Distance and Decision Makers – The heterogeneity in Irish Sports Capital Funding

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Abstract

Work on geographically targeted spending and its electoral connections, particularly in a sporting context is a well-studied phenomena. However, much, if not all examination has tended to focus on grants as being homogenous without taking into the account the heterogeneity of awards. Therefore, this paper decomposes grants into different types of facilities (All, Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), Soccer and Multisport) and tests whether the theory of "sports-pork" holds for all. Secondly, the common binary measure to examine bias is replaced with a new distance variable, which measures the distance between an individual's hometown and successful club. Finally, for the first time a new relationship is examined, noting the difference between a grant a club applied for relative to what it received. Successful applicants geographically proximate to the Minister for Sport, Finance and Taoiseach receive larger awards, however also lower portions of applied funding. Moreover, examining individual specific effects the bias in distribution for both the Minister of Sport and Taoiseach has decreased under recent individuals.

Keywords: Pork-Barrel, Political Connections, Capital Grant, Sport-Pork, Lobbying, Ireland

1. Introduction

Pork barrel politics is the process where a politician or political party promises something to his or her constituents in an effort to gain their support and assist in re-election. These promises can range from the construction of public projects to the retention of local services. Cain et al. (1990) and Weingast et al. (1981) indicate the electoral connection in pork-barrel politics is a well-established phenomenon. Political actors can reward their core voters (Cox & McGubbins, 1986) or target floating or swing voters (Lindbeck & Weibull, 1987). In the case of the Republic of Ireland[1], this theory is no less pertinent, most notably for sports capital grants. Bailey and Connolly (1997) noted, lack of central responsibility along with no independent body to monitor the geographical and socio-economic spread, meant grant allocations were much weaker and open to political influence, in comparison to the United Kingdom. While Considine et al. (2004, 2008) Considine and Doran (2016), Suiter and O'Malley (2014a, 2014b) have examined this political bias, grants for sports facilities have always been treated as homogenous. While a politician's main goal is the re-election to government, they may feel that awarding certain types of sports may better place them in a position to achieve this outcome.

For instance, Delaney and Fahey (2005) note that Gaelic Games' organisational strength is much greater than the relative number who engage in the sport. Its structure is based on a strong voluntarist community model of sports organisation. It is difficult to estimate the number of volunteers, however figures released by the GAA (2015) indicated that registered members, which includes players were over 500,000. Moreover, Gaelic teams tend to share a deep attachment in their locality, particularly in rural areas. Awarding a large grant to a club such as this, may stand a Minister in a better position to be re-elected than to an Athletics club or some other applicant where the successful benefit to the potential political figure may not be felt as strongly.

Furthermore, certain political figures may have a deep affiliation with a particular sporting code. Jim McDaid, former Minister for Sport[2] was a former winner of three national titles with University College Galway soccer team, captaining them on two occasions. Moreover, he also served as a medical officer for the Donegal county Gaelic Football team. Similarly, former Taoiseach and Minister for Finance, Brian Cowen was not only a President of his local GAA club Clara, but also played Gaelic football for Offaly in the 1980s. Given these affiliations, both known and unknown, figures in positions of power may wish to reward applicants in their locality, even more so to sports they have a connection with.

Utilising a newly assembled dataset with geocoded data on successful applicants, along with the intended sport the grant was awarded for, this study aims to exam the heterogeneity in different awards and to test whether the theory of pork barrelling holds for different facilities. Secondly, a new method is utilised to measure political favouritism. This is the distance between the location of an individual's hometown and successful clubs location. Finally, a new measure of sports-pork is utilised – this is the level of funding a club received relative to what it applied for. This paper is structured as follows. The following section discusses the literature relating to pork barrel politics. A discussion of the data is given as well as the estimation method utilised. This is preceded by results and concluded with a discussion and implications.

2. Literature

2.1 Pork-Barrelling – the role of the politician

Stigler (1971) was one of the first to formalise that government regulation served the interests of small lobby groups rather than the interest of the wider community. It was assumed that politicians, regulators and interest groups all operate in their own self-interest. Politicians are concerned mainly with gaining and maintaining elected office. In a political setting politicians reward constituents through favourable policies in order to achieve this. As Hoare (1992) noted, pork barrelling in a political context is the selective geographical allocation of publicly-

controlled funds and resources for the purpose of gaining votes from electors in locations. Archer (1983) and Hoare (1983, 1992) provide detailed reviews in regards to pork barrelling. Individual seat pork barrelling, is primarily what this study is interested in. This is employed by individual politicians, either in government or opposition, who use their position to direct resources toward their own constituency in order to maintain or improve their personal vote at the next election. This type of pork barrel politics is particularly prevalent in the U.S where a large level of political power is vested in individual members of the House of Representatives or Senate (Hoare 1992). Risk-averse politicians will invest relatively larger levels in their core support groups, particularly when strong individual legislators have ample opportunity to reward their constituents (Cox & McGubbins, 1986). Furthermore, Golden and Picci (2008) argue that open-list proportional representation (PR) [3] can incentivize intra-party competition pitching candidates against each other in the quest for votes (Carey & Shugart, 1995).

