

The Distributive Politics of “Compassion in Action”: Federal Funding, Faith-Based Organizations, and Electoral Advantage

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Abstract

Incorporating race into tactical spending for electoral gain, this article revisits the relative effects of vote production and vote retention on distributive politics. It investigates whether a “compassion strategy” to influence the electoral behavior of voters while being responsive to need-based social welfare demands affected federal discretionary grants to faith-based organizations (FBOs) during the administration of George W. Bush. The findings suggest that federal domestic social welfare funding of FBOs may have involved a combination of the tactical use of grants for both electoral purposes (i.e., vote production and vote retention) and the reduction of need among the states.

Keywords

distributive politics, race, political behavior, faith-based initiative, George W. Bush, compassionate conservatism

Studies of distributive politics—“the politics of expenditure programs where the benefits can be targeted to specific localities, paid for via general revenues”—seek to determine why, *ceteris paribus*, more national funding flows to some subnational locales, governments, organizations, and initiatives than to others (Weingast 1994, 319). The degree to which “expenditure decisions are political decisions, which answer the question ‘who to support’ more than they define what to do,” is a key inquiry (Anton, Cawley, and Kramer 1980, xvi). Scholars generally deduce that political incumbents use distributive politics in two ways for electoral purposes. One, they allocate federal grants in aid and other financial resources to reward supporters and to hold electoral bases (e.g., Cox and McCubbins 1986; McCarty 2000; Bertelli and Grose 2009). Two, they dispense incentives to swing voters to increase vote shares for retaining their offices (e.g., Lindbeck and Weibull 1993; Dixit and Londregan 1996; Bickers and Stein 1996). Both streams of this political allocation theory of distributive politics are logical, even in the face of empirical results providing mixed support for the vote retention and vote production arguments (Cox 2010) and evidence that incumbents may allocate awards to respond to need and merit regardless of potential electoral advantage (Rich 1989; Bickers and Stein 1996; Lowry and Potoski 2004).

Identifying the dominant electoral explanation for the political allocation of federal revenues remains central to

the study of distributive politics. We revisit political allocation theory to assess the relative effects of vote production and vote retention on distributive politics. Our study diverges from much of the distributive politics literature by incorporating race into the theory of tactical spending for electoral gain. In addition, it examines discretionary social welfare spending during an administrative presidency.

We focus on the effect of incumbent calculation and support by voters on political allocations. However, in the literature race is never central to general considerations about the effects of need and merit of subnational jurisdictions and actors. Furthermore, needs-driven arguments that we might broadly relate to race overlook how decisions to direct greater funds to needier locales may buttress electoral calculations related to distributive politics. Yet some awards may reflect race-influenced electoral calculations. This is especially plausible regarding social welfare spending. In particular, the flow of discretionary federal funds to faith-based organizations (FBOs)

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across the states for domestic social welfare activities during the presidential administration of George W. Bush provides an interesting case for observing distributive politics with an eye toward spying the effect of racial–electoral calculations on political allocations. We explore it here, guided by the nascent “compassion cues” literature (Hutchings et al. 2004, 514; Streb 2001; Fraga and Leal 2004; Philpot 2007; McDaniel and Ellison 2008).

Federal funding of FBOs through discretionary grants during the Bush administration ostensibly was about increasing the capacity of nongovernmental organizations to manage the effects of social marginalization and the federal government to assist in the reduction of poverty as well as broadening the space for religion in the public square. However, the allocation of federal funds to FBOs from across the states happened amid overt appeals to African American and Hispanic clergy and lay leaders to collaborate with government, highlighting their strengths for minimizing the effects of racial and structural inequality in America. It is conceivable that some of the geographic spread of federal funding and appeals to African American and Hispanic FBOs may have reflected electoral calculations that emphasized race as much as a passion to reduce poverty and other measures of social welfare needs. We posit that the strategic use of social welfare grants under the banner of “compassion” was intended to influence the voting behavior of swing voters, as well as African American and Hispanic voters, during the Bush administration.

Unlike much of the distributive politics research that examines grant making by Congress, we focus on bureaucratic allocations of grants. The literature notes, “[D]iscretionary grant programs are perhaps unlikely places to find strong [political allocation] effects since these awards are made in the byways of bureaucracies, insulated to some degree from congressional and presidential political pressures” (Lowry and Potoski 2004, 517). Still, the influence of bureaucracies over distributive politics can be substantive (see, e.g., Bertelli and Grose 2009). This should be true during an administrative presidency (Nathan 1983; McCarty 2000). Such presidencies like that of George W. Bush seek to achieve political ends as much as they strive for efficiency and effectiveness (Farris, Nathan, and Wright 2004; Aberbach 2005; Waterman 2009).

In addition, whereas the literature tends to study noncompetitive or formula-based grant making, we study competitive or nonformula-based grant making. Agencies allocate such awards per bureaucratic review of formal submissions of proposals meeting objective criteria. Like typical competitive, nonformula-based grants, the awards themselves are composed of relatively nominal amounts open to narrow targeting to particular interests (Gamkhar 2002). Inequality is inherent in their allocation.

All may make claims on such grants but, as Arnold (1981, 109) reminds us, “[not] all claimants deserve a share of benefits. The concentration of benefits in some areas and the denial of shares for other areas is perfectly legitimate.” Also, their nature makes them most open to direct influence by a president (Lowry and Potoski 2004; Bertelli and Grose 2009). Here, we rely on an original data set of competitive, nonformula grants awarded by federal agencies to FBOs (i.e., religion-affiliated nonprofits and religious congregations) across the fifty states from 2002 through 2007.

Generally, our results support the theory that incumbents tactically use grants for political purposes, both vote production and vote retention. They also suggest that racial–electoral calculations have a substantive effect on the distribution of social welfare spending, far more than demand and merit.

Presidential Advocacy for Funding FBOs

Presidential advocacy for increased federal funding to better deliver “public services” at the local level was a hallmark of the Bush administration.¹ In 2001, the Bush administration issued Executive Orders 13198 and 13199, laying the foundation for its “faith-based and community initiatives” (FBCI), which it built on through subsequent orders (National Archives and Records Administration 2001; for analyses of the executive orders, see Black, Koopman, and Ryden 2004; Roberts-DeGennaro 2007). The orders established FBCI offices and centers in the White House and federal agencies such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Agency for International Development, and the Administration for Children and Families. There were mixed motivations for the FBCI (Formicola, Segers, and Weber 2003; Black, Koopman, and Ryden 2004; DiIulio 2007; Wineburg 2007).

The offices and the broader effort of the FBCI were to “help the Federal Government coordinate a national effort to expand opportunities for faith-based and other community organizations and to strengthen their capacity to better meet social needs in America’s communities” (National Archives and Records Administration 2001, 8499).² The president was genuine in his calls to reduce the scale of social welfare problems (e.g., large welfare caseloads, recidivating felons, low-performing public schools). He routinely spoke of the need for government (and the Republican Party) to create opportunities for the poor to enter the mainstream in terms of employment, educational attainment, desistance from crime, and homeownership (Gerson 2007). As a candidate in 2000, for example, Bush delivered a message before the National

Association for the Advancement of Colored People: “We cannot afford to have an America segregated by class, by race or by aspiration. America must close the gap of hope between communities of prosperity and communities of poverty” (New York Times, 2000). He proposed the FBCI as a means of closing “the gap,” and he encouraged greater distribution of federal funds to FBOs to experiment with ways of fostering self-sufficiency among the poor and resolving broader social welfare problems. The FBCI fit with his social welfare doctrine that government should look to FBOs first as partners for managing the consequences of poverty and influencing the individual choices of the poor (Bush 2001). Bush believed, too, that the FBCI would create opportunities for nontraditional groups, especially small, local FBOs, to participate in the delivery of federally supported social welfare (White House 2001; DiIulio 2007).

In addition, the FBCI was a vehicle to diffuse Bush’s perspective on fostering greater church–state collaboration throughout the federal bureaucracy as well as state and municipal bureaucracies (DiIulio 2007; Sager 2010). In 2002, he stated that “as President, I have an authority I intend to use. Many acts of discrimination against faith-based groups are committed by Executive Branch agencies. And, as the leader of the Executive Branch, I’m going to make some changes” (quoted in Farris, Nathan, and Wright 2004, 1). Institutionalization of the FBCI would affect the culture of discretionary social welfare grant making by weakening perceived biases against the presence of religion in the public square and advancing positive neutrality or equal treatment of religion as distributive doctrine in allocating federal social welfare funds (DiIulio 2007; White House 2008b; Sager 2010). Changing the culture of social welfare grant making would “level the playing field” for FBOs to compete for federal discretionary grants, recruit more FBOs to apply for grants, and increase the likelihood of federal agencies awarding more grants to FBOs (White House 2001; DiIulio 2007).

