Working paper 543

The political economy of cash transfer programmes in Brazil, Pakistan and the Philippines

When do governments 'leave no one behind'?

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December 2018

- Pro-poor policies, such as cash transfers, hold wide appeal for politicians in times of economic crises because of the visibility and high level of international support available for such measures.
- The political returns to politicians from a widespread pro-poor policy are significant: they potentially expand their voter base.
- The highly visible link between the politician and cash transfers has mobilised politicians to invest in state capacity and reach eligible citizens.
- Methods of selecting eligible participants and delivering cash has allowed local politicians to gain electoral mileage from central government actions.
- In the longer term, it can be very difficult for subsequent regimes to dismantle far-reaching pro-poor programmes without risking high levels of unpopularity. Consequently, future governments try to establish ownership over the programmes by improving and/or expanding them.

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful for useful discussions with and comments from Paula Lucci, Elizabeth Stuart and Francesca Bastagli (Overseas Development Institute, ODI); Dr Julien Labonne (Blavatnik School of Government); Professor David Hulme (University of Manchester); Professor David Hudson (University of Birmingham), Tim Conway (UK Department for International Development, DFID); and the generous comments from the participants at the 'Leave no one behind' workshop hosted by the Department of Geography, University of Cambridge, in 2018.

I am grateful to government and non-government personnel from Brazil, Pakistan and the Philippines, and for their time and willingness to share their knowledge and expertise with me. This working paper is an output of ODI's 'leave no one behind' engagement with Agenda 2030. Details can be found online at: www.odi.org/our-work/leave-no-one-behind

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Acronyms

4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program
BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
CCT	Conditional cash transfers
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development, Philippines
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority, Pakistan
₱	Philippine peso
Rs	Rupees
R$	Brazilian real
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

1 Introduction

In 2015, countries around the world endorsed Agenda 2030 (UNGA, 2015). This included the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 'leave no one behind' concept, which means 'ending extreme poverty in all its forms and reducing inequalities among both individuals (vertical) and groups (horizontal)' (Stuart and Samman, 2017: 1; see Box 1 also). In practice, the Agenda requires governments to reach out to those groups, populations and individuals who are the furthest behind across different goals and prioritise progress for them.

Often, country governments do not put furthest-behind groups at the centre of their policies and there are many reasons why they may not prioritise outcomes for the poorest. For instance:

- in many countries, most of the population is extremely poor, and almost half or more of the population, rather than a minority, may be 'left behind', e.g. in Benin or Chad (World Bank, 2018)
- in other countries, the government is itself an agent of marginalising populations, e.g. the persecution of Rohingyas by security forces in Myanmar or the ongoing repression of opposition groups in Syria
- in a majority of low- and middle-income countries, both the scale of the challenge and the expense of it are seen to lie outside the existing operational and fiscal capacity of the government (Greenhill et al., 2015).

But in some cases, despite the hindrances listed, governments do introduce and establish a pro-poor policy, with the spoken or unspoken objective of leaving no one behind.

What is the enabling environment that allows governments to do something which might be unpopular among middle classes? What incentivises governments to deliver when the immediate benefits may not be clear, but the additional costs are more so? This paper seeks to answer these questions by examining the political economy of cash transfer programmes introduced by the governments of Pakistan, the Philippines and Brazil. It does not consider the efficacy or efficiency of such programmes ('Did they work?') but instead looks at why the government implemented them in the first place and, where relevant, why subsequent administrations continued the policy when praise for their ongoing successes might be attributed to their predecessors.

1.1 Cash transfers: an example of a leave no one behind policy

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development defines social protection as policies and programmes concerned with 'preventing, managing, and overcoming situations that adversely affect people's wellbeing' (UNRISD, 2010: 135). There are several conceptual frameworks on social protection of which the core and common element is their focus on vulnerability and fostering individual, household and community resilience to shocks (Holmes and Jones, 2013).

Over the past decade, cash transfers have gained importance in academic and practitioner circles (Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux, 2007; Hanlon et al., 2010; Barrientos, 2013) as a preferred method of making social transfers to leave no one behind. This is because they are seen as cost-efficient, adaptable to the most urgent needs of recipients, able to maintain the dignity of recipients and are generators of multiplier effects in local markets (ICRC, 2018).

Consequently, a plethora of studies have focused on the impact of cash transfer programmes. Barrientos and Niño-Zarazúa (2010) have conservatively estimated that anti-poverty transfer programmes reached between 0.75 billion and 1 billion people in low-income countries by 2010 (See Box 2 for types of cash transfers). A range of countries have implemented successful

Box 1 Social protection and the SDGs

In signing the SDGs, countries have committed to implement context-specific social protection systems for all that include basic, agreed social security guarantees (ILO, 2012a; Ortiz et al., 2016). As the Goals set out in this box show, social protection forms a key component of the SDG agenda and has been specifically referred to in 3 out of the 17 SDGs (SASPEN Secretariat, 2015). After the announcement of the SDGs, the United Nations published a primer for its country offices that outlined practical methods of strengthening social protection to leave no one behind (UNDP, 2016).

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including social floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5.4 Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.

cash transfer programmes (both unconditional and conditional) including Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Africa and Yemen (Fiszbein and Schady, 2009; Garcia and Moore, 2012), with Mexico pioneering the cash transfer model as early as 1997 with its programme Oportunidades.

The programmes have shifted from transfers to very specific groups of vulnerable people (e.g. children, pregnant women) to nationwide transfers to a targeted population (entire low-income households considered left behind). For instance, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the Government of Malawi introduced a cash transfer pilot scheme in Mchinji in July 2006 to cover schooling costs for households with children of school-going age (Devereux, 2006). In Ethiopia, the government launched a cash-for-work programme in 2005 to protect the assets of the chronically poor (Woldehanna, 2010). Success has been measured by the effect of cash transfer programmes on their ability to smooth consumption and income and translate into better outcomes on health and social indicators for poor households (such as nutrition and years of schooling) (Bastagli et al., 2016).[1]

The literature on cash transfers, and social protection in general, has highlighted that their effectiveness and sustainability relies on a well-functioning administrative system and a strong and continuing political will (Farringdon and Slater, 2006).

Paradoxically, in low- and middle-income countries, it is often the weaknesses in an administrative system – for instance, the lack of state capacity[2] combined with a weak political will and presence of clientelist politics – that have been blamed for the absence of basic service

1 See Ravallion (2003) for a review of cash transfers' impact on inequality across a number of countries; and Bastagali et al. (2016) for evidence on the impact of cash transfer programmes.

2 The author borrows the definition used by Vom Hau (2012: 5) whereby state capacity is 'best approached as a multi-dimensional concept that can usefully be disaggregated into three distinct, but interrelated dimensions: (1) the external embeddedness with non-state actors, (2) the organizational competence of state agencies, and (3) their territorial reach'.

delivery (Hickey, 2008). Yet countries like Brazil, Pakistan and the Philippines, which are often observed to have weak state capacity (Rice and Patrick, 2016), have successfully rolled out cash transfer programmes.

This paper contributes to an understanding of the kind of external and internal environment and incentives that can open a space for major pro-poor policies to be put into place. It does so by answering the following questions:

- What were the circumstances that led the three countries to launch a nationwide cash transfer programme?
- How and why did the programmes continue and expand through periods of electoral change in countries where regimes have been known to de-fund or de-emphasise programmes that were initiated by a different government?
- What critical variables made the programme administratively sustainable over a long period in countries often said to lack state capacity?

