

OSTROM WORKSHOP RESEARCH SERIES

Kirk Harris

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“Kenya’s Constituency Development Fund and the Politics of Resource Allocation”

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park



Why do politicians in ethnically diverse polities target co-ethnics with patronage resources? I argue that in settings of ethnic diversity, leaders are most likely to target co-ethnics when they have both the ability and the political incentive to do so. Ethnicity itself must be a salient political cleavage for politicians to exploit, and politicians must possess a means for directing this patronage at desired clients. Kenya’s Constituency Development Fund (CDF) provides an ideal setting in which to examine the strategic allocation of patronage resources. Using both survey data and in-depth qualitative interviews with local stakeholders, I compare three ethnically diverse constituencies, looking at how the salience of ethnic divisions and the settlement patterns of ethnic groups impact the strategic use of the Fund by politicians.



Kirk Harris is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at Indiana University. His dissertation focuses on how the political salience of ethnicity impacts accountability linkages between citizens and politicians in recent democracies in the developing world, as applied to a study of Kenya’s Constituency Development Fund (CDF). Prior to graduate school, Kirk worked for humanitarian relief, development, and peacebuilding organizations in Nairobi, Kenya, New York City, and Khartoum, Sudan ([website](#)).

Presentations are open to the public (see our website for papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon (sturgeon@iu.edu; 812/855-3151).