

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03871-4 - The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Particularistic President

Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

As the holders of the only office elected by the entire nation, presidents have long claimed to be sole stewards of the interests of all Americans. Scholars have largely agreed, positing the president as an important counterbalance to the parochial impulses of members of Congress. This supposed fact is often invoked in arguments for concentrating greater power in the executive branch. Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves challenge this notion and, through an examination of a diverse range of policies from disaster declarations, to base closings, to the allocation of federal spending, show that presidents, like members of Congress, are particularistic. Presidents routinely pursue policies that allocate federal resources in a way that disproportionately benefits their more narrow partisan and electoral constituencies. Though presidents publicly don the mantle of a national representative, in reality they are particularistic politicians who prioritize the needs of certain constituents over others.

Douglas L. Kriner is an associate professor of political science at Boston University. He is the author of *After the Rubicon: Congress, Presidents, and the Politics of Waging War*, which received the 2013 D.B. Hardeman Prize from the LBJ Foundation for the best book that focuses on the U.S. Congress from the fields of biography, history, journalism, and political science. He is coauthor (with Francis Shen) of *The Casualty Gap: The Causes and Consequences of American Wartime Inequalities*. His work has also appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, and the *Journal of Politics*, among other outlets.

Andrew Reeves is an assistant professor of political science at Washington University in St. Louis and a research Fellow at the Weidenbaum Center on the Economy, Government, and Public Policy. He previously held a faculty position at Boston University and has held research fellowships at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and at the Center for the Study of American Politics within the Institution for Social and Policy Studies at Yale University. His work has appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, and the *Journal of Politics*, among other outlets.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03871-4 - The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and
Political Inequality

Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03871-4 - The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Particularistic President

Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

DOUGLAS L. KRINER

Boston University

ANDREW REEVES

Washington University in St. Louis



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03871-4 - The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107616813

© Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves 2015

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2015

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-107-03871-4 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-61681-3 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03871-4 - The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	page vii
<i>List of Illustrations</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
1 Introduction	1
1.1 A Tale of Two Obamas	4
1.2 Presidential Universalism	11
1.3 Presidential Particularism	20
1.4 When Goals Collide	24
1.5 Road Map	25
2 The Origins of Presidential Particularism	29
2.1 Electoral Particularism	30
2.2 Partisan Particularism	41
2.3 Coalitional Particularism	44
2.4 Presidential Particularism and the Political Business Cycle	45
2.5 Whither Congress?	47
2.6 Recap	49
3 Base Closings and Trade	50
3.1 Particularistic Trade Policies	51
3.2 Presidential Protectionism	52
3.3 The Particularistic Politics of Base Closings	66
3.4 The Congressional Response and the 1991 DOD List	78
4 Disaster Declarations and Transportation Grants	82
4.1 Presidential Disaster Declarations	83
4.2 Transportation Grants	101
4.3 Summary	108

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03871-4 - The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi	<i>Contents</i>
5	Federal Grants and Presidential Particularism 110
5.1	Why Budgetary Politics? 113
5.2	Presidential Capacity for Targeted Budgeting 115
5.3	A Description of Federal Grants 122
5.4	Presidential Particularism and Grant Spending 124
5.5	Evidence of Presidential Particularism 130
5.6	Summary 145
6	The Electoral Rewards of Presidential Particularism 147
6.1	Targeted Spending and Public Opinion: An Experimental Approach 148
6.2	The Electoral Politics of Federal Spending 152
6.3	The Electoral Benefits of Federal Grant Spending 154
6.4	Presidential Swing State Targeting Revisited 166
6.5	Summary 168
7	Conclusion 171
7.1	The Past and Future of Presidential Particularism 174
7.2	The Dangers of Delegation 180
7.3	The President's Opposition 181
	Appendix A: Technical Appendix to Chapter 3 185
A.1	Swing States and the 1990 Cheney List 185
A.2	Member Ideology and the 1990 Cheney List 186
	Appendix B: Technical Appendix to Chapter 4 188
B.1	Disasters: An Alternative Statistical Model 188
B.2	Transportation Grants 190
	Appendix C: Technical Appendix to Chapter 5 195
C.1	Measuring Federal Grants 195
C.2	Robustness Check: Counties and Congressional Districts 195
C.3	Robustness Check: Additional Controls 196
C.4	Robustness Check: Alternative Measures of Swing and Core 199
	Appendix D: Technical Appendix to Chapter 6 203
D.1	Experimental Sample and Demographics 203
D.2	Robustness Checks on Experimental Results 203
D.3	Localized Grant Spending and Electoral Outcomes 206
	<i>References</i> 213
	<i>Index</i> 229

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03871-4 - The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

List of Tables

2.1	Summary of Hypotheses	<i>page</i> 48
3.1	Punishing Democratic Districts in the 1990 Cheney List	75
3.2	Lack of Particularism in the 1991 DOD List	79
4.1	A Model of County-Level Presidential Disaster Declarations, 1984 to 2008, Logistic Regression Model	97
4.2	Federal Grant Spending and Presidential Particularism within States	106
5.1	Presidential Particularism and the Allocation of Federal Grants, U.S. Counties, 1984 to 2008	131
6.1	Support for Increased Transportation Spending across Experimental Groups	150
6.2	Obama Feeling Thermometer Ratings across Experimental Groups	151
6.3	Effect of Federal Spending on Incumbent Presidential Vote Share, U.S. Counties, 1988 to 2008	161
6.4	Swing State Counties Secure Large Increases in Grant Spending	168
A.1	Protecting Districts in Swing States – the 1990 Cheney List	186
A.2	Targeting Liberal Democrats – the 1990 Cheney List	187
B.1	A Model of County-Level Presidential Disaster Declarations, 1984 to 2008, Poisson Regression Model	189
B.2	Targeting of Transportation Grants to Counties – Continuous Measures of Swing and Core States	191
B.3	Targeting of Transportation Grants to Counties, Swing and Core Measures Using Only Last Election	192