Different measures on how best to quantify the theory of pork barrel politics have been put forward in the literature. Weingast (1994) note these approaches have been defined as legislative logrolling, supplemental or discretionary policies, or distributive public policies. Levitt and Synder (1995) state measures tend to focus on the monetary value awarded to a particular programme or geographic area. The premise behind this is the higher the award the more benefit the constituency receives and in turn the greater the benefit to the public representative, in terms of votes (Suiter & O'Malley, 2014b). The number of projects or unique allocations an area receives has been another measure utilised. Rather than having one large award, a number of smaller awards may provide greater credit-claiming opportunities for a legislator (Bickers & Stein, 1994; 1996).

The discretionary nature of sports spending, make it an ideal example of pork barrel politics, or as Denemark (2000) note, a geographically targetable and divisible good. Quirk and Fort (1997), Keating (1999) and Zarestsky (2001) have shown that sports-pork is rife within the

United States. Work by Gaunt (1999) provide evidence of priority funding appearing to have gone to government-held marginal electorates in Australia. A developed literature has emerged on the topic within Ireland (see Considine et al., 2004; 2008; Suiter & O'Malley, 2014a; 2014b; Considine & Doran, 2016). Findings point to constituencies housing the Minister for Finance and Sport doing particularly well in both overall monetary value and unique projects awarded. The following section will discuss the data which is utilised in this analysis.

3. Data and Preliminary Analysis

In order to test the perceived bias in the allocation of sports capital grant spending, two different measures are utilised. Firstly, the overall monetary value an applicant received, a measure utilised in Suiter & O'Malley (2014b). A potential drawback with this measure, along with a count of projects awarded to an area, is that it does not take into account the funding applied for by a club. For instance, if an applicant close to a *Decision Maker* receives a grant of €70,000 but originally applied for €120,000 does this appear more favourable than awarding a grant of €42,000 to an applicant who applied for €45,000? Therefore, for the first time this study analyses the difference between the levels of funding a club applied for, against the amount it received. While previous studies have identified that the appropriate Minister rewards their locality disproportionality, relative to the national average, these same studies have never factored in the amount the locality seeks. For instance Considine et al. (2008) noted that when Donegal's Jim McDaid was Minster for Sport, Donegal had the sixth poorest success rate for county applications. It could be the case, as they note that applicants believe that having a Minister in their locality can make a difference for them. However, this analysis was for the success rate of applications, not the difference between what was sought and received. Of course there are other reasons why a club may not receive their full allocation of funding. Scarcity of funds, inaccurate figures entered on application forms, as well as including invalid elements of projects (car park facilities, no proof of planning permission provided).

While Gaunt (1999), Considine et al. (2008), Suiter and O'Malley (2014a, 2014b), Considine and Doran (2016) utilise pre-determined spatial units (counties, electoral constituencies, federal electorates) to analyse the effects of political bias, this measure can be hindered due the redrawing of electoral boundaries. To overcome this, this study utilises a distance variable, thanks to geocoded data. Linear distance (km) is measured between the successful applicant and the locality of the various decision makers over the period 2002-2015. Ministerial changes occurred in this period, so too does the point of reference. Regional characteristics associated with the successful applicant are derived from Electoral district data[4]. A list of variables which are utilised in this analysis can be seen in Table 1. These control variables are standard variables in the literature, however Electoral district statistics have never been utilised previously. Suiter and O'Malley (2014a), (2014b), Considine and Doran (2016) have used constituency and county data, thus this study allows a much larger level of regional variability. Before an empirical estimation is undertaken, it is worthwhile carrying out a descriptive analysis of the county allocation of successful applicants.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Description	Source
Dependent Variables		
Grant	Log of Funding club received	Department of Transport Tourism and Sport (Various Years)
Received/Sought	Proportion received of amount sought (%)	Department of Transport Tourism and Sport (Various Years)
Control Variables		
Pop	Log of Total Population (Electoral Division)	Census: Small Area Population Statistics (2011)
Youth Pop	Percent of the population in the age bracket 0-19 (Electoral Division)	Census: Small Area Population Statistics (2011)
Unemployed	Persons looking for first job and unemployed having lost or given up previous work as percentage in working age (Electoral Division)	Census: Small Area Population Statistics (2011)
Population Density	Population per km^2 (Electoral Division)	Census: Small Area Population Statistics (2011)
Decision Makers		
Finance Minister	Log of Distance Finance Minister to Club (km)	Authors own calculations
Sport Minister	Log of Distance Sport Minister to Club (km)	Authors own calculations
Taoiseach	Log of Distance Taoiseach to Club (km)	Authors own calculations
Tánaiste	Log of Distance Tánaiste to Club (km)	Authors own calculations

