

Final report

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Programmatic versus non-programmatic distributive politics in Kenya's cash transfer programmes

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Programmatic versus Non-Programmatic Distributive Politics in Kenya's Cash
Transfer Programs

Final Report*

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Social protection programs are on the rise in Africa and elsewhere around the world (Cirillo and Tebaldi, 2016; Ferguson, 2015; Niño-Zarazúa et al., 2012). The number of non-contributory social assistance programs in Africa — which includes, for example, cash for work programs, conditional and unconditional cash transfers, free health insurance, and skills training¹ — tripled in the 15-year period between 2000 and 2015 (Cirillo and Tebaldi, 2016). This expansion mirrors, and has been influenced by, dynamics elsewhere around the world, where governments have been increasingly providing a more robust package of social assistance programs to fight poverty (Hulme, Hanlon, and Barrientos, 2012; World Bank, 2017).²

In principle, social programs are designed to alleviate poverty, and there is evidence that *programmatic* social programs — where the distribution of benefits is guided by transparent and formal rules and access is not contingent on political behavior or related to political considerations (Stokes et al., 2013) — can have positive welfare effects (e.g. Fernald, Gertler, and Neufeld, 2008). Yet social programs can also be subject to intense political manipulation, which can undermine their welfare impact and threaten the political autonomy of the poor (Diaz-Cayeros, Estévez, and Magaloni, 2016; Stokes, 2005). Indeed social protection programs can provide resources to fuel *non-programmatic* distributive politics (De La O, 2015; Diaz-Cayeros, Estévez, and Magaloni, 2016). When non-programmatic distributive politics guides the allocation of resources, political elites influence the programs for political advantage and, in some cases, make access to benefits contingent on the political behavior of potential beneficiaries (Hicken, 2011; Stokes, 2007). *Under what conditions will social programs be implemented programmatically versus non-programmatically?*

This project addresses this question through the lens of local level program implementation. This approach contrasts with much (though not all) of the literature on social protection, which generally focuses on program adoption, national-level program design, or spending levels. Yet a focus on local level politics and social program implementation is critical because a feature of many social programs in

¹Unlike social insurance programs, which are often contributory and generally provide benefits to workers during emergencies or periods of unemployment, social protection programs are typically aimed at vulnerable individuals and households with the goal of making them more resilient and alleviating poverty (Cirillo and Tebaldi, 2016).

²The rising importance of social protection is reflected in the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which includes “[implementing] nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 [achieving] substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable” as one of its targets for eradicating poverty (World Bank, 2017).

Africa and elsewhere around the world is the delegation of significant responsibility, including a role in beneficiary selection, to leaders and organizations at the local level. For example, beneficiary households for Rwanda’s Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP) are selected by community-level committees. In Kenya, Constituency Social Assistance Committees, which include the constituency Member of Parliament as the “patron,” are involved in the implementation of social programs in each constituency (Wanyama and McCord, 2017). Although this structure creates opportunities for manipulation, there is often significant *within-country* local variation in the extent to which the same social program is implemented in a programmatic versus non-programmatic way (Weitz-Shapiro, 2012, 2014).³ *When will social protection programs be implemented programmatically versus non-programmatically at the local level?*

To address this question, this study analyzes the local implementation of social programs in Kenya, with a focus on the country’s expanding cash transfer programs. It focuses specifically on the three cash transfer programs that make up Kenya’s Consolidated Cash Transfer Program (CCTP): Cash Transfer Programme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC), Person with Severe Disability Cash Transfer Programme (PWSD-CT), and Older Persons Cash Transfer Programme (OPCT).⁴ Although these are national programs, local committees—including the Constituency Social Assistance Committee that includes the Member of Parliament—are involved in various aspects of program implementation, including beneficiary selection. This structure creates scope for political elites to attempt to influence the programs in a non-programmatic manner (Wanyama and McCord, 2017). Kenya is also a context where the conventional narrative suggests that non-programmatic distributive politics is highly prevalent. To generate local constituency-level indicators of programmatic and non-programmatic implementation, I conducted an original survey with local-level bureaucrats in 112 of Kenya’s 290 constituencies. The target subjects for the survey were sub-county officers, who in Kenya are in charge of the day-to-day implementation of the programs. The survey data is supplemented with in-depth qualitative interviews with these bureaucrats in a subset of constituencies. This research strategy relates to and builds

³For example, Weitz-Shapiro (2012) shows that there exists variation across local governments in Argentina in the extent to which food assistance programs are subject to clientelistic manipulation. As I discuss below, clientelism is a sub-type of non-programmatic distributive politics (Stokes et al., 2013).

⁴These programs were initially administered separately. Recent reforms have consolidated the management of the programs.

upon research from Latin American that also adopts sub-national designs to study social program implementation and distributive politics (Niedzwiecki, 2016; Sugiyama and Hunter, 2013; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012, 2014).

This report presents the study's early findings. The first set of results show that, despite Kenya's reputation for being a setting where non-programmatic distributive politics—including clientelism and the politicization of public service provision—is endemic, Kenya's main cash transfer programs are implemented programmatically in a large share of constituencies. Even when local political actors do involve themselves in program implementation it is often — though not always — through a form of programmatic constituency service: for example, helping to raise awareness of the program among constituents; identifying qualified and needy constituents; and helping constituents with requests to help navigate the system in order to access benefits. While this is sometimes done for political purposes — that is, trying to get “their people” on the beneficiary list — often it is not. As noted, this set of findings contrasts with the conventional narrative about distributive politics in Kenya (and elsewhere in Africa and similar lower-income contexts), suggesting that pockets of programmatic politics can emerge and solidify even in contexts where non-programmatic distributive politics is prevalent. Such pockets may get less attention than areas where evidence of non-programmatic distribution is uncovered (Stokes et al., 2013), yet can still be very important.

The second set of results focus on explaining the relative prevalence of programmatic distribution and, relatedly, variation in programmatic versus non-programmatic distribution across constituencies. Indeed, although programmatic implementation appears most prevalent, variation across constituencies does exist. The analysis of the qualitative interviews and the surveys generates several important, if still preliminary, conclusions. First, the *program design and formal rules* guiding the beneficiary selection process — which I lay out in detail below — play a central role in discouraging local politicians from attempting to influence the cash transfer programs and shielding the programs from the impact of attempts to influence when they do happen. This evidence suggests that formal rules can be consequential and binding, even in local environments where the conventional wisdom would predict informal norms and relationships to dominate. Second, the evidence demonstrates the importance of *citizen access to accurate information about the programs*: where bureaucrats and other actors are successful in educating

constituents about the programs — who is responsible for the resources and the process through which one qualifies for benefits — local politicians have a difficult time manipulating the programs for their own benefit. The qualitative evidence also suggests that bureaucrat linkages to local community and religious groups can play a key role in facilitating the spread of this information. Third, the finding about the role of formal rules notwithstanding, the evidence shows that *social norms and bottom-up pressures* can play a key role in driving non-programmatic distribution: indicators of non-programmatic implementation are far more likely to be uncovered in constituencies where MP faces frequent pressure from constituents to help them gain access to social program benefits. As discussed below, this result likely reflects social norms and expectations: if citizens in some constituencies believe that they must pressure the MP to gain access to program benefits and, importantly, that others in the constituency are likely to do so, it can be logical for them to do so even if they would prefer programmatic implementation. In the conclusion, I discuss some potential implications of these findings and directions for future research.

1 Conceptual and Theoretical Background

Existing research on the politics of social protection programs in Africa has generally focused on the political process of program *adoption* in specific cases. Much of this literature has situated the process of policy adoption within the “political settlements” theoretical framework (Pruce and Hickey, 2017; Lavers, 2016a,b; Wanyama and McCord, 2017). These studies are extremely valuable and point to a number of potential drivers of social program adoption and expansion. These include conflict, famines, or economic crises that threaten regime survival (Lavers, 2016a); the realities of structural unemployment and the existence of a large informal sector (Ferguson, 2015); and ideas and norms in the international community, which now emphasize the potential benefits of social protection programs such as cash transfer programs. They also highlight that social programs are likely to be adopted and expanded where they do not threaten the structures of power in the existing “political settlement” (Wanyama and McCord, 2017).

As noted, a key feature of many social programs in Africa and other similar contexts is the role of local institutions, organizations, or political leaders in the process of social program implementation.

This suggests the potential benefits of an analysis of the local level. It also highlights the potential for considerable variation across localities in how social programs are implemented and experienced.

1.1 Concepts: Programmatic versus Non-Programmatic Implementation

The main outcome of interest centers on the distinction between programmatic and non-programmatic social program *implementation*. As such, the focus of this study is on the question of *how* social programs are implemented. For the programs of focus in this study, the process of beneficiary selection is of central interest. This approach differs from much of distributive politics literature, which often focuses on where benefits are allocated or what types of goods are provided (though see Weitz-Shapiro, 2012, 2014) — though of course the answer to the question of *how* can have implications for the answer to the *where* question.

I follow the conceptual framework outlined in Stokes et al. (2013). According to this framework, *programmatic distribution* is defined by two key features: 1) the rules guiding the distribution of benefits are formal and public; and 2) these rules actually guide how benefits or resources are allocated (Stokes et al., 2013). As I detail below, social programs in Kenya generally meet the standard of the first criterion: the rules guiding beneficiary selection are formalized and the public has a formal role in oversight. Further, because these are national programs, these features do not vary across localities within the country. It is with respect to the second criteria — do the rules actually shape outcomes of distribution — that there exists more room for local variation.

Non-programmatic implementation is defined by a process of distribution that violates one of these two key criteria. Although Kenyan social programs meet the criteria of having formal rules, we could observe local variation in the transparency of the formal rules. This lack of transparency about the formal rules and process that are supposed to guide beneficiary selection could, in turn, facilitate violations of the second criterion — indeed local actors could leverage a lack of information in order to benefit politically from a program.

Violations of the second criterion — the outcomes of distribution differ from what is dictated by the formal rules — generally imply that personal or political considerations shape how the benefits from social programs are allocated (Stokes et al., 2013). Here, individuals become more likely to receive

benefits for personal reasons (knowing the right people) or political reasons (supporting the right party, being in the right ethnic group, or living in a politically important community), and therefore may gain access even when others are more qualified as defined in program rules.

As in Stokes et al. (2013), we can characterize sub-types of non-programmatic distribution. A first, *clientelistic distribution*, implies that the distribution of benefits is made contingent on the political behavior of potential beneficiaries (Stokes et al., 2013; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012, 2014). This contingency also implies the potential for punishment should the beneficiary fail to uphold their end of the bargain. For example, distribution would be clientelistic if a politician facilitates an individual's entry into a social program and that person believes that they would be very likely to lose access to program benefits should they fail to continue supporting the politician (or engage in other activities such as turning out at campaign rallies). Here, the beneficiary is receiving the benefit for political reasons — a violation of the second criterion — and they are doing so on the condition that they maintain their support of the politician.

Clientelistic distribution can also be differentiated. Here, *patronage* is conceptualized as clientelism that targets party agents or workers (Stokes et al., 2013). In the context of this study, patronage would imply social program benefits are being channelled toward political party activists or workers as part of their “compensation” (Driscoll, 2017; Grindle, 2012). We can distinguish this form of clientelism from that which targets citizens and voters.

