



# Leading themes in public administration research and cross-national research opportunities

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# Leading themes in public administration research and the role of context

- ▶ Decentralization/devolution of responsibility for core government functions
- ▶ Public-private partnerships, third-party and collaborative governance
- ▶ Contracting (complex, performance-based) and contract management
- ▶ Street-level policy making and implementation
- ▶ Bureaucratic policy making process and citizen voice
- ▶ Race and representative bureaucracy
- ▶ Political and organizational leadership, transformational leadership
- ▶ Public values and public service motivation
- ▶ Civil service reforms

# Leading themes in public administration research and the role of context (continued)

- ▶ Formal and informal accountability
- ▶ Administrative law and regulation
- ▶ Organizational rules, red tape and green tape
- ▶ Administrative burden
- ▶ Performance measures and public sector performance management
- ▶ Performance dialogue and “bench learning” (benchmarking + mutual learning)
- ▶ Public finance, financial accountability and transparency
- ▶ Trust in government, citizen participation and satisfaction

# Example of cross-national research opportunities: cash transfer programs

- ▶ Government cash transfer programs (conditional and unconditional) transfer cash to poor households to reduce poverty and its inter-generational transmission
  - ▶ Conditional cash transfers (CCTs) tie conditions to receipt of benefits and create administrative challenges
  - ▶ Administrative burdens arise with both CCTs and UCTs
- ▶ Other public administration themes in cash transfer programs
  - ▶ Devolution of administrative authority and responsibilities
  - ▶ Public-private partnerships in administration
  - ▶ Representative bureaucracy
  - ▶ Public finance and transparency

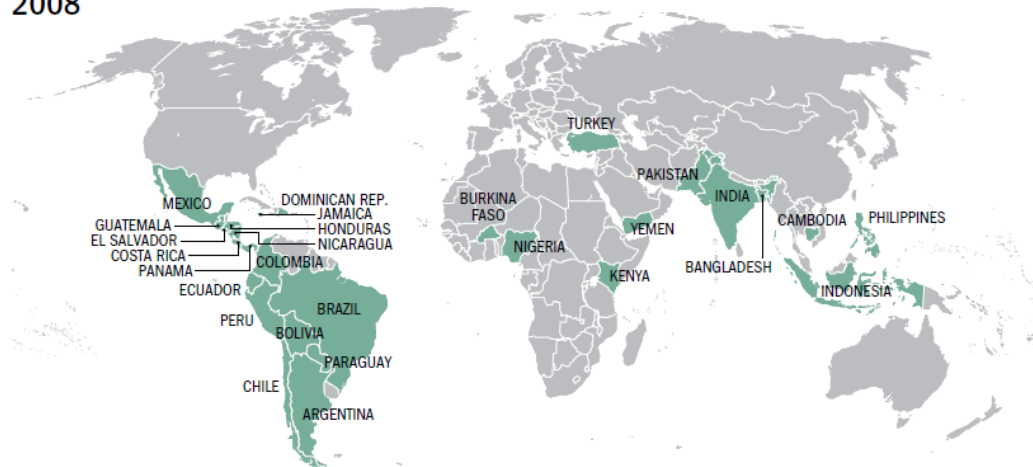
# International expansion of cash transfer programs

Program models developed in Mexico and Brazil expanding to sub-Saharan Africa and beyond and adapting to differing contexts

1997



2008



Source: World Bank.

# Administrative burden in cash transfer programs

- ▶ Administrative burdens found in cash transfer programs cross-nationally:
  - ▶ Document requirements (e.g., identity documents, proof of income for means test)
  - ▶ Long queues and waiting periods, limited service hours, language and communication barriers, delays in processing claims
  - ▶ Lack of clarity/knowledge about program rules and how/where to apply or re-apply and application requirements
  - ▶ Policy conflicts pushed down to lower administrative levels (procedural discretion) creates potential for administrative burden to vary geographically and politically

# Research quantifying impacts of administrative burden on youth outcomes

- ▶ Measured “intended” cash transfer receipt (total months eligible) and actual receipt (accounting for program interruptions and disconnections due to administration burden)
- ▶ Youth matched on intended cash transfer “dose” and other observable characteristics to test hypothesis: *Among adolescents with same intended dose, those with interruptions or disconnections will have smaller or diminished impacts*
- ▶ Estimation of effects of interruptions/disconnections found significantly diminished outcomes for youth; potential benefits of program not fully realized due to administrative burden
  - ▶ Policy levers identified for reducing administrative burden

■ **Article:**  
Carolyn J. Heinrich  
**The Bite of Administrative Burden: A Theoretical and Empirical Investigation**  
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