3.1 Preliminary Analysis

In total data is available for 7,615 [5] individual grants over the period 2002-2015 totalling over €560millon. Given budgetary cutbacks no sports capital grants were awarded in the periods 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 or 2013. Although a number of special allocations were awarded, these were given to national and regional associations, thus are not considered. Grants allocated included sums as small as €200 to the Laois Community Games in 2007 and large sums to Munster Rugby in 2007 and 2008. On average applicants received 51% of their application.

Table 2 illustrates a county breakdown of successful applicants over the entire period. The large urban areas of Dublin and Cork rank highly in regards to the level of funding received by applicants during the period along with what was sought. While areas such as Longford and Leitrim perform particularly poorly. Focusing on the third column, which analyses the county ratio of received and sought, applicants in Laois received the highest proportion, while Longford the least.

3.2 Sporting Heterogeneity

Of these 7,615 successful applicants over the period, 69% of them were for; GAA facilities (36%), Soccer facilities (16%) or Multisport facilities (17%). Multisport can be a catch all term which can include, a joint initiative by two clubs, of different sporting codes, the building of a community hall or a grant awarded to a town council. In essence it is difficult to identify the exact purpose of the grant but it can be assumed that it is intended for more than one sporting activity. However, GAA and Soccer clubs can still benefit from these types of grants. For instance in 2012 under Fingal County Council, O'Dwyers GAA club and Balbriggan F.C received €120,000 for the construction of an all-weather facility. Examining the percentage of the monetary breakdown of allocations by county, again on average GAA facilities received 44% of the allocation over the period, with Soccer and Multisport accounting for 17% and 21%, respectively. On a county basis, these three types of facilities took over 90% of funding in counties such as Roscommon and Monaghan, while the lowest was in Limerick with circa 58%. The reason for the low share in Limerick was during the period a substantial level of funding went to the redevelopment of Munster Rugby's Thomand Park. By far the most funding goes into the construction of GAA facilities, with it accounting for nearly two thirds of allocations in counties such as Cavan, Leitrim and Monaghan during the period. Interestingly, only 2% of funding in Leitrim went to Soccer facilities, with the figure being the largest in Westmeath with 32% of the allocation.

Finally, taking into account the success rates of the various sporting codes in relation to funding successful applicants wished to secure, combined over the period GAA facilities, received circa 50% of their applied funding, Soccer facilities with 54% and Multisport with 49%. However, while it appears particular Sports receive much larger shares of funding, do these sports located close to key *Decision Makers* do well also? In order to ensure robust results and a large sample when examining the heterogeneity associated with different types of facilities, only the three largest types of sports will be used as reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Preliminary Data Analysis 2002-2015

