Politics versus Risk in Allocations of Federal Security Grants

Holly T. Goerdel*

*University of Kansas; hgoerdel@ku.edu

Distributive political theory is applied to whether politics versus risk determines government spending across four grant programs purposed for homeland security. A model of security funding is tested with data from U.S. states from 2004 to 2006. Findings support politics over risk when programs are designed to award universal benefits to elected officials, such as with fair-sharing policies. However, risk explains funding when programs award narrow, particularistic benefits, such as with urban security initiatives. A key conclusion is that *fair*-share strategies in grant politics can actually produce *unfair* allocation outcomes in the area of security. Also, protecting status quo formulas is in the interest of political actors, especially if they might otherwise lose opportunities to secure resources for constituents (state and local governments) in a distressed economy.

Distributive politics are often disparaged in news media, by the public, and even by shrewd politicians as bills are enacted with countless earmarks for pork barrel projects. Commentary and criticism regularly abound as politicians repeatedly claim their constitutional right to insert last-minute projects deemed worthy on behalf of constituents.

It can also be unpopular to criticize security and defense spending, as exemplified in cyclical federal budget negotiations, campaign seasons, and executive transitions. However, since the creation and reorganization of the Department of Homeland security (DHS), homeland security policies have produced questionable practices of allocation, including evidence of pork politics and distributive politics. For example, many security programs are producing "more or less revenue sharing" among states and localities, rather than risk-based allocation focused on terrorism threat and vulnerability" (de Rugy 2005, 21; Chenoweth and Clarke 2010). Among other consequences, this has resulted in what Congressman Chris Cox (R-CA) calls, "funding formulas [for security] that look more like a highway bill" (Earle 2004). The issue over earmarks in security legislation has also been a salient topic; and, while the number and overall value of earmarks in homeland security appropriations bills has remained relatively low since 2009, it is uncertain whether Congress will continue with the informal practice of keeping earmarks out

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of the business of security (Crispin, Finocchiaro, and Wanless 2009; Congressional Research Service 2006).

Despite popular disparagement and misguided homeland security programming, few social scientists have considered the question of whether our democracy has rationally protected itself against domestic terrorism, or whether distributive politics have crowded out security imperatives.[1] In this article distributive political theory is applied to the question of whether politics versus risk determines government spending across four of the largest intergovernmental grant programs purposed for homeland security: the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHGP), the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (LETPP), the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), and the Citizens Corps Program (CCP) (U.S. DHS 2007). The overall goal is to evaluate whether these programs are attractive sources of distributive benefits for political officials, and to understand the fate of risk assessment in the allocation process in light of such a political environment.[2]

First, there is a description about how each program by design confers universal versus particularistic benefits which shape distributive politics in patterned ways heretofore overlooked in the literature. Public choice perspectives are used to identify key institutions and actors within the decision-making process, drawing important distinctions between partisan, cardinal, and other key leadership effects in determining homeland security spending.

Second, public policy research is accessed for identifying key risk factors relevant to homeland security, including vulnerable geography, critical infrastructure, mass public attractions, and a range of other high-profile targets. Independent measures of security risk are oftentimes elusive and subjective to fault. Approaches to risk assessment in homeland security research are compared, focusing particularly on the merits of Delphi methodology—an approach similar to what DHS has adopted in various contexts of resource allocation.

Finally, a full empirical model of intergovernmental security is tested which compares the influence of politics versus risk in the allocation of grant funding across fifty U.S. states from 2004 to 2006. Findings support political dominance over risk-based factors when programs are designed to confer more expansive, universal benefits to key institutional decision makers. On the other hand, risk nullifies political influence in the allocation of funds for programs associated with more narrow, particularistic benefits. A key contribution is that fair-share strategies in intergovernmental grant politics can actually produce unfair, or irrational, allocation outcomes in the areas of security; annual protection of status quo formulas is very much in the interest of political actors, especially if it means they could miss out on opportunities to secure fiscal resources for constituents (in this case, state and local governments) in a severely distressed economy.

Distributive Politics and the Gentleman's Agreement

Public investments in domestic security are an important component of overall public expenditures, especially as a proportion of all intergovernmental grants. Over $1.6 billion were disbursed through core homeland security grant programs in 2006, accounting for nearly 10 percent of all grants distributed to the states (U.S. DHS 2007). These distributive programs are meant to support state and local implementation of federal priorities establishing nationwide baseline capabilities for "preparing, preventing, and responding to terrorist attacks and other disasters" (U.S. DHS 2006). The USA PATRIOT Act requires these programs to be formula-based and provides a mandate for political oversight to ensure fiscal and social responsibility in the allocation process. Therefore congressional management of homeland security grants consists primarily of setting allocation formulas, deciding overall appropriations, and overseeing administration.

Whereas this design and management strategy has been rhetorically portrayed as neutral and objectively detached from politics as usual, more careful analysis reveals otherwise. On the one hand there has emerged an informal agreement among key decision makers to keep homeland security bills clean from earmarks—another widely used distributive tool. The agreement for clean bills has been mostly successful with only thirty-nine earmarks in value of $309 million clearing appropriations during the time of this study (2004–6). Comparatively, the Department of Agriculture had over 700 earmarks in one year (2005), totaling $500 million, and Department of Defense appropriations included 2,500 earmarks in one year (2009) in excess of $11 billion dollars (Crispin, Finocchiaro, and Wanless 2009; Congressional Research Service 2006).

On the other hand, funding has belied neutrality as officials have repeatedly upheld status quo formulas for state grants based on fair-sharing and population—not on risk, threat assessment, or vulnerability. Therefore, the informal agreement has not been successful in curbing either the misallocation or misuse of security grant funding. Examples of misuse include financing promotional campaigns for child pornography tip lines, gym memberships, surveillance cameras in Alaskan fishing villages, kennels for stray animals, and drug-use prevention programs in schools (Prante and Bohara 2008; de Rugy 2005). While these efforts have merit in their own right, they are obvious examples of irresponsibility related to bolstering homeland security.