A second form of non-programmatic distribution is *unconditional partisan/personal bias*. The distinction between this form and clientelism is that there is a partisan or political logic to distribution — again, a violation of the second criterion for programmatic politics — but this distribution is not conditional. For example, a politician might channel program benefits to voters or communities that they deem electorally important in an effort to generate support, but the receipt of these benefits is not contingent and beneficiaries would not expect punishment or to lose benefits based on their future political behavior (Stokes et al., 2013).

The central focus of this paper is on programmatic versus non-programmatic distribution. This is an important distinction with normative implications: namely, are the benefits of social programs being channeled to those who need it the most. Where possible, indicators of clientelistic versus unconditional

distribution will be examined but, empirically, it can in some cases be difficult to distinguish these forms for distribution (Lindberg, 2010).

Before proceeding, I emphasize that the distinction between programmatic versus non-programmatic is about how distribution works, as opposed to what is being distributed (Weitz-Shapiro, 2012, 2014). For example, certain local public goods such as schools or clean water wells could be distributed in a programmatic or a non-programmatic way. Moreover, private goods—such as the benefits from cash transfer and other social protection programs that are the focus of this study—can also be distributed through both mechanisms (De La O, 2015).

1.2 Perspectives on Programmatic versus Non-Programmatic Distribution

Under what local conditions would we expect social programs to be implemented in a programmatic versus a non-programmatic way? The existing literature offers a number of potential answers.

Socio-Economic Development and Electoral Competition

Prominent answers in the literature center on socio-economic development, elite incentives as they relate to electoral competition, and the interaction between political competition and socio-economic development. Early arguments about the drivers on non-programmatic distribution focused mainly on the socio-economic characteristics of voters. Where parties seek to win votes from the poor and the bureaucracy is not well insulated from politics, which is the case in many lower-income countries, parties are expected to adopt clientelistic strategies (Shefter, 1977).⁵ With respect to clientelism in social program implementation, programs that are by definition designed to target poor voters, the socio-economic composition of localities is likely to be most consequential. Where the majority of the electorate in the district is poor — and political elites must therefore secure the votes of the poor — political elites might expend more effort in influencing social program implementation in a non-programmatic way. By contrast, where more voters in the district are wealthier or do not qualify to be beneficiaries of social programs, local political elites may have less of an interest in how the programs run, choosing to invest their time in more electorally beneficial areas.

⁵It is not that the poor prefer clientelism, but that they are likely to be more dependent on the resources provided (Weitz-Shapiro, 2014). As a result, they will be more likely to comply with clientelistic arrangements.

The literature has also emphasized the role of elite incentives and electoral politics. For example, electoral competition and pressure could drive local political elites to manipulate social service provision and there is evidence that some forms of clientelism are more prevalent where electoral competition is stronger (Lehoucq, 2007). Electoral competition can also heighten demands placed on parties by party activists, leading to increases in patronage where electoral competition is intense (Driscoll, 2017). Political parties often rely on large numbers of party workers to conduct their campaigns, and these workers often expect to receive private benefits in return (Bob-Milliar, 2012). Where electoral competition is high, political leaders will have less leverage over party workers and so party activists in these contexts should be better able to pressure party leaders to channel benefits to them (Driscoll, 2017). The implication of these arguments is that we should observe more non-programmatic distribution where electoral competition is greatest.

Related arguments focus on the *partisan* characteristics of the electorate. Asunka (2017) emphasizes the importance of weakly aligned voters, arguing that politicians will be more likely to establish constraints on their discretionary power where there are more weakly aligned voters. The argument is that non-discretionary and rules-based resource allocation (programmatic) is more electorally effective with weakly aligned voters, and that non-discretionary resource allocation allows leaders to target these weakly aligned voters without angering their more strongly partisan supporters. As a result, we should observe more programmatic implementation where weakly aligned or politically independent voters represent a large share of the electorate.

Another set of arguments emphasizes the *interaction* between electoral competition and economic development. Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) posit that clientelism will increase with electoral competition at low levels of development, but will decrease with electoral competition at higher levels of development. Weitz-Shapiro (2012, 2014) argues that local elites will “opt out” of clientelism when there is a sizable middle class and sufficient electoral competition. Because middle class voters do not like clientelism, viewing it as corruption, politicians will choose not to engage in clientelism when they feel electoral pressure and need to win votes from the middle class. Relatedly, Herrera (2017) shows that programmatic reforms of the water sector in Mexico were most effective in cities where mayors faced electoral competition and had to rely on support from the middle class and industrial interests,

constituencies that often prefer effective public service provision. These related arguments imply that we should observe programmatic implementation where electoral competition is strongest and where indicators of socio-economic development are high.

Social Norms and Bottom-Up Pressure

While this paper examines the role of electoral competition and socio-economic development, it also investigates factors of potential importance that have received less attention in the literature on social assistance and local variation in programmatic versus non-programmatic politics. A first centers on *social norms and expectations*. In contexts such as Kenya's, MPs and local government actors often face strong pressures from constituents to provide personal assistance and other particularistic goods (Barkan, 1995; Brierley, 2010; Lindberg, 2010). Lindberg (2010) emphasizes that these pressures are often driven by local social norms and conceptions of leadership; many constituents believe that such activities are central and appropriate functions of their legislative representatives. Lindberg also emphasizes that clientelism in Ghana is at least partially driven by these demand-side dynamics, whereby political elites engage in clientelism partly in response to pressure from constituents. This argument resonates with analyses of clientelism elsewhere in Africa (Banegas, 1998; Hounkpe and Warren, nd; Soumano, nd), including in Kenya (Barkan and Okumu, 1978; Barkan, 1995), and beyond (Auyero, 2014).

Social norms are also important because they shape individual beliefs about how *others* in the political system will behave. If citizens believe that others in their community or district are likely to pressure political actors to gain access to social program benefits, they risk losing out on access to program benefits if they do not do so as well. Thus, even if many constituents would personally prefer that a program is implemented programmatically, they must also believe that others share and will act on this preference in order to restrain from placing clientelistic demands on local political elites. As a result, citizens in clientelistic settings face a coordination problem (Adida et al., Forthcoming).

Thus, we might expect greater levels of non-programmatic implementation where local political elites face strong pressure from constituents to intervene on their behalf. In addition, non-programmatic distribution may be more prevalent where indicators of social capital and trust are low (Putnam, 1994; Rothstein, 2011; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012) — since high social capital and trust could help constituents

solve the coordination challenge — and more specifically, where citizens have strong expectations that programs will be implemented clientelistically and that other citizens in their district will pressure elites for access to benefits.

Citizen Access to Information

A second potentially consequential factor is citizen access to information, and variation in such access. If citizens and potential program beneficiaries are not aware of their rights or about how the program is supposed to function, the local elites can take advantage of this informational advantage to politically manipulate the program. Citizen lack of information can thus increase the likelihood that the benefits of social programs are captured by local political interests (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2000). As a result, we should expect greater programmatic implementation where citizens have access to information about politics and social programs.

There are several reasons why citizen access to information about social programs might be consequential. First, in order for citizens and potential program beneficiaries to hold local leaders and program implementers accountable, they must have information about the program and information about how the programs are implemented (Ferejohn, 1986). Citizens must also have information about how programs could and should be implemented (Gottlieb, 2016). When citizens have such information, their ability to monitor and hold accountable local service providers — and thus to prevent local political capture of the programs — increases (Reinikka and Svensson, 2004, 2005).

A second reason that citizen access to information might matter relates to information asymmetries between local elites and potential program beneficiaries. If constituents only learn about programs from local elites, and do not know the formal process through which benefits are allocated — and, crucially, whether or not they qualify for benefits — local elites can leverage this information asymmetry to their political advantage. For example, clientelism is most effective when patrons have monopoly control over the resources that the client needs (Medina and Stokes, 2007). It is also most effective where resources are scarce. If citizens lack access to information about social programs, local political elites can create the *perception* of monopoly control and resource scarcity and use their informational advantage to make beneficiaries feel as if their selection as a beneficiary is dependent on the political elite.

In the domain of Community Driven Development programs (CDD), Ensminger (2013) documents how local intermediaries in Kenya have used their privileged access to information to convince community members, incorrectly, that their access to CDD programs depends on the intermediaries, which allows the intermediaries to extract resources from the program.

In addition, credit claiming and attribution can be important in facilitating clientelism (Weitz-Shapiro, 2014)—the patron must be able to claim credit for providing the resource to the client—and citizen lack of information can allow local political actors to claim credit for providing social welfare services to beneficiaries. By contrast, if citizens know who has the formal right to social welfare benefits and about the resources available, political elites will have a more difficult time manipulating the program for electoral gain. Consistent with this argument, Sugiyama and Hunter (2013) suggest that one reason the Bolsa Familia cash transfer program has been implemented programmatically in Brazil is that citizens are aware of how the program is supposed to function and that it is a national, rather than a local, program.

The Role of Bureaucrats

A final set of considerations focuses on the characteristics of the bureaucrats involved in the implementation of social programs. One potentially important factor is the degree of control and leverage that politicians have over bureaucrats (Brierley, Forthcoming). For example, Brierley (Forthcoming) shows that local government bureaucrats in Ghana are most likely to facilitate corruption in the contract procurement process in local areas where political appointees have control over their career prospects (in this case, the politicians can transfer bureaucrats to undesirable locations if they are not cooperative).

Other bureaucratic characteristics may also be important. For example, those that are more educated or have more experience may prove less susceptible—and better able to resist—political influence. In addition, bureaucrats can form connections in society and leverage their networks in order to build independence from political interference (e.g. Carpenter, 2001).

2 Setting: Cash Transfer Programs in Kenya

Kenya, an East African nation with almost 50 million residents, gained its independence from the British in 1963. Much like many other countries in Africa, Kenyan politics turned toward single-party rule very

shortly after independence, with President Jomo Kenyatta and his party, the Kenyan African National Union (KANU), consolidating power. Kenyatta ruled until his death 1978, when he was replaced by fellow KANU-member Daniel arap Moi. Moi continued to lead the single-party regime until 1992, when he gave in to domestic and international pressure and agreed to hold multiparty elections. Moi was victorious in the first two contests, stepping down in 2002 after agreeing to respect constitutionally mandated term limits. The elections of 2002 brought Mwai Kibaki and his party, the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), to power, marking the first time in Kenya's history that KANU had not ruled the country. After Kibaki's second term ended in 2013, Uhuru Kenyatta (Jomo's son) was elected to the presidency. Kenyatta is currently serving his second term in office, having also won elections in 2017.

Kenya's existing cash transfer programs have their roots in the period following NARC's victory in 2002. The three programs under study were piloted after 2004 and, under the current Kenyatta government, have been significantly expanded. The programs now operate in all of Kenya's 47 Counties (details on Kenya's government structure below). In addition, the cash transfer for elderly people, which initially targeted Kenyans aged 65 and older living in vulnerable households, has recently been converted into a universal cash transfer for all Kenyan citizens aged 70 and older.

The remainder of this section provides details about the three programs of focus in this study.

