

REPATS

Revista de Estudos e Pesquisas Avançadas
no Terceiro Setor



Universidade
Católica de Brasília



NEPATS

BOLSA FAMÍLIA AND BRAZIL: A NON-SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

**BOLSA FAMÍLIA E BRASIL: UMA REVISÃO NÃO SISTEMÁTICA DA
LITERATURA**

James A. P. Tiburcio*

ABSTRACT: This paper provides a synthesis of some of the current evidence on the outcomes of Brazil's Bolsa Família program in uprooting the poorest of the poor from extreme poverty and breaking intergenerational transmission of poverty. The literature was reviewed in an effort to provide some clarity on the ongoing debate regarding what Bolsa Família truly is, what it has achieved and the way forward. A review of the literature shows a clear need to better understand results achieved, elucidate false premises and point the way ahead. The synthesis revolves around three main sections: i) what Bolsa Família is; ii) the present situation, that is, what it has achieved this far; and iii) six false assumptions regarding the program that have been largely refuted by recent research. I close the paper with the main ideas regarding the future of the public policy and a brief conclusion.

Keywords: Bolsa Família; Non-systematic literature review; Poverty; Food security; Poorest of the poor

RESUMO: Este documento fornece uma síntese de algumas das evidências atuais sobre os resultados do programa Bolsa Família brasileiro na erradicação dos mais pobres dos pobres da pobreza extrema e da quebra da transmissão intergeracional da pobreza. A literatura foi revisada em um esforço para fornecer alguma clareza sobre o debate em curso sobre o que o Bolsa Família realmente é, o que alcançou e o caminho a seguir. Uma revisão da literatura mostra uma clara necessidade de entender melhor os resultados, elucidar falsas premissas e apontar o caminho a seguir. A síntese gira em torno de três seções principais: i) o que é o Bolsa Família; ii) a situação atual, isto é, o que alcançou até agora; e iii) seis pressupostos falsos sobre o programa que foram amplamente refutados por pesquisas recentes. Fecho o papel com as principais idéias sobre o futuro da política pública e uma breve conclusão.

Palavras-chave: Bolsa Família; Revisão não sistemática da literatura; Pobreza; Segurança alimentar; Mais pobre dos pobres

* Department of Public Policy and Governance, Azim Premji University. Bangalore, India. **E-mail:** james.tib@gmail.com



1. Introduction

This paper analyses Bolsa Família, Brazil's largest conditional cash transfer program. Since the 1988 Constitution, successive Brazilian governments have introduced social programs based on cash transfers designed to reduce extreme poverty, and thus, food insecurity. Those policies have been targeting the poorest of the poor, population groups which were largely under the radar. Much lively debate regarding policy implications has taken place, from the appropriateness of conditional cash transfers (CCTs)¹ and universal non-conditioned transfers (extreme poverty-ending cash transfers - EPECTs), to their long-term efficacy. Bolsa Família is probably the most researched and published conditional cash transfer (CCT) program ever, and in international social science circles, it is almost inevitable to mention Bolsa Família when discussing Brazil.

It certainly has become part of the country's social evolution as it pushes its planetary boundaries and learns to better use governance mechanisms in its struggle to eradicate extreme poverty and adapt to the age of anthropogenic climate change. Has the adoption of a cash transfer program with behavioral obligations such as Bolsa Família been helping Brazil address intergenerational transmission of poverty? Has it contributed to improvements in human capital outcomes? Current research seems to firmly suggest that the program is making a difference to the countries' poorest quartile and it has much potential to continue doing so as best practices, lessons learnt, and institutional evolution and learning is incorporated into norms and practices. At the same time, Bolsa Família cannot be taken as an end in itself, rather it is a firm stepping stone to sustainable development that starts with a sustainable economy.

¹ "Cash transfers are direct, regular and predictable non-contributory cash payments that help poor and vulnerable households to raise and smooth incomes." Conway and Greenslade, 2011, p. 1.



This paper is organized in 3 main sections. The first is a description of Bolsa Família as a public policy and as a network that acts as public policy agent. It also synthesizes the 'implicit' theory of change behind Bolsa Família. The second section presents the current stage of the program and its main achievements. The third section deals with six (false) assumptions regarding the program that have been largely refuted by recent research, namely, (1) Bolsa Família discourages job hunting by beneficiaries; (2) Bolsa Família leads to higher crime rates; (3) Bolsa Família has no impact on educational outcomes; (4) Bolsa Família beneficiaries have more children in order to receive more cash; (5) Bolsa Família is very expensive and diverts funds from growth-related policies; and (6) Bolsa Família is a populist and clientelistic program that undermines democracy in Brazil. The paper ends with some considerations regarding how Bolsa Família can adapt and evolve with present and future needs, and some brief conclusions.

2. Why Bolsa Família? The First Sustainable Development Goal

Ending extreme poverty and subsequently hunger is certainly one of the most urgent and pressing issues that without doubt pushes our planetary boundaries and governance mechanisms as we transition towards the Anthropocene. Most of the poorest of the poor today, 625.136.300 million, live in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, in Nigeria, 82 million, and in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 59 million. However, some 100 million are in India, 17 million in Indonesia, and 9 million in Brazil (World Data Lab, 2018).

The first Sustainable Development Goal, supported by all countries, is to eliminate extreme poverty by 2030. Much has been achieved since 2000, as the global poverty rate has been halved, to something around 8% of the world population (United Nations, 2017, p. 2). Part of the credit for this considerable achievement is given to conditional cash transfers and extreme poverty-ending cash transfers



(EPECTs, or, Unconditional Cash Transfers – UCTs), which are instrumental for ending poverty and hunger. Bolsa Família –where eligible poor households receive an income based on their commitment and adherence to the program’s conditionality components (which in a rather officious manner, pre-determines a course of action and rewards the same) is the considered the most successful case.