Even more problematic are subtle examples of small and rural state biases in the allocation process. Because a significant portion of security formulas mix fair-sharing to all states with an accommodation for population, per capita security expenditures have led to outcomes such as North Dakota and Vermont's $9.33 and $8.50 per capita security grant allocation, respectively (in 2004) compared to California and New York in the same year with $.86 and $1.79 per

capita (Eisinger 2006).[3] de Rugy (2005), for example, notes that "rural states are used to grabbing a relatively larger share of the federal pie [when it comes to homeland security grants] and they worry that altering grant formulas could reduce their funding." The same argument extends to rural bias. Altogether it is perhaps more accurate to say the agreement was indeed made for earmarks, but with proverbial fingers crossed concerning federal grants.

These realities have made homeland security grants an attractive source of distributive benefits. If we then assume that legislators will act as vote-maximizing regulators of homeland security, we can draw some expectations from the literature on motivations for distributive political behavior, and more importantly for this article, whether they overwhelm independent assessments of risk and vulnerability in how security grants are allocated to states.[4]

Formal theories of distributive politics describe how officials cultivate personal votes using fiscal resources from national coffers. One body of literature focuses on conditions by which elected officials come to enact policies with distributive benefits, as well as how they manage these benefits to ultimate advantage. Cox and McCubbins (1986, 1993), for example, focus on how politicians secure distributive benefits among different groups of core supporters, opposition groups, or swing groups. In their quest for reelection, more risk-averse politicians are found to first distribute benefits to core supporters, then swing groups, and never to opposition groups. A competing model by Lindbeck and Weibull (1987) finds officials are more likely to distribute resources to swing voters (those ideologically indifferent, in their description) and voters most vulnerable to the advantages of material benefits, such as low-income voters. In comparative perspective, McGillivray (2004) and Golden and Picci (2008) model the effects of electoral systems, such as single-member districts versus proportional representation, as well as party strength, on the distribution of public investments to particular jurisdictions in exchange for potential votes. This is but a sample of this particular research stream.

More applicable to this study is the research on universal versus particularistic benefits in the process of distributing pork. Universalism is when many members of congress share in the benefits of distributing resources across jurisdictions (Mayhew 1974; Weingast 1994). Officials may prefer this strategy when they are unsure of being included in the minimum-winning coalition on the issue at hand. From this perspective, universalism amounts to an "insurance policy" for risk-averse legislators (Balla et al. 2002, 516). A specific example would be fair-sharing of dollars, which is equal distribution of grant funds among all fifty states. On the other hand, particularistic benefits may result from within the committee system which provides an institution opportunity for logrolling issues of more narrow interest to the benefit of fewer members (Cann and Sidman 2011; Gamkhar and Ali 2008; Evans 2004; Weingast and Marshall 1988). Exclusive, or particularistic, benefits also tend to be politically divisive because they more clearly identify

winners and losers (Cann and Sidman 2011; Bertelli and Grose 2009; Weingast 1994). A specific example in this case would be allocation based on specialized aspects of jurisdictions, such as whether they include high-value security targets. This strategy would produce more clear winners and losers in the process. These two concepts—universal versus particularistic benefits—can be applied to homeland security grant funding behavior by elected officials.

Formula-based expenditure programs are often overlooked in the distributive politics literature because they are argued to be less malleable to lobbying efforts of members (Bickers and Stein 1996). However, when executive and legislative priorities lead to major administrative reorganizations and new grant programming (as in the case of homeland security since 2003), opportunities for distributive behavior are made possible at multiple reauthorization checkpoints, as well as through annual appropriation processes, where formulas are confirmed or amended (see, e.g., Savage 1999).

Four specific homeland security grant programs are analyzed in this study. The first is the SHGP. This program provides the greatest amount of funding to states and local units of government to prevent, deter, respond to, and recover from terrorism incidents. At the time of this study, examples of what this grant supports include homeland security and emergency planning activities, purchase of specialized equipment, and help with costs of training and exercises related to the state's homeland security strategic plan. The Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) provides funds specifically to support urban areas and to assist in individual and regional capacity to prevent, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism. Receipt of funds requires proof of an inclusive, regional approach to homeland security and emergency planning. Examples of what this grant supports include creation and coordination of an urban-focus strategic plan for homeland security and emergency preparedness, security-based improvements to critical infrastructure, and development of operational capabilities to manage security and emergency issues on a regional basis. The LETPP provides funds to law enforcement communities to improve capabilities for detecting, deterring, disrupting, and preventing terrorism. This would include, for example, increasing information sharing capabilities related to threats of terrorism, developing intervention strategies for terrorism-related issues, and ensuring interoperable communications among law enforcement communities and between other first responder communities, such as with fire departments. Finally, there is the Citizen Corps Program (CCP) that provides funds to support local councils and volunteers with planning, public education, training, and exercises related to terrorism prevention, planning, and awareness (U.S. DHS 2005; Congressional Research Service Report 2004). For each program, state and local units can consult federal guidelines provided by the DHS to ensure that plans for soliciting funds are consistent with what is allowable according to administrative rules, laws, and legal funding formulas.

Each core homeland security grant has its own funding formula decided by Congress, and more specifically by congressional committees and congressional leadership responsible for building or thwarting support for the status quo. Until 2006, all but one (the UASI) of the four grant programs were nondiscretionary and allocated funds based on a mixture of fair-sharing and population proportion. For example, 75 percent of total grant discernments from the SHGP, LETPP, and the CCP were distributed equally to every state with remaining funds allocated based on population differences (U.S. DHS 2007).