County	Received	Sought	Received/Sought	Rank Received	Rank Sought	Received/Sought	GAA	Soccer	Multisport	Three Sports
Carlow County	5,939,533	11,800,000	50.34	24	25	14	50.81	10.91	12.01	73.73
Cavan County	8,962,744	17,000,000	52.72	20	20	8	64.40	8.97	14.07	87.44
Clare County	14,400,000	25,800,000	55.81	14	15	4	46.14	10.54	25.24	81.93
Cork County	63,100,000	126,000,000	50.08	**2**	**2**	16	41.87	13.21	15.30	70.38
Donegal County	19,400,000	44,700,000	43.40	8	7	25	32.56	28.30	27.05	87.91
Dublin County	142,000,000	244,000,000	58.20	**1**	**1**	**2**	17.06	24.18	30.73	71.97
Galway County	29,700,000	59,200,000	50.17	**3**	4	15	35.30	19.17	26.09	80.56
Kerry County	25,000,000	52,900,000	47.26	5	5	20	47.28	11.98	23.82	83.09
Kildare County	23,100,000	40,600,000	56.90	7	9	**3**	50.69	13.81	11.82	76.33
Kilkenny County	11,700,000	22,300,000	52.47	18	18	9	46.09	14.80	27.75	88.64
Laois County	8,532,111	14,000,000	60.94	21	23	**1**	46.46	11.90	28.20	86.56
Leitrim County	5,668,854	11,600,000	48.87	25	**26**	17	65.58	2.31	17.91	85.80
Limerick County	27,600,000	61,000,000	45.25	4	**3**	24	28.63	20.89	8.41	57.93
Longford County	5,390,231	12,500,000	43.12	**26**	24	**26**	62.47	9.55	12.44	84.46
Louth County	15,200,000	28,600,000	53.15	13	13	6	42.82	23.24	16.26	82.32
Mayo County	16,900,000	33,400,000	50.60	12	11	13	36.00	28.16	12.87	77.03
Meath County	18,900,000	41,400,000	45.65	9	8	23	49.09	17.37	21.96	88.42

Monaghan County	7,804,561	15,300,000	51.01	23	22	11	64.12	12.34	15.53	91.99
Offaly County	11,800,000	23,300,000	50.64	17	17	12	55.09	10.07	19.25	84.41
Roscommon County	8,270,691	16,200,000	51.05	22	21	10	50.44	27.13	16.81	94.39
Sligo County	10,600,000	22,100,000	47.96	19	19	19	17.93	15.87	45.46	79.27
Tipperary County	23,200,000	50,800,000	45.67	6	6	22	43.61	15.39	25.15	84.15
Waterford County	17,200,000	36,800,000	46.74	10	10	21	29.49	21.86	36.91	88.25
Westmeath County	12,300,000	25,600,000	48.05	16	16	18	33.01	31.46	17.38	81.85
Wexford County	17,200,000	32,500,000	52.92	11	12	7	45.15	24.57	16.31	86.03
Wicklow County	14,300,000	26,500,000	53.96	15	14	5	44.24	19.70	17.40	81.34
Total	564,168,725	1,095,900,000	Average 51.48	NA	NA	NA	44.09	17.22	20.85	82.16

4. Estimation Method

Similar to Gaunt (1999) and Suiter & O'Malley (2014a, 2014b) this study employs an OLS model to test for the effects of bias in the distribution of sports capital grants. The main model of estimation is presented as equation (1):

$$Grant_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 B_i + \beta_2 CC_i + \beta_t + \beta_s + \beta_c + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

Where $Grant_i$ is amount of funding awarded to club *i*, the β_0 is the constant term, while $\beta_{1...n}$ are the coefficients, B_i is the various measures of political bias, CC_i is a matrix of regional characteristics[7] associated with club *i* which influence the magnitude of the grant awarded. β_t, β_s, and β_c are a series of dummy variables controlling for year, sporting and county specific effects. ε_i is the error term. In the secondary estimation $Grant_i$ is replaced by $\mathrm{Re}v_i$ which is the amount of funding awarded to club i relative to what club i sought.

For ease of interpretation all variables are converted to their logarithmic form, bar variables which measure the unemployment rate, portion of youth in the population and funding a club received relative to what was sought. These three variables are measured as a percent. Given the error term may suffer from heteroskedasticty or autocorrelation, without addressing for this may result in biased estimates. To counter this clustered-robust standard errors are utilised, a common approach in the literature (Suiter & O'Malley, 2014a, 2014b; Considine & Doran, 2016). With the model specified the following section discusses the results.

5. Results

5.1 Model Results

The results for the initial estimation are presented in Table 3. The first equation (1) is the logarithm of the total € value of grant allocation a club received in a specific year. Equation

(3), (4) and (5) is the sample reduced to include only GAA facilities, Soccer facilities and Multisport facilities, respectively.

Across all estimations a significant negative coefficient is observed for the Sports Minister distance variable. This indicates, on average and holding everything else equal the further away a successful applicant is from the Minister for Sport's hometown, the lower the level of grant they will receive. It would appear that relationship is particularly pronounced for Soccer facilities with a 1% increase in the distance between a successful club and the Sports Minister decreases the value of award for a Soccer facility by 11%.

