ad hoc basis. One party adviser says that the party is completely separate from the Cabinet (Interview 13). "Sean Dorgan⁷⁶ would simply never make a presentation to Cabinet about spending decisions. It is Cabinet ministers and not the party who make all the decisions." However, one civil servant queries this and says that money is, on occasion, directed to projects in swing constituencies.

"In schools funding, there will be an application for funding for a specific school. And political considerations come into play. It is inevitable. There will be money directed to schools in marginal seats and in ministers' constituencies, but whether these could be spotted in the data is open to question." (Interview 10)

There are a variety of reasons given for this behaviour. A former finance minister says that money will not be spent on marginals, as they change category fairly quickly. "In the UK and Australia, constituencies tend to be marginal for a long time, so governments in those systems are more likely to target marginal areas.". (Interview 6). He added that pork barrelling as it is found in the US is also

⁷⁶ Sean Dorgan is general secretary of Fianna Fáil and its election strategist.

precluded by the system. "In the US, the system is crazy; here, you cannot put in an amendment – only the government can produce legislation that is going to cost more money, so there is protection in the system." A former adviser says it is simple.

"They will not target marginal seats, mostly because they are not well-enough organised. Anything that goes wrong is always about 98% cock up. Also, if a new fellow gets elected, he needs to build his base just as they did, with leaflets, door knocking and local meetings – there is no way they are going to say 'here's pipeline to make sure you're OK'. There are also very few places where there is just one seat, so you could make an enemy of one guy automatically." (Interview12).

Others point out that many decisions are inherently political but may not be targeted to previously defined swing constituencies.

"Many decisions are political. For example, building a motorway, the plan may be to go from A to B. The politicians want it to go via bypasses – if you were just designing the road, it would not go through the same places. The new Dublin to Cork road bypasses Naas, Newbridge and Portlaoise – it effectively linked bypasses, and that was not the best route. In 2002, stupid new money was allocated for Dublin to Waterford when Martin Cullen was Minister for the Environment." (Interview 6)

A senior public servant says that, at the end of the day, the cliché is true that all politics is local.

"From sports grants to decentralising, you can see it. FÁS⁷⁷ is a prime example: it was local and then TDs got in on the act. Why do you think the training centre is in Bishopstown? It is because Gene Fitzgerald was minister. Same as John Wilson moved it to Cavan when he was Tánaiste. There is also massive interference with local post offices. However, they do have to be careful and cannot be too overt because of pressure from the media. It is more difficult now. Freedom of Information has also made a huge difference to the freedom ministers have to featherbed their own areas." (Interview 8)

⁷⁷ Job trading and creation agency at the centre of allegations of improper spending

Nonetheless, there is still a widespread perception among policymakers that electoral politics does intervene. Another senior figure asks⁷⁸:

"Why do you think we have Metro North? A €3 to €5 billion investment to run to an airport. It is b..... – it would cost 10% of that to run a connection off at Baldoyle. It's purely political. It's to bolster Pat Carey and Bertie Ahern and his brother – that's why it is going through Finglas. It's disgraceful, it's the worst electoral decision ever made." (Interview 7)

The same public servant argues that:

"It's the same with public/private partnerships (PPPs), which are effectively hire purchase agreements, which bolster the developers. The same is true of the Cork to Middleton train. A three-way highway would be much better and cheaper. So we get a €100 million railway because traffic gets stuck in the Jack Lynch Tunnel. That is purely to bolster Micheál Martin and his local councillors. There is no justification at all. Same as Western Rail – we also have a high-class new road. Ireland of the Celtic Tiger meant that money was no object; decision-making did not have to be quality. It's disgraceful. We need to see will Dempsey approve a railway to Navan? There is a new road to Navan – you could provide parking space and then the Dart⁷⁹." (Interview 7)

Others argue that it is a big problem, with ministers cultivating friends in case of a leadership bid. Others fret about the calibre of successive Ministers of Finance. One view here is that "Albert Reynolds lost control of the finances, as did Bertie Ahern. McCreevy never even bothered to try and rein it in, just said 'party on'. There is a real problem with ministerial level culture. When receipts are buoyant, they do not want unnecessary rows. Just look at the National Spatial Strategy: it took years to review, and then decentralisation had nothing to do with it." (Interview 5) Similarly, someone in the Department of Finance commented on

⁷⁸ This may be a little unreliable as evidence as it would be very expensive for a few seats. However, it does indicate the willingness among those in the political world to 'explain' spending in terms of pork

⁷⁹ Dart – Dublin Area Rapid Transport. A light railway serving the eastern coast of Dublin

Transport 21⁸⁰ that you cannot make policy on the basis of nicely coloured maps. "That was all it was – three maps and a press release and a list of projects" (Interview 15)

Others point to Micheál Martin, and say that Cowen took O'Donoghue and Martin aside.

"That is the reason that Mary Coughlan is in there – there is a sense that Martin, when Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, misdirected huge amounts of Enterprise Ireland and IDA funds. There were a number of huge projects put into Cork South Central; for example, Enterprise Ireland has a huge monstrosity of a building in the middle of his constituency. The problem is, no-one has ever come back and done a proper evaluation. He wants 16,000 votes at every election, no matter the outcome for the party. He does not play the party game, only a personal one. For example, Michael McGrath⁸¹ came in when John Dennehy retired, and he could be ministerial material. Martin decided to open an office in Michael McGrath's hometown, which he should have left him to cultivate. He is not a team player." (Interview 13)

At the end of the day, says this adviser, much pork can be put down to "individual insecurity". Another insists that the problem is recognised and that is why much decision making has been hived off to bodies such as the National Roads Authority (NRA), who are more independent of political control. But others question this.

"The involvement of the NRA may have stopped some of this in terms of national roads. But there are no votes in national roads – it is much better to fix potholes and secondary roads, which are still under direct political influence, and that will not be changing." (Interview 9).

⁸⁰ Transport 21 is a capital investment framework under the National Development Plan through which the transport system in Ireland is to be developed, over the period 2006 to 2015.

⁸¹ A Fianna Fáil' challenger in Cork South Central home constituency to Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin. John Dennehy was the former incumbent along with Martin

Other former ministers worry about the outside agencies and believe it can lead to greater levels of corruption, if not specific pork for political parties.

"Look at $FÁS^{82}$ and the HSE^{83} – they were taken out of political control: it was disastrous. These bodies are not accountable. At least civil servants are more accountable. Rody⁸⁴ was good to begin with, but operated for years in that culture. FÁS has been riddled for years. Politicians have had houses built for them by apprentices." (Interview 6)

8.12 Conclusion

The qualitative evidence in this chapter gives credence to the findings of earlier chapters. In general, interviewees from across the political spectrum and from different political walks of life believe that constituents expect a minister in their constituency to deliver for them, and that ministers do their best to live up to this expectation. According to those involved with spending decisions on the inside in Ireland, pork does indeed exist. But it is an individually driven local form of delivery, driven primarily by ministers or chieftains looking after their own constituents. There is little evidence of a more collective form of pork or of parties directing the destination of spending to more than an ad hoc degree.