These nondiscretionary grants offer attractive universal benefits to those members who might otherwise lose the chance to send money home if elements of risk, for example, are added to the funding equation. Therefore, a vote in favor of the status quo is a vote for universal benefits each budgeting cycle since funding formulas for homeland security are addressed most often during annual processes of reauthorization and appropriation.

After 2006, Congress authorized a change in the funding formula for the SHGP and the LETPP to include more discretionary funding based on terrorism risk, threat, and vulnerability. While 75 percent of total disbursements for each program were still based on fair-sharing across each state, population share was replaced with more discretionary funds that DHS could theoretically disburse based on other factors, including risk. Therefore, any change in formulas favoring discretionary funding, rather than fair-sharing, greatly improved the likelihood of risk playing a more prominent role in security spending to the states. At the same time, movement towards discretionary funding made inherently more narrow, or exclusive, the distributive benefits available to elected officials. This may have been attractive to a subset of affected members, but highly unattractive to the average legislator who would otherwise stand to lose. Table 1 summarizes characteristics of distributive benefits, as well as motivations for their pursuit, according to whether security grants are discretionary versus nondiscretionary. Table 1 also clarifies with examples the connection between concepts in this case: Universal benefits are associated with nondiscretionary, equal sharing strategies, whereas particularistic benefits are associated with discretionary, unequal, and more specialized strategies.

Political Explanatory Factors

The capacity of vote-maximizing regulators (Peltzman 1976) to increase homeland security funding to their states depends on a number of political factors, including position in the committee system, leadership authority within the chamber and party caucus, overall fiscal austerity, and partisanship. First is the matter of committees. Whereas domestic security functions can be housed in a number of different administrative agencies,[5] the DHS is the main executive agent for state and local intergovernmental grant programs, including the four covered in this

Table 1. Distributive politics and Homeland Security Grant allocations, 2004–6

Distributive politics	Homeland Security Grant characteristics	
	Discretionary	Nondiscretionary
Legislative benefits	Narrow, exclusive, particularistic ex) policies that result from log-rolling issues of interest to fewer legislators, such as those based on risk, vulnerability, past incidence (NYC)	Universal, inclusive, wide ranging ex) revenue sharing policies based on equal distribution among fifty states (fair-sharing); per capita distribution
Motivations to secure benefits	Motivated by securing potentially larger piece of fiscal share, even if otherwise trading off fair-share resources	Prevent losing funds to game of narrow political interests; prefer strategy of allocation similar to insurance policy
Examples of State Homeland Security Grant Programs	UASI (risk elements guide allocation); SHGP (2006: per capita allocation replaced by risk factors)	CCP; LETPP; and SHGP (2004–5) all driven by elements of equal distribution or population proportion, not risk

Note. UASI: Urban Areas Security Initiative; LETPP: Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program; CCP: Citizens Corps Program; SHGP: State homeland Security Grant Program.

study. Congressional oversight of homeland security has been argued in dire need of overhaul (McNeill 2008). DHS answers to approximately eighty-six different congressional committees and subcommittees depending on the issue, and despite recommendations of the 9/11 Commission to streamline oversight efforts, changes have been highly incremental to the point of "threatening the DHS mission" (McNeill 2008).

Congressional management of core homeland security grant programs is reasonably tractable. Generally there are two standing committees for homeland security, two appropriations subcommittees for homeland security (and two general appropriations committees relevant to any funding program). One of each committee is positioned across both chambers (U.S. GPO 2004, 2005, 2006). In theory, the gains-from-trade model suggests that legislators' capacity to secure [distributive benefits] depends on their position in the committee system (Balla et al. 2002; Bickers and Stein 1996). However, not all committees and committee members are created with equal power. For example, the cardinal effects of those positioned on key appropriations committees are documented as especially effective at securing distributive benefits (Carsey and Rundquist 1998; Munson 1993;

Ferejohn 1974). The authorization committees for homeland security are substantively oriented towards issues of policy, as well as managing the authorization of funding for policy initiatives and programs, including homeland security grant programs. These committees can recommend policies that shape homeland security activities. Homeland security appropriations subcommittees also have authority to affect the success of policies and programs by writing appropriation checks on the basis of any concerns under their consideration. Therefore, changes to funding formulas can come about from integrated processes between authorization and appropriation committees. And in the end, each budgeting cycle provides all members an opportunity to vote to support or change the status quo of funding formulas for security grants.

Second, leadership authority within the chamber or party caucus improves legislative capacity to secure distributive benefits, by virtue of helping coordinate and build support for or against legislation, gauging and steering party sentiment on policy issues, planning legislative agendas, and coordinating strategic voting attendance (Bickers and Stein 1996; Mayhew 1974). A notable example from the political economy literature was the ability of majority leaders, especially the Pro Tem and Speaker, to acquire, maintain, and expand New Deal spending to state and local jurisdictions (Anderson and Tollison 1991; Wright 1974). More recently from the federalism literature is the inclusion of state and local stabilization as central goals of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, as determined by majority leaders in conference negotiations (Dinan and Gamkhar 2009).

Third, the average fiscal austerity of national delegates provides information on political will to support or oppose government spending, generally, which may then shift the momentum of intergovernmental grant programming overall. Finally, partisans of the majority are argued to fare better at securing distributive benefits than their minority counterparts (Levitt and Snyder 1995; Lee 1999, 2000). Hoover and Pecorino (2003) find evidence of this effect not only in the distribution of federal grants to the states, but also in disbursements of direct spending, wages, and procurement.

Framed as a hypothesis, homeland security spending to states vis-à-vis grant programs is likely to be influenced positively by membership on policy-oriented and appropriations committees, caucus or chamber leadership, and partisanship with the majority, and negatively by conservative fiscal ideology. Whereas more discretionary funds may provide for more rational (risk-based) allocation, they also create a great deal of uncertainty for members compared to benefits insured through fair-sharing (nondiscretionary) formulas. Therefore, these associations may change depending on whether we are talking about total funding, nondiscretionary funding, or discretionary share of all funding.