- The *Cash Transfer Programme for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC)* was formed in 2004, largely in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic that had substantially increased the number of households taking care of OVC. To qualify for CT-OVC, households must be: 1) extremely poor and have at least one OVC as a permanent resident; 2) not benefiting from any other social assistance program; and 3) with a caregiver who is chronically ill and/or unable to fulfill their duties (Mwasiaji, 2015). The program was piloted in 2007 and has been expanded ever since. As of 2017, there were about 355,000 households benefiting from the programme (Mwasiaji, 2015).
- The *Person with Severe Disability Cash Transfer Programme (PWSD-CT)* was designed to assist households with a person living with a severe disability. The goal is to assist caregivers and to mitigate the effects of caring for a person with a disability on the household. To qualify, households must: 1) be extremely poor with a person living with a severe disability; 2) not be enrolled in any

other cash transfer program; 3) have no member receiving a pension; 4) live in a location for more than a year; and 5) have a beneficiary that is a Kenyan citizen (Mwasiaji, 2015).

- The *Older Persons Cash Transfer Programme (OPCT)* was established and piloted in 2007 with the goal of providing support to vulnerable older persons (Mwasiaji, 2015). Originally, to qualify for OPCT households must: 1) be extremely poor with an older person aged 65 or older; 2) not be enrolled in any other cash transfer program; 3) have no member receiving a pension; 4) live in a location for more than a year; and 5) have a beneficiary that is a Kenyan citizen. In 2017-2018, the program was transformed into a universal pension available to all Kenyans aged 70 or older. The OPCT is coupled with access to state-run health insurance.

In the early years, these programs were administered separately. However, in recent years and as the programs have expanded, the government has worked to consolidate the management and implementation of these programs into a consolidated structure. In 2013-14, the Kenyatta government launched the Inua Jami' program (also known as the Consolidated Cash Transfer Program, CCTP), which significantly expanded the scale of the programs and incorporated them in to the National Safety Net Programme (NSNP) (Wanyama and McCord, 2017). In 2016, the Social Assistance Unit (SAU) in the State Department of Social Protection was established to coordinate and implement the cash transfer programs.

2.1 The Political System and Key Actors

A number of actors and institutions are involved in the implementation of cash transfer programs in Kenya. Before describing these actors, a brief overview of several features of Kenya's current political system is required.

First, in 2010, Kenya adopted a new constitution that created a devolved system of government. The national government is head by a president (currently Uhuru Kenyatta) and a bicameral parliament. Kenya also has 47 County governments. County governments are run by an elected governor and an assembly. The constitution details the areas in which the national or the county governments have primary responsibility. Cash transfer programs are *national government programs* but the devolved system is relevant for implementation and for the political units in which national government bureaucrats operate.

Second, Kenya's 290-member National Assembly (the lower chamber of the parliament) is made up of legislators elected in single-member constituencies. Historically, Members of Parliament (MP) have played an active formal and informal role in the provision of public and particularistic goods in their constituencies (Barkan and Okumu, 1978; Barkan, 1995; Kramon, 2016). Currently, the MPs have a discretionary fund, the Constituency Development Fund, which they use to provide constituency service and development projects in their constituencies.

With respect to program implementation at the local level, there are several key actors. First, the Sub-County Children's Officer from the National Department of Children's Services and the Sub-County Social Development Officer from the National Department of Social Development are the key national government bureaucrats involved in day-to-day operation of the programs. Henceforth, I refer to these as *sub-county bureaucrats*.

Second, *Constituency Social Assistance Committees (CSAC)* operate at the constituency level. Constituency boundaries generally correspond with sub-county boundaries. The CSAC includes the constituency MP as the patron, the sub-county bureaucrats, as well as a number of other members who are appointed by the MP. The formal role of the CSAC is to help raise awareness about the cash transfer programs, to participate in community validation of potential beneficiaries (discussed below), to help monitor the process of beneficiary targeting, and to attend meetings about the programs.

Third, at the very local level there are *Location Targeting Committees (LTCs)*. Locations are local administrative units that are nested within Sub-Counties and include a small number of villages (if in rural areas). As discussed below, the LTCs play a central role in identifying potential beneficiary households and in the process of validating beneficiaries.

Fourth, there are *chiefs and assistant chiefs*.⁶ Chiefs play a role in, among other things, mobilizing the community for program activities, reporting cases of births and deaths, and assisting beneficiaries as necessary.

⁶Chiefs operate at the level of the Location, while assistant chiefs operate at the level of the Sub-Location.

Targeting Process

After 2016, the government has aimed to implement a “harmonized targeting process” for the consolidated cash transfer programs. According to the operations manual (published in June 2017), the formal process of targeting beneficiaries is as follows:

1. The first step is geographic targeting. Using data from the census and household surveys, the national offices select the local units where the programs will operate and the distribution of beneficiaries across units.
2. Once a Location is identified, community barazas (meetings) are organized to provide information to the communities about the programs, and LTC members are recruited and trained.
3. The next step is the process of identifying and listing potential beneficiaries:
 - (a) Community barazas are held at the sub-location level and are used to identify the poor and vulnerable households in the community. LTC members collect basic information about the households.
 - (b) Following the initial listing, there is a two-week period where community members can contact LTC members to be listed.
 - (c) The household list is sent to CSAC members for review. It is also posted in public places around the community so that community members can review and ensure it is accurate.
 - (d) A community baraza is held so that the community can update the list of potential beneficiaries (correcting errors of inclusion or exclusion). This is referred to as *Community Based Screening* (CBS).
4. The next step is the registration of listed households. The sub-county bureaucrats recruit survey enumerators who gather data from each of the households on the list. The enumerators visit each household and complete a survey at their place of residence.
5. The survey data is uploaded to a Management Information System (MIS) and analyzed at the national headquarters.

6. The MIS generates a list of beneficiaries for each cash transfer program (ie, the poorest households with an OVC, or the poorest households with a person living with a severe disability). To be more specific, if a Location is allocated 20 slots in a program but the community identifies 30 households that could qualify, the household data is used to determine which households ultimately enter into the program.
7. Finally, there is a *Community Based Validation* (CBV) at the village level, where community members correct errors of inclusion or exclusion, and approve the beneficiary list.

The Potential for Non-Programmatic Distribution

In summary, Kenya's cash transfer programs have a process for beneficiary selection that is designed, in part, to generate programmatic distribution and limit political interference. Community members are provided several opportunities at different points in the process to correct errors of inclusion and exclusion before the beneficiary list is finalized. In addition, while the potential beneficiaries are enumerated through community processes, the final list of beneficiaries is determined using household data through the national office (though of course politics and personal bias could shape inclusion/exclusion on the list of potential beneficiaries).

Nevertheless, there are a number of reasons to expect that, in this context, cash transfer programs could be implemented non-programmatically, at least in some localities. First, and generally, Kenya is a context where non-programmatic distributive politics is believed to be prevalent (e.g., Burgess et al., 2015; Franck and Rainer, 2012; Kramon and Posner, 2016; Wanyama and McCord, 2017). Second, and more importantly, the role of the MP on the CSAC and the process of beneficiary selection do create opportunities for non-programmatic distribution. Indeed Wanyama and McCord (2017) highlight that “the [CSACs] were created as a result of the demand by MPs for direct involvement in cash transfers programme in their constituencies, and their composition makes the implementation of provision at county level vulnerable to patronage” (p. 16).

Yet just because programs are potentially vulnerable to patronage (or non-programmatic influence generally), does not mean that all MPs and other local political actors will have the will (Weitz-Shapiro, 2012, 2014) or the ability to do so. In the next section, I outline the study's research strategy

for identifying the local conditions in which these programs are implemented programmatically versus non-programmatically.

3 Study Design

This study involves a sub-national comparative analysis (Snyder, 2001) of social protection program implementation in Kenya. Prior studies that have used similar research designs to study clientelism, programmatic politics, and corruption include Asunka (2017), which studies the creation of rules to limit MP discretion in the allocation of Constituency Development Funds in Ghana; Bussell (2010), which studies the adoption of technology in Indian state bureaucracies; Driscoll (2017), which studies patronage hiring in local government bureaucracies in Ghana; Herrera (2017), which studies clientelism in the water sector by comparing urban municipalities in Mexico; Niedzwiecki (2016), which studies variation in the implementation of social policies in Argentina and Brazil; Weitz-Shapiro (2012, 2014), which studies clientelism in a national food security program in Argentina; and Brierley (Forthcoming), which examines subnational variation in corruption in procurement processes across Ghana's local governments. The advantage of sub-national comparative analysis, where the unit of analysis is the local government in charge of social program implementation, is that it allows us to control for country-specific factors — history, culture, formal political institutions — that could impact the implementation of social programs (Snyder, 2001). We can thus examine how local level political conditions impact the behavior of political elites implementing the same programs in the same national-level context.

The data collection strategy involved an original survey data and qualitative interviews in a subset of Kenya's 290 constituencies. The survey was conducted in 112 constituencies. In about two-thirds of those constituencies, the survey was supplemented by more in-depth qualitative interviews. The surveys and interviews were conducted with sub-county bureaucrats and CSAC members in each constituency. The survey and interviews were conducted in collaboration with the Institute of Public Opinion Research — Kenya (IPOR-Kenya). Preliminary research and piloting in a small number of constituencies took place in August 2018. The main data collection took place between April and June 2019. The survey was conducted with support and permission from the Social Assistance Unit (SAU), the main national government bureaucracy involved in the implementation of cash transfer programs.

When discussing the qualitative interview data, I deliberately do not provide any potentially identifying information about the respondents, including their county and constituency. Because the sample includes specific sub-county officers, reference to geographic location would make it straightforward to identify the subjects. For this reason, I speak only generally about the bureaucrats.

3.1 Sampling and Target Subjects

The survey was conducted in 112 constituencies. These constituencies were selected at random, blocking on the poverty rate and level of electoral competition, two factors that existing literature highlights as important in shaping programmatic versus non-programmatic distribution (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Stokes et al., 2013; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012, 2014). Using the most recently available constituency-level poverty rates (the same data used to guide the allocation of social program benefits), I categorized constituencies as having 1) a high poverty rate, 2) a medium poverty rate, or 3) a low poverty rate using the 33rd and 66th percentile of the distribution as cut-points. Using recent elections results data for parliamentary races, I also defined constituencies as being 1) high electoral competition, 2) medium high electoral competition, 3) medium low electoral competition, and 4) low electoral competition. I use electoral competition in the parliamentary race as I am particularly interested in the degree of electoral competition faced by the MP. I then randomly sampled from each of the 12 sampling blocks (3 poverty X 4 electoral competition). Table 1 provides descriptive information about the sample of constituencies, illustrating the sample has an even distribution of constituencies at various levels of poverty and electoral competition. It also presents the average number of beneficiaries of each program, as reported by the sub-county officers in the sample.

In each constituency, the goal was to conduct at least three surveys. The target subjects in each constituency were: 1) the sub-county (constituency) children's officer; 2) the sub-county (constituency) social development officer; 3) 1-2 members of Constituency Social Assistance Committees (CSAC). Thus, the sample includes the two main bureaucrats involved in the day-to-day implementation of the cash transfer programs, as well as at least one member of the CSAC.