Furthermore, the FBCI was a means of creating an administrative presidency for Mr. Bush (Farris, Nathan, and Wright 2004; DiIulio 2007; Waterman 2009). Such presidencies, where a president installs agency heads and other agents vetted for superior loyalty and alters the designs of agencies to increase bureaucratic compliance with presidential policy goals, seek “responsive competence” from bureaucracies to “circumvent established organizations and vested interests” in the Congress and to “acquire control over the structures and processes of government” (Moe 1985, 239-44; also see Nathan 1983). Institutionalization of the FBCI through its offices and centers granted the administration greater influence over executive agencies and bureaucratic rule regimes in

“virtually every Federal effort to address human need” (White House 2008b). Moreover, it allowed the Bush administration to bypass congressional opposition from a variety of Democrats, as well as Republicans who opposed taking on issues of poverty in ways that “sounded like a Democratic idea” (Gerson 2007, 169).

Along with possibly reducing the scale of social welfare problems, the White House may have intended the FBCI to complement its electoral strategies and those of the GOP. The theme of government partnering with FBOs was potentially bipartisan, given that Al Gore relied on it during his 2000 presidential campaign, Bill Clinton had supported it as part of welfare reform in 1996, and public opinion favored it (DiIulio 2007; Wuthnow 2004). More important, in some quarters, according to one analysis, the FBCI “seemed less a vehicle to implement the philosophy of ‘compassionate conservatism’ and more of a political strategy to attract African-American and Hispanic voters. . . . Strategically, [Karl] Rove was motivated by the need to enlarge the base of the Republican Party and transform its religious rhetoric” (Formicola and Segers 2003, 117, 125). Moreover, some Republican congressmen determined that the FBCI seemed inconceivable without a partisan angle. “Quite frankly,” in the words of Representative Mark Souder (R-Indiana), “part of the reason [the FBCI] went political is because we can’t sell it unless we can show Republicans a political advantage to it, because it’s not our base” (quoted in Edsall 2006, A1). Also, the memoirs and testimonies of some political appointees and civil servants imply that the distribution of discretionary grants, generally, was partly a function of political favoritism, one they deemed characteristic of the executive branch during the Bush administration (Kuo 2006; Stout 2006).³

The Political Allocation of “Compassion”

Politics influences the allocation of federal funding to subnational governments and nongovernmental organizations (Shepsle and Weingast 1981). A general implication is that incumbents are tactical in their distribution of discretionary grants. This political allocation theory holds that incumbents award national funds to subnational locales to increase electoral advantage, preserve partisan power, and reward political supporters. The logic of political allocation has two variants, *vote production* (producing new electoral supporters) and *vote retention* (retaining core electoral supporters).⁴

The *vote production thesis* is that political incumbents with influence over distributive processes mainly direct awards and other political resources to areas or actors in areas where political competition for swing voters is the

greatest (Lindbeck and Weibull 1993; Dixit and Londregan 1996; Bickers and Stein 1996). It emphasizes the electoral importance of “the relatively many moderates, nearly indifferent between the parties on the basis of policy position and traditional loyalties, and more likely to switch their votes on the basis of particularistic benefits” (Dixit and Londregan 1996, 1148). In American national elections, swing voters are pivotal voters, and many of them are moderate white voters (Mayer 2008).

Studies of “compassion cues” (Hutchings et al. 2004, 514; Streb 2001; Fraga and Leal 2004; Philpot 2007; McDaniel and Ellison 2008) along with memoirs by Republicans (Olasky 2000; Kuo 2006; Gerson 2007) suggest that Bush and other members of the GOP employed symbolic and substantive messages to signal to moderate white swing voters, especially women, that the GOP was taking a new path regarding social welfare issues. It sought to indicate a new willingness to assist the poor through public policy as well as to appear more racially inclusive. Examples included televised events by the president promoting faith-based initiatives and school choice, often literally against a backdrop of “compassion in action,” accompanied by rows or images of African Americans, particularly children. These moments were to signify an ideological and policy shift to “compassionate conservatism,” described by Bush (2000, xi; also see Olasky 2000; Gerson 2007) as a “conservatism that cares about [the needy], and makes a concerted effort to help them bring lasting change into their lives.” Strategically, the moments were to suggest to moderate white voters that Republicans are conscious of human suffering and desire to alleviate it (Hutchings et al. 2004). Thus, “compassion in action” was a message to advance the “symbolic mainstreaming” of the GOP to influence moderate white voters (Fraga and Leal 2004, 298) while permitting the GOP to “add a new face to the race card” without necessarily changing its deck of policies (Philpot 2007, 53). In that way the compassion card differs from the conventional race card.

Instead of priming racial stereotypes and sending implicit negative messages about racial minorities, tactics normally associated with “playing the race card” in contemporary American politics to influence white voters (Mendelberg 2001; Hurwitz and Peffley 2005), the compassion card primes racial stereotypes and sends implicit messages about the magnanimity of whites in terms of noblesse oblige and a lack of hardheartedness or meanness in relation to the poor, especially poor minorities. In addition, the compassion card allows candidates to suggest that compassion is a key characteristic of their personality, which may have special appeal for moderate women (Hutchings et al. 2004). It also may imply to prospective voters that an activist government is permissible

and valuable but with a twist. By positioning nongovernmental organizations as key agents of the state, it sends a message that active but smaller government is best. Thus, compassionate conservatism does not appear costly along a number of dimensions. Most important, it does not demand evidence of new substantive policy choices and decisions that improve the lives of the poor. Symbols inclusive of images and words may adequately communicate the message of Republican care, regard, and inclusion in relation to racial and ethnic minorities (Fraga and Leal 2004).⁵ Presumably, all of this resonates among moderate white voters. Applying this reasoning to the flow of federal funds to FBOs across the states then, we would expect a greater number and/or amount of grants to go to FBOs located in states where there are more swing voters.

Hypothesis 1a: More federal discretionary funds went to FBOs in states with more swing voters than states with fewer swing voters.

Although the GOP may design its “compassion strategy” to induce new electoral support from moderate white voters (Hutchings et al. 2004), another objective of its compassion cues is to influence minority voters (Streb 2001; Wallace and Lewis 2007). The GOP does not seek the bulk or even a large minority of African American and Hispanic votes. It does seek to cleave some minority support from Democrats, especially in battleground states, where small percentage points influence presidential and statewide elections. This is plausible given that under some conditions the GOP can peel minority votes from Democrats. From 2000 to 2004, for example, the proportions of African Americans and Hispanics voters casting ballots for Bush increased, modestly overall but especially in battleground states like Ohio. Hence, the GOP may treat African American and Hispanic voters as if they are swing voters. Furthermore, in pursuit of minority votes, the GOP plays an unconventional “race card in American political discourse”; it appeals to racial groups based on their collective interest in seemingly nonracial issues and policies (White 2007, 339).⁶ In addition, recent placement by the GOP of issues on the public agenda that disproportionately affect African American and Hispanic communities but generally go unaddressed by Democrats (e.g., the challenges of ex-prisoner reentry) is intended to indicate that national Republicans understand and act on some of the problems residing at the intersection of race and inequality. In doing so, the GOP appears responsive, albeit in small ways, to a long-standing request by black political leaders that it “exhibit a compassionate conservatism that adapts itself to the realities of a society ridden by class and race distinction” (Rule 1981, 17). For

African Americans and Hispanics, such an exhibition would appear stronger and more credible if it were substantive rather than symbolic.

Lacking an interest in influencing all types of African American and Hispanic voters, the GOP focuses on African Americans and Hispanics for whom religion is most salient, namely black and Hispanic Protestants. It recognizes their potential as “values voters” (Wuthnow 2004; Espinosa 2008; McDaniel and Ellison 2008).⁷ In particular, GOP advocacy for greater federal funding of FBOs and its highlighting of the faith-based activities of African American and Hispanic Protestants, especially pastors and congregants of inner-city ministries, appeal to African American and Hispanic Protestants (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2001; Wuthnow 2004; Owens 2007; Wilson 2008). Such Protestants believe in the capacity of FBOs to transform the lives of the poor, and many of them personally attest to it. They also favor a porous wall between church and state. For instance, African American and Hispanic Protestants are among the strongest supporters of transferring public money to FBOs generally and funding FBOs that engage in religious hiring discrimination specifically (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2001). In addition, and in line with a rationale of the FBCI, black Protestant clergy see material benefits such as discretionary grants as a way to level the playing field for FBOs competing to collaborate with government agencies to provide social welfare. They see it as their chance to get their fair share (Owens 2007). Getting it under a Republican administration would denote for black (and Hispanic) Protestants a strong and credible exhibition of compassionate conservatism, one emphasizing substantive decisions over symbolic behavior.