Pakistan, Brazil and the Philippines were selected as case studies on the basis that: (1) impact evaluations show that cash transfer programmes in these countries have improved the living conditions of poor people; (2) the programmes have survived electoral changes and have continued over at least a decade; and (3) the programmes have been scaled up, both in terms of expenditure and number of households covered.

In Pakistan, the Benazir Income Support Programme's (BISP) annual disbursement rose after its 2008 launch from 16 billion Pakistani rupees (Rs) ($152 million) in 2008/2009 to Rs 96.65 billion ($921 million) in 2015/2016. There are currently 5.7 million active eligible citizens on the roster (BISP, 2017) and the programme has been operational under two governments. A 2016 impact evaluation of BISP found that the programme had a strong positive impact on poor households' welfare and reduced poverty (Cheema et al., 2016).

In 2011, Brazil's social welfare programme, Bolsa Família (in operation since 2003), covered 13.3 million households nationwide and represented 2.5% of total government expenditure (ILO, 2012b). It rose from 5.8 billion Brazilian real (R$) ($1.9 billion) under President Lula in 2004 to R$28.8 billion ($9.3 billion) in 2015 (Alves, 2015). The programme was shown to have caused a decrease of between 12% and 18% in the country's poverty headcount index (Higgins, 2012).

The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps, 'Bridging Programme for the Filipino Family') in the Philippines covered 400,000 Filipino households in 2015 (DBM, 2015) and, according to a World Bank evaluation, has increased welfare of recipient households (Chaudhury et al., 2013). The programme had a budget of 62.7 billion Philippine peso (₱) ($1.3 billion) in 2015 (Gavilan, 2015) up from ₱4 million ($0.1 million) in 2007 (Acosta and Velarde, 2015). The programme has been in place since 2007 and through four electoral changes.

Box 2 Types of cash transfer programmes

Cash transfers are a form of social assistance.

1. Targeted but unconditional transfers: no immediate links intended to productive sectors. The intended outcome is to increase and smooth consumption of publicly or privately provided goods and services.
2. Targeted and conditional transfers: no immediate links intended to productive sectors. The intended outcome to increase and smooth consumption of publicly or privately provided goods and services; in addition, to invest in human capital.
3. Transfers linked to productive activity: self- targeted. To increase and smooth consumption of publicly or privately provided goods and services; to create or rehabilitate community physical or natural capital.
4. Matching grants: the intended outcome is to create or rehabilitate private capital assets.

Source: Farringdon and Slater (2006).

1.2 Methodology

This paper's approach is built on a political economy analysis framework that highlights the interplay between structures, institutions and stakeholders, and the role of power and ideas, to understand political outcomes and actions (Leftwich, 2006; 2010). By adopting a politics of development framework, the paper examines the interaction of data collected under the variables identified (see Appendix B: Table B1). It is this interaction that prompts the introduction and maintenance of pro-poor policies (Hudson and Leftwich, 2014: 7) in the three countries.

Information gathered from secondary sources and primary interviews is brought to bear on a discussion of how institutions, resources and structures affect the position and discretion (the ability to exercise authority) of key stakeholders in establishing a policy direction. Data sources include: scholarly publications; newspaper articles; government press releases; cash transfer programme websites and physical publications; third-party analyses and commentaries on the programmes; and crucial interviews with key government, academic and non-academic informants involved in the programmes in each country (Appendix A). A vital focus of the methodology has been to triangulate information through peer review and secondary data – particularly from key informants. However, due to constraints on access to several key people involved in the programmes, the findings of this study should be considered preliminary; the aim here is not to provide a blueprint for success across different socioeconomic contexts.

2 The evolution of cash transfer programmes in Pakistan, Philippines and Brazil

2.1 Pakistan's Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)

In 2008, after a long period of military rule in Pakistan, the election of the Pakistan People's Party created an opportunity for new policies. In the first budget presented to parliament in 2008, the government launched BISP, the country's largest national cash transfer social safety net programme (Gazdar, 2011b; see Box 3 also). BISP was established ostensibly to counter the debilitating effects of the ongoing food, fuel and financial crises with the long-term aim of providing a minimum income to cushion the poor against chronic and transient poverty (World Bank, 2015; Cheema et al., 2016). However, commentators noted that political expediency was as important in triggering the design and implementation of BISP as the impact of the global economic crisis on domestic consumption.

The programme's strong ties to the Pakistan People's Party meant that politicians in the opposing Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) did not own the programme completely. For example, in BISP's first phase there was evidence that members of the national assembly from the opposition in the Punjab were loath to distribute BISP forms within their constituency and, at times, returned unfilled forms (Khan and Qutub, 2010). Targeting through parliamentarians proved problematic because of clientelist patterns of voting in Pakistan (Gazdar, 2011). Specifically, local politicians used the system to enter the names of eligible citizens – both poor and non-poor – who had voted for them.

The government sought technical assistance from the World Bank to improve targeting. It recommended the use of a poverty scorecard using proxy means testing. The poverty scorecard was designed in collaboration with Pakistan's National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Pakistan's civil registration system, to whom data management and monitoring of BISP was moved entirely (Koehler, 2011). Aware that eligible households without national identity cards would be left out of the system, NADRA dispatched mobile teams to register potentially eligible applicants and households (Khan and Qutub, 2010), bringing previously unregistered and marginalised residents on to the civil registration database. By 2009, the government had stopped using parliamentarian recommendations to identify eligible citizens – an atypical move in a regime where government programmes are often used as sources of patronage (Haseeb and Vyborny, 2016). The risk to the reputation of the governing party, the new party leader and that of its flagship programme motivated the government to address targeting and leakage issues (Khan and Qutub, 2010).

BISP recipients who could not be validated through the poverty scorecard were removed from the list of eligible citizens. Officials from

Box 3 The main features of BISP

BISP is an unconditional cash transfer programme that gives each household Rs 1,000 ($10) per month, disbursed quarterly. The programme aims to increase the purchasing power of low-income families through the cash grant and to empower women by making a female member in the family (either the head of the family or an adult female member) as the direct recipient of the grant.[1]

Under this method, 7.7 million families have been identified as eligible for the grant and as of 2016, 5.7 million families were active users of the programme.

Five payment disbursement mechanisms are in place, depending on the location of the eligible family. All disbursal mechanisms rely on collaboration with NADRA and selected banks in the country:

1. Pakistan post/money orders
2. smart card payment dispersal system
3. mobile banking system
4. debit card system – this is the most commonly used system but it is compromised when people lose their personal identification numbers and/or struggle to comprehend the text on automated teller machines (ATMs)
5. biometric verification system (BVS) – the government started to roll this out in 2017 and, by the end of 2017, 43 districts had the new system, reaching 37% of eligible citizens.

BISP has been implemented in all of Pakistan's four provinces – Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa – as well as Federally Administered Tribal Areas – Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and Islamabad Capital Territory.

Source: http://bisp.gov.pk/

1 There is widespread evidence that providing grants to female members of the family means greater gains in health, nutrition and education for the family (Yoong et al., 2012).

BISP reported disgruntlement among politicians as their constituents were declared ineligible. To maintain widespread support for the programme, BISP staff held meetings with politicians to assure them of the impending increase in the programme's outreach. Unusually, in this way, the Pakistani government was successful in reaching an agreement on the system, which constrained high-level politicians It was the result of efforts by senior political leaders in Pakistan and international donor agencies, with senior politicians agreeing to tie their hands and those of their colleagues against interfering in recipient selection (Vyborny, 2017)

One key informant (INGO1) notes that the promise of reaching greater numbers of eligible citizens, which local politicians could then take credit for, made up for the fewer and more selective beneficiaries they could reach via the quota system given to the parliamentarians.