Incorporating Risk

A more rational model of homeland security spending would be driven less by politics or other public choice concerns, and more by public interest. Coats, Karahan, and Tollison (2006) are the first to test the public interest, or risk, hypothesis. They are particularly interested in whether funds go where risk of future terrorist attacks is greatest. Drawing on coarse measures of vulnerability and threat across the United States, they are unable to find support for the public interest hypothesis beyond population levels.

Prante and Bohara (2008) build on this analysis by including a more discriminating measure of risk, threat, and vulnerability. Rather than relying on dichotomous indicators of geography (e.g., coastline, border, etc.) and singular critical infrastructure (nuclear facilities), they identify an independent composite measure developed using the Delphi forecasting method. Delphi methodology was first developed by RAND to interactively forecast frequency and severity of catastrophes and attacks during the Cold War period. Panels of independent experts were brought together with backgrounds in warfare, counterterrorism, international conflict, and national security among others. Iterative interactions among experts were scientifically structured and facilitated to produce group judgments on a range of issues. In the absence of declassified access to DHS's decision methodology, the independent Delphi measure of terrorism risk across U.S. states provides a strong proxy; one that may prove more valid than current executive administrative measures. Details about the expertise used to determine modern terrorism risk at the state level is discussed in a later section.

Framed as a hypothesis, homeland security spending to states is a positive function of terrorism risk, threat, and vulnerability. I also expect risk factors to be especially important for increasing discretionary funding of grants overall, as well as the discretionary share of funding compared to nondiscretionary funding. This is because risk is a factor that leads to specialized targeting of grant funds.

The next section brings together into one system of empirical equations major political expectations and risk-based expectations for determining state-level homeland security spending.

Hypotheses and Empirical Models

Following the theoretical literature on distributive politics vis-à-vis intergovernmental spending (Levitt and Snyder 2005; Hoover and Pecorino 2003; Balla et al. 2002; Anderson and Tollison 1991; Wallis 1996; Wright 1974), universal versus particularistic benefits (Golden and Picci 2008; Balla et al. 2002; Bickers and Stein 1996; Weingast 1994; Shepsle and Weingast 1981), and risk assessment in

homeland security (Prante and Bohara 2008; Coats, Karahan, and Tollison 2006), testable hypotheses are summarized as follows:

H1: *total* intergovernmental homeland security spending increases when states' overall delegation profile mirrors the majority, when states have representation on key policy and appropriations committees, when states have legislators in key leadership roles tied to coalition building and agenda setting, when political will for general government spending is more favorable, and when security risk is elevated; however,

H2: political factors are likely to dominate risk factors in determining increases in *nondiscretionary* security spending to states, because of more certain, *universal* member benefits associated with fair-sharing.

H3: risk factors will determine increases in *discretionary* security spending to states; however, political factors will likely decrease discretionary spending because of uncertainty over, and narrowing of, potential member benefits.

These hypotheses are tested using a system of four basic models. The first is an empirical model of total homeland security spending to states, overtime:

$$\begin{aligned} &TotalHSEXP_{st} = \alpha_{st} + \theta PF_{st} + \theta RF_{st} + \theta Z_{st} + \varepsilon_{st}, \\ &s = 1 \ldots 50;\ t = 2004 \ldots 2006; \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

where TotalHSEXP_{st} is the logged total of homeland security spending for all four programs to state s at time t. θPF is a vector of political factors, θRF is a vector of risk factors, θZ is a vector of control factors including population statistics and state economic indicators, and ε_{st} is an error term. The remaining three models follow similar format but with different specifications of the dependent variable:

$$\begin{aligned} &Non - DdiscretionaryHSEXP_{st} = \alpha_{st} + \theta PF_{st} + \theta RF_{st} + \theta Z_{st} + \varepsilon_{st}, \\ &s = 1 \ldots 50;\ t = 2004 \ldots 2006. \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

The amount of nondiscretionary funding represents more or less fair-sharing of security monies from formulas based predominately on equal nationwide disbursements with some accommodations for population differences. The next model focuses on discretionary components of homeland security spending. The first is total discretionary spending, whereas the second is the proportion of discretionary spending of all spending across core grant programs:

$$\begin{aligned} &DiscretionaryHSEXP_{st} = \alpha_{st} + \theta PF_{st} + \theta RF_{st} + \theta Z_{st} + \varepsilon_{st}, \\ &s = 1 \ldots 50;\ t = 2004 \ldots 2006; \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

$$\begin{aligned} &Disc/ShareHSEXP_{st} = \alpha_{st} + \theta PF_{st} + \theta RF_{st} + \theta Z_{st} + \varepsilon_{st}, \\ &s = 1 \ldots 50;\ t = 2004 \ldots 2006. \end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

Data, Measures, and Methods

To test the overall question of politics versus risk in the allocation of homeland security funding, a panel data set is constructed for all variables across fifty U.S. states from 2004 to 2006 ($N = 150$). Data for all dependent variables are collected from annual fiscal oversight reports from the DHS (U.S. DHS 2004a, b, 2005, 2007). Political data on committees and leadership come from legislative resources made available from the U.S. Government Printing Office (U.S. GPO 2004, 2005, 2006). Political data for majority representation are provided by Prante and Bohara (2008), and are taken from the Center for Responsive Politics.[6] Fiscal conservatism scores of state delegations to Congress come from the National Taxpayers Union Foundation.[7]

I incorporate indicators of risk from Prante and Bohara (2008), which are improvements over Coats, Karahan, and Tollison (2006). Each state is annually categorized into low-, medium-, and high-risk categories based on Delphi assessments of terrorism experts, many whom are formerly high ranking employees of the FBI, CIA, and Department of Defense. Deliberations focused on a range of risk factors from multiple types of critical infrastructure and high-profile targets, to evaluating probabilities of incidence and severity of diverse modes of attack.[8] Finally, several control variables are accounted for, including state population and economic statistics. These come primarily from the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. Summary statistics and variable descriptions may be found in Supplementary Data available at *Publius* online.