There is no strong theoretical expectation regarding whether funding will flow more to states with greater proportions of African American voters relative to Hispanic voters. The GOP may prefer the support of Hispanics over African Americans because it perceives the former to be a better fit with its core constituencies. There is evidence from the racial distancing and stereotyping literatures, for instance, that whites and Hispanics tend to place themselves proximate to each other rather than to African Americans, especially in terms of work ethic and social conservatism, even if whites are less likely to place themselves closer to Hispanics than Hispanics are to place themselves nearer to whites (e.g., McClain et al. 2006). Hispanic support, too, as evidence of “racial” inclusion may be adequate to soften the hardhearted image of the GOP in the eyes of moderate whites without having to demonstrate substantial inclusion of other groups (Fraga and Leal 2004). Also, some states with higher proportions of Hispanic voters such as New Mexico were electoral prizes sought by the GOP.

Nevertheless, GOP strategists presumed that African American turnout would aid the electoral efforts of the Republican Party in states, especially battleground states, that had morality initiatives (e.g., same-sex marriage bans) up for votes. Also, while proportions of Hispanics are increasing in GOP stronghold states, their relatively low rates of citizenship hinder their electoral influence. In addition, some Republicans may view Hispanic support as an electoral liability to retaining core supporters, particularly in light of white and Republican fear and resentment of Hispanics that manifests itself in punitive local ordinances that regulate the livelihoods of undocumented immigrants (Ramakrishnan and Wong, 2010) and negative attitude toward Hispanic immigrants (Cohen-Marks, Nuño, and Sanchez 2009; Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2006). Plus, Republicans may prefer African American support to Hispanic support. Perhaps seeking the support of African Americans, the conventional “needy” group in the United States, sends the strongest message to white moderates that the GOP and its candidates are compassionate. Last, the social welfare organizations of Hispanic Protestantism may not be as developed as those of black Protestantism and Hispanic Catholicism, which would reduce their capacity for winning federal funding and hamper the political distribution of federal funding to them.

Because it is plausible the Bush administration would strategically distribute federal funding to generate votes from minority voters, be they African American or Hispanic, we propose a hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1b: More federal discretionary funds went to FBOs in states with higher rates of registered African American and Hispanic voters than states with lower rates of registered African American and Hispanic voters.

This should especially prove true in battleground states like Ohio, Florida, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania. It would suggest that the GOP values minority votes in competitive states. Plus, given high correlations between the size of minority electorates and the size of minority populations, it could strengthen support for our earlier hypothesis that the compassion strategy is less about winning minority votes and more about yielding white votes for an electoral victory. Funding FBOs in battleground states with higher rates of African Americans and Hispanics in the electorate signals “compassion in action” that cues African Americans, Hispanics, white moderates, and white conservatives in the most electorally appealing states.

Alternatively, if Hypothesis 1a (i.e., the GOP engages in vote production among swing voters) is correct we should

observe an absence of racial–electoral effects vis-à-vis discretionary grant allocations.⁸ The strategic pursuit of moderate whites would not require substantive actions such as allocations to areas with more African Americans and Hispanics; symbolism should yield an effect equal if not greater than substance. Also, as Fraga and Leal (2004, 300) observe, national incumbents should show great caution in allocating benefits in ways that could turn off moderate white swing voters. Furthermore, if vote retention is in play and the GOP is using federal allocations to reward core supporters more federal discretionary funds should go to FBOs in states with lower rates of registered minority voters than states with higher rates of registered minority voters.

Under the *vote retention thesis*, “politicians appear to ‘take care of their own’” (Dixit and Londregan 1996, 1133). Incumbents distribute grants to retain strong partisans in their electoral coalitions (Cox and McCubbins 1986; Grossman 1994; Bertelli and Grose 2009). The distributive logic is that “risk-averse candidates will tend to overinvest in their closest supporters (from the point of view of maximizing their expected vote)” (Cox and McCubbins 1986, 385). In the case of incumbent presidents, in particular, “patterns of spending across states should reflect electoral and/or legislative support for the president” (McCarty 2000, 125). That is, despite the wisdom of the vote production thesis, national incumbents should make strategic grant allocations to appeal to their core electoral supporters. Locales where voters supported a president and his party in previous elections is one source of core support.

The thesis assumes that the strategic use of allocations means that grants flow directly and only to core supporters. Yet it is plausible that benefits could flow to groups outside the base of supporters while having a positive influence on the political behavior of core supporters. As was the case with white moderates, the compassion card, especially when social welfare grants are the values allocated, signals to white conservatives that the GOP expresses sympathy for the impoverished while avoiding substantive policy changes that redistribute resources in ways that confront systemic inequalities. It also suggests a defense and promotion of traditional conservative principles such as efficiency and a diminution of the scope and scale of government through greater reliance on civil society (Olasky 2000; Gerson 2007). In addition, given the association of social welfare with African American poverty (Gilens 1999), “compassion” signals core supporters that the party of Lincoln is working to foster self-sufficiency among African Americans (Philpot 2007). Thus, the strategic allocation of social welfare grants during the Bush administration may demonstrate a “calculating compassion” (Woodward 2002).

Playing the compassion card produces electoral support from swing voters while retaining electoral support from core voters.

Hypothesis 2a: More federal discretionary funds went to FBOs in states where George W. Bush won the majority of votes cast in the 2000 and/or 2004 presidential elections than to states where a minority of votes cast were for Bush.

Voters, however, are just one type of core supporter.

Consistent and influential partisans are an additional fount of core support for incumbents. Evangelical Protestants are perhaps the most consistent and influential segment of electoral support for the GOP, and they were central to the electoral victories of Bush in 2000 and 2004 (Campbell 2006; Smidt 2008).

Hypothesis 2b: More federal discretionary funds went to FBOs in states where evangelical Protestants constituted a greater proportion of voters than in states where evangelical Protestants constituted a lesser proportion of voters.

Subnational incumbents of the party of national incumbents are another source of core support (Grossman 1994; Worthington and Dollery 1998).

Hypothesis 2c: More federal discretionary funds went to FBOs in states where Republicans controlled institutions of government (the executive and the legislature) than in states where Democrats controlled such institutions.

Beyond political allocation, national incumbents may attend to demand, along with merit, when allocating awards, even discretionary awards (Rich 1989; Bickers and Stein 1996; Lowry and Potoski 2004). From a normative perspective, allocations should go to the most deserving and the coverage and/or concentration of funds should overlap with community needs as much as possible (e.g., discretionary spending to reduce poverty should accord with local poverty rates). Because discretionary grants by bureaucracies are competitive grants, the most meritorious applicants should receive the greatest number and amount of funds. The ability of applicants to efficiently and effectively use their allocations to meet federal objectives should affect discretionary allocations. If so, national incumbents may assess the capacity of potential recipients to help the needy, for example, when making social welfare allocations. Interestingly, much of the public rhetoric around the flow of federal funds to FBOs across the states stressed the claim that the Bush administration

would and only should fund those organizations and efforts at the local level that would best reduce the scale of social problems. "As Bush liked to say," according to John DiIulio Jr. (2007, 10), the first director of the White House FBCI office, "'job one' was to measurably and cost-effectively help all people in need."

Hypothesis 3a: More federal discretionary funds went to FBOs in states with greater demand than to states with lesser demand.

Hypothesis 3b: More federal discretionary funds went to FBOs in states with more capacity relevant to the social welfare aims of the FBCI than to states with less capacity.

Demand and merit do not necessarily equal apolitical factors. They may have face validity while masking politically motivated allocations. Under both the vote production and vote retention theses, national incumbents may pursue strategic electoral groups such as Appalachian whites or Catholics under the guise of responding to needy and/or meritorious groups (e.g., the poor or reputable organizations like Catholic Charities). Allocations may appear more compassionate than calculating, even if calculation matched compassion as a criterion for grants making. The organized interests presenting the demands also may influence allocations (Dahlberg and Johansson 2002; Lowry and Potoski 2004; Gamkhar and Ali 2007). More influential organized interests may have a greater effect on award allocations than less influential organized interests (Lowry and Potoski 2004). In the case of subnational efforts within states to create analogues to the federal FBCI, for example, the creation of state-level offices for faith-based initiatives and liaisons to the faith sector is more likely in states where the influence of evangelical Protestants in state Republican parties is greater (Sager 2010).

Data and Method

The extant research on distributive politics tends to examine the allocation of noncompetitive, formula-based intergovernmental grants (Gamkhar 2002). When scholars look beyond such grants they often examine the distribution of demonstration grants in the form of earmarks, those nonformula-driven grants the Congress authorizes and allocates to specific locales (e.g., Gamkhar and Ali 2007). Other scholars focus on the entire federal budget to predict general outlays (Larcinese, Rizzo, and Testa 2006). But many grants the federal government allocates across subnational jurisdictions and to local agents are discretionary project grants awarded by bureaucracies (Rich 1989; Wood and Waterman 1991). They are for

purposes defined by legislators and interpreted by bureaucrats. Incumbents do not necessarily intend them for "grand or programmatic redistribution" related to fostering equality among locales or actors in them (Dixit and Londregan 1996, 1132). This is true even if discretionary project grants are awarded to "encourage innovation or to target benefits according to extreme need or distress" (Arnold 1981, 109).