There is some debate over how formal the process is: two believe that there is an informal rule of thumb that a minister can allocate as much as an additional 15% or 20% of his overall discretionary budget to his own constituency without attracting the ire of colleagues. Others believe that the process is more informal and dependent on the personality of the ministers involved. There also appears to be a perception that ministers from outside Dublin are likely to be more focused on procuring pork for their districts. This could explain some of the findings in

⁸² Job trading and creation agency at the centre of allegations of improper spending.

⁸³ Health Service Executive – a beleaguered agency at the centre of a constant stream of criticism and funding worries.

⁸⁴ Rody Molloy, former chief executive of state training agency FÁS, who resigned over allegations of lavish expenses on trips to the US.

earlier chapters, where roads and schools funding, for example, were not related to population. Interestingly, no interviewees felt that there would be consistent targeting of swing or marginal seats with projects. The common view was that this sort of targeting would happen on an ad hoc basis, but it would not be enough to show up in the data. However, when it came to bye-elections and looking after independents that the government relies on for support, most said that they would expect a systematic pattern of preferment. In terms of how any targeting would be achieved, it was an informal picture. There are no informal Cabinet subcommittees, the parties do not get involved, and ministers do few deals with one another. Rather, an individual minister or his main adviser will ask questions of civil servants that will serve to highlight their concerns. On occasion, ministers may move a particular project up a list after it has landed on his desk. In addition, civil servants will, on occasion, act in what they perceive to be their minister's interest without any direct request to do so. In terms of how the pork is allocated, the emphasis appears to be on the informal, with requests that such and such a project be 'looked at' along with some pre-emptive prioritisation by some civil servants. These informal requests and pre-emptive moves, combined with a lack of the expertise/infrastructure to objectively assess funding claims, means that ministers can move 'their' claims up the list, even if they do not have complete discretion.

To sum up, as we saw in the quantitative chapters, the overwhelming pattern across a range of types of spending is that ministers tend to look after themselves and, rather than engaging in systematic logrolling with one another, appear to do their best to look after their own constituencies. Contrary to expectations in the literature, there is little substantive evidence of parties directing the destination of spending on the targeting of core or swing voters. Not one interviewee was surprised at this outcome, or indeed predicted that this pattern would not be found. In fact, some ministers even outlined the projects that they themselves had delivered for their constituents. Civil servants were resigned to the process, although a few made suggestions as to how the systems could be improved to reduce the tendency. Government advisers also felt that the system was open to

some abuse and did not benefit the party adequately. But whatever they thought, all had one belief in common – the old fashioned localism of Irish politics means that many politicians, and indeed their electorate, expect partisan delivery of goods to their home constituencies.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

9.1 Abstract

The title of this thesis refers to 'chieftains', and this follows from the observation of one of the interviewees that many legislators are tribal, with behaviours akin to a chieftain delivering goods and looking after their own clan or tribe. The more a minister behaves like a chieftain, the more spending you could probably expect would be directed at his home area. This thesis has analysed the extent to which political or policy variables determine the distribution of capital spending by the Irish government in the years 2001-2007. Extending US theories of legislative behaviour to a parliamentary system using PR-STV, it examines whether spending is directed to specific districts for political reasons or according to a norm of universalism. It finds that Cabinet ministers deliver significant additional resources to their own personal bailiwicks, while the governing party is unable or unwilling to target the areas of the party's core electoral strength. It also finds mixed evidence that policy variables predict the destination of most spending. Finally, it charts a way forward to a situation in which policy could be debated and decided and empirical models could be utilised by government departments to ensure that monies are allocated in order to meet policy goals.

This chapter first restates the central goal of this investigation and outlines the main hypotheses and their significance, then briefly reviews the model, data and methods employed. The next section summarises the conclusions, hypothesis by hypothesis, including some qualitative evidence from the preceding chapter. I will then discuss the significance of what was discovered for the literature, and for the working of the political and the administrative system in Ireland.

9.2 Introduction

What have we learned from investigating the patterns of capital spending in Ireland? Let us first summarise and reiterate the object of this investigation. This is a geopolitical examination of the allocation of capital expenditure in Ireland, which asks to what extent political or policy considerations drive spending decisions by ministers and their departments. There is a good deal of anecdotal evidence that, TDs and, especially, Ministers are able to direct capital resources to their constituencies to promote their candidacy at future elections. Indeed both TDs and Ministers indulge in much credit claiming for spending there. Yet, to date, these claims have never been subject to formal rigorous testing. Despite the fact that political insiders estimate that a minister can use up to 10 or 15% of a discretionary budget to direct towards projects that will benefit his own constituency, there has simply been no concrete evidence of this. If partisan considerations were a driving force behind the allocation decisions of government, there would be a number of substantive normative concerns regarding the general egalitarianism of the system, democratic standards, and individual ethical behaviour.

In addition, political spending equates to suboptimal spending outcomes, since the destination of spending is altered by electoral considerations, although, of course, one may not want to give up democratic control over spending outcomes. As far back as 1988, Sibert, for example, showed that politicians may work frenetically before elections and adopt suboptimal policies in order to successfully make voters believe they are competent. This thesis looks not only at whether money is targeted at core or swing voters, but also at the interaction of institutions such as the legislative-executive relations, electoral and party systems, which impact on incentives for legislators and policymakers, arguing that the interaction of the institutional structures in Ireland incentivises ministers to favour their personal constituencies disproportionately. It also asks whether needs can account for where money is spent and focuses on the actual processes and mechanisms that allow partisan spending or not. In addition it asks if ministers engage in logrolling

in order to deliver benefits between themselves, or if perhaps the party has a central role in ensuring that all spending ministers strive towards electoral targets.

9.3 Hypotheses

Scholars have devoted a formidable amount of research hours into the study of discretionary expenditure, primarily in the US, but in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe too. The bulk of the literature, as we saw in Chapter Two, consists of argumentation about whether it is rational for parties to target core or swing voters when making distributive spending decisions. In recent years, this has been developed to the point where the impact of varying electoral systems and party systems can be accommodated in the rubric. For example, Golden and Picci (2008) argue that Italy can be classified as a weak party proportional system given its open list PR system. However, much of the classifications of party systems have been based on the parliamentary role of parties, which can be conceived of as operating independently of its electoral role. In Ireland, for example, it is possible to conceive of parties being very strong legislatively with a strong party whip, control over promotions and committee positions and so on, while individual legislators have considerable leeway to be free of such restraints at home. This freedom, coupled with strong intra-party competition that underlines competition between members on the same ticket in a given constituency, results in an incentive for ministers who have the motivation and the ability to allocate a disproportionate amount of spending to their own home district to do so. Of course it is not just intra party competition which drives the behaviour of Ministers, incumbents from smaller parties, believing their seats to be at risk are also likely to behave in a similar fashion. The Ministers in question are those who have the opportunity as well as the incentive to direct additional funds at their home constituency. In our terms, this means the line minister: that is, education, the Minister for Education; for roads, the Minister for Environment; and so on. It is also likely to include the Minister for Finance: the point of this is that this minister is so powerful, with the ability to sign off on many areas of spending, that the line minister will want to ensure that good relations exist

between himself and/or the officials in his department and their counterparts in Finance. For the sake of completeness, we have also included a measure for the Taoiseach, as he is the most senior minister in the Cabinet. However, the Taoiseach has no direct power over exchequer funding, and thus we were not expecting any significant patterns. As a group, these ministers are conceived of as key ministers. This led us to Hypothesis 1:

1. Cabinet ministers will act in their individual interests, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to their home districts.