The structure of the overall data set requires panel data analysis. Equations are estimated with robust panel-corrected standard errors to account for heteroskedasticity and contemporaneous correlation across panels. For intergovernmental politics research, it is also common to find serial correlation within panels because of the autoregressive nature of the grant production function overtime. Therefore, I account for first-order autocorrelation within panels, for all panels, to yield more consistent estimates (Baltagi 2005).

Findings

The first set of models is drawn from funding equations (1)–(4) above. In table 2, the dependent variable for Model 1 is total spending for all four grant programs. Both politics *and* risk significantly increase total spending, especially political representation on key committees and high-risk classification. While spending to all states increased on average during the time under study, those states with legislative representation on key appropriation committees received, on average, 22.6 percent more total security grant funding than those without committee representation.

Table 2. Political versus risk-based determinants of homeland security spending to U.S. States, 2004–6

Independent	Type of benefit			
	Universal		Exclusive	
	Model 1 Total	Model 2 Nondiscretionary	Model 3 Discretionary	Model 4 Discretionary Share
Political factors				
Appropriations cmtes	.226***	.102***	−1.83*	−.124***
	(.071)	(.027)	(.943)	(.000)
Homeland security cmtes	.029	.067**	−1.21	−.083***
	(.072)	(.027)	(.867)	(.010)
Leadership in chamber/caucus	.104	−.049	1.25	.064
	(.095)	(.039)	(1.31)	(.184)
Blue-Red Index (majority)	−.020	−.005	.090	.006
	(.053)	(.041)	(.750)	(.806)
Fiscal conservatism	−.001	.001	−.016	−.006
	(.001)	(.066)	(.026)	(.457)
Risk factors				
Medium risk— AIR	.051	.008	3.39	.007
	(.103)	(.040)	(1.48)**	(.890)
High risk—AIR	.405**	.042	.906	−.046
	(.164)	(.066)	(2.32)	(.081)
Controls				
Population	.552***	−.136***	4.04***	.171***
	(.058)	(.022)	(.000)	(.026)
Gross state product (per capita)	.026	−.319***	8.19***	.397***
	(.228)	(.082)	(.007)	(.101)
Constant	8.88***	1.57***	−22.71**	−.914**
	(.822)	(.288)	(11.32)	(.011)
R^2	.754	.478	.493	.502
Number of observations	150	150	150	150
Wald χ^2	443.77***	129.13***	153.50***	147.34***

Notes. All dependent variables, gross state product, and population are logged. Models estimated as OLS with panel-corrected standard errors; adjusted for first-order autocorrelation (AR1). $p < .10^*$; $p < .05^{**}$; $p < .01^{***}$ (two-tailed).

Risk also played a significant role in overall funding, with those states classified in the highest risk category receiving on average 40.5 percent more resources than those classified otherwise as low risk. However, states classified with moderate risk are not significantly different from those with low risk, which is a finding consistent with Prante and Bohara (2008). On the one hand this could indicate difficulties with establishing categories of risk. On the other hand it could actually signal that homeland security funding is being strategically allocated to those most at risk.

Whereas both politics and risk are significant determinants of total homeland security spending, high-risk factors display a greater magnitude effect (.226 and .405, respectively). This could be taken as a positive sign that our government is defending itself more rationally than critics expected, and that key legislators involved in the allocation process via appropriation committees are indeed helping to produce efficient allocations of funding to areas most susceptible to terrorist attacks.

Models 2, 3, and 4 explore the more controversial side of the story. Studies of intergovernmental grant allocation often give more attention to total expenditures than to subsets of expenditures defined by grant formulas. Model 2, for example, considers nondiscretionary allocations. These allocations represent the fair-sharing of security dollars across all states, with only minor adjustments for population differences. In theory, the average legislator is expected to favor nondiscretionary spending as insurance against what could be lost if more discretionary restrictions were placed on funds. Positive coefficients for both political committees confirm legislators are interested in protecting funds associated with more certain, universal benefits. Those states with legislative delegates on key policy and appropriations committees receive approximately 10 percent and 7 percent, respectively, more nondiscretionary funding than those without representation. While three quarters of all nondiscretionary funding are distributed equally among states, one quarter of this funding is based on a measurement of population share that can result in differences among states. While this seems rational in theory, it has led to numerous accounts of per-capita bias towards small and rural states, and not larger and urban states (Eisinger 2006; Coats, Karahan, and Tollison 2006; Clarke and Chenoweth 2006; Roberts 2005). The negative association between population and nondiscretionary funding lends support, in part, to this observation. Finally, in the contest between politics and risk in determining overall nondiscretionary spending, political will to protect more certain, universal benefits prevails over any risk factor, whether medium or high.[9]

Model 3, in contrast, considers discretionary homeland security funding. This funding represents more discriminate allocation of security dollars based on factors relevant to threats of terrorism. In theory, the average legislator is not expected to favor spending that potentially restricts, or makes more uncertain and exclusive,

opportunities for distributive benefits. Evidence is found to support this argument. Legislative representation for appropriations, on average, leads to less discretionary funding to states. The relationship between discretionary spending and risk is more complicated and potentially disturbing. Whereas medium-risk states receive more discretionary funding ($b = 3.39$) than what is lost because of politically rational decision makers ($b = -1.83$), they do so more than states otherwise classified as high-risk.