In the absence of a federal catalog listing discretionary grants to FBOs by recipient, amount, and departmental programs, we rely on federal competitive and nonformula grants data reported by the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) and the Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy (Roundtable) for the period 2002 through 2007. The data include (1) aggregate annual counts of grants awarded to FBOs per state for domestic social welfare activities from FY 2003 through FY 2007 and (2) the aggregate annual amounts of grants awarded to FBOs across the states for domestic social welfare activities from FY 2002 through FY 2007.⁹

We accessed the website and contacted the staff of OFBCI in the spring of 2008 as well as contacted the staff of the Roundtable at the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government.¹⁰ From both sources we obtained sets of spreadsheets that identified aggregate grant amounts awarded by federal agencies to FBOs across the states for FY 2002, 2005, 2006, and 2007. For FY 2003 and 2004, we obtained grants data from state reports the Roundtable posted on its website and that staff provided to us on request via email. According to the Roundtable, the data contained in its reports came from the OFBCI as well as the Associated Press, which conducted a small-scale investigation of the funding of FBOs. The data included aggregate counts and amounts of grants for each state by year, along with the names of FBOs awarded grants, the names of the cities or metropolitan areas where they were located, the amounts of their awards, and the federal programs associated with the grants (e.g., Section 202 Housing for the Elderly, Head Start, and the Carol M. White Physical Education Program). We obtained a similar set of data from the OFBCI for FY 2005. Data were unavailable to us for the remaining years.

For FY 2002, 2006, and 2007, the OFBCI and Roundtable informed us that they did not have disaggregated data to identify the names of FBOs awarded grants, their locations, the sizes of their awards, and the federal programs associated with the grants. Nonetheless, the OFBCI spreadsheets for FY 2006 and 2007 identified the state, the number and amount of awards to secular organizations, the number and amount of awards to FBOs, and the number and amount of awards to secular organizations and FBOs combined. Although we could not

confirm that the grants data covered only FBOs for the years 2002, 2006, and 2007, we assumed that the OFBCI was diligent in accurately identifying the correct status of organizations. The best check on the data was our own review of the disaggregated data for FY 2003, 2004, and 2005 to confirm the FBO status of grantees identified by the OFBCI and Roundtable reports for the three years.

We broadly defined a “faith-based organization” to include faith-related agencies and religious congregations. The former are groups with “a formal funding or administrative arrangement with a religious authority or authorities; a historical tie of this kind; a specific commitment to act within the dictates of a particular established faith; or a commitment to work together that stems from a common religion” such as Catholic Charities, Lutheran Family Services, the Salvation Army, and Jewish Family Services (Smith and Sossin 2001, 652). Such agencies include nonprofit subsidiaries of individual congregations and faith-based social service coalitions, with the latter sometimes being ecumenical institutions but almost always possessing resources and governance structures distinct from congregations, partnering with secular groups and agencies, and pursuing and receiving government funding to operate their programs. Congregations are social networks that routinely bring people together for sustained religious worship and study (Chaves 2004).

We corroborated the FBO status of all grant recipients identified by the OFBCI and Roundtable by conducting Internet searches of their website and contacting organizations by telephone. We did not conduct in-depth interviews with representatives of the organizations. We confirmed the existence of the organizations and whether they fit our definition of FBO. We recognize that our approach falls short of determining the religious characteristics of services and programs associated with the organizations (Sider and Unruh 2004). It does provide, however, an adequate method of establishing the basic nature of the organizations, and it follows the methods of other researchers (e.g., Ragan 2004; Montiel and Wright 2006). Also, for our purposes, we did not need to determine the degree to which religion permeated or saturated the services of the grant recipients.

Our review suggested that the number of grantees possibly misidentified as FBOs for the years we lacked disaggregated data would be miniscule. We observed only a few instances where recipients identified as FBOs were secular organizations. Examples included the School of Medicine at Emory University (Atlanta, GA), the Community Rehabilitation Center (Jacksonville, FL), United Veterans of America (North Hampton, MA), and municipal and tribal governments such as the Navajo Nation. Where possible, we removed awards to secular organizations and municipal or tribal agencies from our data set.

Still, the data are somewhat incomplete beyond the aggregate amounts and counts of awards by state. In addition, we sought to ensure that year to year the grant programs in the data set remained the same. This was not always possible because of the format of the data. Accordingly, we exercise caution in interpreting our findings.

Dependent Variables

While the literature argues over whether the number or count of grants is substantively more important than the amounts of grants, we examine both to determine the correlates of discretionary funding of FBOs during the Bush administration.¹¹ Our first dependent variable is the annual count of discretionary grants federal agencies awarded to FBOs in each state, as reported by the OFBCI and the Roundtable. These counts cover FY 2003-7, generating a panel data set of 250 observations. Data were unavailable for 2002. Our second dependent variable is per capita grant amounts to FBOs from 2002 through 2007. The OFBCI reported annual funding amounts in aggregate dollars for each state from FY 2002 to FY 2007, generating a data set of 300 observations. We converted the annual amounts to per capita measures.

The data are repeated measures, resulting in a panel data structure because we have more panels than years recorded. These data structures require special techniques to deal with potential correlation in the error terms (both temporally and across panels) that are likely to plague the analysis as a result of the repeated nature of the data. Since our research questions deal more with broad population effects rather than panel-specific effects, we opt for alternative methods of estimation to the standard fixed effects or random effects models commonly used for repeated measures estimation. Moreover, because our first dependent variable is a count of grants and the second one is more consistent with a continuous variable, we use different estimation procedures for the dependent variables. We use a generalized estimating equation population-averaged model to estimate the model of grant counts (Zorn 2001). This technique treats the dependent variable as an event count and allows for values that are nonnegative integers, along with correction for autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity. For the annual funding amounts, we employ a panel-corrected standard errors model, which also corrects for autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity (Beck and Katz 1995).

Information on such things as population size and amounts of other sources of federal funding is likely available only for the year before because these programs and data collection occur concurrently with the programs granting awards to FBOs. Accordingly, we use lagged independent variables. We also specify the model in three

ways: (1) all years, (2) the first term of the Bush administration, and (3) the second term of the Bush administration. This is to discern whether elections or unobserved intraterm politics influence any identified effects.¹² In an effort to be conservative in representing our results, we supplement our results with graphs that use the findings from our “all years” model. This permits us to make use of all available information contained in our data set without cherry-picking results from the first term or second term specifications.

Independent Variables

We collected several indicators to test our vote production and vote retention hypotheses as well as the demand hypotheses. For the vote production hypotheses, we identify (1) battleground state status, (2) minority composition of state electorates, and (3) the proportion of Catholics in a state.

There is dissensus on the best gauge of whether a state is a swing state and how to identify particular (and calculate the proportion of) voters lacking strong preferences for candidates across the states (Mayer 2008). We chose a proxy for moderate swing voters, one employed by others (e.g., Bergan et al. 2005)—battleground state status. Our *battleground state* measure is a dichotomous variable (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*), which we obtained from political reports CNN produced on the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections.¹³ If national incumbents tactically used the grant allocation process to produce new voter support, they would likely do it in anticipation of elections. Moreover, investments in the most recent swing states might generate more support in off-election years until new information surfaces identifying the next likely battleground states.

The percentage of registered voters who self-identify as African American (*% AARV*) and Hispanic (*% HRV*) measure the racial/ethnic makeup of state electorates.¹⁴ We also include in our models an interaction term between battleground states and the percentage of African Americans registered to vote (*battleground* × *% AARV*). The expectation is that the two characteristics, in tandem, will have a unique and strong positive effect on federal allocations of grants to FBOs. In an alternate model specification, we test an interaction term using the measure of Hispanic registered voters (*battleground* × *% HRV*). We independently test the interactions related to African American voters and Hispanic voters to avoid issues of multicollinearity. We also include a measure of Catholic presence among residents of the states (*% Catholic*). This measure may be indicative of both swing voters (vote production) and the potential capacity of states to achieve objectives consonant with the FBCI (demand/merit). On

one hand, Catholics have been key swing voters in contemporary elections (Prendergast 1999; Legee 2008). On the other hand, the proportion of Catholics may influence the presence of Catholic Charities, which is among the oldest, largest, and most capable FBOs in the United States and is adequately capacious to apply for federal funding and use it effectively.¹⁵ We anticipate a positive relationship between Catholic presence and the number and amount of grants awarded to FBOs across the states.¹⁶

To test the vote retention hypotheses, we collected variables measuring core support for Bush and the Republican Party in the states. *% Bush vote* identifies the percentage of voters who voted for George W. Bush in the 2000 and 2004 elections. *Evangelical Protestant density* estimates the number of adherents of evangelical Protestantism per one thousand people at the state level in 2000 (Jones et al. 2003). We also include dummy variables (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*) for whether states had a GOP-controlled legislature (*GOP legislature*) and whether governors were Republicans (*GOP governor*). More federal grants should go to FBOs in states with stronger core electoral support for and control by the GOP, reflecting an effort by the Bush administration to secure the existing base before an election. *Gubernatorial election* indicates whether a gubernatorial election was upcoming (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*), testing the effect of state-level electoral politics on federal grant allocations to FBOs.

