



"Inside the black box: The political economy of local governments and their role in rural development"

The last decades have seen a worldwide trend towards decentralization, both in developing and transition countries. By "bringing government closer to the people", decentralization has a particular promise for reducing poverty and increasing the quality of life in rural areas, which have long been neglected by central governments. Yet, the empirical evidence has been rather mixed in view of problems such as capacity constraints and local elite capture. Even though there is an increasing body of theoretical and empirical literature that deals with decentralization and rural development, important knowledge gaps remain. In particular, many studies treat local governments as a "black box" and do not capture the multi-faceted ways in which rural citizens – men and women – interact with local governments and influence local government performance. But a better understanding of the way in which local governments actually work – depending on their institutional design and the structure of the societies in which they operate – is essential for the design of successful development interventions as well as governance reform strategies. The proposed **special workshop**, organized by the University of Kiel (ADVANCED-EVAL Project), Germany, and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), United States, will contribute to filling this knowledge gap by looking inside the "black box".

Place: International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington D. C., United States

Date: February 2010

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Objectives of the workshop

The seminar will provide a forum to present and discuss new empirical research that addresses questions such as: Which factors influence the ability of rural citizens to hold local governments accountable, and which channels do they actually use? How do policy networks of local actors look like, and how do they influence local government performance? Which factors influence the voting behavior of rural citizens for local governments? How does the design of local government institutions influence the scope for elite capture? How do societal factors, such as eth-

nic fragmentation, influence service provision by rural governments?

The seminar will also deal with research methods that can be used to better understand what happens "inside the black box" of local governments: How to identify and explain variation in local government performance? How to model the political economy of local governments and simulate reform scenarios? Additionally, the seminar will provide a forum to discuss the implications for policies and projects that can be derived from this field of research.



Program

Day 1	
9:00-10:00	Keynote 1: Pranab Bardhan , University of California, Berkeley and Dilip Mookherjee , London School of Economics "Tba"
10:00-10:45	Christian Henning , University of Kiel "Computable General Political Equilibrium Models as a tool to analyze local politics: An application to Poland." (with <i>Volker Saggau</i>)
10:45-11:00	Coffee break
11:00-11:45	Radu Ban , University of Maryland "Is Deliberation Equitable? Evidence from Village Meeting Transcripts." (with <i>Vijendra Rao</i>)
11:45-12:30	Regina Birner , IFPRI "Influence-Network-Mapping as a tool to assess how local governments implement development programs – Evidence from Ghana and India." (with <i>Madhu Sekher, K. Gayathridevi, Katharina Raabe and Eva Schiffer</i>)
12:30-1:15	Lunch
1:15-2:00	Christian Assmann , University of Kiel "Estimating policy networks and political influence of local elites: A latent class model approach to Polish and Slovakian policy elites." (with <i>Christian Henning and Eva Krampe</i>)
2:00-3:00	Keynote 2: Ehtisham Ahmad , International Monetary Fund "Tba"
3:00-3:15	Coffee break
3:15-4:00	Afua Branoah Banful , IFPRI "Can institutional design limit clientelism? A study of the District Assemblies Common Fund in Ghana."
4:00-4:45	Tewodaj Mogues , IFPRI "Which factors influence of internal revenue generation by local governments? Empirical evidence from Ghana." (with <i>Sam Benin and Godsway Cudjoe</i>)
4:45-5:00	Coffee break
5:00-5:45	Nethra Palaniswamy , IFPRI "How do reservation policies influence inter-village public resource allocation? Evidence from Karnataka." (with <i>Nandi Krishnan</i>)
5:45-6:30	Xiaobo Zhang , IFPRI "How do local power structures influence inter-village public resource allocation in China: The role of elected village leaders and appointed party secretaries." (with <i>co-authors</i>)



Day 2	
9.00-10.00	Keynote 3: Richard Crook , University of Glasgow and James Manor , University of Sussex "Tba"
10.00-10.45	Jesse Ribot " Tba"
10.45-11.00	Coffee break
11.00-11.45	Stuti Khemani , World Bank " Tba"
11:45-12:30	Jianping Han , University of Kiel "Firm-government relations Chinese style: The impact of firms' network relations to local government on economic performance in rural China." <i>(with Christian Henning)</i>
12:30-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:45	Kiran Gajawani , IFPRI "Is reservation of seats in local councils an effective tool to make local governments more responsive to women's needs? Evidence from Tamil Nadu." <i>(with Xiaobo Zhang)</i>
1:45-2:30	Susumu Shikano , University of Konstanz "The impact of social networks and voter behavior and local government performance: Empirical evidence from Poland and Slovakia." <i>(with Christian Henning)</i>
2:30-3:15	Kamiljon Akramov , IFPRI "Do geography and ethnic diversity matter for rural service provision? Evidence from rural Ghana." <i>(with Felix Asante)</i>
3:15-3:30	Coffee break
3:30-5:30	Panel discussion
5:30	Reception