Of course Ministers also need to ensure that a sufficient number of their party colleagues also win seats in order to maximise their own chances of returning to Cabinet. This could operate in a number of ways. First, the party may have a series of geographic targets for the next election, which ministers would be expected to deliver projects to when possible. These targets could be constituencies where the party fears a loss may be likely, or ones where another seat gain is seen as possible – in other words, swing districts. Second, the party may prefer to reward core voters, knowing that to ignore them may turn previously safe seats into swing seats. After all, as Gallagher (2008) has noted, there is no such thing as a really safe seat in the PR-STV environment in Ireland. Third, pork barrel may be used to cement bargains among individual legislators and to build cohesion within governing legislative coalitions. Ministers may do deals with one another, delivering projects to the home districts of Cabinet colleagues in return for projects in other areas in their own districts. This gives rise to the following two hypotheses:

2. Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest of the party, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to geographic areas of greater electoral strength for the party.

3. Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest of the party, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to geographic areas with maximum numbers of swing voters for the party.

Of course, ministers should also ensure that policy dictates where funds are spent. In other words, policy parameters set down by the department – such as targeting disadvantage or ensuring that areas of rapid population growth receive new schools – would be adhered to. This gives rise to the final hypothesis:

4 Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest generally, directing expenditure at all constituencies on a universal basis, targeting groups as set out by government policy.

9.4 Model, data and methods

We expect different influences on the dependent variable: one emanating from the individual powerful legislators or Cabinet ministers, another from the political party, and the last from needs-based variables. Following Golden and Picci (2008), one way to represent this is:

$$INV_{it} = f(CAB_{it}, GOV_{it}, MARG_{it}, CONS_{it})$$

Where INV is the amount of money spent on capital projects in constituency i at time t (year). CAB is a composite measure representing the political influence of particular Cabinet ministers; GOV is another composite, measuring the strength of governing party; MARG is the marginality of the party in a district; and CONS are the socioeconomic characteristics of the constituency. Several variables potentially capture the influence of Cabinet ministers, including a dummy variable for whether or not each constituency is represented by a Cabinet minister, as well as dummy variables for the finance minister (perhaps the most individually powerful minister in terms of the allocation of discretionary expenditure) and the Taoiseach, as well as particular spending ministers, for example, the ministers for

education, transport, and arts, sports and tourism. These dummies are included in order to test whether individually powerful ministers such as this target disproportionate allocations to their home constituencies.

Operationalising the concept of governing party is, in this case, straightforward. Fianna Fáil came to power, forming a coalition with the Progressive Democrats (PDs), in 1997 – this coalition was returned to power in 2002. Thus, for the entire period in question, 85 the coalition was extremely stable, with only Fianna Fáil (the dominant party) and the PDs being in power. The variables composing GOV include the raw number of seats held by the governing party in a constituency, a measure of the vote for the party at the previous election, as well as a measure of the vote of the two main opposition parties at the previous election. MARG is made up of a variable denoting the absolute swing to or from the party between the previous two elections and a dummy variable denoting whether the constituency was considered marginal during the election campaign. CONS, the socioeconomic characteristics of the constituencies in which investments are made, are also controlled for. These include population figures such as the numbers in various age cohorts. There are other policy variables, such dummies denoting a disadvantaged school or facility, or the length of the road network, for example.

9.5 Data

The spending data on the dependent variable was obtained under the Freedom of Information Act from each relevant individual government department and include all items of capital expenditure on the specific projects in the years 2001-2007. 2001 was the earliest date for which all of the departments had electronic access to the data. On the one hand, it means that the analysis is limited to two government parties being in power; on the other hand, it ensures that two general elections are included, as well as one local and one European election. The three

⁸⁵ As set out in Chapter 5, due to the restrictions of data availability, this was the maximum time period possible.

areas analysed are sports grants allocated by the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism; all capital allocations to all primary and post-primary schools from the Department of Education; and all allocations to town, city and county councils for regional and local roads from the Department of the Environment. In each spending area, the greatest level of detail possible was requested on each individual grant, whether a new window or a new school, a new sports pitch or a refurbishment, a pavement improvement or new road. Each was then allocated to its specific constituency. As a result, all datasets contain thousands of individual observations. Most datasets are thus at the level of the individual grant, although – in order to avoid as far as possible problems of ecological inference, where incorrect conclusions can be drawn from analysing data at different levels – this is consolidated to the individual institution, such as school or sports club, and further to the constituency. I used the reports of the Constituency Commission in order to ascertain which constituency each address was in. This was done manually and was a big undertaking with the coding taking thousands of hours. Independent political variables were garnered through the Oireachtas website and policy variables, including demographics, from the Central Statistics Office and, in particular, the Small Area Populations Statistics census results in 2002 and in 2007.

9.6 Methods

In general, this thesis employs multivariate regression and, in particular, OLS. The central empirical strategy is to regress per capita spending for each policy area and for each electoral district and year on measures of political factors, together with economic and demographic controls that may influence funding decisions. It is also possible that it may be more politically advantageous to distribute large numbers of small grants rather than small numbers of large grants. An analysis of the number of grants is thus also employed, utilising a negative binomial regression. In addition, in the sports chapter, there is an additional level of information. As well as revealing how much of a grant was paid to each project, there is also information on whether or not a project was successful – that

is, received a grant. In this model, we are estimating a dichotomous dependent variable (success, failure, which takes only two values, say zero and one.) and in this case logistic regression is employed.

9.7 Summary findings

Hypothesis 1

Cabinet ministers will act in their individual interests, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to their home districts.

We saw in the previous chapter the depth of the belief among senior politicians, civil servants and advisers that ministers will do their best to deliver goods home. According to former Fine Gael Taoiseach Garret Fitzgerald:

"The minister is seen primarily as representing his constituency, and not as a member of Cabinet, by both their constituents and by themselves ... Where the minister has the money to spend locally, he will use that power either blatantly or sometimes subtly."

Former Tánaiste (deputy prime minister) and leader of the Labour Party Dick Spring broadly agrees:

"There are always things you want to achieve in your own constituency – the hospitals, the schools, the third-level institutions. It is simply expected of ministers; everyone calls their candidate if they want something done. If the minister does stuff, it is not forgotten."