Indicators for the demand hypotheses measure demand, which focuses on need. We measured it with multiple variables from the US Census Bureau that reflect higher rates of social welfare needs. Two measures include the percentages of state populations living below the federal poverty line (*% poverty*) and aged sixty-five years or older (*% seniors*). We expect states with higher rates of poverty and senior citizens to generate greater needs for social welfare provision, which should increase grant applications from and awards to FBOs across the states. In addition, we measure the percentages of state populations under the age of eighteen (*% youth*) to capture demand for social welfare services directed at youth. Moreover, youth-oriented services are among the most common social welfare activities of FBOs, especially congregations (Chaves 2004). Furthermore, we include the natural log of annual amounts of federal human services assistance (*ln (FHSA)*) to states in the previous year,¹⁷ calculated from raw data in annual Federal Aid to the States reports. Larger FHSA grants should influence the numbers and amounts of funding to FBOs across the states.

Unfortunately, we lack a measure of demand in relation to organized religious interests. Extant measures are outdated, inadequate, or captured to a degree by a few of our political allocation measures (e.g., *% Catholic* and *% evangelical Protestant*). Finally, we test the capacity

dimension of the demand thesis with *nonprofit organization density*, a measure of the number of charitable nonprofit organizations in a state per ten thousand people. While others use a similar measure to gauge organized demand for federal grants (Lowry and Potoski 2004), we use it to gauge overall capacity of the nonprofit sectors of states. Federal agencies may interpret greater densities of charitable nonprofits, be they faith based or secular, to reflect greater capacities of the nonprofit sectors of states achieve the goals of federal programs. Consequently, nonprofit density should positively influence the award of federal discretionary social welfare grants across the states.

For the model of grant counts, we include lagged natural logs of populations to control for the variation in the sizes of the states.

Results

From 2002 through 2007, federal agencies in our data set allocated a minimum of 10,133 grants totaling nearly \$7 billion to FBOs across the states for domestic social welfare programs.¹⁸ The median number of federal discretionary grants awarded to FBOs per state-year in our data set was 22. The average number of awards granted to FBOs across the states was 41. The largest number of grants awarded to FBOs in a single state in one year was 239 in California for 2006. In some years, FBOs in some states (e.g., Montana, North Dakota, and Rhode Island in 2003) did not receive discretionary federal grants. The median per capita grant amount was \$2.63, and the mean was \$3.47. The largest aggregate amount of money awarded to FBOs was \$164,800,000 granted to FBOs in New York in 2007. The state with the greatest aggregate amount of money per capita was Maryland in 2007.

The results of both the grant counts models and the per capita grant amount models show that federal discretionary funding of FBOs during the Bush administration matched the varied motivations of the White House to address need as a collective problem while maximizing electoral support.

Grant Counts

Our results from the grant counts model, where the dependent variable is the number of federal grants awarded to FBOs per state, are mixed (see table 1). The results from the full model contradict the vote production thesis of distributive politics. They support neither the hypothesis that more discretionary grants went to FBOs in states with more swing voters (as measured by battleground status) nor the hypothesis that more grants went to FBOs in states with greater proportions of minority

voters in the electorate.¹⁹ In the first term model, however, the results tell a different story. Despite a smaller sample size but as predicted, the percentage of registered voters who are African American is positive and significant. Moreover, the interaction term of battleground states and percentage of registered voters who are African American is positive and significant. These two results suggest that the attempts to produce new, favorable votes for the Bush administration from African American voters influenced grant allocations across the states. Yet we failed to observe similar results for the interaction between battleground states and Hispanic registered voters and the interaction between battleground states and Catholics (results not shown). In addition, in the supplemental model using data for all of the years and the second term model, the proportion of Hispanic registered voters is significant but negative, demonstrating a reduction in the number of grants awarded to states with larger Hispanic registered voter populations. Perhaps the results reflect concern for retaining core electoral supporters, especially in light of the national and local immigration protest mobilization of Hispanics in the second term of the Bush administration.

The results of the models somewhat confirm the general vote retention thesis. As predicted, in both the all years model and the first term model more grants went to FBOs in states where Bush had greater core electoral support than to FBOs in states where Bush had lesser core support. The percentage of the voting population that cast its ballots for Bush in the 2000 and/or 2004 presidential elections yielded a strong, positive effect on the number of grants awarded to FBOs by state. Figure 1 illustrates how the predicted amount of grants increases as electoral support for Bush increases. By the numbers, the model predicts states that had the highest support for Bush would receive 162 grants, while those with the lowest support would get only 8 grants. Yet the other measures of core support for Bush and the GOP either yielded results that contradicted expectations or failed to produce the predicted effect.

We expected more grants to go to FBOs in states with higher concentrations of evangelical Protestants. The results imply that the number of federal grants awarded to FBOs in a state during the Bush administration decreased as the density of evangelical Protestants in a state increased. Why? Evangelicals fear government entanglement with religion (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2001; Chaves 2004; Owens 2006), and evangelical congregations tend to oppose the receipt of government funds (Chaves and Anderson 2008). Their fears and policies may reduce the number and capacity of evangelical Protestant FBOs applying for public funding, thereby reducing the broader capacity of FBOs generally

Table 1. Generalized Estimating Equation Negative Binomial Model of Discretionary Grant Counts

Independent variable	All years	All years (alternate)	First term	Second term
Vote production				
Battleground state	-0.135 (0.127)	-0.00343 (-0.106)	-0.0979 (-0.184)	-0.158 (-0.268)
% AARV	1.475 (1.412)	1.433 (-1.528)	2.021* (-0.913)	0.549 (-1.356)
% HRV	-0.853 (1.049)	-2.736* (-1.334)	0.517 (-0.96)	-2.234* (-0.942)
Battleground × % AARV	3.535 (2.081)	—	7.236*** (-2.002)	1.589 (-3.523)
Battleground × % HRV	—	2.724 (-1.458)	—	—
% Catholic	0.0117 (0.00803)	0.0113 (-0.00801)	0.0258* (-0.0103)	0.0139 (-0.0108)
Vote retention				
% Bush vote	0.0601*** (0.00680)	0.0618*** (-0.00682)	0.0454* (-0.0189)	0.0105 (-0.0153)
Evangelical Protestant density	-0.00236* (0.00111)	-0.00247* (-0.00118)	-0.000103 (-0.00096)	-0.000677 (-0.00107)
GOP governor	0.0331 (0.0802)	0.0351 (-0.0762)	0.019 (-0.0963)	0.135 (-0.072)
GOP legislature	-0.328*** (0.0978)	-0.276*** (-0.0956)	-0.424* (-0.177)	0.0568 (-0.0686)
Gubernatorial election	-0.0740 (0.0474)	-0.0695 (-0.0479)	-0.252* (-0.104)	0.029 (-0.0372)
Demand (need and capacity)				
% poverty	0.0589* (0.0294)	0.0579 (-0.0306)	-0.0611 (-0.0472)	0.0531 (-0.0353)
ln(FHSA)	0.638*** (0.241)	0.663*** (-0.247)	1.181** (-0.453)	0.581*** (-0.173)
% senior	-0.207*** (0.0431)	-0.216*** (-0.0441)	-0.14 (-0.0886)	-0.0889 (-0.0565)
% youth	-25.96*** (4.393)	-26.37*** (-4.292)	-11.11 (-8.273)	-11.51*** (-3.839)
Nonprofit organization density	-0.00438 (0.0134)	-0.00695 (-0.013)	-0.0515 (-0.0396)	-0.0296 (-0.016)
Control				
ln(Population)	0.402 (0.285)	0.44 (-0.299)	-0.283 (-0.506)	0.325 (-0.201)
Constant	-10.92*** (2.389)	-11.78*** (-2.568)	-14.64*** (-3.912)	-10.80*** (-2.558)
N	250	250	100	150
Number of panels	50	50	50	50

Semi-robust standard errors are in parentheses. AR(1) correlation structure is assumed.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

in a state to compete for and win federal funds during the Bush administration, even if evangelicals support FBOs playing a greater role in social welfare efforts and support politicians fostering it (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2001; Wuthnow 2004). It is also plausible that national incumbents are simply tactical in a way

we should expect: they ignore core supporters when they are too large and lack alternative electoral choices. Vote retention efforts vis-à-vis evangelicals were unnecessary because ideology (and the lack of a more preferable third party candidate) anchored their support to the Republican Party.

