

## Summary

The project investigates the extent to which political parties' organizational coverage and electoral geography – the degree to which they are successful at gaining electoral support throughout all regions within a country – affects both the incentives and opportunities of parties to engage in particularistic spending towards favoured regions. In political science, political party nationalization has figured prominently on the theoretical agenda, and scholarly assertions abound on the significance of party nationalization in determining the geographical 'scope' of national policy. However such claims regarding the importance of political parties' geographic 'linkages' for public policy, have rarely been subject to empirical scrutiny.

The central theoretical proposition is that the degree of nationalization affects parties' preferences over geographical distribution. Competition at the national level between state-wide parties who run in, and represent, all regions in a state has a better chance of leading to nationalized, comprehensive policy programs. By contrast, regionally fragmented party systems will tend to lead to more particularistic policy programs that result from cross-regional log-rolls or policies that distribute benefits unevenly across geographic areas. The general objective of the project is to test the contention that regionalized political competition leads to inferior public goods provision compared with contexts where parties are nationally represented throughout all regions in a state.

In Chapter 1 we introduce the project, describing its framework and main objectives. Its main contribution is the literature on distributive politics – work concerned with the geographic allocation of goods and services by governments. In such empirical studies of distributive politics, scholars seek to ascertain the systematic determinants of the differential distribution of goods and services between regions in a country. The central perspective within this literature has emphasized the institutional determinants of particularistic policies: in particular voting rules and regime type are seen as especially important in explaining variation in distributive politics. Our focus, by contrast, is on direct influence of political parties in distributive policy. We emphasize that political party characteristics, relatively independent of the institutional environment, are important to explain variance in pork barrel activities both across countries and within countries over time.

Despite the prominent understanding of the importance of party nationalization in producing national public goods, this view has only recently been subject to empirical scrutiny. Chapter 3 presents a time series, cross-national investigation of the impact of parties with regionalized patterns of electoral support on governments' public spending priorities. When fiscal policy is

bargained between parties that represent regionally specific interests, this is likely to lead to a 'fiscal common pool problem'. This comparative study makes a valuable contribution to the emerging literature finding that the extent to which national governments are representative of all regions within a country, has an influence on the level of spending on geographically concentrated (local) public goods by central governments.

While a number of studies have recently emerged investigating the policy consequences of parties' variable electoral geography on public policy outcomes, this project is amongst the first to investigate the direct policy effects of party nationalization on distributive policy in specific countries. In our case study of the allocation of regional infrastructure investment by central governments in Italy (1972-2006) we point to the explanatory importance of variation in parties' electoral geography to explain 'macro' shifts in the level of redistribution among regions. While the extant literature generally attempts to explain observed patterns in pork barrel spending in terms of institutional explanations, these explanations are insufficient to explain the large-scale changes to the system of inter-regional transfers we observe after 1994. The key implication we take from the study is the 'functional' nature of politically motivated regional investment in Italy. The insight is that political factors have a strong influence on regional investment in Italy across all periods studied (1972-2006) but the extent to which some regions are 'disfavoured' in terms of investment is strongly influenced by the political geography of the governing parties.

Likewise in our study of the allocation of infrastructure investment among Spanish provinces by the central government (1978-2010), we find that political institutional factors are inadequate to explaining observed variation in distributive policy, among political parties operating in the same institutional context. We find that the extent to which different parties in government pursue political 'tactical' distribution to favoured constituencies is, to a large extent, determined by their electoral geography.

The findings are relevant to a larger theoretical literature related to political economy and distributive politics. In particular, we argue that the emphasis in this literature on exploring patterns of politically motivated distribution should shift away from formal electoral institutional incentives that political actors face towards a greater cognizance of the importance of the distributive incentives generated by political geography.