

Evaluating antipoverty transfer programmes in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa: Better policies? Better politics?

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Evaluation of antipoverty transfer programmes

The incidence of impact evaluations of antipoverty transfer programmes is more intense than for most other development interventions

...especially human development conditional transfer programmes aka ccts

Why?

A **policy/epistemic** explanation: evaluations contribute to 'evidence-based' policy

Government effectiveness/Aid effectiveness

A **politics** explanation: evaluations are a tool to overcome political resistance and competition

Research approach

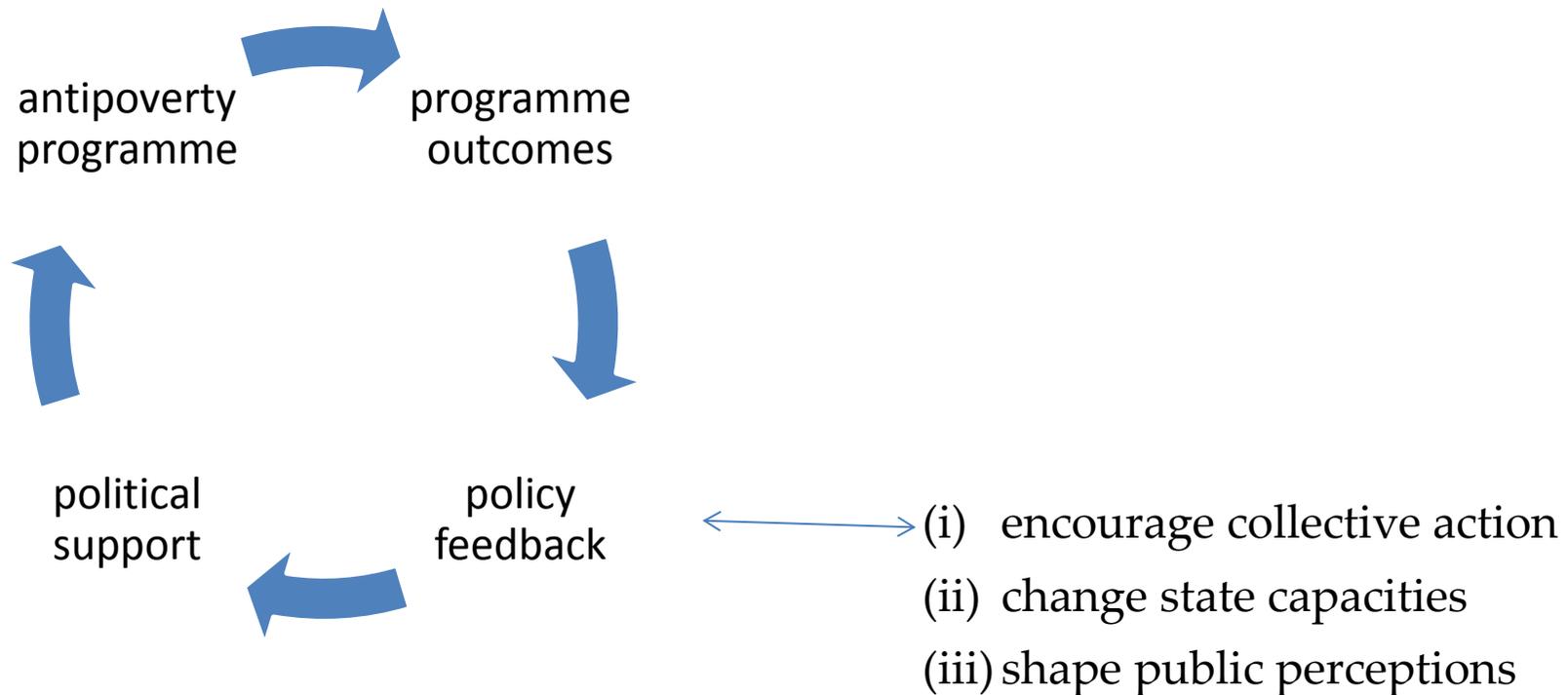
Hypothesis: the incidence of impact evaluations in antipoverty transfer programmes is explained by the degree of political resistance and competition

Examine a dataset of social protection programmes and look for reliable correlations between incidence and variables proxying for the two explanations

Compare the role and scope of impact evaluations in Latin America and Africa

The relationship between evaluation incidence and political resistance

Evaluations as a 'political tool'



Pierson [1993] When effects become cause: Policy feedback and political change

Findings from impact evaluations can influence support for antipoverty transfer programmes by helping overcome political resistance

Programme agencies will have stronger incentives to include rigorous evaluation components of antipoverty transfers the greater is the **resistance** to their introduction/scaling up