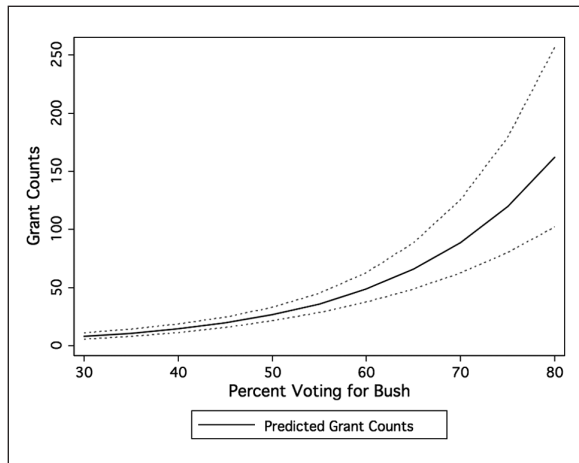


Figure 1. Predicted grant counts as a function of percentage voting for Bush

The results also show that the presence of a Republican governor had no effect on the number of grants federal agencies awarded FBOs across the states and that fewer grants went to FBOs in states with Republican-dominated legislatures than to FBOs in states with Democratic-controlled legislatures. These results may reflect a differentiation between national and state-level politics. “Party leaders,” as Frymer (1999, 205) observes, “are generally unwilling to take chances by promoting the interests of a group they perceive to be at odds with broader coalition-building.” Seeing the target populations of those served by grants to FBOs as dependents or even deviants (Schneider and Ingram 1993), groups for whom increased public financial support could yield reduced electoral support by core segments of the party, state-level Republicans (i.e., governors and legislators) may have been laggards in building the capacity of FBOs in their states to apply for and win federal funding.²⁰

Alternatively, the organizational capacity of FBOs generally in Republican states like Georgia, which tend to be states where social welfare systems are less progressive and may create fewer opportunities for nongovernmental organizations generally to partner with government, may have been weaker than for their peers in Democratic states like New York where social welfare systems are more progressive and opportunities for nongovernmental organizations to partner with government are more long-standing. This would influence the supply of applications from FBOs seeking federal discretionary grants. Regardless of the explanations, the finding contradicts theoretical expectations derived from the literature and undermines conventional wisdom that the Bush administration allocated federal funding of FBOs to reward and bolster support for state-level Republican incumbents.

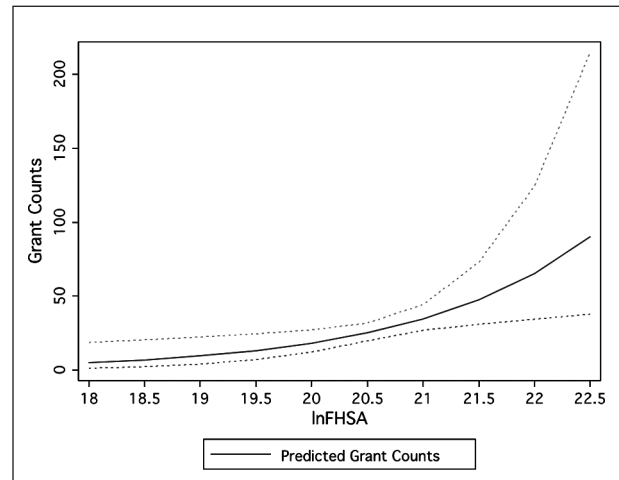


Figure 2. Predicted grant counts as a function of federal human services assistance (FHSA) funding

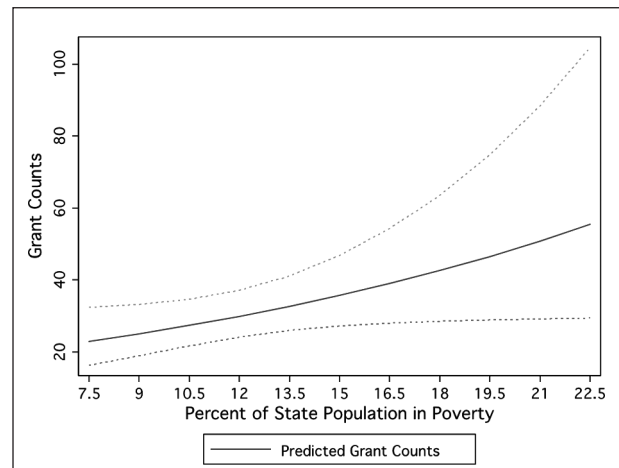


Figure 3. Predicted grant counts as a function of poverty rates

Beyond the political allocation thesis, the results from the full grant count model provide strong evidence that federal agencies gave more grants to FBOs in states with greater demand than those in states with lesser demand. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate how greater human services assistance by the federal government and higher poverty rates increase the number of grants awarded to FBOs across the states. The model predicts that more than twice as many grants went to states with the highest poverty rates. FHSA funding amounts had an even stronger effect, ranging from 5 grants for the lowest levels of assistance to 124 grants for those receiving the highest levels of FHSA funding in the previous year. These relationships cohere with the claims of the White House that federal agencies during the Bush administration allocated awards to FBOs in response to needs, contradicting criticisms that it based

decisions primarily, even solely, in response to patronage and realpolitik (Edsall 2006; Helman 2006). Furthermore, the results support the literature's earlier findings that the needs of subnational jurisdictions are important to understanding distributive politics (Rich 1989; Bickers and Stein 1996; Lowry and Potoski 2004).

The other demand measures yielded negative relationships. However, the proportions of senior citizens and youth are imperfect measures of social welfare need. They encompass all seniors and youth, not just the impoverished. Plus, the results may confirm that distributions of funds to FBOs were more likely to support activities directed at working-age adults needing employment and housing assistance than youth and seniors. Last, the results failed to confirm our capacity hypothesis. The density of nonprofits (and the percentage of Catholics) proved insignificant in explaining the number of grants awarded to FBOs across the states. While federal agencies may have addressed need through their allocations, perhaps they underemphasized the capacity of organizations to achieve their objectives when awarding funds to FBOs.

Grant Amounts

Unlike the results of our grants count model, the results of our panel-corrected standard errors model of per capita funding of FBOs provide strong and clear support for the political allocation perspective, inclusive of its vote retention and vote production theses (table 2). Focusing on how much money, not the number of grants, federal agencies allocate yields further evidence that incumbents seek to maximize votes by retaining core supporters and producing new supporters.

Two measures of vote retention had significant effects on per capita grant amounts awarded to FBOs. Just like the results of the count models, the grant amount models suggest that the percentage voting for Bush continues to have a strong, positive effect on the amount of grant money awarded to FBOs across the states. As Figure 4 illustrates, FBOs in states where Bush received the highest percentage votes (80 percent) would receive more than three times the funding of FBOs in states where the lowest percentages of votes (30 percent) went to Bush. The difference in funding would be about \$17 million. However, the negative effect of a state having a Republican-dominated legislature that we observed in the grant count model persists in the grant amount model, while the remaining measures of vote retention, including the density of evangelical Protestants, fail to achieve standard levels of statistical significance.

Turning to vote production, the results from the grant amount model provide stronger support for the associated hypotheses than the results from the grant count model.

Figure 5 shows, as predicted, that the percentage of African American registered voters has a strong, positive effect on the amount of grant money awarded to FBOs across the states. Its effect on federal discretionary funding of FBOs is larger than the effect of the percentage of votes for Bush. FBOs in states with the highest percentage of African American registered voters would get almost four times more funding than states with the lowest proportions of African American registered voters, resulting in an additional \$25 million in predicted funding. Moreover, while the battleground measure alone does not produce a significant effect, when battleground states have relatively high percentages of African American voters, greater amounts of funding flow to FBOs in those states.

The percentage of Hispanic registered voters, too, is significant and positively related to per capita grant amounts awarded to FBOs. This is true even if the observed effect is weaker than the one produced by the proportion of African American registered voters. Specifically, the amount of FBO funding per capita is approximately two times greater for states with the largest proportions of Hispanic registered voters than those with smaller proportions of such voters. As figure 6 illustrates, there is much more variability in the Hispanic voter coefficient vis-à-vis per capita grant amounts. Furthermore, in the alternate specification ("all years, alternate"), the interaction between battleground states and Hispanic registered voters also appears positive and significant.²¹

Revisiting whether grants to FBOs across the states were a function of demand, the results of the full per capita grants amount model suggest otherwise. The demand measures in the full model, including the percentage of persons below the poverty line, fail to achieve standard levels of significance. In the first term model, however, we observe a positive and significant relationship between FHSA funding and grant amounts. Nevertheless, the results suggest that in the aggregate demand may have weakly factored into the allocation of grant amounts to FBOs on a per capita basis across the states during the Bush administration.