As high-risk classification is not significantly associated with discretionary spending, questions arise whether the threat-based formula could (should) be improved to produce more efficient allocation of security resources to those most in need. These concerns are exacerbated further in Model 4, where both risk factors are insignificant compared to political factors. Additional political findings also emerge in Model 4, where the dependent variable is the discretionary share of all security grant spending. Both policy and appropriations committees are now equally concerned over the share of distributive benefits apportioned as discretionary, or exclusive. Legislative representation on either type of committee is associated, on average, with an 8–12 percent decrease in states' discretionary share of security funding. Taken together, whether politics versus risk determines homeland security spending appears to depend on the type of distributive benefit conferred by the grant.

In table 3, I examine this argument in the context of two specific grants: the SHGP and the UASI. The first grant exemplifies mostly universal benefits based on fair-sharing across states and therefore benefits more legislators. The second represents a more targeted approach to allocating security dollars based on risk, thus benefiting fewer legislators. In Model 5 the dependent variable is a state's yearly allocation of SHGP funding. Politics and risk are *both* significant predictors of funding.

Whereas political factors are expected to positively influence programs with more universal benefits, the SHGP model differs from other models of nondiscretionary funding (Model 2) on the importance of risk. High-risk classification is associated with increases in SHGP funding, while it is not associated when considered alongside other programs with nondiscretionary components. This tells us key information about which programs may best produce more rational allocations of homeland security resources. The SHGP, for example, may be more attendant to risk factors than grants for law enforcement prevention and citizen protection programs. Of course, an independent analysis of each of these would verify such claims.

Model 6 tells a similar story for discretionary funding vis-à-vis the UASI grant program. The primary goal of this program has always been to allocate funding to urban areas across the country with greatest risk, threat, and vulnerability. The significance and magnitude of coefficients for high-risk ($b = 4.04$) and medium-risk ($b = 6.41$) align with the overall mission of the grant program. When compared to

Table 3. Political versus risk-based determinants of homeland security spending to U.S. States, 2004–6: Comparing two grant programs

	Type of benefit	
	Universal Model 5 (SHGP)	Exclusive Model 6 (UASI)
Political factors		
Appropriations cmtes	.335***	–.494
	(.092)	(.769)
Homeland security cmtes	.082	–.618
	(.369)	(.789)
Leadership in chamber/caucus	.018	2.15*
	(.118)	(1.14)
Blue-Red Index (majority)	.024	–.273
	(.070)	(.636)
Fiscal conservatism	–.001	–.014
	(.002)	(.021)
Risk factors		
Medium risk—AIR	.109	6.41***
	(.128)	(1.29)
High risk—AIR	.435**	4.04**
	(.203)**	(2.09)
Controls		
Population	.364***	4.34***
	(.069)	(.706)
Gross state product (per capita)	–.451	3.51
	(.234)	(2.91)
Constant	9.40***	–46.45***
	(.981)	(9.96)
R^2	.528	.689
Number of observations	150	150
Wald χ^2	170.54***	379.55***

Notes. All dependent variables, gross state product, and population are logged. Models estimated as ordinary least squares with panel-corrected standard errors; adjusted for first-order autocorrelation (AR1).
$p<.10$*; $p<.05$**; $p<.01$*** (two-tailed).

models of overall discretionary spending, which include components of other homeland security grants (Model 3), the UASI program appears to more rationally steer grant resources to those at risk. Also notable is the insignificance of political factors, especially cardinal effects, in predicting UASI spending. Whereas overall

discretionary models predict large, and negative, political effects (Model 3), the importance of risk to specific programs overwhelms any effort by key decision makers to further reduce discretionary spending on programs with more exclusive, or uncertain, benefits.

Taken together, tables 2 and 3 demonstrate both the importance of politics and risk in determining homeland security spending, as well as conditions under which each is principally important. For example, in cases where universal benefits, or the share of universal benefits, are at stake, we can expect political factors to be vital to security spending. While this does not mean risk-based factors are never important, they generally play a less crucial role in the determination of funding. In specific programs (SHGP), however, there is evidence suggesting alignment between the political protection of universal benefits and the rational allocation of security funding to those most at risk.

Formula Shift

Under political and public pressure to bring homeland security funding, writ large, into compliance with the intent of 9/11 Commission recommendations, as well as to curb the misuse of federal dollars, Congress passed legislation changing how security grants would be allocated. The 2006 Homeland Security Appropriations Act amended, in particular, the formulas for two major programs, the LETPP and the SHGP. Whereas these programs mostly produced fair-sharing of security funding across the states before the Act, now their population-based components would be replaced by risk-based factors.

At first glance, this move may be viewed as antithetical to a theory of distributive politics based on universal versus particularistic benefits; after all, to move away from fair-sharing is to move toward more exclusive advantages. A careful second look, however, reveals this change as a circumscribed, even shrewd, response on behalf of key decision makers under political pressure. For example, to come into full compliance with Commission recommendations would require *all* state and local security funding be based on discretionary factors of risk, threat, and vulnerability. Knowing this would be politically infeasible, decision makers took incremental steps to improving allocations according to updated standards. Table 4 presents results for how the 2006 Act influenced homeland security spending to the states, including whether a declaration of risk-based priorities mitigated overarching political motivations to protect universal benefits.

The first model focuses on *total* homeland security spending (Model 7). Whereas appropriations committee and leadership measures are significant independent predictors of overall spending, appropriations committee effects are alleviated after the 2006 shift. This confirms how key changes in legislation affect the ability of some key institutional actors to secure distributive benefits. On the

other hand, the positive and significant coefficient for high-risk classification is evidence that a portion of total security dollars is indeed going to those most in need. Finally, the robustness of the leadership variable is consistent with general claims that key institutional members did not want to be responsible for *not* supporting policies in favor of securing the homeland.