Advisers also concur:

"It is really true that the minister is, above and beyond everything else, simply interested in his own constituency; he is worried about himself and his office. They are all always in a constant state of worry and trepidation, fearful of losing their seats. They also tend to support their personal interests – just look at the support given to racing by Charlie McCreevy." (Interview 13)

So what did we find? Across every area of spending examined, the line minister, who is the minister whose job it is to allocate the money, allocated a statistically significant additional amount to his home constituency. In the first policy area examined, capital grants to sports clubs in the constituencies of the Minister for Arts and Sports were statistically likely to receive more in grants than other clubs, and this is significant at the highest level. Looking at how likely clubs were to be successful in their applications, we saw that applications from clubs in the sports minister's constituency are significantly more likely to win additional funds, as are clubs in the constituency of the Minister for Finance. Clubs in the Minister for Sport's constituency are up to 12% more likely to be successful, while those in the Minister for Finance's constituency are over 15% more likely (See Table 9-1). In addition, the number of grants in the sports minister's constituency averages 48, compared with 24 elsewhere. Overall, clubs in the Minister for Finance's constituency can expect to receive over €70,000 in funding, compared with €53,700 elsewhere. At the constituency level, over €1 million in additional funding is made available to the constituency of the Minister for Sports each year, or €2,560,817 compared with €1,526,575 elsewhere.

A similar pattern emerged when examining capital grants to primary schools, where schools in the Minister for Education's constituency can generally expect to receive almost 33% in additional funding – or &133,459 each, compared with a mean grant of &699,541 to other schools. In total, primary schools in the Minister for Education's constituency receive about &1 more for each person in the constituency on primary school funding. Schools in the Minister for Finance's constituency also tend to do very well, receiving some &4,650,706 in grants or almost an additional &12 per person in the constituency. More schools in both constituencies can also expect to receive funding than elsewhere. However, we saw that, not only did schools in the Taoiseach's constituency not receive additional funding, they were actually statistically more likely to receive less funding. It is clear, then, that primary schools were not top of the list for Bertie Ahern (who was Taoiseach for the duration of the study) to win additional funding for. Indeed, a former adviser noted that schools and community centres

were often dilapidated in Ahern's central Dublin constituency. He cared more about the big projects, such as the new children's hospital or Croke Park, noted this former adviser. In post-primary education, a similar pattern emerges. Schools in the constituencies of the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Education win significant additional funding. Again, schools in the Taoiseach's constituency receive significantly less.

When examining roads funding, we can see that the constituency of the line minister for the period, the Minister for the Environment, receives significant additional funding, or a mean grant of ϵ 603,465 compared with ϵ 238,852 elsewhere. However, unlike other areas we have looked at, the amount of money allocated to roads in the Minister for Finance's constituency is less than that going to other constituencies. On average, a constituency received some ϵ 3.6 million each year, while some ϵ 15.9 million was allocated in the Minister for the Environment's constituency. We saw too that there is some evidence of partisan delivery in the allocation of CLÁR funding for roads, which is overseen by the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon O'Cuiv, his constituency receives significant additional funds. However, each grant is on average smaller than those allocated to other constituencies, but in total his constituency receives statistically more funding. Projects in his constituency receive a mean grant of ϵ 130,878, while the total grant to the constituency amounts to some ϵ 4,516,747 (See Table 9-1).

Hypothesis 2

Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest of the party, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to geographic areas of greater electoral strength for the party.

The insight here is that parties in government focus the spending of discretionary resources on the constituencies where their support is strong, thereby rewarding those who have habitually voted for it. Party advisers, however, insist that the party is completely separate from the Cabinet. There may be instances, says one,

but it will be more about lobbying on behalf of constituents. Officials corroborate that this may happen on an ad hoc basis, but they would be surprised if it showed up in the data. The picture here is certainly more mixed than that for the line ministers. When empirically examining allocations to sports clubs, there was no evidence that the core voters were systematically targeted and, in fact, those with higher Fianna Fáil votes received significantly less funding. However, clubs in these areas are more likely to be successful in funding applications than clubs in areas with a low Fianna Fáil vote. In terms of the primary school data, schools in constituencies with a higher Fianna Fáil vote at the last election did do a little better, and those with a higher Fine Gael and Labour vote did a little worse than other schools.

Summary table: mean grants to projects, constituencies, per capita							
	Line minister €	Finance minister €	Mean €				
Sports clubs	53,165	70,117	53,700				
Total sports by constituency	2,560,817	2,804,700	1,526,575				
Sports per capita	37.17	25.10	15.55				
Primary schools	133,459	135,857	115,328				
Total primary by constituency	3,203,028	4,650,706	3,081,633				
Total primary per capita	34.96	41.63	30.39				
Road projects	603,465	217,611	237,892				
Total roads by constituency	15,981,240	2,567,819	3,619,217				
Total roads per capita	138.67	22.98	36.85				

Table 9-1: Mean Grants to projects, constituencies, per capita

However, there was no pattern in post-primary schools and, in fact, those in areas with a higher Fianna Fáil vote share actually did a little worse. The picture is also mixed with roads funding, where there is some evidence that areas with a high Fianna Fáil vote received more funding, but this dissipates when the length of the road network is controlled for.

In addition, few interviewees expected to see evidence of logrolling among Cabinet ministers (the trading of favours from one to another). Another former adviser says that the reason logrolling is not systematic, although it does of course happen, is that it would disenfranchise the backbenchers. "If they thought all projects were just going to the 15 Cabinet ministers, they would be pissed." Others believed that Cabinet ministers are essentially in competition with one

another and that only particular allegiances are likely to be apparent. Again, this observation is borne out by the data, with no evidence that those other Cabinet ministers, apart from the one line minister and the Minister for Finance, benefit disproportionately from one another's discretionary spending. Indeed, in the sports data, clubs in other Cabinet ministers' constituencies are statistically less likely to receive larger grants or indeed to be more successful in their applications, underlining the apparent absence of logrolling among ministers.

Hypothesis 3

Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest of the party, directing higher levels of expenditure or more benefits to geographic areas with maximum numbers of swing voters for the party.

The literature would lead us to expect that governments may target resources on constituencies where seats might be won or lost at the next election, thereby promoting their prospects at future elections. However, as we saw in the last chapter, Irish political observers are doubtful. One former minister says that money will not be spent on marginals, as they change category fairly quickly. "In the UK and Australia, constituencies tend to be marginal for a long time, so governments in those systems are more likely to target marginal areas." A former adviser says that it is simple. "They will not target marginal seats, mostly because they are not well enough organised." As we saw in the last chapter, former Tánaiste Dick Spring agreed, saying that he cannot recall anything as "Machiavellian" as directing money to specific marginal or swing constituencies. There is also no evidence that the necessary mechanism exists to ensure that money could systematically be diverted to areas according to electoral considerations.

Turning to the data, we found that, with primary school spending, there was a significant spending on districts that had a large swing to Fianna Fáil at the last election, but there was no evidence of this in post-primary spending. There was also no evidence of systematic targeting of swing voters in the sports data, for

either the amount of the grant or the success rate of applications. There was some evidence that swing districts were targeted in the roads data. However, given its absence elsewhere, this may be due to omitted variable bias or other unexplored variables.