Domestically, resistance depends on policy and political competition and on strategic imperfections in the political process;

If **donor involvement** – intra- and inter-agency competition and innovation incentives

Correlates of evaluation incidence

A dataset of programmes:

Table 1 Variable description and statistics

Variable	Description	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Any	Whether any evaluation	159	0.47	0.50	0	1
Donor	Whether involvement by multilaterals or bilaterals	159	0.48	0.50	0	1
Pilot	Whether pilot	159	0.26	0.44	0	1
Nprog	Number of programmes per country	159	3.18	1.74	1	7
Wbgi_gee	Index of government effectiveness	143	-0.36	0.54	-1.60	1.10
Aid_gdp	DAC assistance to GDP.	156	0.06	0.12	0	1.09
Van_comp	Vanhanen political competition	156	42.8	17.7	0	70
Chga_demo	Democracy	156	0.65	0.48	0	1
Dpi_checks	Number of veto players	153	3.25	2.03	1	17
Programme Type		164	3.01	1.63	1	6
	Conditional cash transfer	164	0.36			
	Employment guarantee	164	0.07			
	In-kind transfer	164	0.06			
	Non-contributory pension	164	0.27			
	Unconditional cash transfer	164	0.24			

Table 2. Probit results

Variables ^a	Coefficients ^b		
Donor = 1	0.76** (0.31)		
Pilot = 1	-0.009 (0.33)		
Nprog	0.26*** (0.83)		
Aid_gdp ^c	-0.13 (1.03)		
Wbgi_gee ^c	0.62** (0.28)		
Van_comp ^c	-0.008 (0.01)		
Dpi_checks	0.03 (0.06)	Number of observations	143
Programme type (omitted category is cct):		Pseudo R-2	0.289
Employment guarantee	-0.74 (0.47)	LL(0) -98.94	
In-kind transfer	-1.05** (0.54)	LL = -70.34	
N-c pension	-1.56*** (0.36)		
UCT	-1.26*** (0.33)		
constant	-0.01 (0.48)		

Number of observations 143
Pseudo R-2 0.289
LL(0) -98.94
LL = -70.34

Data source: Authors' database and GoQ.

Notes:

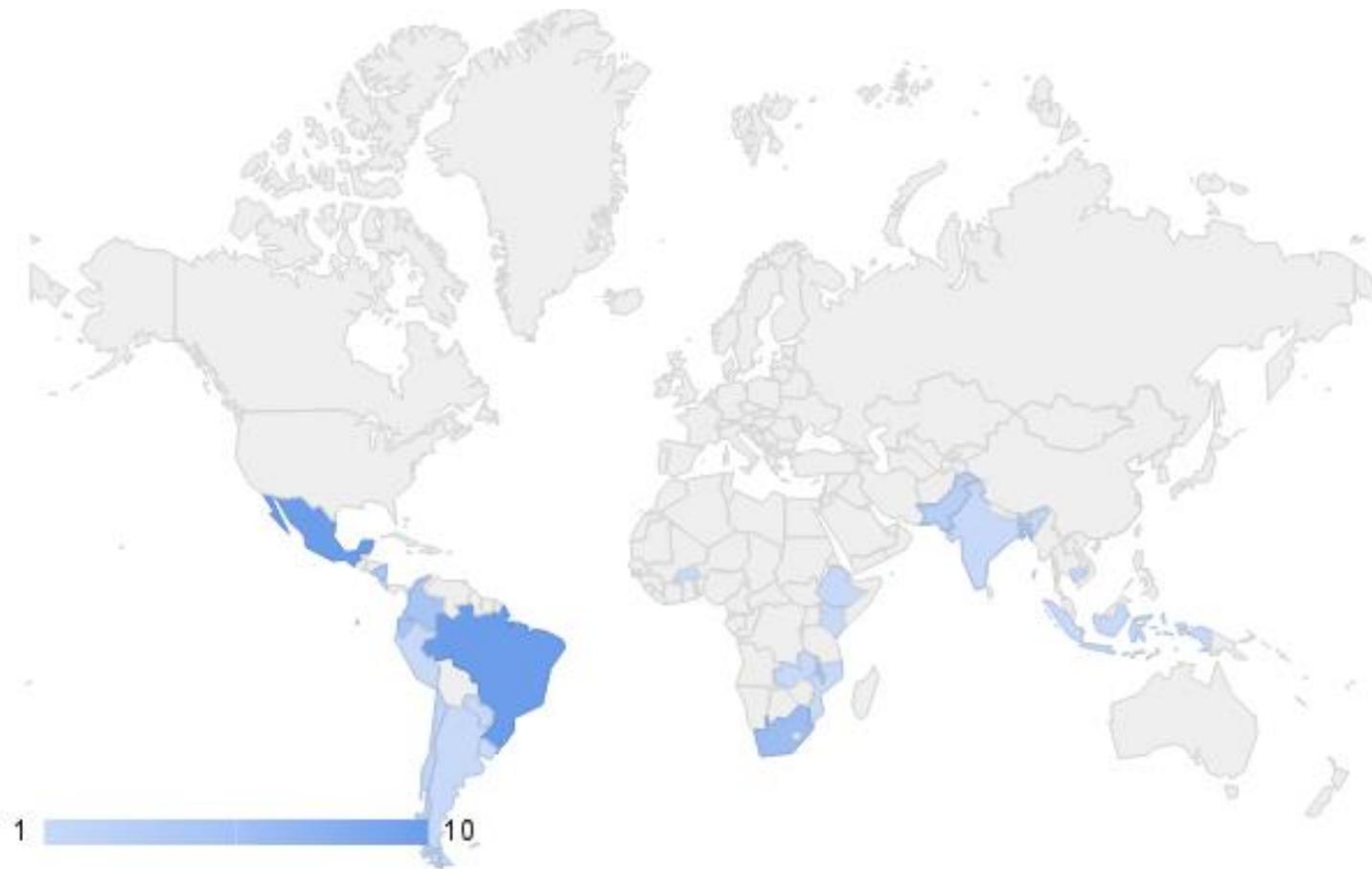
^a See Table 1 for variable definitions.