As before, Models 8, 9, and 10 explore more controversial aspects of the story. The most intriguing finding is that across models of nondiscretionary funding, discretionary funding, and discretionary share of funding, risk factors are only significant in the case of discretionary funding. This suggests that a declaration of risk-prioritization does not, and cannot, produce risk-based allocation on an immediate basis. In fact, because the DHS did not already have in place validated, formalized, and standardized approaches for how to measure risk, threat, and vulnerability, changing the formula in favor of risk actually led to perverse outcomes of initial misallocation.

It also left funding more susceptible to political factors. For example, appropriations committee effects remain positive and significant in predicting nondiscretionary funding, as well as negative and significant in predicting the discretionary share of all spending. These findings are consistent with those before the Act was passed, leading us to conclude that key decision makers continue to favor universal benefits over exclusive benefits, even if it results in the misallocation of some funding. One piece of evidence defying this conclusion, however, is the negative and significant effect of leadership on nondiscretionary funding. Key leadership roles in Congress do not guarantee states will receive more nondiscretionary funding. The robustness of this variable is consistent with the portion of members serving in leadership roles who also represent states that stand to gain if fair-sharing is compromised in favor of risk-based strategies.

These general findings are also evident in the context of SHGP and UASI funding (table 5). For SHGP (which remains the more "universal" of the two), the 2006 shift mitigates the positive political effect of appropriation-representation, producing a pattern similar to *total* homeland security funding after the Act. On the other hand, the fact that risk plays no role in determining SHGP spending is indicative that making changes in formulas which favor risk before also ensuring ways of *evaluating* risk, are likely to lead, at least temporarily, to misallocation.

For UASI funding, the leadership variable is consistent with table 4. This either simply reflects the composition of those in leadership roles related to this policy area (i.e., the composition of chamber and house leadership is predominately comprised of those representing jurisdictions that stand to gain from risk-based allocation), or it indicates that congressional leaders do not want to be found on the losing side should a high-visibility urban area come under attack—even if it means supporting more exclusive benefits. The size of the coefficient ($b = 2.16$) in this case suggests both factors are likely at play during the time period of this study.

Table 4. Political versus risk-based determinants of homeland security spending to U.S. States, 2004–6: Accounting for the formula shift

Independent	Type of benefit			
	Universal		Exclusive	
	Model 7 Total	Model 8 Nondiscretionary	Model 9 Discretionary	Model 10 Discretionary Share
Political factors				
Appropriations cmtes	.168***	.033**	−.461	−.042**
	(.061)	(.017)	(1.02)	(.000)
Appropriations × 2006 Shift	−.281***	.025	.312	−.022
	(.102)	(.051)	(1.67)	(.059)
Homeland security cmtes	−.067	.017	−.077 −.022	
	(.062)	(.017)	(.801)	(.021)
Leadership in chamber/caucus	.123**	−.043*	1.09	.057*
	(.060)	(.025)	(1.13)	(.030)
Blue-Red Index (majority)	−.020	−.003	.056	.004
	(.036)	(.013)	(.633)	(.016)
Fiscal conservatism	−.001	.001	−.018	−.001
	(.001)	(.000)	(.021)	(.001)
Risk factors				
Medium risk—AIR	−.053	.037	4.46***	.007
	(.062)	(.026)	(1.30)	(.890)
High risk—AIR	.179*	−.052	3.18	−.046
	(.106)	(.040)	(2.10)	(.081)
Controls				
2006 Shift	−.520***	−.292***	6.58***	.358***
	(.053)	(.026)	(.993)	(.031)
Population	.622***	−.105***	3.30***	.136***
	(.034)	(.014)	(.724)	(.017)
Gross state product (per capita)	.501***	−.109**	3.21	.138**
	(.174)	(.055)	(2.76)	(.067)
Constant	9.65***	1.93***	−31.33***	−1.37***
	(.822)	(.190)	(9.18)	(.228)
R^2	.858	.785	.638	.802
Number of observations	150	150	150	150
Wald χ^2	173.30***	426.46***	290.27***	518.64***

Notes. All dependent variables, gross state product, and population are logged. Models estimated as ordinary least squares with panel-corrected standard errors; adjusted for first-order autocorrelation (AR1).

$p<.10^*$; $p<.05^{**}$; $p<.01^{***}$ (two-tailed).

Table 5. Political versus risk-based determinants of homeland security spending to U.S. States, 2004–6: Comparing two grant programs after formula shift

	Type of benefit	
	Universal Model 11 (SHGP)	Exclusive Model 12 (UASI)
Political factors		
Appropriations cmtes	.206**	–.607
	(.097)	(.966)
Appropriations × 2006 Shift	–.281**	.195
	(.116)	(1.71)
Homeland security cmtes	–.069	–.672
	(.055)	(.795)
Leadership in chamber/caucus	.043	2.16*
	(.063)	(1.14)
Blue-Red Index (majority)	.026	–.269
	(.052)	(.636)
Fiscal conservatism	–.001	–.014
	(.002)	(.021)
Risk factors		
Medium risk—AIR	–.047	6.37***
	(.076)	(1.29)
High risk—AIR	.097	3.96*
	(.157)	(2.12)
Controls		
2006 Shift	–.845***	–.340
	(.041)	(1.09)
Population	.469***	4.36***
	(.041)	(.714)
Gross state product (per capita)	.265	3.70
	(.206)	(2.94)
Constant	10.59***	–46.08***
	(.741)	(9.96)
R^2	.823	.689
Number of observations	150	150
Wald χ^2	37.81***	395.69***

Notes. All dependent variables, gross state product, and population are logged. Models estimated as ordinary least squares with panel-corrected standard errors; adjusted for first-order autocorrelation (AR1).

$p<.10$*; $p<.05$**; $p<.01$*** (two-tailed).