Hypothesis 4

Cabinet ministers will act in the collective interest generally, directing expenditure at all constituencies on a universal basis, targeting groups as set out by government policy.

Most interviewees felt that, in general, funds would be targeted according to policy where possible, but that this was likely to be hampered by the absence of crucial data, such as an inventory of schools or sports facilities, or indeed usage and population data when deciding roads allocations. However, a few said that the problem of monies not going to where policy would dictate is fairly widespread. That, one said, is why much decision-making has been hived off to bodies such as the National Roads Authority, who are more independent of political control. But others question this. "The involvement of the NRA may have stopped some of this in terms of national roads. But there are no votes in national roads. It is much better to fix potholes and secondary roads, which are still under direct political influence, and that will not be changing," says a senior public servant. Other former ministers worry about the outside agencies and believe it can lead to greater levels of corruption, if not specific pork for political parties. "Look at FÁS⁸⁶ and the HSE⁸⁷ – they were taken out of political control and it was disastrous."

Certainly, demographic and other policy variables are not, in general, a good predictor of spending patterns. For example, in primary school spending, the

⁸⁶ Job trading and creation agency currently at the centre of allegations of improper spending.

⁸⁷ Health Service Executive – a beleaguered agency at the centre of a constant stream of criticism and funding worries.

absolute number of children in the relevant age cohort has a negative impact, although the number in the incoming cohort is significant in a positive direction. Change in that number between the two census points has a positive impact. However, the change in the number in the incoming cohort also has a negative impact on spending, and the change in cohort of current primary school students is positive, pointing to a lack of coherent planning. In post-primary school spending, we saw that there is no positive relationship between the number of children in a constituency and the amount of money going to post-primary schools in that constituency. In fact, there appears to be a significant negative relationship between the two, and this holds for both the more parsimonious demographic model and the full model.

The total enrolment in a school is, however, a good predictor of money spent, but there is no significant relationship between a school being classified as disadvantaged and receiving additional funding. In fact, disadvantaged schools actually received less money than others. In general, disadvantaged schools can expect to receive some €4,800 less than another school, even when the number of children enrolled is taken into account. A similar picture emerges from sports spending, where constituencies with a greater number of children aged under 19 are statistically less likely to receive additional funding. This is also true of constituencies where there are more people in the 20 to 45 age group. Indeed, it appears that clubs in areas with a greater than average proportion in the over-45 age group are more likely to receive additional funding, and this is significant at the highest level. Again, disadvantaged status is not a good predictor of receiving sports funding. In fact, clubs in areas with younger populations receive about 10% less in funding compared with those in areas with an older population base. Even when looking at the success rate of clubs, it is clear that clubs in younger demographic areas are less likely to have a successful application. However, clubs in disadvantaged areas are more likely to be successful in grant applications; it is simply that the grants they receive are smaller than those received by other clubs.

In roads the only policy variable, that appears to predict spending in a constituency, is the road length in that constituency. None of the variables for population, number of cars, or whether it is a hub or gateway are significant. Taking population into account, the suboptimal results are even starker. The mean grant per person in Dublin is &15. However, in Mayo it is &57.13 and Kerry South is the highest, at &62.86.88

Summary	Table.	Complete	Model Fo	timates on	A mount an	d No of Grants
Summary	l'able.	Complete	MIDUEL ES	umates on	Amount an	u vo oi triains

	Line Min	Fin Min	Core	Swing	Pop	Disad
Sports clubs €	***	***			_***1	
Sports clubs No	***	*		_*	_*** ¹	_**
Sports clubs Cons	**	***	_***	***	_*** ¹	_**
Prim School €	***	**	***	***	_*** ²	
Prim School No	_**	**	**	_**	_** ²	
P Prim School €		***			_***3	
P Prim Sc No	**		*	***	***3	
P Prim Sc Cons	1.5	***	***	***	_***3	
Roads €	***4	_***		***	_***	***5
Roads No	***6	_***				***5

Notes: 1. Population 0-19 and 20-45; 2. Children 5-12; 3. Children 13-18; 4. Minister CRGA;

5. Road length; 6. Min Env and Min CRGA *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 9-2: Summary table - complete model OLS estimates on amount

In summary (see Table 9-2) in almost every area of spending examined both in terms of value and number of grants awarded the key ministers' (line minister and finance minister) constituencies receive significant additional amounts. There is also some evidence that spending is directed at both core and swing voters but this does not appear as systematic. Population is in general negatively related to funding while key policy variables such as disadvantage are also often at times negatively related to funding received. To sum:

- Ministers spend disproportionately on their home constituencies;
- Ministers are said to have discretion to allocate 10% to 15 % in additional discretionary funding to projects in their own constituencies;

⁸⁸ The results were very similar when either or both of the dummies for Minister O Cuiv and TD Healey Rae were omitted.

Including a measure for Cabinet ministers in general did not prove significant nor change other results to any extent

• Minister for Arts and Sports and Minister for Finance constituencies receive more in sports grants. The Minister for Sports constituency receives a mean of €2.5 million compared with €1.5 million elsewhere;

- Sports clubs in the Minister for Arts and Sports and Minister for Finance constituencies are more likely to be successful in their applications at 12% and 15% respectively than clubs in other districts;
- Individual clubs in the Minister for Arts and Sports and Minister for Finance constituencies receive larger grants at over €70,000 compared with €53,000 elsewhere;
- Minister for Education and Ministers for Finance's constituencies receive more money in primary and post primary grants. The Minister for Finance's constituency receives an average €4.6 million a year in grants to primary schools compared with €3 million elsewhere and €3.2 million for the Minister for Education's constituency;
- Individual schools in Minister for Education and Minister for Finance constituencies also receive more money. Primary schools in the Minister for Education's constituency can expect 33% additional funding at over €133,459 compared with €99,541 elsewhere;
- Minister for the Environment's and Minister for Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs constituency receive more money in non-national roads funding with a mean €15.9 million allocated to the Minister for the Environment compared with €3.6 million elsewhere and €4.5 million in the constituency of the Minister for Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs;
- Much spending is unrelated to population or other policy variables;
- There is no inventory of sports clubs and facilities despite repeated calls for one to be drawn up;
- The younger the population in any constituency the less money will be allocated to sports clubs. Constituencies with more of the population aged over 45 will receive greater amounts of funding;
- Sports clubs in areas with a younger population are less likely to be successful in applications for sports capital funding;

- Sports clubs in disadvantaged areas are more likely to have a successful application but the grant they receive is less;
- There is no inventory of schools buildings despite repeated calls for one to be drawn up;
- The more children aged 5-12 there are in a constituency the less funding that constituency's primary schools will receive;
- The more children aged 13-18 in a constituency the less money is sent to schools in that constituency at post-primary level;
- Disadvantaged post-primary schools receive less funding (on average €4,800 less);
- Roads spending is linked to the length of the road network in a constituency; and
- Roads' spending is not linked to population or the road usage in a constituency.