As elections neared in 2013, there was widespread concern that the likely new government would dispense with BISP because of its strong linkages to the outgoing Pakistan People's Party. But when the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) came to power as expected, it kept the programme and even discussed changing the nature and branding of BISP to promote ownership by the new government (key informants LNGO1 and INGO1). Suggestions that emerged from the newly elected government included shifting the programme's focus from income support to entrepreneurship and changing its name to the Pakistan Income Support Programme (Gishkori, 2014). However, given the programme's grassroots association with a BISP debit card bearing a picture of former Pakistan People's Party leader Benazir Bhutto, the new government was concerned that it would lose would favour and trust with eligible

groups if it made drastic changes to an existing, widespread and popular programme that had considerable technical and financial donor support. Consequently, the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) kept the programme's main features (although the method of disbursement continues to evolve).[3] Instead it increased the budget allocation to the programme, among considerable media fanfare to promote its ownership (*Express Tribune*, 2013; PK Revenue, 2016). For information on the programme's impact, see Box B2 in the Appendix.

2.2 The Philippines' Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program

The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) is a conditional cash transfer (CCT) programme that aims to reduce poverty in the Philippines by giving cash transfers to poor households if they meet established health and education obligations.

Secondary literature and key informants proffer two reasons as to why the government undertook the programme and scaled it up within one year. According to the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD)

Box 4 BISP eligibility criteria

For families to be eligible, (1) their monthly income must to be less than Rs 6,000 ($60), and (2) the female applicant/recipient needs to possess a national identity card.

Several classes of eligible citizens were identified by the government: widowed/divorced women without adult male members in the family; households that included person/s with physical or mental disabilities; and family members suffering from a chronic disease. Individuals in these categories also must meet the general criterion regarding family income and possession of a national identity card.

Households were eligible if they had no family member in government service, ownership of no or less than three acres of agricultural land, were not users of any other welfare programme, did not hold an account in a foreign bank, and did not possess a foreign passport or an overseas Pakistani identity card.

Source: Khan and Qutub (2010); Naqvi et al. (2014).

Box 5 Main features of the 4Ps

The 4Ps aims to

- 'provide cash assistance to the poor to alleviate their immediate need (short-term poverty alleviation); and
- … break the intergenerational poverty cycle through investments in human capital' (Tabuga and Reyes, 2012).

Households can receive ₱500 per month ($10) for complying with the condition on health. With regards to education, each child in day care or elementary school receives ₱300 ($6) per month and each child in high school receives ₱500 ($10) per month (given to the household in which the child lives). A maximum of three children per household may receive the education grant for 10 months of the school year. The maximum monthly grant is ₱2,000 ($40) for a family with three children regularly attending high school. But in practice average grants are lower because family composition differs across eligible households and not all conditions are met by all households every month.

Sources: ibid.; DSWD (2017).

3 After the introduction of the poverty scorecard, the government also changed the cash delivery mechanism from postal deliveries to magnetic stripe debit cards (Benazir Debit Card). The card removed the need for postal workers, who would often demand payment for handing over the money order, and thereby lessened the opportunity for leakages (Khan and Qutub, 2010).

Box 6 4Ps eligibility criteria

To be eligible for the programme, applicants must meet the following government-mandated criteria:

- resident of the poorest municipalities, based on 2003 Small Area Estimates of the National Statistical Coordination Board
- in households whose economic condition is equal to or below the provincial poverty threshold
- in households that have children 0–18 years old and/or have a pregnant woman at the time of assessment.

Secretary Corazon 'Dinky' Solima, the programme's genesis lay in the country's desire to meet its poverty reduction commitments under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which would highlight its regional and global profile. Discussions for the programme started as early as 2005 under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration (Flores, 2011). However, the food and fuel crisis facing Filipinos in this period in line with worldwide trends was as significant a driver as the pro-MDG sentiment cited by Secretary Solima (Velarde and Fernandez, 2011). The interaction of both factors created an environment favourable to the creation and implementation of a pro-poor cash transfer programme.

There is some evidence that Arroyo's government engaged in a dialogue with the World Bank about its experience with CCTs in Latin America. One key informant supported this theory, noting that the World Bank had facilitated a visit by President Arroyo to Brazil to meet President Lula who had launched the Bolsa Família cash transfer programme:

> Although Arroyo could not technically stand for elections she was manoeuvring to have the constitution changed in the Philippines at the time she went to Brazil. Having seen how successful Lula had been at gaining electoral victory on the back of launching the cash transfer programme, upon her return she became a big proponent of it. (INGO2)

The pilot programme was initially supposed to run for a year. But, 'barely three months into the implementation, … President Arroyo decided to go full scale the next year, allocating five billion pesos from the windfall of the expanded value-added tax (E-VAT) and increasing the target by 320,000 households' (Dadap, 2011: 31). One reason seems to be that Arroyo – though unsuccessful in modifying the constitution to allow her to rerun for election – was motivated to end her term on a positive note, particularly in the wake of allegations against her party and family of electoral fraud and financial corruption (Monsod, 2014; key informant INGO3). By the end of Arroyo's election term in 2010, 700,000 households were enrolled. The programme's sudden expansion was also facilitated by financial aid of up to $405 million from the World Bank between 2010 and 2012 (World Bank, 2010), as well as expertise offered by the donors and knowledge gained by Filipino administrators during the programme's pilot phase.

When Benigno Aquino III's government took power in 2010, instead of following the Filipino tradition of launching a new programme linked directly with the previous political administration (and side-lining programmes associated with the former government), it announced that it would expand the 4Ps coverage (Orbeta and Paqueo, 2016). Aquino committed to reaching 1 million households (up from 700,000) by the end of 2010 and a further increase to a total of 2.3 million by the end of 2011 (11.5% of the population, by conservative estimates) (Labonne, 2013). By 2016, the programme had covered 20% of the population (World Bank, 2017). The Philippine's Development Plan noted the CCT to be the 'cornerstone' of the government's efforts to eradicate poverty (Government of Philippines, 2010) (see Box B3 in the Appendix for more information on the impact of the 4Ps).

One of the mechanisms that supported the programme's expansion was the

institutionalisation of the household targeting system. The lead implementing agency, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), soon created a separate entity – Pantawid Pamilyang National Project Management Office – to manage the programme's routine operations in conjunction with regional project management offices and officers, and officials at the city and municipal level (Tabuga et al., 2013).

The institutional arrangement was formalised through a series of legal and political notices – that is, an Administrative Order 16, Series of 2008, which provided guidelines on the implementation of the 4Ps, and a Joint Memorandum Circular 1, Series of 2009 outlining the specific institutional arrangements for the programme's implementation, monitoring and evaluation (Fernandez and Olfindo, 2011). The DSWD works in close coordination with the Department of Health, the Department of Education, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government to fulfil the supply of health and education facilities needed for eligible families to meet the conditions for the cash transfer.

2.3 Brazil's Bolsa Família

In 2003, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government in Brazil launched Bolsa Família, one of the largest CCT programmes in the world in terms of outreach, covering up to 50 million people or 14 million families (see Box 7).