Taken together, tables 4 and 5 demonstrate the importance of politics and risk in determining homeland security spending when shifts in funding formulas alter distributive benefits. For example, shifts away from fair-sharing and towards risk negate distributive benefits enjoyed by states with representatives on key appropriations committees. Overall, the incremental strategy to incorporate risk and threat factors into spending formulas has led to the misallocation of funds, potentially disadvantaging those states at medium and high risk for terrorist attacks.

Comments and Conclusion

The major question considered in the study is whether our democracy has rationally protected itself against domestic terrorism, or whether distributive politics has crowded out security imperatives. Before the shift in 2006, both politics and risk played significant roles in determining overall state allocations. However, a closer look into discretionary versus nondiscretionary funding led to more nuanced explanations for the roles of politics and risk. Consistent with a theory of distributive politics based on universal versus exclusive (or, particularistic) benefits, political factors dominated risk in protecting universal benefits, as well as in limiting the amount or share of funds with exclusive benefits. However, in most models of discretionary spending, including the specialized UASI models, risk factors produced more increases in funding (in magnitude), than decreases produced by political factors. Therefore, if we want to further improve upon the rational allocation of security funding, we need to address inefficiencies emerging in models of nondiscretionary versus discretionary spending.

Second, whereas the overall political opportunity to secure distributive benefits becomes limited by incremental changes in funding formulas, we should be aware that negative externalities, especially related to misallocation, are likely to occur if validated systems of risk assessment are not already in place, or coming on line. Administrative systems can act as a productive obstacle to the logrolling of universal benefits (Stazyk and Goerdel, 2011).

Third, the insignificance of majority-party representation to secure distributive benefits, even in the context of united government, is consistent with rhetoric expressed by elected officials on the nonpartisan quality of domestic security issues.[10] In the past two years, however, this sentiment has been challenged as debates over competing values of security and civil liberties and individual rights have become more salient to the public.[11] Future research on distributive politics of intergovernmental security grants must take on the overall politicalization (and potential polarization) of security efforts by partisans, especially as there has been an executive transition of power coupled with a precarious balance of power in the legislature. Even though tractability can be difficult, emerging intergovernmental

areas to apply this approach include cyber security management and funding of state-level fusion centers (Goodyear et al. 2010; Goerdel 2011).

Another area to explore more thoroughly is the difference among political institutions (or, institutional actors) in determining support for universal versus particularistic benefits in the distribution of public resources, and in particular those resources purposed for security. Whereas there is an extensive literature in traditional American politics on this subject, generally, institutional theories in public policy also offer explanations for why political committees might behave differently than those in institutional leadership roles, such as those described in the chamber and caucus, in securing universal versus particularistic distributive benefits. There is also preliminary evidence, for example, that issue networks on a range of domestic security topics are becoming the preferred vehicle for securing certain types of distributive benefits. This would be a good area to test and update, for example, assumptions behind Arnold's (1990) study of congressional decision making: What is the logic of congressional action for the common pool resource of security? A debate of normative assumptions therein could follow.

Finally, the management role of the DHS must be accounted for more directly in models of grant allocations to the states. The managerial competency of DHS to collaborate with state and local officials on how exactly to measure risk, threat, and vulnerability is only now beginning to gain traction. To say that DHS got off on the wrong foot with states and localities after September 11 is a gross understatement. However, administrative processes since that time have evolved substantially, and therefore obviously have implications for the rational allocation of federal monies. Hopefully, a key improvement will be a more nuanced accounting of risk that is less blunt and more nuanced than the calculation used in this study. As can be concluded, making grant allocations based on risk are only as good as the formula and measurement of risk itself.

Supplementary Data

Supplementary data can be found at www.publius.oxfordjournals.org

Notes

1. Rational protection in this study means matching resources with the widely accepted claims about risk and vulnerability.
2. These grant programs reorganized existing funding and created new funding targets. In early stages of planning it was widely accepted that more institutionalized funding mechanisms were preferable in the area of security management over disjointed, temporary funding patches to states and locals. This, in addition to a need at the time to figure out priorities and sustainable fiscal and performance management on behalf of federal, state, and local officials.

3. The homeland security grant for these figures was among the first: The Firefighter Investment and Response Enhancement (FIRE) program.
4. Coats, Karahan, and Tollison (2006) discuss how elected officials engage as vote-maximizing regulators when opportunities arise to "take advantage of newly available wealth transfer opportunities between winners and losers" (280).
5. Others include The Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Defense (U.S. DHS 2007).
6. These can be accessed directly at http://www.opensecrets.org.
7. Each member of Congress is given a score based on their support or opposition in voting on all policies dealing with fiscal issues. The constituency of the National Taxpayers Union is the "overburdened American taxpayer" regardless of party affiliation. Therefore, high values on a 1 to 100 scale represent net opposition to government spending. Lower scores indicate congressional approval of most spending policies, as well as opposition to taxpayer reform (National Taxpayers Union 2004, 2005, 2006). Overall House and Senate scores are reported separately. This is a measure similar to Concord Coalition scores used by other distributive scholars (Binder, Lawrence, and Maltzman 1999; Balla et al. 2002). However, Concord scores were not available for overtime use.
8. The risk firm Applied Insurance Research (AIR) convened the experts and managed deliberations. Their Terrorism Loss Estimation Model has also been assessed elsewhere (e.g., Boyle, Malinowski, and Gannon 2002; Prante and Bohara 2008).
9. Incidentally, this finding is consistent with municipal research that politics is edging out the performance of security preparedness (Chenoweth and Clarke 2010).
10. This is empirically expressed in the insignificance of the Blue-Red Index variable across all models. Correlations between this index and other political variables do not warrant statistical concerns over multicollinearity across estimated models.
11. This also includes debates over the role of federal government in the business of states and concerns about austerity and government spending overall.

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