Conclusion

Our study leveraged the logic of the "compassion strategy" thesis to examine whether electoral calculation influences discretionary social welfare funding, as measured by the allocation of grants to FBOs across the states during the administration of George W. Bush. We posited that the number and amounts of federal grants flowing to FBOs at the subnational level from 2002 through 2007 were consequences of a strategy to influence electoral

Table 2. Panel-Corrected Standard Errors Model of Discretionary Grant Amounts

Independent variable	All years	All years (alternate)	First term	Second term
Vote production				
Battleground state	-0.552 (0.503)	-0.456 (0.423)	-0.295 (0.359)	-1.355 (0.864)
% AARV	17.04*** (4.558)	16.22*** (4.522)	13.37*** (2.805)	14.87 (8.104)
% HRV	11.14* (5.316)	-3.419 (4.983)	1.470 (1.623)	16.75*** (4.545)
Battleground × % AARV	20.18* (10.11)	—	16.08*** (1.726)	32.87* (16.20)
Battleground × % HRV	—	21.47** (7.779)	—	—
% Catholic	0.0216 (0.0206)	0.0260 (0.0190)	0.0675*** (0.0145)	-0.00498 (0.0221)
Vote retention				
% Bush vote	0.0911* (0.0410)	0.104* (0.0410)	0.0715*** (0.0151)	-0.0527 (0.0610)
Evangelical Protestant density	-0.00608 (0.00381)	-0.00644 (0.00382)	-0.00549*** (0.00159)	0.00154 (0.00453)
GOP governor	0.445 (0.289)	0.564 (0.297)	0.390 (0.249)	0.165 (0.398)
GOP legislature	-0.800** (0.309)	-0.361 (0.287)	-0.941*** (0.201)	-0.368 (0.533)
Gubernatorial election	-0.0766 (0.359)	-0.0553 (0.339)	-0.463 (0.240)	0.255 (0.408)
Demand (need and capacity)				
% poverty	-0.00714 (0.0893)	-0.0345 (0.0925)	0.0168 (0.0297)	-0.121 (0.121)
ln(FHSA)	0.202 (0.292)	0.724** (0.264)	0.452* (0.219)	-0.551 (0.315)
% senior	-0.356 (0.262)	-0.366 (0.283)	-0.337* (0.165)	-0.00558 (0.315)
% youth	-50.33 (28.83)	-53.22 (30.66)	-13.34 (16.89)	0.932 (38.24)
Nonprofit organization density	0.0870 (0.0766)	0.0738 (0.0766)	-0.00103 (0.0675)	0.0835 (0.104)
Constant	8.917 (10.32)	-0.930 (12.34)	-4.815 (8.563)	16.72 (16.23)
N	250	250	100	150
Number of panels	50	50	50	50
R ²	.111	.115	.378	.208

Panel-corrected standard errors are in parentheses. AR(1) correlation structure is assumed.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

behavior among swing and core supporters, coupled with a responsiveness to demand such as social welfare need. Our results suggest that the distributive politics related to federal funding of FBOs during the Bush administration involved a combination of the use of grants for the tactical political purposes of vote production and vote retention and responsiveness to social welfare need among the states, especially poverty.

A puzzle arising from our results, one worthy of further study distributive politic scholars, is the substantive (and perhaps political) difference between federal agencies awarding more grants to FBOs at the subnational level and awarding more grant money to FBOs across the states. Why would the results of our grant counts and grant amounts models yield disparate outcomes regarding the substantive effect of the demographic compositions

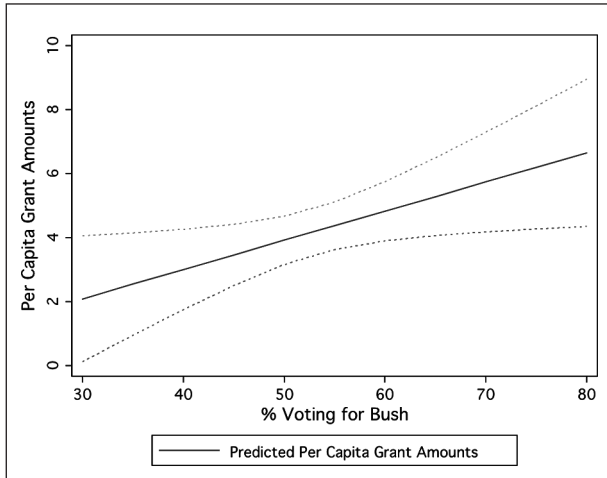


Figure 4. Predicted grant amounts as a function of percentage voting for Bush

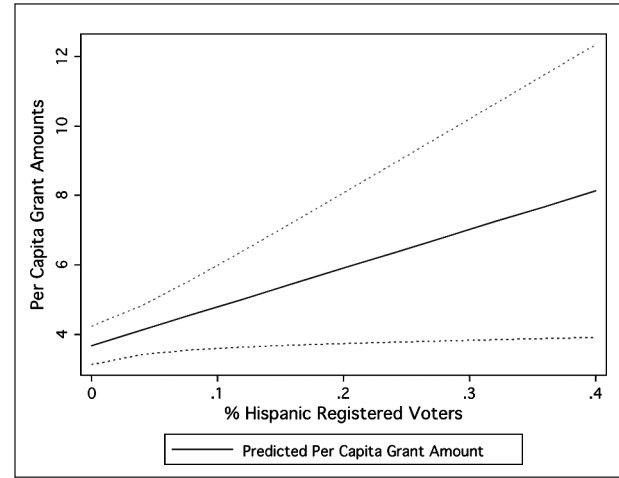


Figure 6. Predicted grant amounts as a function of percentage Hispanic registered voters

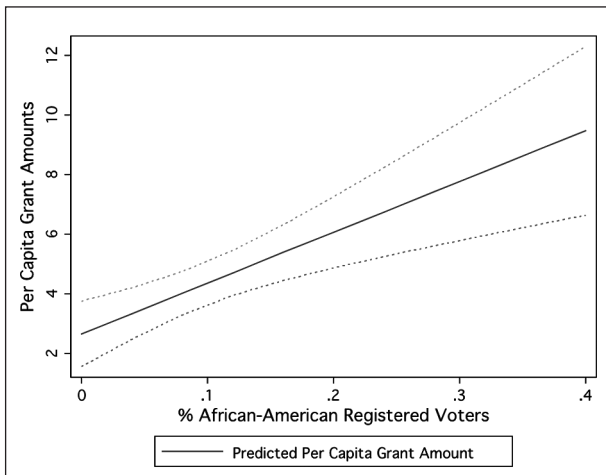


Figure 5. Predicted grant amounts as a function of percentage African American registered voters

of state electorates on the number and amounts of grants awarded to FBOs? It is plausible the results may reflect alternative decision processes of discretionary grant programs. Before federal agencies can decide who, where, and how much to fund, potential applicants first decide whether to submit funding proposals. The behavior of recipients matters as much as the behavior of donors when considering distributive politics (Choi, Turner, and Volden 2002; Volden 2007), as suggested by, for example, the negative relationships between the counts and amounts of grants to FBOs and the density of evangelical Protestants in a state. FBOs in states with higher levels of poverty and greater need of federal aid, as our results imply, could be more likely to submit funding proposals for social welfare projects. A greater pool of grant proposals

should equate with a greater likelihood of winning grants from discretionary award processes. The discretion, and therefore the distributive politics, should affect award amounts since proposed projects may or may not receive full funding. In the future, access to adequate data on all individual proposal submissions by FBOs to federal grant programs ideally would allow scholars to control for this self-selection process. Doing so might better explain our contrary results.

In addition, several of our results, like those of other studies (e.g., Stein and Bickers 1995; Lowry and Potoski 2004; Gamkhar and Ali 2007; Bertelli and Grose 2009), suggest that the number of grants and amounts of grants that agencies allocate reflect distinct distribution processes. Consider our direct measures of demand. The percentage of residents below poverty and the amount of federal social welfare aid received by states are associated with higher numbers of awards. But their effects attenuate, even disappear, in the grant amount models. Furthermore, we have no expectation that the applications from FBOs would be greater in number in states with larger African American and Hispanic voting populations than in states where the percentages are lower. Yet the political allocation perspective of distributive politics, coupled with our results, implies that states with greater proportions of African American and Hispanic voters would be disproportionately favored in the grant process. Perhaps the voluntary nature of grant proposals mitigates the effects of racial-electoral conditions vis-à-vis grant counts. Although we cannot test this because of data limitations, it is a reasonable explanation for the discrepancy of results between the two models and calls for extended research and data collection in the domain of social welfare spending.

Furthermore, other studies conclude that partisanship and demand have consistent and substantive effects on the distribution of federal funds generally (e.g., Dahlberg and Johansson 2002). Yet our results suggest that the literature would benefit from a reconsideration of when we would expect to see the effects. In the case of competitive, nonformula-based funding, as well as social welfare funding generally, partisanship and demand may function differently when we observe the distributive politics of discretionary grants, especially those awarded by federal agencies, versus other types of grants like congressional earmarks. Different types of funds may produce different distributive politics. Moreover, some agencies may lend themselves to different distributive politics. Future studies, assuming the availability of adequate data, should disaggregate the funding of FBOs (or other types of recipients) by federal agency to discern whether there is greater political grant making by some agencies (e.g., Housing and Urban Development) compared to other agencies (e.g., Health and Human Services).