Regarding the other Ministerial distance variables, both the Minister for Finance and Taoiseach are found to have a significant effect on grant allocations as a whole, along with various other facilities (Finance – All, GAA, Soccer; Taoiseach – All, GAA, Multisport). The Minister for Sport and Finance having a significant influence on the trajectory of sports capital grants is in line with results found in Considine et al. (2008), Suiter and O'Malley (2014a; 2014b), and Considine and Doran (2016). However, to date no such study has found the Taoiseach as having a significant influence on grant allocations. For the remaining controls in regards to All (1) and Soccer (2) successful applicants located in poorer regions on average receive a lower magnitude of grant awarded, while successful applicants in more densely populated areas receive a higher level. On average larger grants are awarded to more populated regions, as noted for All (1) and Soccer (3). While, in relation to GAA (2) and Multisport facilities (4), on average, holding all else equal, a 1% increase in the number of youths in the population increases the overall monetary allocation to a club for a GAA and multisport facility by circa 110% and 42%, respectively. Those who engage in Gaelic Games, tend to be skewed towards a more youthful demographic, which may explain the strong relationship seen here (Lunn et al., 2013).

One possibility for the statistical significance of the role of the Taoiseach, may be that during the period 2002-2007 the Taoiseach was located in Dublin. As Table 2 noted, Dublin receives extremely large levels of grants. Given that a number of national headquarters of sporting organisations are located here, a number of large awards which may be utilised throughout the country might be being picked up by the Taoiseach distance variable. As local and regional projects are allowed to apply for a maximum of €150,000, focusing on these may give a better representation of the credit claiming projects to which a politician applies for. Re-estimating equation (1) with only these projects, indicates the only *Decision Maker* variables of significance are the Minister for Sport and Finance similar to the results found in previous studies.

Table 3: Dependent Variable - Logarithm of € value club received

	(1)All Facilities	*(2)GAA Facilities*	*(3)Soccer Facilities*	*(4)Multisport Facilities*
Decision Makers				
Finance Minister	-0.0924***	-0.1092***	-0.1097*	0.1019
	(0.0214)	(0.0304)	(0.0566)	(0.1794)
Sport Minister	-0.0770***	-0.0825***	-0.1051*	-0.0763*
	(0.0197)	(0.0282)	(0.0569)	(0.0431)
Taoiseach	-0.0509**	-0.1122***	-0.0061	-0.0787*
	(0.0207)	(0.0365)	(0.0574)	(0.0428)
Tánaiste	0.0038	0.0312	0.0366	0.0154
	(0.0325)	(0.0560)	(0.0738)	(0.0788)
Control Variables				
Population	0.0548***	0.0460	0.0853*	-0.0740
	(0.0186)	(0.1703)	(0.0436)	(0.0532)
Unemployed	-0.6829**	-1.0972**	-0.8408	-0.5682
	(0.3050)	(0.4538)	(0.6865)	(0.8144)
Youth Population	0.3676	0.9381*	0.2493	1.6141*
	(0.3489)	(0.5499)	(0.9644)	(0.8708)
Population	0.0274**	0.0384*	0.0282	0.0141
Density	(0.0132)	(0.0203)	(0.0322)	(0.0359)
Constant	11.2055***	11.2268***	10.9831***	10.1685***
	(0.2593)	(0.3834)	(0.6578)	(0.6995)
R^2	0.3076	0.1341	0.1744	0.1871
F	45.20	10.59	5.95	6.67
P>F	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Obs.	7,615	2,628	1,203	1,296

Note: ***, ** and * indicate significance at the 99, 95 and 90 percent level. Equation (1) controls for Sporting, Year and County effects, while the remainder controls for only Year and County effects. Robust Clustered Standard Errors in brackets.

So while it appears to be the case applicants located close to key decision makers on average do particularly well, for a variety of different facilities, does the relationship of pork barrelling hold when factoring in the amount of funding a club applied for? These results are presented in Table 4.

While in Table 3 the Sports Minister, Finance Minister and Taoiseach were seen as having a significant influence on the trajectory of discretionary sports expenditure, when factoring the amount a club received relative to what was sought, only successful applicants near the Taoiseach, Tánaiste and Minister for Finance have an influential impact. While successful applicants further away from these *Decision Makers* receive lower portions of funding, they do receive more of what they apply for. Put differently, while successful applicants nearer the Taoiseach and Minister for Finance's hometown receive larger awards, these same applicants receive a lower proportion of what they apply for. It may be the case as Considine et al. (2008) noted that those applicants located proximate to influential decision makers apply for larger allocations with the hope their local political figure can deliver for them. For robustness, a separate regression was run were the dependent variable was the Logarithm of € value an applicant sought. Results indicated that a 1% increase in distance from the hometown of the Minister of Sport (-0.0719***), Minister of Finance (-0.0992***) and Taoiseach (-0.0893***) see a decrease in the amount of funding an applicant seeks[6]. This provides evidence that successful applicants near key *Decision Makers* on average seek larger awards. For the remaining *Control Variables* a heterogeneity exists with results. Interestingly, for the entire sample (1) along with GAA facilities (2), successful applicants from poorer regions on average

receive greater portions of funding applied for, while for the same two samples, more youthful regions receive a lower portion of funding.