President da Silva ('Lula') had campaigned in three presidential elections before his victory in 2002. In his first speech as President, he promised to combat hunger in the country and said: 'If, by the end of my term of office, every Brazilian has food to eat three times a day, I shall have fulfilled my mission in life' (Adams, 2003), making it a central mandate of his time

Box 7 Bolsa Família's main features

The programme has two main objectives (Soares, 2011):

- immediate poverty alleviation through direct cash transfers to poor and vulnerable households
- long-term investment in human capital through conditionalities attached to behaviour in the areas of health and education.

The programme makes a cash transfer to poor households with pregnant women and/ or children and to the poorest households (regardless of the presence of pregnant women or children). Payment is preferentially, though not always, made to an adult female in the house and conditionalities are monitored by local municipalities. The families withdraw money using a debit card and, in some cases, money is transferred directly to a family bank account.

To receive the transfer, families with children and pregnant women must comply with the following conditions (ibid.):

- Children aged 0–6 years must visit health centres for scheduled vaccines, regular check-ups and growth monitoring.
- Pregnant and lactating women must visit health centres for pre- and post-natal check-ups.
- Women must participate in educational, health and nutrition seminars delivered by local health teams.
- Children between the ages of 6–15 years must be enrolled in school.
- Young people aged between 15–17 must have daily school-attendance rates of at least 85% a month.
- Parents should participate in parent–teacher meetings.

Presently, the programme is estimated to reach almost 14 million families – more than quarter of the country's population (Illingworth, 2015).

in office. In that first year, Lula established the food security programme Fome Zero ('Zero Hunger'). In practice, the programme brought together scattered welfare initiatives already in place under former President Fernando Cardoso, including *Bolsa Escola* for education, the Bolsa Alimentação food programme, La Programa de Erradicaçao do Trabalho Infatil (PETI Programme for the Eradication of Child Labour) and Auxilio Gas, a cooking gas subsidy.

However, unlike the individual programmes, Fome Zero emphasised the need to target the poorest of the poor in Brazilian society, in line with Lula's very public mandate to provide food for all.[4] To that end, it relied on decentralised implementation that tried to minimise leakages at the local level (hence the use of credit cards instead of food stamps)[5] and reaching out to corporate entities for contributions (Hall, 2006).

For targeting purposes, Lula inherited Cadastro Único, a registry created in 2001 by the Cardoso government.[6] When Lula's administration began work with Cadastro Único it covered only 70% of the country's poor and there were considerable opportunities for political manipulation under the registration quota system (de la Brière and Lindert, 2005). For instance, before 2004, municipalities were given quotas that determined how many people they could enrol in the registry, which created opportunities for vote-seeking whereby local politicians could register households with favourable political affiliations. In turn there was a high likelihood (ibid.) that the extreme poor would be excluded because they are less connected to municipal-level officials and less informed about the function and aim of the registry.

Within only a few months of the Lula administration, the programme was considered ineffective at reaching the poorest and providing three meals a day to all (Andrews, 2004; Hall, 2006). To deliver on his promise, and thus retain electoral strength for the next elections, Lula reformed the Fome Zero programme and

Box 8 Bolsa Família eligibility criteria

The programme targets two main groups based on self-declared household income:

- families with per capita monthly incomes of up to R$85 ($27)
- families with per capita monthly incomes of up to R$120 ($38).

Families in the first category receive a minimum flat-rate payment of R$85 ($27) a month, regardless of whether they have children. If they have children, both categories of eligible households are paid R$39 ($12) for each child aged 15 and under, for up to a maximum of five children (increased from three children in 2011), plus a further R$46 ($14.5) each for up to two children aged 16–17. Families in the first category receive the minimum payment as well as the transfer based on the number of children they have.

In 2008, the government amended the implementation procedure for the programme to survey eligible citizens every two years to ascertain their continued eligibility. This is to ensure that households that are no longer eligible are removed to make way for households who have been on the waiting list or have become eligible.

4 During the global food crisis, increases in the price of staple food hurt the real income of net food consumers in low- and middle-income countries, most of who were relatively poor (Ivanic and Martin, 2008).

5 Food stamps were seen to have the same disadvantages as in-kind assistance such as distorting local markets and being less flexible than cash (Hall, 2006).

6 Operated by a public bank, Caixa Econômica Federal, Cadastro Único is used to enrol and identify families who: (1) earn up to half a minimum wage per person; or (2) earn up to three total monthly minimum wages. Data for the registry is collected and entered by the local municipalities in Brazil while the federal government performs data validation and cross-checks to verify the status of enrolled families (Caixa Brazil, 2017).

re-launched it as Bolsa Família in October 2003.[7] The relaunched programme brought about institutional changes that sought to improve outreach of the cash transfer programme. Under the Bolsa Família umbrella, Bolsa Escola, Bolsa Alimentação, Cartao Alimentação (a federally targeted transfer scheme) and Auxílio Gás were no longer administered separately by each relevant ministry but were integrated under a newly established Ministry of Social Development.[8] Registry quotas for entry into the Cadastro Único were eliminated: municipalities could register as many families as applied and were eligible, although the benefits were not guaranteed immediately (see Box 8).

Traditionally, Brazil's legislative body, the National Congress, has not had a ruling party majority. Therefore, any new policy measure has needed to undergo considerable political negotiation to become law (Hall, 2006). To sidestep such deliberations – which would have delayed Lula in delivering on his mandate – Bolsa Família was controlled by the executive office from the outset to strengthen its association with Lula's Workers' Party (Hall, 2012). Brazil introduced Bolsa Família in 2003 by executive order, and the legislature passed Law 10,839 in 2004 for the programme's regulation and institutionalisation.[9] Close links between the President and the management committee, as well as Lula's role in creating the new Ministry, meant that Bolsa Família continued to be closely linked and responsible to Lula (key informant BGO1). In the short term, strong presidential influence on the programme was seen to be integral to countering capture of the programme by local politicians and, to ensure that 'conditional cash transfers translate into electoral gains for the president, local discretion has to be attenuated through the extension of coverage to all the poor, and poverty has to be defined loosely enough that most of the population receives the CCT' (Ansell and Mitchell, 2011: 310).

Financially, although the programme continues to represent a modest proportion of Brazil's gross domestic product (0.5% in 2016) (Liddicoet, 2016), the formal involvement of the Departments of Health and Education and of local municipalities has meant that several institutions rely on financial support from Bolsa Família. Marques (2005, in Hall 2012) shows that poorer municipalities, such as those in the northeast of the country, rely on Bolsa Família for up to 40% of their overall budgets. For local politicians, the source of funding prevents them from imposing additional local taxes thus maintaining electoral popularity during election seasons (Hall, 2012).

7 Fome Zero became the collective title of Brazil's 30 other social intervention programmes.

8 The result of the integration of the Ministry of Food Security and Fight Against Hunger with the Ministry of Social Welfare.

9 The President's Office had initially hosted the Inter-Ministerial Management Committee and Executive Secretariat for Bolsa Família, which was then relocated to the Ministry of Social Development to promote integrated implementation of the programme.

3 Determinants of introducing and maintaining a pro-poor policy

A structural, institutional and stakeholder analysis of the three case studies of Brazil, Pakistan and the Philippines shows that the interaction of four identified factors was important in prompting governments to introduce and maintain pro-poor cash transfer programmes to leave no one behind:

- structural international and national economic situation: the food and fuel crises
- establishing political legitimacy through formal institutions: creating and maintaining electoral popularity
- the power of domestic stakeholders: presidential control but decentralised implementation
- the role of international donors in policy transfer and supporting pilot projects.