Finally, as both the “compassion strategy” thesis and our results suggest, scholars can incorporate race into their political understanding of distributive politics. We anticipate that future studies of the effects of incumbent calculation and support by voters on the politics of federal expenditures at the subnational level will benefit from the inclusion of race as part of rather than separate from the strategic electoral considerations of incumbents.

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Notes

1. Federal funding of faith-based organizations (FBOs) to implement social welfare policy, however, was long-standing by the time Bush entered the White House (see, e.g., Schaller 1967).

2. Much of the policy foundation for the faith-based and community initiatives (FBCI) rested on Section 104 of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (or Charitable Choice), which encouraged state governments to involve nongovernmental organizations from the faith sector in the administration of public programs directed at low-income people. The law reiterates that federal agencies and subnational governments may use federal funds to partner with faith-related agencies to deliver welfare and supplemental services. It also implies that government agencies may allocate federal funds to *sectarian institutions*, organizations whose primary purposes are worship and evangelism (i.e., churches, mosques, temples, etc.).
3. In response to the allegations that political motivations partly explained federal awards to FBOs, the Bush administration vigorously claimed its allocations were entirely apolitical. James Towey, the second director of the White House Office of FBCI during the Bush administration, routinely disavowed political motivations: “The issue is not about [electoral] regions [and] it’s not about religions. It’s about results” (Helman 2006). Wade Horn, then assistant secretary of Health and Human Services, added, “Who ever got these grants wrote the best applications, and the panels in rating these grants rated them objectively, based on the criteria we published in the Federal Register. Whether they support the president or not is not a test in any of my grant programs” (Edsall 2006, A1). As Karl Rove, the former deputy chief of staff to President Bush, told a group of black clergy, “This initiative isn’t political. If I walked into the Oval Office and said it was going to be political the president would bash my head in. This isn’t political” (cited in Kuo 2006, 240).
4. The literature tends to treat them as mutually exclusive behaviors, even though formal reasoning and party strategies suggest otherwise (McCarty 2005; From and Lynch 2008). Although few empirical analyses have sought to determine which behavior has greater validity and effect with regard to the allocation of federal resources at the subnational level in the United States, the best evidence from other nations suggests that the vote production thesis is empirically superior to the vote retention thesis (Johansson 2003; Dahlberg and Johansson 2002; Khemani 2003). There is conflicting evidence, however, that when incumbents use their political resources to reward core supporters, the supporters who matter are subnational politicians of the same party as the national politicians, not core voters (Grossman 1994).
5. The strategic distribution of small amounts and numbers of discretionary grants to “needy” groups and the trumpeting of such grant making may function as both substantive and symbolic representations of “compassionate conservatism.”
6. One example is the GOP seeking to increase African American support for reforming social security by attempting to identify how the creation of personal retirement accounts

- would advance the economic interests of African Americans and reduce racial inequities. Another example is the GOP pursuing Latino electoral support by enduring and executing expedited naturalization and citizenship for immigrants serving in the military.
7. Whether African American and Latino Protestants are “values voters” is debatable. Generally, studies of values voters focus on presidential vote choice, not the demographics of values voters. When studies do examine the composition of values voters, the findings suggest that whites account for a majority of such voters (Langer and Cohen 2005). Yet studies that examine ballot measure choice involving morality questions such as same-sex marriage suggest that African Americans are presumed pivotal to campaigns directed at values voters, given the religious-influenced social conservatism of many African Americans (McVeigh and Diaz 2009).
 8. We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out to us.
 9. The agencies distributing the grants included the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Education, Justice, Labor, Agriculture, Commerce, Agency for International Development, Small Business Administration, Veterans Affairs, and the Corporation for National and Community Service. All domestic grants in our data set were for projects consonant with the objectives of the FBCI and the broader social welfare policy objectives of the Bush administration. They included the promotion of work (job preparation, employment training, and vocational education), nutrition (emergency food distribution and subsidized meals), healthy living (drug and alcohol treatment), and human care (adoption, foster care, orphanages, refugee resettlement) for the impoverished. However, our data are not FBCI data per se. Some grant programs were newly established under the auspices of the FBCI (e.g., Compassion Capital Fund and Mentoring the Children of Prisoners Fund). Other programs associated with the FBCI existed before the Bush administration (e.g., the Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program) but were included in FBCI reports as evidence of progress in expanding the amount of funds flowing to FBOs across the states (see, e.g., White House 2008a). All of the grants in our data are discretionary and conceivably were open to influence through presidential advocacy for and institutionalization of the FBCI during the Bush years.
 10. The roundtable was an independent, nonpartisan, research initiative sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts. From 2002 through 2008, it was based at the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, where it convened scholars, policy makers, and social services providers to examine the roles and effectiveness of FBOs in the American social welfare system, the constitutional and intergovernmental issues emanating from public funding of FBOs, and the intergovernmental policy choices that affected collaboration between governmental agencies and FBOs.
 11. The grant count approach is appropriate when focusing on congressional representatives demonstrating effectiveness to their constituents. However, bureaucrats operating under an administrative presidency are our focus. Our research questions pertain to whether federal agencies exert political influence over grants on behalf of a national incumbent and aimed at broad constituencies where grant amounts may seem as meaningful, if not more meaningful, than grant counts to local constituencies.
 12. We thank an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.
 13. CNN identified Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Washington, and Wisconsin as battleground states in 2000. In 2004, it identified Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin as battleground states. While the CNN lists and those of other media sources are rough proxies for the scale of swing voting in the states, “they accurately reflect a strategic dichotomy acknowledged by the campaigns” (Shaw 2006, 51). Moreover, the battleground states identified by CNN aligned with states (1) where polls and previous elections predicted that vote margins would be closest in the presidential elections (Bergan et al. 2005), (2) where presidential campaigns made greater investments compared to “blackout” states (Gimpel, Kaufmann, and Pearson-Merkowitz 2007), and (3) that the dominant political campaigns tended to agree or independently believe were highly competitive (Shaw 2006). In addition, an independent analysis found that the CNN battleground list, while a blunt classifier of battleground states, was as valid a measure as a more sophisticated measure such as Federal Election Commission filings of political party spending across the states (Huber and Arceneaux 2007, appendix A1).
 14. Given our argument that the GOP sought to produce votes from African American Protestants and Hispanic Protestants, we intended to include measures of the percentage of African American and Hispanic Protestants registered to vote. We also intended to include a measure of the proportion of Hispanic Catholics among the states. Data were unavailable.
 15. Using an online directory from Catholic Charities USA, we found incomplete or conflicting data on the presence of Catholic Charities. The directory underreported the number of agencies located in some states, overstated the number of agencies in other states, and did not consistently identify or distinguish branch and satellite offices. Consequently, we lack a direct measure of the presence of Catholic Charities.
 16. We also tested an interaction term combining battleground states with the measure of Catholics. In all specifications the results did not meet standard levels of significance. It is worth mentioning that the coefficient for this variable was nearly significant in the first term count model (described

later in the main text), but the coefficient was consistently negative, suggesting a reduction in the number of grants rather than an increase. The results are available from the authors.

17. The federal funding programs in our measure include Child Nutrition, Food Stamps, Special Supplemental Food, Vocational Technical Education, Adult Education and Literacy, Title 1, Administration for Children and Families, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, Emergency Shelters and Homeless Assistance, Housing Assistance, and Social Security Supplementary Income (US Bureau of the Census, 2002-2008).
18. More detailed descriptive statistics, inclusive of annual means and variation in grants by number and amount, are available from the authors.
19. Using other measures of race, specifically the percentage of African Americans by state, produced significant and positive results. However, such a measure captures a broader population than registered voters. Accordingly, we retained the measure that aligned more closely with political considerations (i.e., % AARV) to test hypothesis 1b.
20. No studies exist of the relationship between Republican control of state governments and the adoption of state-level policies that cohere with the federal FBCI. Sager (2010) suggests, however, that Republican states (i.e., states where a majority of votes went to Republican presidential candidates between 1996 and 2004) were no less likely than Democratic states to adopt policies associated with the federal FBCI. Still, the policies she studied do not necessarily relate to the capacity of FBOs to seek *federal* funds.
21. The minority population issue is a complex one, reflected in the results when we compare the original all years and alternate all years model specifications *and* when we compare first and second term estimates. In the first term, states with larger populations of registered African American voters received more money. In the second term that relationship is true of states with larger numbers of Hispanic registered voters. This shift from one minority group to another warrants further exploration of the Bush administration's relationships with minority voters.

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