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03871-4 - The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

List of Tables

B.4	Targeting of Transportation Grants to Counties – Chair and Ranking Member Measures	193
C.1	Federal Grant Spending and Presidential Particularism	197
C.2	Federal Grant Spending and Presidential Particularism	198
C.3	Federal Grant Spending and Presidential Particularism – Continuous Measures of Swing and Core	200
C.4	Federal Grant Spending and Presidential Particularism – Swing and Core Measures Using Only Last Election	201
D.1	Demographic Characteristics of Experimental Sample	204
D.2	Logit Models Assessing Effect of Spending Treatments on Support for More Federal Transportation Funding	204
D.3	Least Squares Regression Models Assessing Effect of Spending Treatments on Feeling Thermometer Rating of President Obama	205
D.4	The Effect of Federal Spending on Incumbent Presidential Vote Share, U.S. Counties, 1988 to 2008	208
D.5	The Effect of the Change in Logged Federal Spending and Electoral Competitiveness on Incumbent Presidential Vote Share, U.S. Counties, 1988 to 2008	209
D.6	The Electoral Consequences of the Change in Federal Grant Spending per Capita	210
D.7	Swing State Counties Secure Large Increases in Grant Spending, State Fixed Effects Model	211

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03871-4 - The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

List of Illustrations

3.1	Change in President Bush's Electoral Fortunes from 2000 to 2004 in Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania	<i>page</i> 65
4.1	Presidential Disaster Declarations, 1984 to 2008	92
4.2	Distribution of Natural-Disaster-Related Damage at County Level, 1984 to 2008	93
4.3	Presidential Particularism and Disaster Declarations across All Years	96
4.4	Presidential Particularism and Disaster Declarations in Election Years	99
4.5	Presidential Particularism and Transportation Grants (County-Level Effects)	107
5.1	Presidential Particularism and Federal Grant Spending (County-Level Effects)	132
5.2	Presidential Particularism and the Political Business Cycle (County-Level Effects)	137
5.3	Estimated Increases in Grant Spending Secured by Swing States in 2008	138
5.4	Estimated Increases in Grant Spending Secured by Core States in 2008	139
5.5	Presidential Particularism and Presidential Incumbency (County-Level Effects)	140
5.6	Presidential Particularism within States (County-Level Effects)	144
6.1	Distribution of Election-Year Change in Grant Spending at the County Level, 1988 to 2008	156
6.2	Changes in Grant Spending, Florida in 2008	157
		ix

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03871-4 - The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

List of Illustrations

6.3	Changes in Grant Spending and Change in GOP Vote Share, Florida in 2008	158
6.4	Effect of Federal Spending on Incumbent Presidential Vote Share, U.S. Counties, 1988 to 2008	162
6.5	The Effect of Federal Spending and Electoral Competitiveness on Incumbent Presidential Vote Share, U.S. Counties, 1988 to 2008	165
C.1	Histogram of Logged County Federal Grant Totals, 1984–2008	196

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03871-4 - The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

In writing this book, we have benefited from the thoughtful insights of many individuals who have read drafts or listened to our questions and shared their thoughts. These individuals include: Barry Burden, Ian Clark, Adam Dynes, Katherine Levine Einstein, Justin Fox, Jim Gimpel, David Glick, Daniel Hopkins, William Howell, Jeff Jenkins, Gary King, Toby Merrill, Gary Miller, Terry Moe, Ryan Moore, Max Palmer, Eleanor Powell, Jon Rogowski, and Christine Rossell.

The book was also improved by the comments and criticisms that we received at various workshops and conferences where participants and discussants challenged us to think harder about our research questions. These venues include: the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Georgetown University, Stanford University, the Harris School at the University of Chicago, the University of Virginia, and Yale University.

In particular, we wish to single out individuals who attended a book conference at Boston University, which was generously funded by Graham Wilson and the College of Arts and Sciences. Here, we had the great benefit of receiving advice from Dino Christenson, Jeff Cohen, Dean Lacy, and Frances Lee, each of whom who read the entire manuscript, offered valuable suggestions and insight, and sacrificed a Saturday to share their thoughts. We also thank chairs, discussants, and participants at meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association and American Political Science Association where elements of this project were presented and improved.

At Cambridge University Press, we thank our outstanding editor Robert Dreesen, who encouraged us and guided us throughout the project, and Elizabeth Janetschek and Brianda Reyes, who deftly steered

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03871-4 - The Particularistic President: Executive Branch Politics and Political Inequality

Douglas L. Kriner and Andrew Reeves

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

us through the sometimes daunting publication process. We also wish to thank Paula Dohnal for editorial assistance, as well as Amron Gravett for indexing assistance.

For financial support, we wish to thank Boston University, the Center for the Study of American Politics at Yale University, the Hoover Institution, Washington University in St. Louis, and the Weidenbaum Center on the Economy, Government, and Public Policy.

Finally, for their love and support, we wish to thank our families, particularly Jillian Goldfarb, Deborah Kriner, Gary Kriner, Ann Reeves, Christopher Reeves, Harry Reeves, Michael Reeves, and Patrick Reeves.