

“WHO BENEFITS FROM DISTRIBUTIVE POLITICS? HOW THE OUTCOME ONE STUDIES AFFECTS THE ANSWER ONE GETS”

By Eric Kramon and Daniel Posner

Valerie Wirtschafter

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- Most literature on distributive politics focuses on who profits from government policies and how the groups that do are able to secure the distributive outcomes that favor them.

Study of distributive politics suffers from one major issue:

- Pattern of favoritism with respect to one outcome in question may be counterbalanced by a quite different, even opposite, pattern of favoritism with respect to other outcomes.

DIFFERENT DISTRIBUTIVE OUTCOMES

1. Infant survival
2. Educational attainment
3. Access to improved water sources and electrification

- **Dependent variable:** infant survival, primary school completion, household electrification, and household water source in each country
- **Independent variable:** Ethnic match variable (*takes a value of 1 if the respondent or head of household was a coethnic of the president at the time that the benefit was received, and a 0 otherwise.*)

Estimate a series of logit models for dichotomous outcomes and OLS regression for ordered categorical outcome.

EXAMPLE OF DIFFERENT OUTCOMES IN SIX COUNTRIES

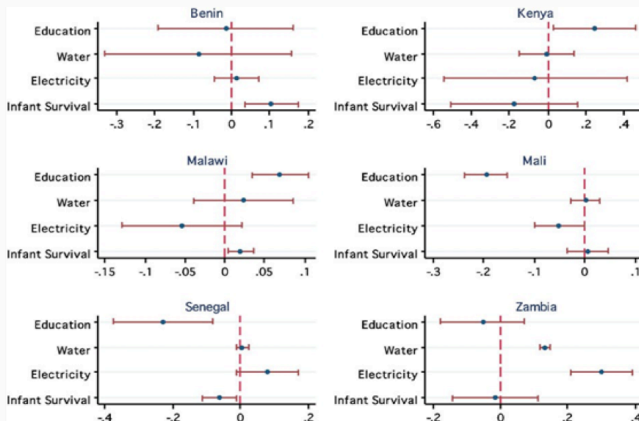


Figure: Main graph from Kramon and Posner shows evidence of potential pitfalls of not examining the full set of outcomes over which government leaders have control.

CONCLUSION

- Studies that focus on a single good that is one of several that the government allocates may not provide as much information about distributive politics behavior as research may think
- May be better to study cash transfers or total government spending instead