Table 2 provides descriptive information about the subjects in the sample. As dictated by the sampling procedure, about one-third of the sample are sub-country children's officers, about one-third

Table 1: Descriptive Information about Constituencies in the Sample

	Mean	SD
OVC Beneficiaries	875.25	591.34
OPCT Beneficiaries	2293.1	2323.38
PWSD Beneficiaries	134.07	229.47
Low Competition	.26	.44
Medium-low Competition	.25	.44
Medium-high Competition	.25	.43
High Competition	.24	.42
Poverty Rate	44.28	15.18
Low Poverty	.34	.48
Medium Poverty	.32	.47
High Poverty	.33	.47

are sub-county social development officers, and the remainder are other CSAC members. About 39 percent of the bureaucrats are female and the average age was about 43 years. As would be expected, levels of education are far higher in the sample of bureaucrats than they are in Kenyan society: about 21 percent completed university and have post-graduate education, 49 percent completed university but have no post-graduate education, and about 30 percent have less than a university education. About 41 percent were born in the county in which they were working. On average, the bureaucrats had been in their current positions for about 4.75 years and had worked in their current constituency for about 2.5 years.

3.2 Main Indicators of Programmatic versus Non-Programmatic Implementation

This paper focuses on three main outcome measures that were collected as part of the survey. The first two draw from and build upon the survey measure analyzed in Weitz-Shapiro (2012, 2014), which focuses on clientelism in the implementation of a food program in Argentina. Of particular interest in this study is the role of the constituency MP and other political actors in influencing the selection of beneficiaries in the cash transfer programs. To generate indicators of whether the MP or other political actors influence beneficiary selection, I use two survey questions worded as follows:

Thinking of this constituency, can you tell me how often, if ever, any of the following people or groups are involved in or try to influence the selection of HOUSEHOLDS to be included

Table 2: Descriptive Information about the Bureaucrats and CSAC Members in the Sample

	Mean	SD
Children’s Officer	.34	.47
Social Development Officer	.34	.48
CSAC Member	.32	.47
Female	.39	.49
Age	42.99	9.8
Post-graduate Education	.21	.41
University Completed	.49	.5
Less than University Education	.3	.46
Born in County	.41	.49
Years in Current Position	4.76	3.62
Years Working in Constituency	2.51	2.77

in the list of beneficiaries for social programs? [Response options for each: Frequently, Sometimes, Never]

and

Thinking of this constituency, can you tell me how often, if ever, any of the following people or groups are involved in or try to influence the selection of LOCATIONS/COMMUNITIES to be included in social programs? [Response options for each: Frequently, Sometimes, Never]

The individual or groups listed was as follows (with the order randomized for each question and subject): Bureaucrats from the Ministry of EAC, Labor, and Social Protection; Religious leaders; Leaders of community groups; County Commissioners; County Governor; Members of the County Assembly; Member of Parliament (MP) of this constituency; Women’s representative; Constituency Social Assistance Committee members; Chiefs of assistant chiefs; Political party agents.

In Section 4, I provide qualitative evidence that is important for interpreting these measures. In brief, the evidence from the interviews documents that the most prevalent form of influence on the part of MPs and other political actors is efforts to assist constituents in gaining access to programs. For example, they might send a list of names to the bureaucrat for consideration, help the constituents gain access to the bureaucrat, or put pressure on the bureaucrat to include certain names or locations on the final list.

Local political actors also play a role in gathering information for constituents and raising awareness of the programs, but these activities are not aimed at influencing the beneficiary list. As I will discuss further, some of these activities are consistent with programmatic distribution, while others are not.

In addition to the two questions about the role of the MP and other local political actors in influencing community and individual beneficiary selection, I analyze a third question that more directly addresses the role of politics in who gets access to social program benefits in the constituency. The question reads as follows and was asked specifically for each of the three cash transfer programs of focus.

Thinking about how social programs such as government cash transfer programs work in this constituency, would you say that need, politics, or both politics and need play the most important role in determining which citizens get access to program benefits?

Response options for this question were: Need only, Politics only, Both Need and Politics.

A central concern in the design of the survey was the potential for *response bias* to influence the survey responses. Because non-programmatic distribution can be sensitive and socially undesirable, the bureaucrats may be hesitant to report it. Indeed, bureaucrats would have some incentive to report that programs are operating programmatically in their areas. Further, they may have concerns about reporting honestly about political interference in their constituencies. To address these concerns, the survey adopted several approaches when capturing the main outcome measures.

First, the subjects completed the more sensitive components of the survey, including the three questions listed above, in *private* using a tablet. In other contexts, privacy has been shown to substantially reduce response bias on socially and politically sensitive survey items (Chauchard, 2013). Because the subjects are required to be literate in order to hold their positions, it was possible for subjects to complete the survey in private without the enumerator. The more sensitive component of the survey thus began with the following prompt:

Now the survey is going to ask you some questions about social protection programs in this constituency. For these questions, I am going to hand you the tablet. You can read the questions and tap on the answer that you would like to give. As you do this, I will NOT be

looking at your answers. This means that I will not be able to know how you have answered. I would also like to remind you that identifying information will not be stored with your responses, so no one will be able to track your answers. Instead, your responses will be put together with those of people like you in around 100 constituencies, to provide a general picture. If you have any questions or would like me to clarify anything about the survey questions, please let me know. If you have questions about how to provide your response, please let me know.

Second, the questions were designed to reduce response bias as much as possible. Some of the actors listed in the two questions about political involvement are legally required to be involved in the process of community and beneficiary selection and others that are not. Some would be very likely to be involved in the programs, while others would not. For some, the response might be sensitive, while for others it would not. This question design reduces the likelihood of response bias by integrating the question of primary interest, about the role of the MP and other political actors, within a larger question that is made up of elements that are not sensitive in nature. This, coupled with subject privacy, should help to address concerns about response bias. In addition, as illustrated below, the qualitative interview results illustrate that bureaucrats were very open about discussing the role of political actors, including the MP, in social protection programs in their constituencies.⁷

4 The Prevalence of Programmatic versus Non-Programmatic Implementation

This section begins by presenting survey and qualitative evidence that speaks to the overall prevalence of programmatic versus non-programmatic implementation across the constituencies in the sample. It shows that, despite the conventional wisdom about distributive politics in Kenya, the implementation of the social programs under study is predominantly programmatic. In the next section (Section 5), I provide preliminary evidence on some potential explanations for this finding.

⁷I considered other techniques to reduce response bias such as a list experiment or randomized response. I decided against these approaches for several reasons. First, these techniques generate estimates that are less efficient than direct questions, which can substantially reduce statistical power. A recent meta-analysis of the list experiment suggests that the gains in terms of reducing response bias may not be worth the loss of statistical power that the technique generates (Blair, Coppock, and Moor, 2019). Second, preliminary interviews with sub-county bureaucrats suggested that many bureaucrats would be open to discussing these issues openly.

Figure 1: Drivers of Beneficiary Selection in the Constituency

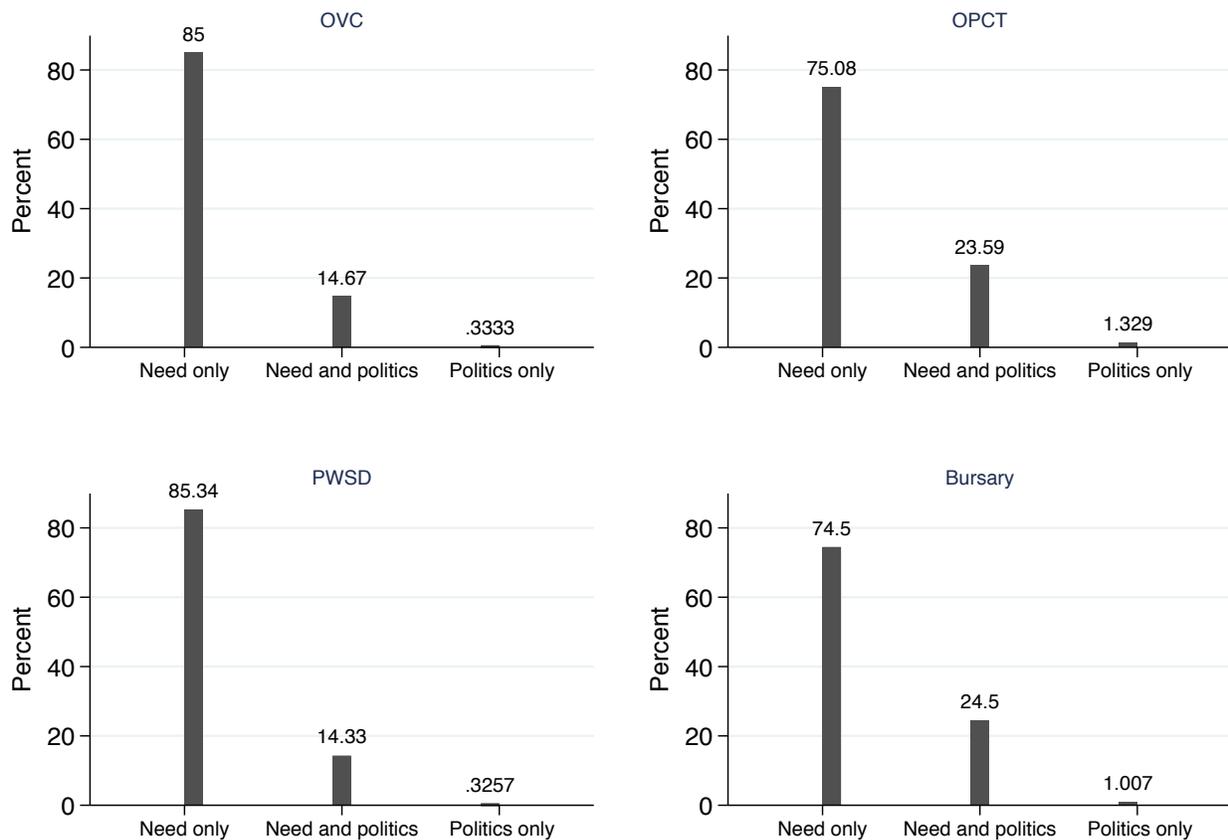
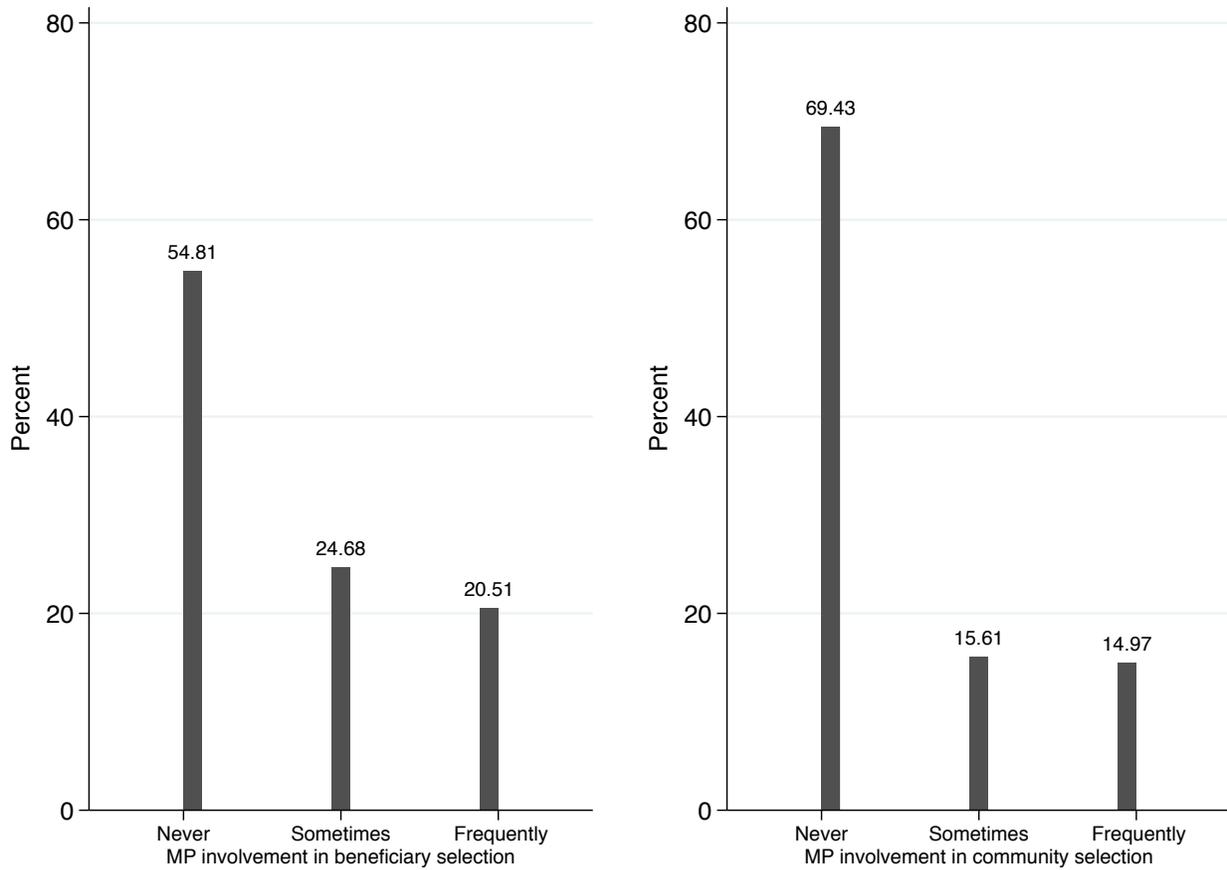