Table 4: Dependent Variable – Amount Received/Amount Sought (%)

	(1)All Facilities	*(2)GAA Facilities*	*(3)Soccer Facilities*	*(4)Multisport Facilities*
Decision Makers				
Finance Minister	0.0083**	0.0212***	-0.0102	0.0158
	(0.0039)	(0.0065)	(0.0098)	(0.0097)
Sport Minister	-0.0021	1.02E-05	-0.0054	-0.0034
	(0.0038)	(0.0065)	(0.0134)	(0.0096)
Taoiseach	0.0265***	0.0330***	0.0281***	0.0376***
	(0.0035)	(0.0079)	(0.0093)	(0.0082)
Tánaiste	0.0178***	0.0245**	0.0167	-0.0039
	(0.0055)	(0.0106)	(0.0117)	(0.0139)
Control Variables				
Population	-0.0026	0.0072	-0.0076	-0.0042
	(0.0035)	(0.0065)	(0.0084)	(0.0093)
Unemployed	0.1379**	0.1920*	0.1069	-0.1118
	(0.0562)	(0.1036)	(0.1413)	(0.1418)
Youth Population	-0.1248**	-0.3973***	-0.1515	0.2072
	(0.0619)	(0.1182)	(0.1576)	(0.1473)
Population Density	-0.0041	-0.0151***	-0.0055	0.0079
	(0.0025)	(0.0047)	(0.0061)	(0.0068)
Constant	0.5608***	0.4088***	0.6178***	0.4080***
	(0.0378)	(0.0843)	(0.1305)	(0.1251)
R^2	0.1861	0.1553	0.1582	0.2463
F	36.75	11.84	6.16	10.50
P>F	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Obs.	7,615	2,628	1,203	1,296

Note: ***, ** and * indicate significance at the 99, 95 and 90 percent level. Equation (1) controls for Sporting, Year and County effects, while the remainder controls for only Year and County effects. Robust Clustered Standard Errors in brackets.

5.2 Distance Effects and Decision Makers

As the results in the previous section highlight that *Decision Makers*, namely the Taoiseach and Minister's for Sport and Finance can have an influence on the trajectory of spending, they do not address the fact that similar to the heterogeneity amongst different sporting facilities, there may also be a heterogeneity amongst different individuals. In recent years Considine et al. (2008), Considine and Doran (2016), Suiter and O'Malley (2014a, 2014b) have provided

more evidence to the presence of pork barrelling so much so, that an informal rule titled the *Considine Rule*[7] was brought in to curtail the bias in distribution of local grants. However, before this increased commentary and empirical analysis occurred, was the presence of rewarding your locality more promient? In order to assess this, additional models were estimated which included interaction terms between significant *Decision Maker* variables and individual specific *Decision Makers* in order to consider individual specific effects. The estimated average marginal effects of distance to the Minister for Sport, Finance and Taoiseach for the various different individuals from the preferred version of this model are presented in Table 5, 6 and 7.

From Table 5 results suggest that the prevalence of the Minister for Sport rewarding their locality has decreased over the years, and under different individuals. Under Jim McDaid and John O'Donoghue there appeared to be an extreme bias in targeting allocations in their locality, with the estimated average marginal effect being particularly pronounced under McDaid. Moreover, Soccer facilities located close to McDaid were rewarded particularly well during the period, a sport which the former Minister has a particular affinity too. Similarly, when Michael Ring was Minister for Sport it appears that Soccer facilities located proximate to the then Minister benefited particularly well. Part of this effect may be driven by the grant of €200,000 Westport United FC received, something which the Minister was forced to explain to the media[7].

In Table 6 a similar pattern appears with the estimated marginal effects being negative and statistically significant under both Bertie Ahern and Brian Cowen. The magnitude, in absolute terms is very large for Cowen. One potential reason for this may be that this period was an election year and the Taoiseach moved from the Minister of Finance post to his new role. Moreover, the former Offaly GAA footballer appeared to reward local GAA facilities particularly well during his time in power, along with Multisport projects.