9.8 Combined analysis

In order to ascertain the combined effects, all types of spending were combined into one model with a variable denoting the type of spending. Again, the dependent variable is logged per capita grants. The electoral variables include dummy variables for the Taoiseach, the finance minister and a dummy variable for the relevant line minister across different departments. It also controls for the swing, the Fianna Fáil vote and the proportion of Fianna Fáil seats at the previous election. In terms of policy, the controls are for disadvantage, which is a dummy variable, and population (see Table 9-3). We can see that, across the various spending areas, the impact of the finance minister is significant at the highest level. In fact, across just sports and schools, the constituency of the finance minister can expect to receive some €2.1 million more in grants than other

⁸⁹ The r-squared for these models is very high, with the spending type which is not shown, doing much of the heavy lifting. When the regression is run without this, a similar pattern emerges, but the r-squared for electoral variables is around 0.1, for policy around 0.15 and for the combined model 0.25.

constituencies, controlling for population. The line minister across the relevant grant types is also highly significant and, on average, these constituencies can expect to receive about 11% more than other areas each year, or €556,400.⁹⁰ Once again, there is no evidence for the core voter or swing voter models and, when other Cabinet ministers were included in the analysis, the findings did not change, once again ruling out logrolling among Cabinet ministers.

OLS regression all grants 2001-2007 by constituency				
VARIABLES	Electoral	Policy	All	
Taoiseach	-0.162		-0.205	
Constituency	(0.157)		(0.162)	
Finance	0.388***		0.578***	
minister				
Constituency	(0.133)		(0.147)	
Line minister	0.471***		0.408***	
Constituency	(0.165)		(0.154)	
Proportion	0.0606		0.0631	
FF seats	(0.0610)		(0.0737)	
FF vote	0.00473		0.00200	
Previous	(0.00513)		(0.00560)	
election				
Vote swing	-0.00930		-0.00971*	
Previous	(0.00580)		(0.00582)	
election				
Disadvantaged		-0.498***	-0.542***	
		(0.101)	(0.103)	
Population		-0.00021	-0.00022	
		(0.0014)	(0.0016)	
Constant	-8.750***	-8.390***	-8.437***	
	(0.199)	(0.135)	(0.270)	
Observations	790	790	790	
R-squared	0.979	0.979	0.980	
Dobust standard	aurous in naventh.	and anding type	controlled for not	

Robust standard errors in parentheses; spending type controlled for, not shown

Table 9-3: OLS regression all grants 2001-2007 by constituency

^{***} p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

⁹⁰ Results obtained using *Clarify*, Tomz, M, J Wittenberg, et al. (2003). CLARIFY: Software for interpreting and presenting statistical results. Version 2.1, Stanford University, University of Wisconsin, and Harvard University. January.

It seems clear, then, that Irish pork involves a personalised delivery to the constituency of the relevant minister and that of the Minister for Finance. Overall, these two variables have greater explanatory power than any other, including population density.

9.9 Contribution

This thesis contributes to the political science literature in a number of ways. First, through the use of an extensive new bespoke dataset, it finds evidence for the hypothesis individual Irish legislators, and particularly ministers, focus discretionary capital resources on their home constituencies, thereby promoting their own re-election. Second, through the employment of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies it examines not only the extent of partisan allocations but the mechanism at play behind the decision making process; and third it demonstrates that a lack of evidence- based decision making allows sub-optimal allocations across a number of spending areas.

The central scholarly debate in analysing partisan expenditure is one which pits proponents of the core voter thesis against those who argue that discretionary spending will be targeted at swing voters. In recent years electoral and party system variables have been added to the explanatory mix. This thesis moves beyond this to argue that under certain institutional arrangements partisan distributive spending may also be partly explained by the desire of individual ministers to bolster their own personal support in their constituencies. Indeed this insight appears to have the most explanatory power when examining these distributions in Ireland.

The possible reasons for this are manifold. Overall this thesis argues that the structure of the executive and legislature in Ireland, which ensures executive dominance, combined with an electoral system, which promotes intra-party competition, is a key force in structuring pork barrel, ensuring that the interests of

certain members of the executive do not coincide exactly with those of the party. A number of factors are at play. First, the Irish executive is very strong in relation to the legislature, ministers have broad scope to make decisions, and most legislation passes with a party whip system. TDs rarely vote against the party line and those that do are generally expelled. As noted in Chapter 3 the legislature is exceptionally weak, even given the very low level of power than any legislature can exercise over the executive. As a result TDs generally view their role as sustaining government rather than acting as individual scrutinisers of it and practically all legislative bills emanate from the executive.

Second, members of the executive or Cabinet ministers have considerable leeway within their own Departments and at home. Theoretically, Cabinet supervision is tight and the full Cabinet must approve most major policy changes. Policies are distributed to all members to be commented on and agreed in advance. However, supervision, such as it is, does not come down to the level of the spending decisions of ministers within budgetary allocations. Indeed, the Cabinet has little or no role in overseeing the policy implementation of individual ministers or of measuring policy outputs in general, and it devolves a great deal of power to individual ministers, and particularly those in charge of the large spending departments and their civil servants. As was demonstrated in Chapter 3 Ministers also have considerable discretion to do as they see fit at home even if local statements are at odds with those which the party makes nationally. There is of course a balance to be struck here but the impression is one of a system where Ministers have leeway so long as it does not overly damage the party reputation nationally.

Third the electoral system, PR-STV, ensures intra-party as well as inter-party competition. Legislators compete both within their own party and outside it, and live in a constant state of fear about losing their seats: Fianna Fáil candidates have lost more seats to fellow party members than to the opposition, compounding the problems of intra-party competition and incentivising those who have the ability to deliver locally to do so. Thus, in Ireland, Cabinet ministers target local voters

partly in order to stop them from transferring allegiances to another candidate from the same party at the next election. A Cabinet minister with discretion over a grant allocation will seek to target allocations at voters within his own constituency. The system may also incentivise ministers from small parties to deliver locally with intense inter-party competition in most constituencies meaning that few, if any seats, being considered safe.

Fourth, unlike many other systems, in Ireland all ministers are TDs—a principle unknown in the rest of Europe, where ministers who are not members of parliament are commonly appointed. Indeed, in such countries as France, the Netherlands and Norway, members of parliament must resign their seats to take up ministerial office. The Irish Constitution does, however, allow two members of the Seanad to be appointed ministers, but this has happened on only two occasions. Indeed the ability of Cabinet ministers to distribute largesse arguably makes it even more difficult for the Taoiseach to squander patronage by making appointments form outside the ranks of elected TDs. This culture of expectations also works on the part of the public, leading to the fifth influence which is simply as we have seen that constituents expect their local representatives to deliver and that expectations rise accordingly if that representative is appointed a Cabinet minister.