This section provides a political analysis of these four phenomena.

3.1 Responding to the food and fuel crisis

The world food crisis in 2007 and 2008 caused the price of primary commodities – including staple foods such as rice, wheat and corn – to increase steeply (Holmes et al., 2007; Hanlon et al., 2010). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the world prices for rice, wheat and maize increased by 102%, 115% and 204% respectively during this time (Spivack, n.d.), reducing the overall purchasing power of poor households. Poorer households in low- and middle-income countries were particularly hard hit, with an average poverty increase of 1.1% points in low-income countries and 0.7% points in middle-income countries (Ivanic et al., 2012).

In Pakistan, rising global fuel prices pushed the annual inflation rate to 7.8% in 2006/2007, and it rose again in 2007/2008 as higher food prices pushed the annual inflation rate up to 9.7%. Consequently, prices for key staple foods such as sugar, wheat, rice, eggs and meat rose steeply:

> The food crisis increased overall poverty by 8.2 percentage points while the proportion of extremely poor doubled (0.9 percentage points) and the proportion of ultra-poor increased by 4.5 percentage points. (Haq et al., 2008: 483)

The Government of Pakistan launched BISP in 2008 with the explicit and very public commitment to buffer the impact of the international food and fuel crisis on the poor in the country (Khawaja et al., 2010; BISP, 2017) by providing a direct and unconditional income injection to smooth consumption in vulnerable households.

In the Philippines, the global food crisis caused the price of rice to skyrocket: it was recorded to be $0.72 per kilo in March 2008 compared to the average of $0.60 per kilo in 2007 (Nadason, 2008). As 'rice accounts for about 25% of food expenditures of the poorest 30% of the population, the price shock created a significant negative impact on the well-being of poor Filipinos' (Balisacan et al., 2010: 3), and the government mobilised the military and the police to distribute subsidised rice to the poorest (Nadason, 2008). President Arroyo in the Philippines cited the 4Ps as instrumental in providing the most immediate relief to poor households from the global food and fuel crisis (Arroyo, 2009) and, following the crisis, the programme received an additional ₱5 billion to cover more eligible households (Balisacan et al., 2010).

Meanwhile, in Brazil, three cash transfer programmes (Bolsa Escola, Bolsa Alimentação and Auxílio Gás), which eventually merged under Bolsa Família, predated the global food and fuel crisis. They were introduced as early as 2000 to minimise negative effects experienced by the poor in the areas of education, basic food needs and cooking gas in response to another public crisis: the devaluation of the country's currency (Fenwick, 2009). When the food crisis hit in 2007, the prices of staple foods rose steeply in Brazil, affecting the purchasing power of the poorest households: 'Households at lower percentiles suffered a welfare drop of approximately 12 per cent while the households at the higher percentiles lost only around 2 per cent to 3 per cent' (Mueller and Mueller, 2015: 16). The government responded by increasing the levels of benefits via Bolsa Família. Ferreira et al. cite the Minister of Social Development at the time, who stated that the average benefit of the Bolsa Família was increased by 8% in 2008 with the stated 'objective of improving the purchasing power of low-income families during the world food crisis' (2011: 13, in Mueller and Mueller, 2015).

The impact of a food crisis, however, is long-term: global food crises occur through an interplay of short-term and long-term structural factors that continue to affect food security, even after short-term measures are deployed to counter its effects (UNCTAD, 2008). A World Food Program (2011) study showed that 44 million people were pushed into severe poverty and hunger in a one-year period between 2010 and 2011. The large-scale and long-term impact of food crises on food security made it critical for governments to be 'seen' to be responding and provided the political rationale for a pro-poor policy response.

However, in considering why politicians decided to respond to this particular food crisis by promoting a particular policy response (i.e. a cash transfer programme), the effect of political interests and the power of institutions becomes salient.

3.2 Creating and maintaining electoral popularity

3.2.1 Creating electoral support

The need for political legitimacy was significant in all three countries studied. Politicians in all countries considered cash transfers – conditional, in the case of the Philippines and Brazil, and unconditional in the case of Pakistan – to significantly strengthen their political standing and provide a route to widespread popularity.

For example, in Brazil, President Lula's electoral victory was strongly supported by Bolsa Família's success through its effective appeal to voters outside his familiar constituency (Watts, 2013). Until 2002, Lula's political base had been a comparatively wealthy population of leftist and working-class urban groups from the south and south east of the country. The declaration of the Bolsa Família as a non-partisan programme allowed Lula to reach out into the northern areas of the country where his support had traditionally been weaker (Hunter and Power, 2007). Some analysts have noted that President Lula's landslide re-election victory in 2006 was a direct impact of the Bolsa Família programme, which led a 'groundswell of support among Brazilians in the lowest categories of income and educational achievement' (ibid.: 3). Lula's political credibility was seen to lend popularity to Dilma Rousseff, the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT, 'Workers' Party') candidate in the 2014 election, who successfully rose to power after Lula's second term.

In the case of Pakistan, the new President, Asif Ali Zardari, used cash transfers to solidify a fragile position within his own political party and his political legitimacy nationwide. In December 2007, before the general elections, his party leader (and wife) Benazir Bhutto was assassinated at a public rally. This led the Pakistani Election Commission to delay elections from January 2008 to February the same year. Zardari took over leadership of the party to participate in the elections. Aware of his position as a nominal member of the Bhutto clan, Zardari realised he needed to solidify the gains accruing to him from Benazir Bhutto's political legitimacy and the sympathy of the nation in the wake of her assassination (key informant LA1). Once in power, the cash transfer programme that his government introduced was named after Benazir – even as the opposition complained that recipients of the handout would think that the payment came from Benazir and her party rather than the government (key informant INGO1). In the Philippines, President Arroyo launched the 4Ps programme to gain political favour at the end of a troubled term, rife with accusations of mismanagement and financial misconduct.

All three countries had a smattering of social protection programmes, and the cash transfer programmes discussed in this paper were by no means the first foray Brazil, Pakistan or the Philippines had made into providing some level of support. However, in all three countries, such programmes were scattered, administered by different organisations and addressed different populations with little cross-sectoral coordination.[10]

The appeal of establishing a nationwide cash transfer programme under one name and one agency, with broader coverage than that offered by any existing programmes, lay in the potential to generate widespread political support through a highly visible programme. A strong identity that emphasised a cash transfer programme's connection with a political party and one political leader in power would reap greater electoral dividends than increasing the level of resources available to existing fragmented programmes. In Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto's photograph is on the card used to access the cash transfer; in Brazil, President Lula publicly launched Fome Zero and then Bolsa Família; and in the Philippines, local politicians' campaign posters often bear the sign of the 4Ps.

Cash transfer programmes in these cases successfully established a direct link between eligible citizens and the national government, which is one of their key features (Barrientos and Hulme, 2009). As McLoughlin and Bately (2012) note in their paper on service provision, 'different types of reform attract different types of politics' (2012: 27). By giving cash transfer programmes flagship status under their jurisdiction, the governments in power at the time could take credit for the material benefits received by eligible citizens. In that sense, the political value of a service became intrinsically linked to its characteristics. For example, while roads are physical evidence of an office bearer's service to their constituency, improvements in quality of education are less evident over a short period of time. Cash as a social protection mechanism has the benefit of being a direct provision in-hand to individual eligible citizens (either directly or through ATMs).