^b Robust standard errors in parenthesis.

* Significant at 10%; ** Significant at 5%; *** Significant at 1%.

Comparing practice in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa

Figure 3. Distribution of impact evaluation studies processed



	Latin America	sub-Saharan Africa
Evolution of antipoverty transfer programmes	<p>Rapid growth; large-scale programmes:</p> <p>ccts and social pensions but also integrated antipoverty programmes</p> <p>donor provided initial financing; public provision</p>	<p>Slow growth outside southern Africa; pilots</p> <p>southern Africa: unconditional transfers social pensions and child benefits</p> <p>elsewhere: Pilot ucts and ccts ; small scale; donor supported and funded; mixed provision</p>
Political resistance to antipoverty transfers	<p>Strong public demand: 'social debt'</p> <p>Main resistance from competing programmes and existing agencies</p> <p>ccts show high evaluation intensity compared to other programmes</p> <p>evaluation more likely for donor supported programmes</p>	<p>excluding southern Africa:</p> <p>virtually no public demand</p> <p>resistance from political elites ...and from competing agencies</p> <p>...and from donors focused on emergency aid and food transfers; infrastructure; or on sectoral projects</p> <p>Mixed capacity among donors</p>

	Latin America	sub-Saharan Africa
Evaluation	<p>Experimental evaluation strong</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>Innovative programmes: ccts?</p> <p>Discretion vs rights?</p> <p>Agency competition; no donor competition</p> <p>Limited partisan competition</p> <p>More recently: Evaluation mainstreamed into the work of public agencies: Mexico's CONEVAL</p>	<p>Experimental evaluation is v. limited</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>Strong political resistance BUT did not lead to strong evaluation:</p> <p>Donor competition did not initially lead to strong evaluation components... what about Ethiopia and Kenya?</p> <p>Pilots as demonstration; not learning</p> <p>Capacity constraints/institutionalisation</p> <p>More recently: Second generation programmes have stronger evaluation components http://www.fao.org/economic/ptop/en/</p>

How does political resistance play out in the comparison?

Widespread resistance to transfer programmes can explain the intensity of evaluation

Why is the incidence of evaluation weaker in SSA than in Latin America when resistance is stronger in the latter?

...because of capacity and finance

...because pilots developed for demonstration effects only (politics over policy/epistemic?)

...because pilots were never expected to go to scale

Conditions in SSA mitigated the demand for evaluations in response to political resistance

Conclusions

The incidence of impact evaluations in antipoverty transfer programmes appears to be associated with policy (evidence-based) and politics (resistance) explanations

Rigorous evaluations have political feedback effects; antipoverty policies perceived to be effective have greater support and are more sustainable

Examining correlates of evaluation incidence suggests support for both explanations, or at least, suggests that the politics explanation cannot be ruled out: The incidence of impact evaluations is positively correlated with donor involvement; programme competition; and government effectiveness

Comparing the evaluation of antipoverty transfer programmes in LAC and SSA reveals some significant differences in the way these explanations interact: in SSA early pilots were used for demonstration purposes; the epistemic gains from evaluations were not given enough attention

In explaining effective demand for evaluation, we need to pay attention to evidence-based policy stance, but also need to pay attention to politics.