It is the interaction of these factors which likely underpins the individually dominated partisan allocations which have been found. Much recent scholarly debate has been focussed on the interaction of the party and electoral systems. The electoral rule generates expectations about the type of voters that those seeking national public office will cultivate. According to Carey and Shugart (1995), diverse electoral systems provide different incentives for candidates. In systems where votes are cast for individual candidates, as opposed to votes for a party list, legislators seeking re-election have significant incentives to cultivate personal support among the electorate. At one end of the spectrum are closed-list systems, where party leaders exert maximum control. At the other end, fully open-list PR systems and STV are the most candidate centred. Party strength, conceptualised as

the degree of personalisation in electoral contests or the degree of party control over candidate selection process, interacts with this. In an SMD system, strong parties will cultivate swing voters. However, in PR systems, every vote can count, depending on the system. Thus, strong parties will target their strongholds in order to hold core voters. In SMD systems, weak parties cannot discipline members who look after themselves, and thus we see idiosyncratic patterns of spending and delivery to safe seats belonging to individually powerful legislators (as in the US). Golden and Picci (2008) extended the case to weak parties in open-list PR settings, arguing that individual legislators seeking re-election will target their own bailiwicks, while parties will seek to target areas of core support. The argument is that where parties are factionalised and lack central control, the pattern of individually powerful ministers is likely to prevail. This definition of party strength as the degree of personalisation is of course contestable. However, it is no doubt and a factor and under this definition, Ireland is a weak party system. Thus the Irish system – despite the power of parties within the Oireachtas, where to vote against the party is to invite immediate expulsion – may also be characterised as weak.

Parties in open-list PR or PR-STV electoral systems wish to target core voters, partly to persuade them from switching party in an institutional setting where vote switching is becoming more commonplace. However, the voters that the *minister* would like to target will not always be the same as those the *party* wishes to target. A minister may represent an area with more swing voters than another area, for example, or may represent an area with a very low core vote for his party. Overall then, we can argue that, rather than conceiving of delivery to the constituencies of powerful ministers as delivery to core voters, it is rather a pattern in its own right. Ministers, it seems, can be more powerful than the parties they represent and, when making decisions, tend to look after their own personal bailiwicks rather than any party interest, or indeed general policy goals as set out by overall government policy.

This thesis goes beyond the quantitative analysis through the deployment of extensive interview evidence with politicians, civil servants and advisers in order to trace the process by which funding allocation decisions are made. The traditional view is that political parties manipulate policies and control allocations through their control of committees, the flow of legislation on the floor, and coalition building. Congress-centred explanations revolve around logrolling, while party electoral considerations matter relatively little. In Ireland, neither appears to be the case. It found no evidence for Cabinet ministers logrolling or doing deals, and we saw that the legislature has little role in the allocation of resources. The model, rather, is one where ministers – or chieftains – have the power to allocate budgets with scope for themselves. There is, we were told, an unofficial rule of thumb that a minister can allocate around 15% of discretionary funds to his own constituency, and that fits with the evidence we have unearthed and analysed.

However, there does appear to be some evidence of Arnold's (1979) executive/legislative bargaining theory, where bureaucrats strategically reward members of Congress in a way to gain favour. In Ireland, this appears to be at least part of the mechanisms, with allocations made almost as a matter of course to the Minister for Finance. We saw that some believe that this is done by the line ministry in order to have bargaining tools in the annual estimates round.

A combination of this interview evidence and a review of official reports into the various spending areas also reveals that perhaps surprisingly, departments often simply do not have access to an objective set of criteria by which cases or applications are evaluated. For example, there is an absence of a database of school accommodation and of existing sports buildings on which to base decisions. In addition, many criteria on which decisions are based is often vague and open to subjective interpretation.

9.10 Conclusions – the electoral system and executive appointment

In general, the literature argues that electoral systems are crucial in shaping the politics of any democratic country. We know from the experience of electoral reform in other countries that changing the electoral system can have far-reaching effects, and thus we can agree that the electoral system has major consequences for party competition in Ireland (Laver 1998). The argument of many representatives is that PR-STV is to blame for the punishing constituency workloads and the need to focus on 'the local'. Their argument is that multi-seat constituencies – which are essential for STV to work as a proportional representation system – create strong competition between candidates of the same party. The case was put by Fianna Fáil's Willie O'Dea⁹¹:

...the reality is the multi-seat constituency that forces politicians to expend energies locally rather than nationally; one that means the winning of a medical card for a constituent is more valuable to the politician than any finely crafted or well-motivated Dáil speech ... Many politicians spend more time going to local funerals than they do preparing for Dáil debates. This is not because they prefer to do so. It is because they know better than anyone else the meaning of the old phrase "all politics is local"... In Ireland, we have institutionalised this core reality into a straitjacket that binds politicians and constituencies together...We need to devise a system that ensures ... accountability without enslaving politicians to local, client-bound pressures (Sunday Independent, 30 November 1997).

Typically, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael tend to nominate more candidates than they expect to elect, trusting in their ability to manage vote transfer between party candidates, and so we normally find two or three candidates from each of the larger parties fighting for votes in any given constituency. Irish electors have considerable power over the selection of public representatives – not just between parties, but within parties – resulting in often very intense competition between legislators on the same ticket. In his report on the electoral system for the Constitution Review Group, Gallagher (1996: 509) finds that the system compels legislators to concentrate on local work. But, as Gallagher puts it, "there will

⁹¹ As cited in Laver 1998

always be intense competition to enter parliament among actual or would-be candidates in a party, which will surface at different places under different electoral systems" (Gallagher 1996: 512). Having looked extensively at the arguments, Gallagher is unconvinced that PR-STV is to blame for the intensely local political culture so peculiar to Ireland. Writing in The Irish Times, John Coakley (2009) argues that political-cultural values and the public's and politicians' expectations regarding political norms change slowly and that electoral reform may not even change cultural expectations. Coakley argues that reform of "quite inappropriate procedures" would go far in reforming this culture. First, small constituencies (none returning more than five members since 1948, compromising the principle of proportionality) should be increased in size. Second, bye elections to fill casual vacancies, which are entirely incompatible with PR, should be abolished. Reform of PR-STV rather than its wholesale replacement then might go some way to changing the culture. In addition, as we saw earlier a move to the European system of separating the offices of TD and Cabinet Minister could do much to remove the incentives underlining partisan delivery.

9.11 Conclusions - oversight of Cabinet ministers

A common feature of Westminster-style parliamentary democracies is the strength of the executive and its accumulation of influence at the expense of the legislature that elects it. The Dáil suffers acutely from this and, more so than even in Westminster, the Irish government controls the parliamentary agenda with ease (Doring 2004: 149; Gallagher 2005) Indeed, the Cabinet or executive manages an essentially unassailable veto over parliamentary procedures such as the legislative process, the voting of monies, and the format of debates, and can thus easily insulate itself from scrutiny, thus Cabinet ministers benefit (or suffer) from a lack of parliamentary oversight. Parliamentary accountability in this context refers to the obligations of the executive to reveal and defend its decisions (both ex ante and ex post) to the elected representatives of the people (MacCarthaigh 2007), with the ultimate threat of sanction and dismissal. Key to this is that the representatives need to have adequate tools at their disposal to uncover and

interpret the activities of the executive. However, the reality in Ireland is that the mechanism of parliamentary accountability has failed, and the growth of the executive state in recent years has made accountability increasingly difficult to realise. Parliamentary accountability is also undermined by alternative forms of executive oversight (MacCarthaigh 2005: 52-93): an example of this is the power of Dáil committees to directly question public servants on the boards of state companies. A clearer and more distinct role of Oireachtas committees may go some way towards improving this. If committees could examine specific expenditure, and indeed had a role in ensuring that specific outputs were being addressed, there would be less leeway for individually authorised partisan expenditure, and legislators could hope to participate in the formulation and monitoring of policy. Fine Gael deputy leader Richard Bruton has long advocated a fundamental change in the system of drafting budgets in order to give the Dáil a direct input into the creation of policy, with proper debate on all the available options (Collins 2009).