10 In Pakistan, the Ministry of Religious Affairs had been operating the Zakat and Ushr (the 'Zakat') Programme that gives social assistance to widows, orphans and unemployed persons (excluding beggars) who identify as Muslims (Khan and Qutub, 2010); the Bait-ul-Mal Food Support Scheme, run by the Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education, which provided a biannual transfer of Rs 1,200 ($11) to those classified as in need (ADB, 2004); and the Employees' Old Age Benefit Institution Social Security Offices, which provided benefits to those engaged in the formal sector and working in businesses that have five employees and above (Rahim, 2016). In the Philippines, before the advent of the 4Ps, the country had in place a Sustainable Livelihood Programme Self-Employment Assistance Kaunlaran, which aimed to provide microcredit to poor families for starting a business (Ballesteros et al., 2015), and the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan ('Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services') community driven development programme under the DSWD, which transferred resources to the local level for improved service delivery (ADB, 2012). In Brazil, the Bolsa Escola was managed by the Ministry of Education and targeted only households that had children of school age and the Bolsa Alimentacão, managed by the Ministry of Health, which aimed to reach children up to seven years and pre- and post-natal pregnant women (Box 7).

Viewed from this perspective, cash transfer programmes – by nature of their focus on eligible populations and executive-level control – mimic patterns of clientelist voting that have traditionally led politicians in low- and middle-income countries to court favour of poorer people. This interpretation has been supported by extensive research in these settings, where poorer groups constitute a sizeable proportion of the population and pro-poor and anti-poverty policies often become a political resource for manipulating voters and buying public support (Hall, 2012; Dodlova, 2016; Thachil, 2016; Scarloto and d'Agostino, 2016).

3.2.2 Maintaining electoral support: re-branding to establish ownership

The concept of path dependency, popularised by Pierson (1994, 1996) in the social policy literature on the welfare state, helps to explain why cash transfer programmes in the three countries have survived despite electoral transfers to new incumbents from opposition political parties. Path dependency refers to the staying power of new institutions and programmes through time (even when the original circumstances have changed) because of the new paradigm and constituencies created by the very institution or programme itself.

The concept is key in explaining the inability of past presidents to change the terms of social programmes in high-income country contexts (ibid.). For example, Pierson notes that, during her tenure, then UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was unable to disassemble the National Health Service and that subsequent governments in the UK have struggled to make cuts to the programme without public outcry. Similarly, US President Ronald Reagan struggled to abolish Medicare or Social Security (ibid.). In countries such as Pakistan, the Philippines and Brazil, where governments have in the past de-funded programmes previously sponsored by outgoing administrations (key informants INGO1 and INGO2), the continuity of their cash transfer programmes could be explained by the programmes' unprecedented visibility and national reach. In all countries, it would have been electorally unpopular to remove nationwide social protection programmes once in place because of the core support they receive from a sizeable electorate.

Therefore, the same factors that lead to political popularity of cash transfers in turn appear to make dismantling the programmes difficult. Given the emphasis of the programmes on reaching eligible citizens across party lines in all three countries, the range of people who would see their benefits withdrawn would be wide. Moreover, the focus on establishing a direct link between the national government and the programme user at the grassroots level for political mileage means that if benefits are withdrawn, national-level politicians would be blamed.

Cash transfers as a pro-poor tool marked a paradigm shift from the belief that the poor bear personal responsibility for their plight to a recognition that poverty is caused by systemic factors (Hanlon et al., 2010). Withdrawing the programme would require a policy environment in which the causes of poverty are understood differently. The opportunity to introduce changes to such programmes relies on incremental efforts within the existing framework rather than any drastic changes initiated altogether (Starke, 2006).

Politicians involved in election campaigns could no longer be 'seen' to oppose the programmes. And, as retrenchment of the programmes was difficult, successive governments would have to choose improvements and expansions to stake their own claim and help to continue and maintain support for a programme. Indeed, as observed in the case of all three countries studied, candidates competing in elections after the adoption of cash transfer programmes chose to promise improvements and expansion, rather than cut backs.

In the Philippines, one candidate proposed the addition of a fifth 'P' – 'Pinalawak' – to include older citizens in poverty; meanwhile, another promised to improve the system for enrolling new eligible citizens (David, 2016). President Aquino extended the budget from ₱5.0 billion in 2009 (Fonbuena, 2009) to ₱62.3 billion in 2016 (Government of Philippines, 2014). This trend has continued and, in 2017, the Department of Budget and Management allocated ₱78.7 billion to the 4Ps under President Duterte (Cayabyab, 2016). In Pakistan, the government of Nawaz Sharif promised to cover more households and increased the budget of BISP from Rs 40 billion in 2012/2013 to Rs 115 billion in 2016/2017 with

the aim of reaching 5.6 million households by 2016/2017 compared to the 3.7 million covered by June 2013 (PK Revenue, 2016).

Similarly, in Brazil, all three candidates campaigning in the presidential elections promised to keep Bolsa Família and enhance its features – including extending its coverage and increasing the transfer. Overall, between 2004 and 2014, expenditure on Bolsa Família increased by 170% (Petrus, 2015). Although the Workers' Party maintained power in 2014 (until 2016, when Dilma Rousseff was impeached), the introduction of Bolsa Família had an impact on electoral politics for all parties concerned. Regardless of party affiliation, candidates with a high chance of winning who stood for the 2014 election promised to maintain and expand Bolsa Família as part of their mandate (Illingworth, 2015). Rousseff committed to incorporate Bolsa Família in the government's national development plans; and the Brazilian Socialist Party candidate Marina Silva declared in a campaign speech: 'We are going to keep the Bolsa Família. Do you know why? Because I was born in the Seringal Bagaço, and I know what it is to go hungry' (*Economist*, 2014).

The increase in contribution from domestic resources for the 4Ps in Philippines and Bolsa Família in Brazil[11] demonstrates the difficulty in retrenching public-sector expenditure. The earmarked space in domestic fiscal budget has implications over time:

> If it's funded from taxation, a social protection floor initiative would be guaranteed in the sense that it would be very hard to dismantle. Once it is anchored in the fiscal budget, it is easier to increase the amounts and to improve the transfer than to dismantle it. (ILO, 2016)

3.3 The power of a domestic stakeholder

3.3.1 Presidential control but decentralised implementation

The delivery of social protection programmes such as widespread cash transfer initiatives requires an actor/set of actors who can establish an arrangement for the necessary technical elements. That is, someone who can command 'the organisational ability to allocate resources effectively and the political ability to overcome the actors and historical processes that would undermine this type of activity' (Johnson and Start, 2001: 5). Policy elites, such as the office of the president, can significantly influence policy planning and implementation processes because of their access to resources and control over government institutions (Reis and Moore, 2005).

The embodiment of a pro-poor policy in a separate unit is a tactic used by governments, not only to have a prominent and visible agency associated with their work, but also to insulate reforms from the dysfunctional operation of existing bureaucracies. This view is supported by literature on the political economy of public service reform, which demonstrates that in countries where political leaders have the power to centralise political and economic rent, they can exert considerable top-down pressure on the performance of services (Watson and Khan, 2010; Kelsall, 2011; Booth, 2012). In the case study countries, the link to the office of the president was designed to: (1) show the importance assigned to the programme by the highest office in the country; and (2) separate the programme in public perception from the excessive bureaucracy and patronage politics that characterised all other government social programmes at the time (key informant interviews).