Finally, while over the entire sample the evidence of favouritism has diminished recently for both the Minister for Sport and Taoiseach, the same is not true for the Minister for Finance. A clear bias towards the locality was evident under the last three Minister's for Finance, with the magnitude of the effect particularly strong for Brian Lenihan, no doubt partly explained by the upcoming general election in this period.

However, for the case of the Taoiseach and Minister for Sport it would appear that in more recent year's favouritism or pork barrelling has disappeared. A potential reason for this could be attributed to the increased spotlight placed on the distribution of sports capital grants by both the media, and academics cited within. Although Considine and Doran (2016) who analyse the *Considine Rule* note that introduction of increased constraints on Minister Ring, caused him to engage in providing additional grants in "Non-Local", "Special" and "Other" in his locality – something this dataset doesn't analyse.

Table 5: Estimated Marginal Effect of distance (log) by Minister of Sport

Period	*Minister*	*All*	*GAA*	*Soccer*	*Multisport*
2002	McDaid	-0.1248**	-0.1378	-0.1836*	-0.1056
		(-2.41)	(-1.49)	(-1.95)	(-1.06)
2003-2007	O'Donoghue	-0.1198***	-0.1122***	-0.0402	-0.1176**
		(-4.15)	(-2.63)	(-0.32)	(-2.25)
2008	Cullen	-0.0409	-0.0688	0.0906	-0.1302
		(-0.75)	(-1.15)	(1.12)	(-0.55)
2012-2015	Ring	0.0387	0.0472	-0.2532*	0.0323
		(0.82)	(0.58)	(-1.67)	(0.29)

Note: ***, ** and * indicate significance at the 99, 95 and 90 percent level. The dependent variable is natural logarithm of grant. The model is an OLS with clustered standard errors and the table indicates the marginal effect of distance (log) by Sports Minister. Absolute values of t statistics are presented in parenthesis.

Table 6: Estimated Marginal Effect of distance (log) by Taoiseach

Period	*Taoiseach*	*All*	*GAA*	*Soccer*	*Multisport*
2002-2007	Ahern	-0.0734***	-0.1380***	0.0142	-0.0921
		(-2.77)	(-2.72)	(0.21)	(-1.48)
2008	Cowen	-0.1729**	-0.2231**	0.0651	-0.5948**
		(-2.37)	(-2.28)	(0.32)	(-2.36)
2012-2015	Kenny	0.0662	-0.0054	-0.1219	0.0376
		(1.20)	(-0.08)	(-0.86)	(0.24)

Note: ***, ** and * indicate significance at the 99, 95 and 90 percent level. The dependent variable is natural logarithm of grant. The model is an OLS with clustered standard errors

and the table indicates the marginal effect of distance (log) by Sports Minister. Absolute values of t statistics are presented in parenthesis.

Table 7: Estimated Marginal Effect of distance (log) by Minister of Finance

Period	*Minister*	*All*	*GAA*	*Soccer*	*Multisport*
2002-	McCreevy	-0.0415	-0.1800***	0.0641	0.2591
2004		(-1.12)	(-3.39)	(0.67)	(2.70)
2005-	Cowen	-0.0862**	-0.0512	-0.2405*	-0.1117
2007		(-2.16)	(-1.09)	(-1.70)	(-1.05)
2008	Lenihan	-0.1604***	-0.1798***	-0.1419	-0.1137
		(-2.97)	(-1.09)	(-0.95)	(-0.72)
2012-	Noonan	-0.0969**	-0.0744	-0.2124***	-0.2017
2015		(-2.55)	(-1.27)	(-2.68)	(-1.34)

Note: ***, ** and * indicate significance at the 99, 95 and 90 percent level. The dependent variable is natural logarithm of grant. The model is an OLS with clustered standard errors and the table indicates the marginal effect of distance (log) by Sports Minister. Absolute values of t statistics are presented in parenthesis.

6. Conclusion

The research reported here has advanced the literature relating to distributive politics, namely in relation to sports expenditure in a number of ways. Firstly, this paper proposes a new method of measuring sports pork, namely the portion of funding a club received, relative to the level of funding a club applied for. Moreover, to date any analysis, particularly in Ireland has treated grants as homogenous, without taking into the account the heterogeneity of different types of facilities. Finally, the common dummy variable to measure the location of a key *Decision Maker* is replaced thanks to a novel geocoded dataset, which measures the distance between a *Decision Maker's* hometown to successful applicant's location.