9.12 Conclusions - the administrative system

The comparative literature often points to the problem of 'rubber levers', where the administrative system is not responsive to political direction. In other words, policy changes simply do not happen, or are implemented very slowly. Indeed, Irish ministers do complain that they cannot get policies implemented, but it is unlikely that this is the source of the difficulties we have seen. After all, report after report in spending areas that we have examined have pointed to a myriad of problems and suggested improvements — but few have been implemented, even a decade or more after the problems were first set out. A lack of political will, rather than administrative obstruction, is more likely to be behind this. Further problems, often referred to in the British literature, are the lack of 'joined-up thinking', government too fragmented to do its job efficiently, and ministers that are simply overloaded with work. In such a system, policies can get through without sufficient oversight or interrogation. Indeed, this absence of oversight could be one of the major reasons behind the pattern of partisan spending we have

observed. Simply put, governments have been able to operate the system because one minister did not believe that money going to another's project would mean less being allocated to his.

Other problems also arise, including the criticism that some permanent officials lack expertise. Most are serious public servants, but have little incentive to take risks or be imaginative with policy. The long period in which Fianna Fáil has been in power may also mean that some have 'gone native' and equate the interests of the party with the country. Indeed, some say that the prime motivation can be blame-avoidance – hence the plethora of consultants' reports. There also appears to be an endemic culture of secrecy. No department made it easy to research this project, although none refused access to the information. However, it was often not available in the format requested, and in the case of the health service, the data obtained were of such poor quality that they were not reliable enough to be utilised.

9.13 Conclusion

It seems clear that needs alone do not account for where money is spent, and some areas of government capital spending allow uncontrolled advantages to a few ministers. This, of course, may be seen as undesirable in a liberal democracy that aspires to egalitarian treatment for all its citizens. There also appears to be an absence of rationality in explaining at least some of the spending patterns of much of the funding flowing through these government departments. One problem appears to be a lack of evidence on which objective and rational spending decisions can be made. The Department of Education still has no inventory of schools, more than 15 years' after one was first called for. The same is true of an inventory of sports grounds. Departments simply cannot make efficient spending allocations if there is little empirical data on which to base such decisions. The case for ensuring that all spending is allocated on the basis of evidence, and that outputs are clearly defined, is a strong one. There have been some changes in government systems inspired by the idea of 'new public management'. For example, the Strategic Management Initiative, launched in 1994, envisages that

Irish public administration would become more directly accountable to the public, as consumers of its services. More recently, many policies must now undergo a regulatory impact analysis (RIA), but in practice, this can be self-serving and formulaic. Cost benefit analyses are also becoming more commonplace, even for non-EU funds, which is welcome — but again, the standard to which they are performed can be suboptimal. It is also clear that the absence of thorough analysis of policy and outputs is a problem. There is an argument for more evaluation of spending along econometric lines and for a debate over where we want to spend money. Modelling that includes measures of needs and other policy variables is surely essential if money is to be spent in an efficient manner. Simply put, moving from demand-led allocations to awarding grants on an evidence-based, needs basis would do much to ensure optimal policy allocations and diminish discretionary partisan allocations.

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Appendix 1

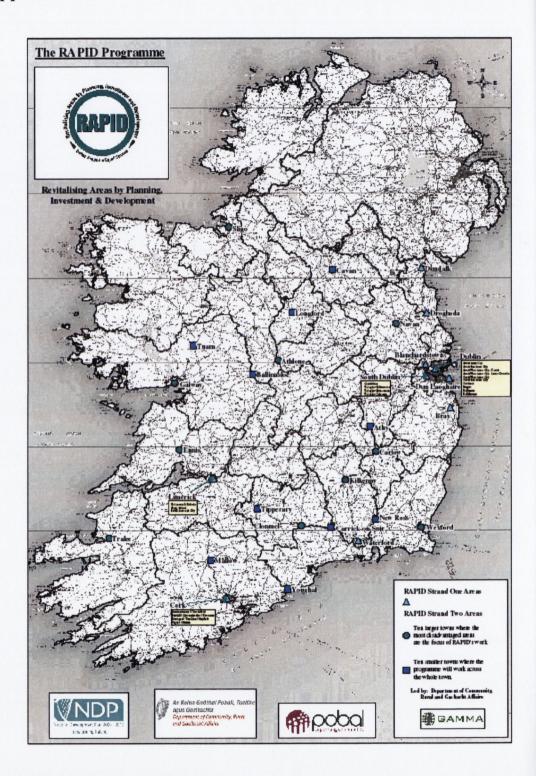


Figure 11-1 Map of Rapid Areas. Courtesy Pobal

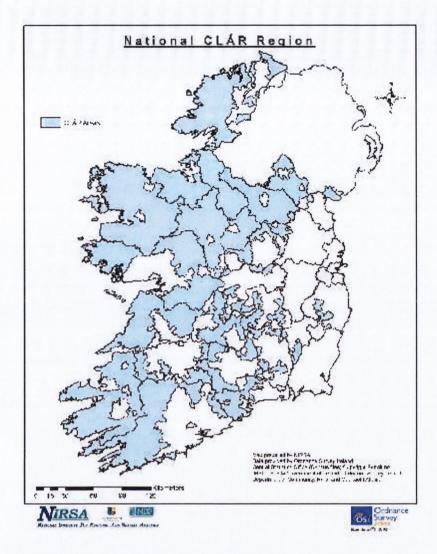


Figure 11-2 Map CLAR Areas Courtesy. Pobal

Appendix 2

12.1 Interview Schedule

Interview 1	Former Fine Gael Cabinet Minister	January 2007
Interview 2	Fianna Fail Cabinet Minister	June 2007
Interview 3	Former Labour Cabinet Minister	July 2007
Interview 4	Former Labour Cabinet Minister	November 2008
Interview 5	Former Labour Cabinet Minister	November 2008
Interview 6	Former Fine Gael Cabinet Minister	November 2008
Interview 7	Public servant	September 2008
Interview 8	Public servant	October 2008
Interview 9	Former senior public servant	November 2008
Interview 10	Department Finance civil servant	November 2008
Interview 11	Department Finance civil servant	January 2009
Interview 12	Department Arts Sports civil servant	September 2007
Interview 13	Former Fianna Fail adviser	November 2008
Interview 14	Former Fine Gael adviser	November 2008
Interview 15	Former Fianna Fail adviser	November 2008
Interview 16	Former Fianna Fail adviser	November 2008