Figure 1 presents the distribution of responses to the question about the role of need versus politics in driving beneficiary selection in the respondent’s constituency. The subjects overwhelmingly report little role for politics in driving beneficiary selection for the cash transfer programs. This provides the first piece of evidence that implementation of the cash transfer programs is programmatic in a large share of constituencies.

Figure 2 presents the distribution of responses on the two survey questions about MP involvement in household (beneficiary) and community selection for social programs. Because the subjects in the sample have expertise and experience with different social programs even when working in the same constituency, I present here the distribution for all respondents. The left panel shows that 55 percent of subjects report that the MP never influences or attempts to influence household selection in their constituencies. 25 percent report that they sometimes do so, while about 21 percent report that they

Figure 2: MP Involvement in Beneficiary and Community Selection



frequently do so. Attempts to influence community selection are less prevalent: about 69 percent report that this never happens, while about 15 percent report that it sometimes or frequently happens.

For comparison, Figures 3 and 4 present the same response distributions for other political actors. The bureaucrats report very little influence of county assembly members, the county governor — which is not surprising given the size of counties and the fact that these are national programs — and for political party activists. By contrast, chiefs and assistant chiefs have frequent influence in a number of constituencies. This is to be expected given the central role of chiefs in the community-based processes described above: for example, the chiefs help to mobilize the community meetings required for community-based validation and for enumerating the list of potential beneficiary households.

Aside from the chiefs, the MP appears to be the actor most involved in influencing community and household selection — though they do not do so in over half of the sample constituencies. Where the

Figure 3: Other Political Actor Involvement in Beneficiary Selection

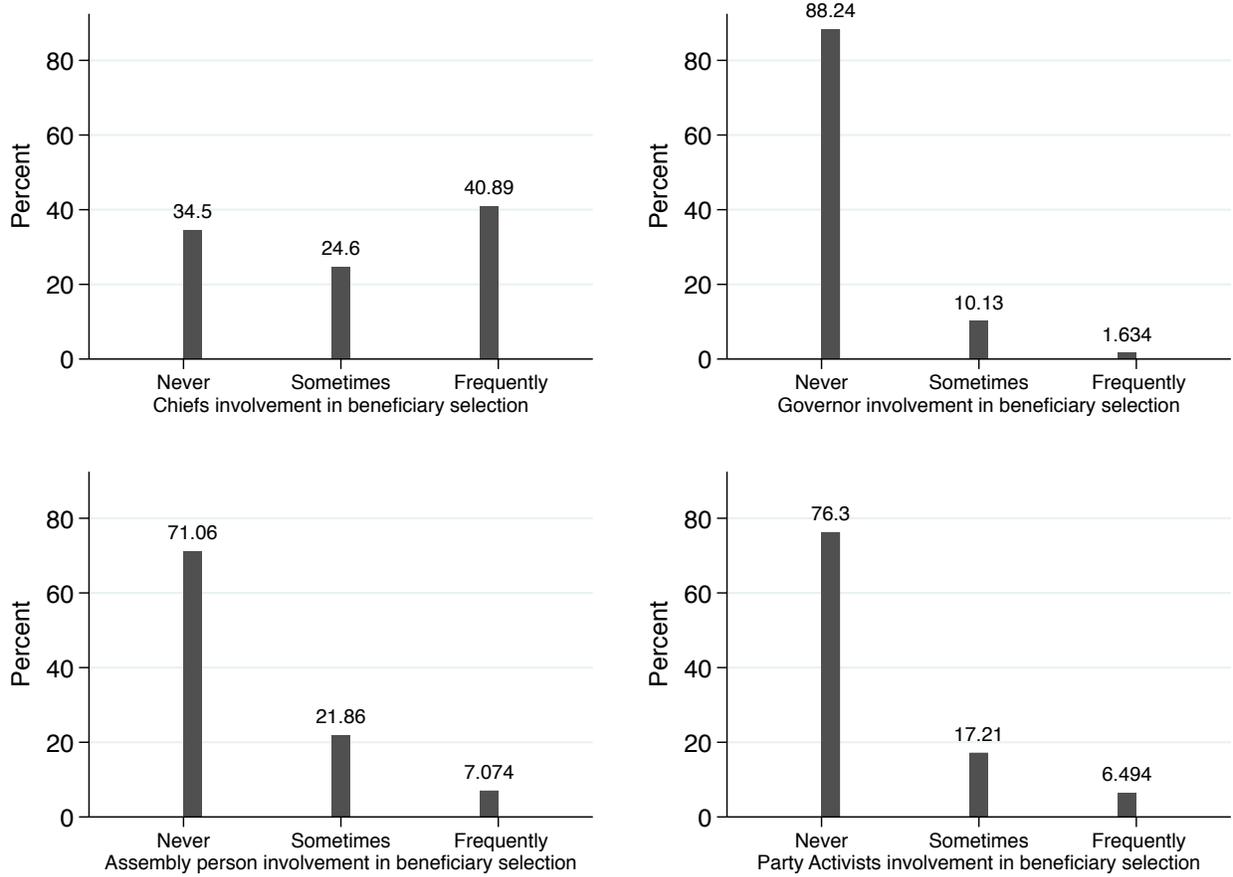
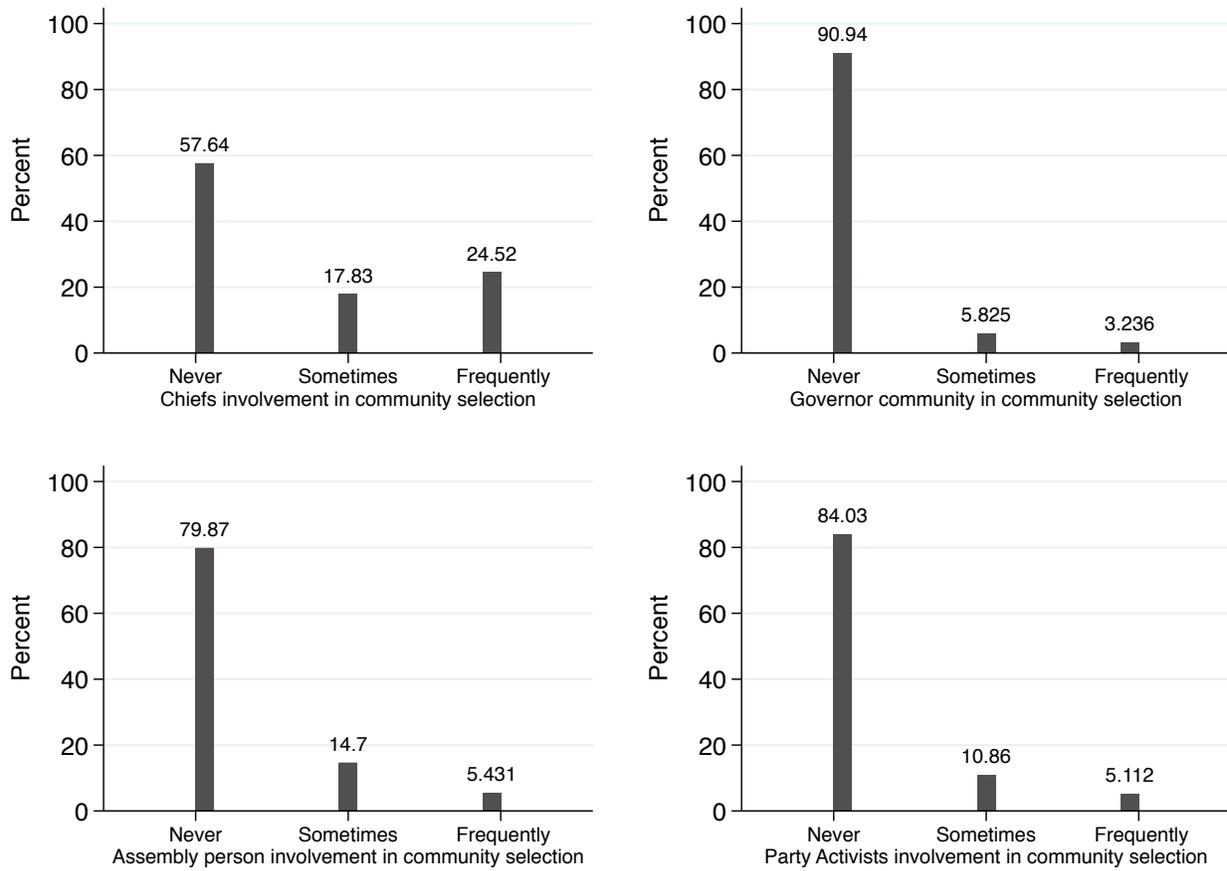


Figure 4: Other Political Actor Involvement in Community Selection



MP does have or seek influence, evidence from the qualitative interviews highlights that this engagement *is not always non-programmatic*.

Indeed the interviews highlight that the most common way that an MP gets involved in influencing beneficiary selection is by either providing potential names to bureaucrats for consideration or by helping constituents gain access to the bureaucrats in order to help facilitate their entry into the program. As I will discuss further below, this often — but not always — occurs when constituents approach the MP's office for assistance in gaining access to social program benefits. When the MP attempts to help people gain access to social program benefits, this represents a particular form of *constituency service* that is prevalent around the world. Helping constituents navigate the bureaucracy and gain benefits from government programs is a function that elected representatives often play. In Kenya and elsewhere, many people perceive that this is a central role of the MP (Barkan, 1995; Brierley, 2010; Lindberg, 2010).