For example, both Zardari in Pakistan and Lula in Brazil chose to place BISP and Bolsa Família under direct executive control, through an executive order that formed a separate agency (Pakistan) and the establishment of an inter-ministerial committee to oversee the programme in the office of the president (Brazil). While Lula

11 BISP in Pakistan remains largely funded by international donors (key informants INGO1 and LNGO1).

moved Bolsa Família to a new ministry created under his jurisdiction, BISP continues to operate as a separate entity in Pakistan. In the case of the Philippines, the World Bank had begun a pilot in conjunction with the DSWD that was supposed to scale up slowly from 6,000 to 300,000 eligible citizens over a period of five years (key informant INGO3). President Arroyo's interest in and promotion of the programme directed government resources and capacity towards it and instead scaled it up to 1 million eligible citizens – 'triple the intended number over this time' (ibid.). In all three countries, a single agency (as well as a single policy and a single government politician) became the face of the programme for citizens, local municipalities and governments, thus reducing the number of intermediaries that controlled access to the programme.

At the same time, however, the establishment and continuing success of a nationwide programme of central origin but local implementation lies in the dispersal of political benefits. While users of the programme are aware of the national government's role in providing the cash transfer, decentralisation of administration simultaneously allows local politics to be associated with perceived government largesse and, in turn, reap the dividends of increased political credibility. As noted, parliamentarians in Pakistan were initially opposed to the move towards a proxy means-tested targeting system that would remove their discretion over who was registered to be eligible. But the promise of an expanded network that would allow a greater number of eligible citizens to be included (even if not the ones they chose) was sufficient to bring local politicians on board (Vyborny, 2017). In documenting the benefits accrued to local politicians in the Philippines' 2010 municipal elections, Labonne (2013) finds that in municipalities where all villages were covered by the 4Ps the share of the incumbent vote was 26 percentage points higher than in those municipalities where only half the villages were covered by the programme. In Brazil, the localised implementation but centralised control was significant for the Workers' Party's expansion of support in the country. Having formed in 1980, the party was relatively young and did not have access to the clientelist networks established by Brazil's older parties. But through the programme:

> Local politicians … developed their own vote-catching strategies in support of the President, capitalising on federal schemes such as Bolsa Família to strengthen the image of President Lula and the Workers' Party. (Hall, 2006: 706)[12]

3.3.2 Cross-sectoral and agency support within the country

One of the reasons that path dependency carries power is because of the emergence of a new institutional landscape in which organisations and personnel create webs of relationships that they invest in with a view to sustaining them in the future. Cash transfer programmes – particularly those that are nationwide – are institutionally complex and require coordination between several institutions (Soares and Britto, 2007). Involvement from a wide range of government agencies was needed both for the programme's implementation – its financing, monitoring and data gathering – and its evaluation.

In Pakistan, other than the BISP agency and its offices, the planning and disbursement of funds involved the Ministry of Finance, the Pakistan Post Office (temporarily), local banks and NADRA. In the case of the Philippines' CCT programme, other than the DSWD, the programme heavily involved the Department of Education, the Department of Health and the Ministry of Finance as well as local municipalities. Similarly, in Brazil, Bolsa Família's conditionalities required involvement from the Department of Budget and Management, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of

12 There is some evidence that in both Brazil and the Philippines, the imposition of conditionalities was considered successful in garnering support of the middle classes with the focus on ending intergenerational poverty and improving human capital (Adato and Basset, 2012; Pellerano and Barca 2014). However, this area needs further research, as discussed in this paper's conclusion.

Education, along with local banks and the Cadastro Único, which needed to work in tandem with the Ministry of Social Development to implement the programme.

Improvements in data collection for targeting cash transfers has now made a database of recipients for additional programmes available to other agencies within the government. For example, in Pakistan, approximately 30 federal and provincial social-sector programmes use the registry database to monitor their performance in delivering services to the poor (World Bank, 2015). Similarly, data-sharing arrangements have allowed education and health ministries in both the Philippines and Brazil to direct supply of facilities towards those identified as poorest to meet the conditionalities for the cash transfer. The formal and informal links between organisations that rely on each other for the effective implementation of the cash transfer programme means that there is a high number of stakeholders involved. Any changes to the programme will thus have an impact on more than one government agency and will need to consider the potential disruption of restructuring.

3.4 Facilitation by international donors and organisations

In the 1990s and 2000s, discourse on social protection was influenced by an international trend towards social programmes for the poorest groups who had not received the promised poverty alleviation effects of structural adjustment programmes of the previous decade (Barrientos and Hulme, 2009). International donor organisations, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, responded by developing social protection strategies. Meanwhile, poverty reduction became an explicit goal of the international development agenda through the MDGs, which were adopted by the United Nations in 2000. Consequently, low- and middle-income countries saw an increase in donor support for actions and policies that emphasised social protection. This support took the form of both financial and technical assistance, promoting knowledge exchange (via south-to-south learning) and facilitating monitoring and evaluation of programmes (which also met the need for donors to show results).

The success of earlier cash transfer programmes in Latin America in covering large swathes of the population at costs that were considered financially sustainable (e.g. Mexico's Oportunidades and Chile's Solidario) (McCord, 2010) made the mechanism popular among donors. Hanlon et al. (2010: 61) quote one experienced multilateral development practitioner, who declared cash transfer programmes to 'as close as you can come to a magic bullet'.

In the three countries studied in this paper, the World Bank played the strongest role in ideologically and practically facilitating cash transfers.[13] Clemens and Kremer (2016), among others,[14] note the central role the World Bank performed in promoting conditional transfers in 28 countries across the world:

> The Bank financially supported national programmes and vigorously promoted 6 conditional cash transfer programmes, including at international conferences convened for that purpose in Mexico in 2002, Brazil in 2004, and Turkey in 2006. The Bank's researchers also played an important role in rigorously evaluating the impact of these programmes, a factor in their rapid diffusion. (2016: 5–6)

13 In Pakistan, the World Bank funded a $60 million-technical assistance project in 2009, and in conjunction with the UK Department for International Development, has committed an allocation of £9 million until 2021 through a trust fund (World Bank, 2015). In 2013, the Asian Development Bank also approved the mobilisation of $430 million to increase BISP's outreach (ibid.). In the case of the Philippines, the World Bank approved a loan of $450 million (around ₱21 billion) in 2016 for the next four years (de Vera, 2016). In Brazil, the World Bank made a $200 million loan in 2010, following on from a $572 million loan approved in 2004 (World Bank, 2010). In recent years, the involvement of the World Bank in Bolsa Família has dropped off and the programme is now largely tax-funded (Illingworth, 2015).

14 Fiszbein and Schady. (2009); Garcia and Moore (2012); Ancelovici and Jenson (2013).

The World Bank's engagement with the results-based agenda made cash transfers an ideal programme to support because of the ease with which it lent itself to impact evaluation analysis (de Haan, 2014).

In the Philippines, the Bank was critical in promoting policy transfer by facilitating visits for Filipino high-level officials including President Arroyo to Latin American countries that had pioneered cash transfer programmes. Additionally, the World Bank had piloted a cash transfer programme in 2007 that President Arroyo later expanded near the end of her term in 2010 (key informant PGO1). In Brazil, President Lula met with World Bank officials at the start of Bolsa Família's launch to officially confirm the Bank's financial support in providing cash transfers (rather than support on programme design) (Lindert et al., 2007).