The theory of distributive politics is tested utilising data over the period 2002-2015, with the overall monetary value an applicant received, along with the ratio of funding received by a club relative to what was sought. Descriptive analysis on a county level note, over the period in question Dublin, not only received some of the largest levels of funding, but had one of the best success rates of receiving the level of funding applied for. Examining the variation in

funding of different sports, three sports tend to dominate. Much of the funding for grants go towards GAA, Soccer or Multisport facilities, with these three types of facilities accounting for over 80% of funding in some counties.

Empirically testing the role of *Decision Makers*, successful applicants geographically proximate to the Minister for Sport, Finance and Taoiseach receive larger levels of funding on average. Unlike previous studies, the Taoiseach is found to have an influence on the trajectory of discretionary capital expenditure. However, this effect appears to be influenced by a small number of large rewards, as this relationship disappears focusing on more local grants of €150,000 or less.

In regards to the secondary relationship successful applicants closer to the Taoiseach, Minister for Finance and Tánaiste receive a lower proportion of the level of funding they apply for. As Considine et al. (2008) notes this may be due to the fact that applicants near influential *Decision Makers* feel that they stand a better chance of securing larger rewards given the political influence these individuals possess. Subsequently it is found that applicants near both the Minister for Sport, Finance and Taoiseach ask for larger grants, thus providing direct evidence to this assertion. Finally, estimating the marginal effects of distance on individual *Decision Makers* it would appear that the prevalence of bias towards the locality has decreased over the years for both the Minister for Sport and Taoiseach. However, no such relationship is evident for the most recent Minister for Finance.

This study, over the entire period find the benefits of having an influential figure in your locality to increase the magnitude of allocation a club can receive, a relationship which is consistent amongst a variety of different facilities. However, when factoring in the level of funding these same applicants apply for, no such benefit exists, pointing to the fact that clubs

geographically proximate to key *Decision Makers* on average tend to apply for much larger grants.

Endnotes

1. Ireland from here on.
2. While the responsibility for the distribution of sports capital grants have fallen under the remit of numerous different government departments and Ministers, for clarity throughout this individual/department is referred to as the Minister for Sport.
3. This is the voting system utilised in Ireland.
4. This is the smallest level of regional statistical information available. It was chosen as it allows a larger level of variability, unlike more aggregated county or constituency data.
5. Due to missing data on grant sought by clubs, some grants are omitted.
6. See Appendix Table I for regression results.
7. This informal rule was based on the premise that no county would receive more than 150%, or less than 75%, of the national average.
8. Michael Ring noted Westport United FC having never received a grant in previous years as one the reasons behind their large allocation.

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Appendix

Table I: Dependent Variable - Logarithm of € value club sought

	(1)All Facilities	*(2)GAA Facilities*	*(3)Soccer Facilities*	*(4)Multisport Facilities*
Decision Makers				
Finance Minister	-0.0992***	-0.1369***	-0.0698	-0.5845
	(0.0227)	(0.0320)	(0.0574)	(0.0758)
Sport Minister	-0.0719***	-0.0763**	-0.0891	-0.0873*
	(0.0220)	(0.0336)	(0.0622)	(0.0499)
Taoiseach	-0.0893***	-0.1700***	-0.0553	-0.1193**
	(0.0211)	(0.0349)	(0.0547)	(0.0532)
Tánaiste	-0.0322	-0.0199	0.0160	0.0073
	(0.0347)	(0.0549)	(0.0812)	(0.0870)
Control Variables				
Population	0.0613***	0.0538*	0.1021**	0.0809
	(0.0199)	(0.0305)	(0.0470)	(0.0579)
Unemployed	-0.9659***	-1.5031***	-1.0229	-0.3424
	(0.3241)	(0.4842)	(0.7358)	(0.8835)
Youth Population	0.5682	1.6376***	0.4309	1.1425
	(0.3719)	(0.6024)	(1.0123)	(0.9293)
Population	0.0371***	0.0721***	0.0385	0.0041
Density	(0.0141)	(0.0217)	(0.0343)	(0.0387)
Constant	11.9423***	12.0488***	11.3335***	11.1423***
	(0.2798)	(0.4221)	(0.6991)	(0.7677)
R^2	0.3229	0.1442	0.1806	0.1948
F	57.64	11.00	5.80	7.05
P>F	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Obs.	7,615	2,628	1,203	1,296

Note: ***, ** and * indicate significance at the 99, 95 and 90 percent level. Equation (1) controls for Sporting, Year and County effects, while the remainder controls for only Year and County effects. Robust Clustered Standard Errors in brackets.