It is important to emphasize that this form of constituency service can be consistent with programmatic implementation (Stokes et al., 2013). For example, if the MP is equally responsive to all who come to their office seeking assistance and plays a role in ensuring that the most qualified constituents receive benefits from the programs, the MP could be seen as enhancing the programmatic nature of the program. However, if the MP (or other political actor) is more/less responsive to certain constituents for political reasons, this would indicate non-programmatic political influence.

In practice, it can be sometimes be difficult to empirically distinguish programmatic from non-programmatic constituency service. However, in a number of cases, the involvement of the MP or other local political actors does appear to be on the more programmatic end of the spectrum. For example, one bureaucrat notes that the MP is often helpful because “they sometimes bring older persons to the office that had missed on the registration at the chief’s office.” Another reported that “the MP gets involved by identifying the needy clients in the constituency and submits the names for consideration for the program. They sometimes do this for political mileage. However the MP’s involvement to a greater extent is useful and positive to the program.” Another explained that “the MP is active in the grassroots and being a representative of the people, the people go to the MP to help them gain access to the social programs. The MP refers them to the sub County office or sends citizens to her representatives in CSAC.”

A number of other bureaucrats indicated that the MP could play a positive role in this way. They also often emphasized that the MP might help in their efforts to raise awareness about the programs. In sum, the qualitative evidence illustrates that not all efforts by the MP to involve themselves in the programs should be interpreted as non-programmatic interference.

This being said, there are other instances where it would appear that the political actors' efforts are clearly more non-programmatic. For example, one sub-county bureaucrat reported the following about the MP: "Yes sometimes he tries to influence for example during enrollment as an officer I am given a number to enroll in each location, so the MP called and told me to reserve a certain number for his people..." In another constituency, a subject reported that "the main challenge in CSAC is the patron and I feel they should do away with this committee because they are political appointees and they bring in politics." Another bureaucrat reported the following when asked about the MP's involvement in their constituency:

"Yes they do get involved, but most of the time not in a good way, for example one can come with a list of names and they force you to put the names of their people in the program and that is not how our programs work, if you as an officer refuse to go their way they threaten you, and usually it is just for their own selfish interest."

Another bureaucrat also noted incidents of non-programmatic influence:

"Trying to influence those to be included in the list of beneficiaries, there are cases where he refers people posing as needy only for the social offices to realize they are his close relative. There was a case where the MP forwarded his mother's name to be included in the list of OPCT beneficiaries. It brought a lot of uproar by the community during public validation forum."

It is important to note that even when the MP (or other political actor) tries to influence the program non-programmatically, it can in many cases be difficult for them to do so. Although there were cases where bureaucrats reported that the MP's efforts did in fact impact who received program benefits, a number of others also indicated that it was difficult for politicians to do so even when they try.

Table 3: MP Influence and Need versus Politics in Driving Beneficiary Selection

<i>Need or Politics in CT-OVC?</i>	<i>Frequency of MP Efforts to Influence</i>		
	Never	Sometimes	Frequently
Need only	93%	77%	73%
Need and politics	7%	23%	25%
Politics Only	0%	0%	2%

Table displays column percentages.

To further examine the connection between MP efforts to influence beneficiary selection and non-programmatic implementation, we can examine the correlations between these efforts and the subjects reporting about the role of politics in driving beneficiary selection in their constituency. Table 3 presents this relationship with respect to need versus politics in driving selection for the CT-OVC program (patterns are similar for the other programs). There are two important patterns to emphasize. First, consistent with the reports noted in the previous paragraph, subjects are reporting no role of politics even in constituencies where the MP does try to influence beneficiary selection. For example, among subjects who report that the MP is frequently involved in trying to influence beneficiary selection, 73 percent report no role for politics in dictating who gets access to social program benefits in their constituencies. Second, however, there is a correlation between MP effort to influence and the reported role of politics. Although less common, instances where politics plays a role are concentrated in areas where MPs exert effort to influence.

In sum, the evidence in Table 3 and from the qualitative interviews illustrates that politician involvement should not always be interpreted as evidence of non-programmatic implementation. However, politics is more likely to play a role in shaping how benefits are allocated in a constituency in contexts where the MP makes an effort to influence the program.

5 Explaining the Prevalence of Programmatic Implementation

The previous section illustrated that, although there is variation across constituencies, programmatic implementation appears to be most prevalent. Given that distributive politics in Kenya is often characterized as highly non-programmatic,⁸ this is perhaps a surprising finding. This section addresses two inter-related questions that address this puzzle. First, what explains the prevalence of programmatic implementation at the local level? And second, why are programs implemented programmatically in some constituencies but not in others?

5.1 Program Design and Rules

One of the most important themes that emerged from the discussions with sub-county bureaucrats is the importance of program design, program rules, and the targeting process in shielding the cash transfer programs from political influence. Formal program rules do not vary across constituencies, and so this argument cannot be tested comparatively. However, we can draw upon the qualitative evidence to highlight how and why program rules matter.

First, a number of bureaucrats noted program rules when explaining why the MP and other local politicians do *not* try to interfere with their implementation of the programs. One bureaucrat explained that “the MP understands the rules and guidelines of this program which limits influence of any kind.” As a result, some politicians do not invest much or any effort trying to influence the program, knowing that these efforts would likely not yield results. One sub-country bureaucrat noted that, because of this, the MPs focus more attention on programs and resources, such as their Constituency Development Funds, where they do have more discretion. This suggests an interesting argument for providing legislators with discretionary development funds: these funds can divert legislator attention away from other government programs, potentially creating space for programmatic programs to gain a foothold.

Other bureaucrats emphasized that the program rules and the targeting process protect them and the programs from efforts that politicians make to influence the programs. One subject explained that “the politician will always want to arm-twist but in this program there are set out guidelines which need

⁸Though see Harris and Posner (2019) for evidence that the allocation of Constituency Development Fund resources in Kenya is more programmatic than might be expected.

to be followed... It is very difficult for them to influence.” Another reported facing pressure from the local MP and county assembly person, but that it “is inconsequential because of the guidelines in place.” Another noted that “the vetting is very clear. It is difficult to influence.” “The programs are set in such a way that the rules and guidelines are very stringent making them free from any political interference,” reported one sub-country officer. Another bureaucrat explained:

“it is very difficult for social programs to be influenced by politics. This is because there are laid down procedures and guidelines to be followed in the selection process. This is sent from the Head of Social Assistance Unit (SAU). The list also goes through a process of validation that also involves the citizens so even if there was intent to influence, the whole process does not give room for that.”

One key feature of the program design is that, while local bureaucrats and communities are tasked with developing the potential list of beneficiaries, the final list of beneficiaries is put together by the national office using household data. This removes some discretion at the local level and provides the local bureaucrats with a way to resist pressure from politicians. One officer explained:

“what [the MP] can do and usually does is to question why such people were not eligible, but sometimes our hands are tied because we do the listing with the help of the community, then it is sent to the Headquarters in Nairobi, the list comes to us with names of the beneficiary and there is nothing much we can do about it for those whose names did not appear.”

Another subject echoed this point, explaining that “the current guidelines leave no room for such influence even the social development officers don’t have that chance of influencing.” This evidence resonates with the findings of Sugiyama and Hunter (2013), who find that similar design features have been important in facilitating the programmatic implementation of Brazil’s Bolsa Familia program.

The evidence thus suggests that program design plays an important role in shaping local implementation and explaining the relative prevalence of programmatic local implementation. While this may appear obvious, the connection between formal program design and *de facto* implementation has not always been straightforward in Kenya (and other similar contexts), a setting where the conventional wisdom suggests that informal rules and relationships have often been more important than formal rules.

This being said, it is also important to be clear about the potential limitations of the evidence. First, it is clear that the sub-county bureaucrats interviewed for this study do have incentive to report that they follow program rules and guidelines, regardless of political pressure. Although I cannot fully rule this out as a potential source of bias, three pieces of evidence suggest that bias is not the sole driver of the evidence presented above. First, across the interviews, references to program design and rules were by far the most common answer that subjects provided when asked why programs in their area were not politicized. Second, there were a number of bureaucrats who were quite open about the political issues in their constituency. Third, we can complement the interview data with the data from the survey, where the more sensitive questions in private. The qualitative interview responses are consistent with the survey data where we would expect less response bias.

A second limitation, which I discuss in the conclusion in areas for future research, is that surveys and interviews with bureaucrats are not able to detect all of the ways in which program rules might be violated in a non-programmatic way. For example, given the central role of chiefs and assistant chiefs in the process at the community level, they (and others with local political or social power in a community) could directly or subtly influence the community-based processes in ways that would undermine programmatic implementation (Wanyama and McCord, 2017). This type of non-programmatic influence could vary within constituencies, in addition to across them. The evidence collected and analyzed thus far is best equipped to measure non-programmatic violation of program rules at the level of the constituency, and by actors such as the MP.

5.2 Information and Bottom-up Pressure

The surveys and interviews also highlighted the importance of citizen information and education in protecting the programs from political influence. The interviews highlighted two inter-related reasons that education and information have been important, both of which are consistent with the theoretical discussion above.

First, subjects emphasized the importance of educating citizens about the rules guiding beneficiary selection and the connection between this and political interference. As one bureaucrat explained, “[politicians do not get involved] because at the sub-county level we have done sensitization to the public

that everybody who meets the laid down criteria qualifies to access the departmental of social program.” This information reduces information asymmetries between local political elites and potential beneficiaries that could be leveraged for clientelistic or non-programmatic purposes. Second, and relatedly, education about *who* is responsible for the program is also important in shielding the program. Similar to Sugiyama and Hunter (2013)’s findings from the Bolsa Familia program in Brazil, citizen awareness that the programs are national-level programs with set guidelines helps to reduce political influence from local political influence.

One bureaucrat explained that efforts to educate the population in this way have been of central importance on helping to shield the programs from the politics.

“To reduce [political interference] we also ensure that we do proper sensitization at every stage of the programs. Mostly at the targeting and validation by ensuring the public knows who are responsible in the implementation and the roles of politician in these programs.”

Other subjects reinforced this argument. “There is no connection between politics and programs in this sub-county. This is because the public sensitization has been very effective,” explained one sub-country bureaucrat.

A number of bureaucrats emphasized how their personal connections with community groups and their leaders have played a central role in helping them spread information to constituents, which illustrates the importance of bureaucrats’ linkages to the communities in which they operate. For example, one sub-country officer explained that “being both a community and religious group official leader helps [them] to serve citizens better and [they are] able to use these avenues to pass information on social protection programs.” Another reported that they are “involved in religious groups and it helps in the government work because whenever there is information [they] want to pass, [they] use the community group in passing the information.” Still another mentioned that “being a member in my religious group/church helps me to pass information on the social programs when we are doing targeting, payments and sensitization.”