For governments, the availability of international support and funding reduced the cost of introducing cash transfer programmes. And, in turn, outlay of donor support put pressure on these countries to sustain and deliver on the programmes. To cut back on cash transfer programmes once they had started would have meant losing international sources of expertise and funding as well as international goodwill (key informant interviews). As well as providing financial and technical support, the World Bank also played a key role in maintaining the discourse around cash transfers by signalling publicly their continued ideological support for such programmes. This would have indicated to stakeholders, both international and domestic, the continued feasibility of cash transfers. Clemens and Kramer (2016) remark that, in low- and middle-income countries:

> When the Bank withdraws support from a particular government ministry, other donors often follow. This pattern gives the Bank considerable power to influence overall donor flows, and additional leverage in negotiating with client governments. (2016: 8)

4 Conclusion

The country case studies explored in this paper show four factors that made for an environment conducive to a large cash transfer programme in each country. At the structural level, the international food and fuel crisis precipitated a national economic crisis in Pakistan and the Philippines, which necessitated a quick political response to poverty. In Brazil, similarly, an economic shift in the value of the currency required political actors to be seen to cater to the negative impact of devaluation on the population.

Coupled with these structural economic conditions, political leaders in each country sought to establish political legitimacy at a time when their credibility was threatened. In all three countries, the highest political actor – the office of the President – sought to gain political ground by launching a highly visible social protection programme to make the quickest gains within a short period. The political returns of a widespread pro-poor policy response to politicians in office were significant in consolidating the voter base in each of the three countries, and, in the case of Brazil, in expanding it.

The move towards choosing cash transfers as a response to the national and global economic situation received major support from international donors and was, in part, influenced by the international development discourse that was lauding cash transfer programmes as an effective social protection mechanism. In all three countries, the World Bank played an important role in providing technical and financial assistance as the cash transfer programmes were put in place. However, without the political work done by a high-level actor such as the President, it is unlikely that the budget and institutional set-up required for roll-out of a cash transfer would have occurred as quickly as it did.

The power of discretion possessed by presidents in each country was critical to their ability to promote cash transfers as an effective poverty alleviation tool. It was also critical to their ability to negotiate political opposition and thereby continue to establish organisations that were able to implement cash transfers swiftly. The public association of the programme with the presidents and their initial (and, in some cases, continuing) attempts to house the programme separately from existing bureaucratic institutions signalled to the citizenry a real attempt at poverty alleviation. The changes in targeting mechanisms to address inclusion and exclusion errors as well as to prevent leakages through intermediaries (shifts towards proxy means testing and payments via debit cards instead of cash-in-hand) reinforced this impression. As agencies at different levels of government began to coordinate to implement the cash transfer programmes, and presidential control co-existed with decentralised implementation, this allowed both national and local-level politicians to reap mileage from association with cash deliveries.

The roll-out of the programmes saw the creation of a new institutional arrangement whereby the government discourse on poverty saw the poor as 'deserving' of cash, combined with investment in the physical infrastructure needed to build the programme, and positive reinforcement from international donors. This in turn created a policy landscape in which subsequent regimes risked losing political credibility if they considered withdrawing or slashing funding to the cash transfer programmes – a traditional method of undercutting the opposition's work.

Consequently, new political candidates vying for the office of the president found themselves in the position of having to not only keep the cash transfer programmes but to increase their ownership of it, expand it and promise improvements in the framework. Rescinding the programme would have concentrated the cost of withdrawal (unlike the benefits, which had

a non-partisan appeal) and posed a risk to the goodwill of international donors.

So, what motivated political leaders in the three countries to undertake a pro-poor cash transfer programme in the face of ostensible capacity constraints? The international support for cash transfer programmes coincided with a global food and fuel crisis that struck at the political legitimacy of presidential candidates and incumbents. It provided a critical juncture for the uptake of what was then seen as an innovative social welfare tool. That the pro-poor programmes have been sustained since then speaks to the well-documented phenomenon of path dependence, where rolling back a widespread programme for any subsequent regime would risk high political unpopularity. For in-country reformers, quickly scaling up pro-poor pilot projects that voters care about and legislative candidates directly or indirectly benefit from can be one way to embed a project.

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Appendix A

The following table provides the codes for interviews with experts who responded to requests for interviews. Names and organisations are confidential at the request of interviewees.

Interviews were conducted and followed up in person (London and Oxford, UK) and remotely (over Skype, telephone and emails) over the period from February 2017 to April 2017.

Table A1 Interviewee codes

Role	Country	Interview code
International consultant on BISP	Pakistan	INGO1
Local policy analyst on BISP	Pakistan	LNGO1
Local academic working on BISP	Pakistan[a]	LA1
International consultant evaluating 4Ps	Philippines	INGO2
Technical team involved in creating 4Ps	Philippines	INGO3
Government advisor on 4Ps	Philippines	PGO1
Former government advisor to Bolsa Família	Brazil	BGO1
Former government officer from DSWD	Brazil	BGO2

[a] *Unfortunately, members from BISP including the Chairperson were unable to meet other than in person for procedural reasons. However, the report will be sent to them for early comment and reply.*

Appendix B

Table B1 Levels of political analysis

Structural analysis	– socio-economic, political and ideological structures – country, sectoral, or issue area context – power in structure
Institutional analysis	– formal institutions – informal institutions – the power of the institutions
Stakeholder analysis	– stakeholders – interests, ideas, ideologies
Political analysis	– contingent dynamics of structure and agency – power – ideas

Box B1 Impact evaluation of BISP

- BISP has induced a net increase of Rs 187 ($1.8) in per-adult monthly consumption expenditure.
- The per-adult equivalent monthly food consumption increased by Rs 69 ($0.6) driven by high quality protein.
- There was a reduction in the proportion of stunted girls and a decrease in malnutrition among girls.
- There was a 7% drop in poverty when using the country's food energy intake poverty line and a 3% decline in the poverty gap according to the Cost of Basic Needs poverty line among the households of eligible citizens.
- The proportion of eligible households who were characterised as multidimensionally poor in 2013 was 31% whereas in 2016 the figure went down to 23%.
- BISP brought 5.4 million women voters onto the electoral list by providing them with national identity cards.

Source: Cheema et al. (2016).

Box B2 Impact evaluation of the 4Ps

The programme has achieved:

- higher rates of school enrolment among children 3–11 years of age in eligible households (by 10 percentage points for 3–5 year olds and by 4.5 percentage points for 6–11 year olds), compared to poor households who did not receive the programme
- a 10-percentage point reduction in severe stunting among poor children 6-36 months of age
- an increase in healthcare-seeking behaviour among eligible citizens when their children become ill.

Source: Chaudhury et al. (2013).

Box B3 Impact evaluation of Bolsa Família

- The programme was successful in reaching the poorest in Brazil: approximately 20% of programme users are based in the Amazon – a historically poor area with a concentration of indigenous populations – with plans to include more people from the area into the programme in the future (Hall, 2012).
- Among girls, the programme significantly increased school participation (by 8 percentage points) and grade progression (by 10 percentage points) though the effect is mostly concentrated in urban areas (de Brauw et al., 2015).
- The programme increased women's decision-making power regarding contraception and in areas related to children's school attendance and health expenses (de Brauw et al., 2014).
- The programme has also made headway in eligible citizens' utilisation of healthcare services – especially for services linked to conditionalities such as children's visits to health centres for vaccination, growth monitoring and check-ups (Shei et al., 2014).

Source: Chaudhury et al. (2013).

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