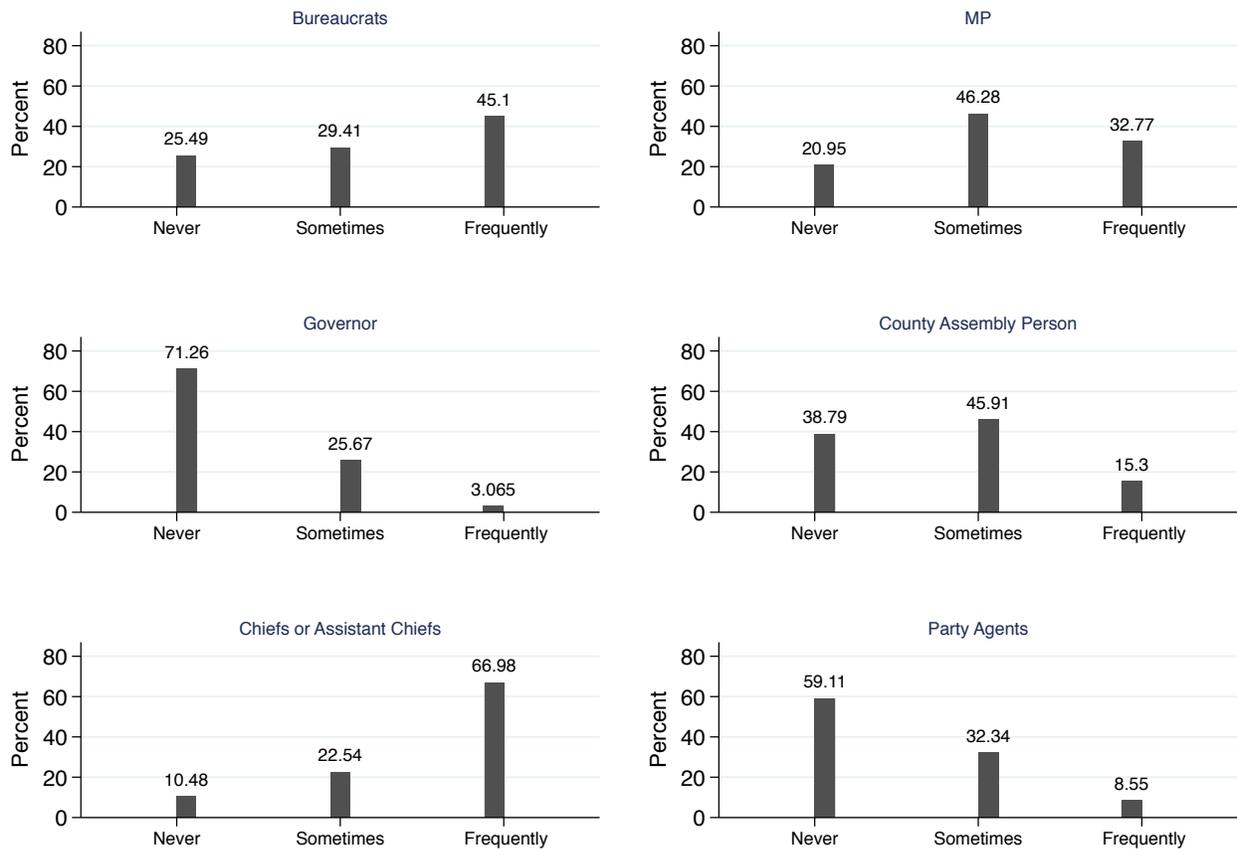
The evidence from the interviews also highlights a connection between information about the programs and the role of bottom-up pressure and social norms in driving non-programmatic influence. As noted above, informal social norms about the appropriate role of an MP, combined with bottom-up

accountability pressures, can be an important driver of non-programmatic distributive politics (Lindberg, 2010). According to a number of the bureaucrats interviewed, education efforts have been central in shaping the extent to which citizens put pressure on MPs to help them gain access to program benefits. For example, in one constituency where there was no reported political influence, the bureaucrat argued that “most of the citizens are informed about the program and they don’t need to give pressure to politicians.” In another, where the bureaucrats did report non-programmatic implementation, one noted that “citizens pressurize the MP due to the perception that in Kenya one has to know somebody to get assistance.”

This connection is important because the factor that correlates most strongly and robustly with each of the measures of non-programmatic implementation is a measure of how frequently citizens in the constituency pressure the MP to help them gain access to cash transfer programs. Both the survey and interview evidence highlight that citizens in some constituencies often approach the MP or their office to help them gain access to social programs, or to figure out why they are not benefiting from them. Some of the interviews also suggested that the MP is only likely to try to influence the programs when they are subject to pressure from their constituents: “The MP only involves himself when there is pressure from the citizen who visits his office with claims that they missed out on the program.” As noted above, these demands and the MPs response can often be consistent with programmatic politics, but in other cases they are not.

Figure 5 shows that the constituency MP is the political actor most commonly approached by constituents to gain access to cash transfer programs (chiefs and assistant chiefs are part of the bureaucracy in Kenya). Figure 6 shows that the frequency with which citizens approach the MP for assistance is strongly correlated with the three main indicators of non-programmatic implementation. Where the MP faces frequent demands from their constituents, the MP is more likely to try to influence household (beneficiary) selection, more likely to try to influence community selection, and bureaucrats are substantially more likely to report that politics plays a role in shaping the allocation of program benefits in their constituency. Regression analyses show that these correlations are robust to the inclusion of a range of controls for constituency and bureaucrat characteristics. Indeed, MP contact is the most robust predictor of non-programmatic implementation that has been gathered thus far.

Figure 5: Who Do Citizens Contact When They Want Access to Social Programs?



In interpreting these patterns, it is worth emphasizing that they should not necessarily be taken as evidence that it is constituents who are ultimately responsible for non-programmatic distribution — though in some cases there surely are constituents who seek to inappropriately gain access to program benefits. One reason to caution against such an interpretation is the aforementioned importance of *expectations about the behavior of others* (Adida et al., Forthcoming). If citizens in some constituencies believe that pressuring the MP is required in order to gain program benefits, and that others in the constituency are likely to do so, then it makes sense for them to do so, even if in principle they would prefer that the programs be implemented programmatically (Smith, 2007). If they do not, they will not benefit from the program while others will. Thus, this result may reflect a non-programmatic equilibrium in some constituencies, which the measure of pressure on the MP is capturing.

Figure 6: MP Contact and the Role of Politics in the Constituency

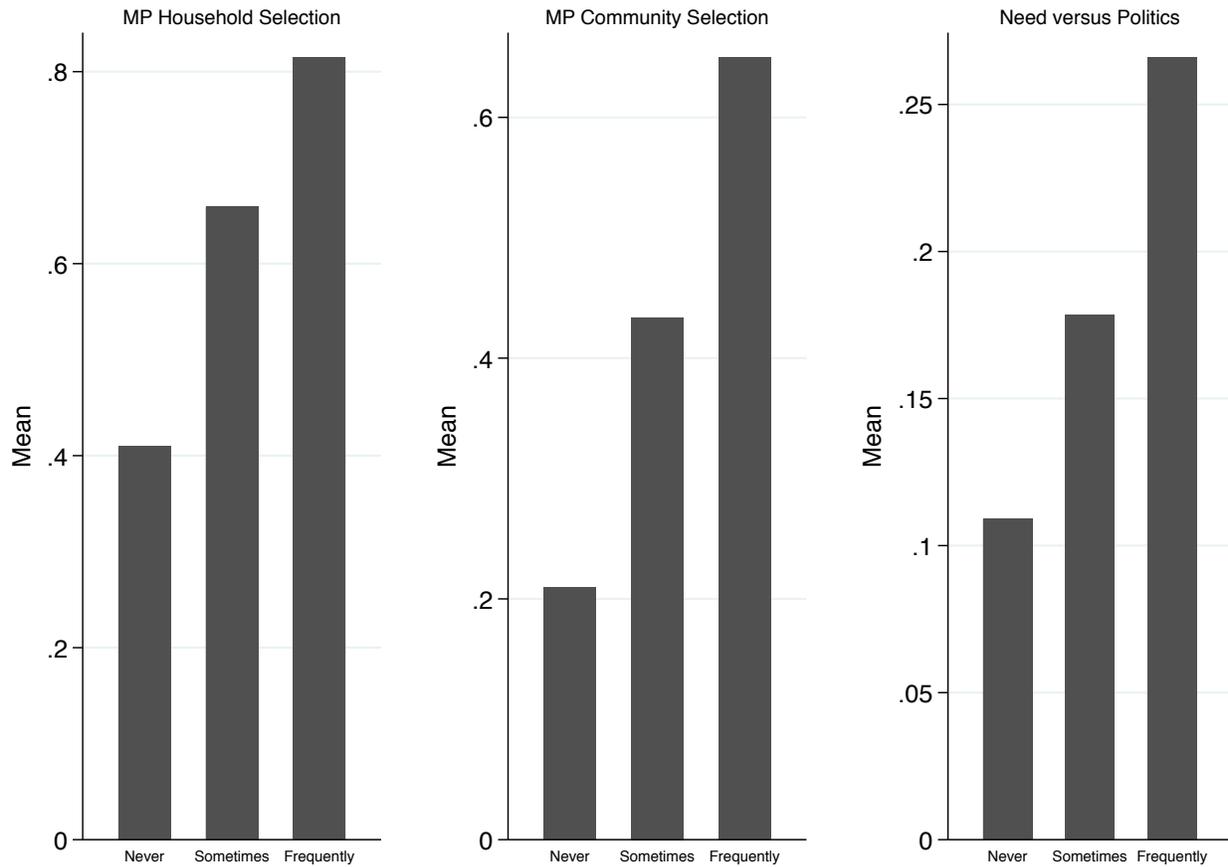
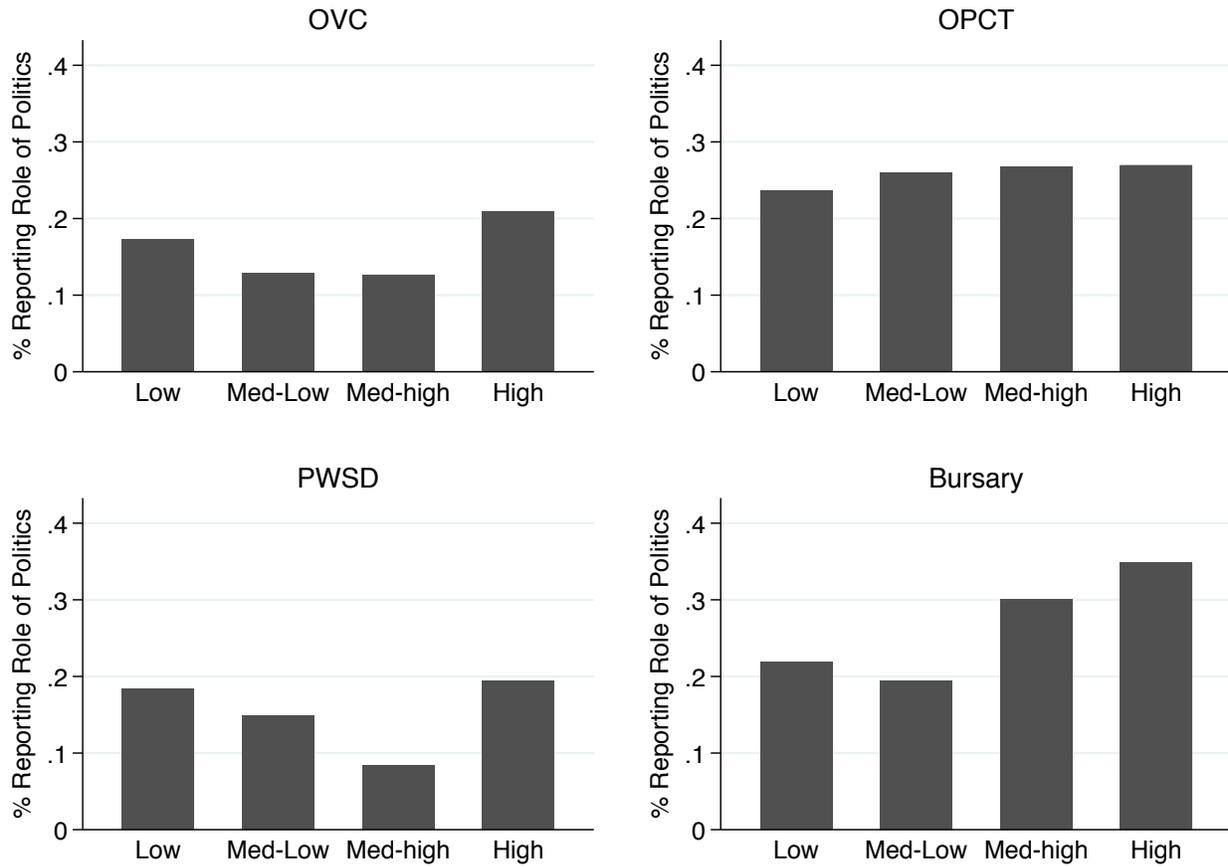


Figure displays the correlation between citizen pressure on MPs and indicators of non-programmatic implementation. The X-axis displays the frequency with which citizens in the constituency contact the MP for assistance in gaining access to social programs and the Y-axis displays the mean of the indicators of non-programmatic implementation.

5.3 Electoral Competition and Socio-Economic Development

Finally, as noted, the existing literature highlights that electoral competition and socio-economic development—and their interaction—can be important drivers of programmatic versus non-programmatic distributive politics. However, Figure 7 and Figure 8 illustrate that there is no strong correlation between electoral competition and poverty on the one hand, and indicators of non-programmatic distribution on the other. This is confirmed in regression analyses (not shown). I also find no evidence that electoral competition and poverty interact to drive programmatic versus non-programmatic distribution. It should be noted that poverty rates are relatively high in most Kenyan constituencies. Thus, even in “low” poverty constituencies, need and demand for these programs is very high. Further, many of the lower poverty

Figure 7: Electoral Competition and Reported Role of Politics

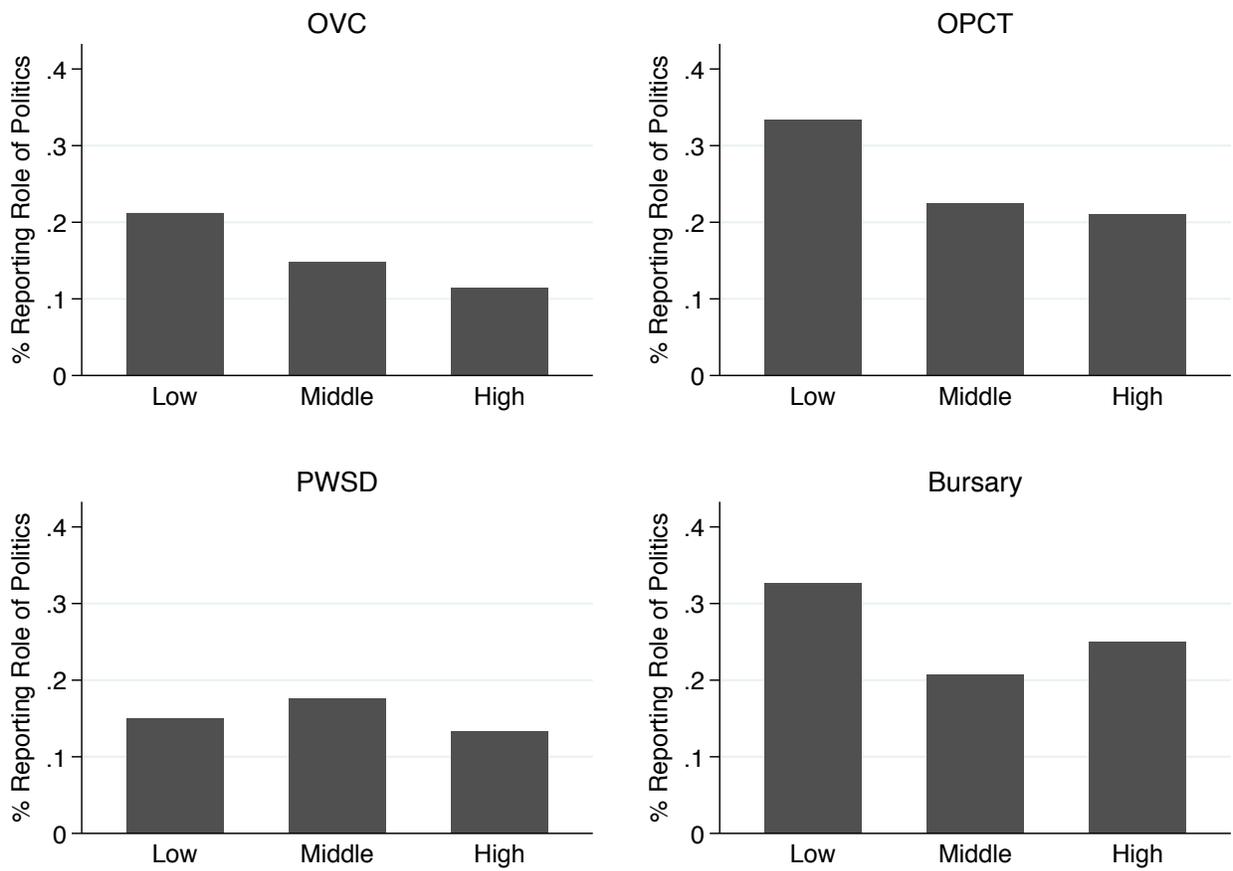


constituencies, with the exception of some in the major cities (Nairobi), would still not have a large population of middle and upper class voters, which the existing theoretical literature highlights as important (Herrera, 2017; Weitz-Shapiro, 2012, 2014). As such, we should not necessarily take these results as evidence against these theoretical perspectives. Levels of socio-economic development may not yet be sufficiently high for these theoretical models to be operative.

6 Policy Implications, Conclusions, and Directions for Future Research

This report presents findings from ongoing research about programmatic and non-programmatic distributive politics in Kenya's expanding cash transfer programs. In this concluding section, I discuss central conclusions and their policy implications, as well as areas for future research.

Figure 8: Poverty Rate and Reported Role of Politics



One of the main findings is that, despite the conventional wisdom about distributive politics in Kenya, the three cash transfer programs under study are to large extent implemented programmatically. A second set of key findings suggest that programmatic implementation is facilitated by formal program design features and guidelines and efforts by implementing bureaucrats and their connections in constituencies to spread accurate information about the programs. The results also highlight that a central driver of non-programmatic implementation, where it does occur, is bottom-up pressure on the MP to try to influence the program.

While still preliminary, these results highlight that pockets of programmatic distributive politics can emerge and expand, even in a context where non-programmatic politics is generally believed to be most prevalent. They also illustrate that formal program design and rules can be consequential, even in contexts where the conventional wisdom suggests that informal rules should dominate. The results also show that programmatic politics is supported by citizen access to information — by reducing information asymmetries between political actors and citizens, information about the programs makes it difficult for politicians to claim credit for or manipulate provision. In addition, the importance of formal rules notwithstanding, informal social norms and bottom-up pressure are strongly correlated with non-programmatic implementation and appear, in this context, to be more consequential than a factor such as electoral competition.

These findings generate a number of policy implications. First, the research demonstrates how certain features of program design have been consequential in shielding the programs from political influence. For example, one important design feature is that, while local bureaucrats and groups guide the process of identifying potential program beneficiaries, the actual selection takes place at the national office. This type of design has also been influential in other contexts, for example in Brazil (Sugiyama and Hunter, 2013). Policy makers should continue to strengthen these aspects of the program designs and use these lessons in the design of future programs.

Second, the research highlights that citizen knowledge can play an important role. The Kenyan Government — and governments elsewhere around the world — can therefore improve program implementation by maintaining and expanding efforts to educate citizens about social programs. These efforts would also address the role of social expectations and bottom-up pressures in driving non-programmatic

implementation. For example, increased civic education about the programs could shift expectations about how program benefits are allocated, thus reducing citizen incentive to pressure local politicians for help getting access.

Third, an interesting finding is that some local politicians elect not to interfere with social protection programs because they have access to other resources that are easier for them to influence in a discretionary manner (for example, MPs have their own Constituency Development Funds). A policy implication is that the existence and maintenance of potentially non-programmatic service provision programs can help protect emerging social protection programs from political interference. Another implication is for reformers who are aiming for more programmatic service provision: they may benefit from gradually introducing and expanding programmatic programs over time, rather than seeking immediate wholesale changes to distributive politics that would impact all or most service provision spheres at one time.

Finally, the results suggest areas for short- and longer-term research. In the short term, more evidence of programmatic versus non-programmatic implementation is required for sub-constituency units — that is, at the community level. In this paper, I have focused on the level of the constituency and mainly on the role of the MP. Yet the role of Community-Based Screening and Community-Based Validation, as well as the role of Location Committees, suggests a need to examine politics in these areas. Second, future research in this project will use information from citizens and beneficiaries in order to provide some validation for the measures presented here, which rely on the survey of bureaucrats. Finally, I will gather more evidence to test additional hypotheses that were not examined in this paper. For example, several bureaucrats noted that the MPs refrain from trying to interfere with the social programs because these reduce demands on the MP to provide constituents with the types of informal assistance— assistance with school fees, funeral expenses, and so on— that has long been expected of Kenyan politicians. One sub-county officer noted that “the long queues to the local politicians particularly MPs for handouts have diminished” since the programs had expanded in their area. This resonates with Lindberg (2010), who suggests that Ghanaian MPs support new programmatic social programs in part because the programs reduce demands on them for provision.

This research also points to future areas of research that go beyond the immediate question of focus in this paper. Specifically, the apparent importance of formal program rules raises an interesting

puzzle: why would politicians allow the program to be designed in a way that limits non-programmatic influence, especially when non-programmatic distributive politics is so prevalent? De La O (2015) addresses a similar question in Latin America and concludes that divided government is important: legislatures controlled by the opposition will only agree to fund cash transfer programs if those programs include rules to limit politicization. Although Kenya has not had divided governments of the sort observed in Latin America, this argument is still relevant to the extent that there is a significant opposition in the Kenyan legislature and the parliament is a relatively strong institution in Kenya. Yet Wanyama and McCord (2017) suggest that MPs supported reforms to and expansion of the cash transfer programs, which included the creation of the CSACs, because they thought these could easily be accommodated into the existing patronage system. One possibility is that the executive was willing to support strong program rules with the hopes that this would limit the influence of local politicians, under the assumption that the president would benefit electorally from the programmatic provision of cash transfers, as has been shown to happen in other contexts (Zucco Jr., 2013). Examining these speculations and other potential explanations for program design — including those that focus on national level bureaucrats and foreign donors — will be an interesting area for future research.

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