The decentralization brought about by the 1988 Constitution, which made municipalities into federal entities, the idea of associating primary school education to a guaranteed cash transfer, low-cost debit card coverage and acceptance and reach of the Brazilian banking system all came together in the early 2000s. Bolsa Família was conceptually birthed in the 1988 Constitution of Brazil, evolving from the Bolsa Escola Program (school allowance program), that was initiated by then-governor of the Federal District Cristovam Buarque in 1995, which encouraged school attendance through a conditional cash transfer. Subject to other terms and conditions, families that had children between the ages of 7 and 14 enrolled in government schools in the Federal District were entitled to a minimum wage.

The idea was copied and experimented with by a few municipalities, and later adopted by the federal government of the then-president, Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 2001. When Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva became president in 2003, his government unified a number of federal programs, among them the Cartão Alimentação (Food Card), Auxílio Gás (LPG Subsidy) and Bolsa Escola (School Allowance) into the new Bolsa Família,² under his administration’s flagship umbrella initiative Fome Zero (zero hunger) program (Lindert et al., 2007, p. 14). Fome Zero was the overarching government super program aiming at eradicating extreme poverty and hunger in Brazil, that congregated more than 60 programs in different

² A complete list of the programs: the National Minimum Income Program linked to Education - Bolsa Escola (Law nº 10.219, of April 11, 2001 - Fernando Henrique Cardoso Government); the Single Registration of the Federal Government (Decree 3.877, dated July 24, 2001 - Fernando Henrique Cardoso Government); the National Minimum Income Program linked to Health - Food Allowance (Provisional Measure No. 2.206-1, dated September 6, 2001 - Fernando Henrique Cardoso Government); Gas Subsidy Program (Decree nº 4.102, of January 24, 2002 - Fernando Henrique Cardoso Government); and, the National Food Access Program - Zero Hunger (Law No. 10,689, of June 13, 2003 - Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva Government).



ministries on a multi-pronged effort against poverty (Lindert et al., 2007; Ansell, 2014; Tiburcio, 2015).

A consensus arose among public entities, activists, non-governmental organizations and representatives of private interest groups on the principles for social policy in Brazil. First, the federated entities, the Union, the states, the federal district and municipal governments were to have shared responsibility in the fight against extreme poverty and social inequalities (Linder, 2012). Second, the 1988 Constitution's decentralization principles allowed the federated entities to cooperate in the implementation of programs and in the creation and maintenance of structures around programs, such as the Unified Registry (Cadastro Único), promoting co-responsibility and ownership of processes on different levels. Third, a holistic approach that encouraged a multi-sector attack on poverty, encompassing coordinated programs in education, healthcare and social assistance, that would not only deal with food and nutrition security, but combat the roots of intergenerational poverty. Fourth, allow those trapped in extreme poverty to break free and enjoy social goods and services, in other words, social inclusion at its most basic level.

3. What is the theory of change behind Bolsa Família?

The 'Theory of Change' (ToC) of Bolsa Família is not clearly stated in any official document or law, but its programmatic documents state that the target population is imprisoned in a poverty cycle mostly due to a low level of human capital accumulation. That poverty cycle can be broken with changes in human behavior that lead to greater human capital accumulation, incentivized by direct and indirect investment in health and education, especially of the younger generations (Paiva et al., 2016). Through a better understanding of the mechanisms and pathways of social protection and cash transfers on poverty reduction and development, with conditionalities acting on the outcomes of human capital, improvements would follow and stimulate resilience through impacts on behavior (Bastagli, 2009).



The disentanglement of how conditional cash transfer program conditionalities work within the framework of a theory of change is challenging and potentially rewarding as it gives policy-makers the means to make informed decisions on the usage of conditional cash transfers and/ or (unconditional) extreme poverty-ending cash transfers (EPECTs). Such knowledge makes possible informed decisions on the choice of CCTs, and on the introduction and monitoring of conditionalities (Paiva et al., 2016).³

Browne (2013), summarizes the main theories available in literature regarding theories of change for cash transfers, adopting a conceptually stretched definition of ToCs so as to include “pathways, causal relationships, and underlying assumptions about how change happens [,]” (Browne, 2013, p. 1), as shown in Table 1. The more in-depth and articulated theories of change are mostly academic exercises, hypothetical and retrospective.

In general, the majority assume a holistic approach with macro to micro levels and contextual factors. There are two main branches: the first one is the human capital investment and productive assets theory, and the second one, is the vulnerability / risk reduction approach. At the heart of cash transfer programs such as Bolsa Família, are the conditionalities, that within its implicit theory of change, incentivize beneficiaries to invest in mid- to long-term human capital accumulation. These conditionalities simultaneously stretch the poor’s decision-making horizons as they undercut their ‘short-term coping decisions’ (Browne, 2013, p. 2; Bastagli, 2009).

Growth is another way cash transfers impact the economy at large, and as the added income lifts restrictions on families’ productive capacity, it also enables access to credit, consequently, more security and guarantee in consumption, lowers

³ The conditionalities conundrum persists, as singling out outcomes beyond the income effect is problematic. Paiva et al., (2006), affirm that “[i]t seems clear that no particular study or methodology will give a definite answer to the question of whether conditionalities do have an effect beyond the income effect. Rather, a conclusion should emerge from a large number of different studies, adopting different methodologies”. Paiva et al., 2006, p. 19.



costs, and it impacts families' decision-making in general. Cash transfers are also expected to influence (1) human capital, (2) material and financial asset accumulation, (3) local and community economies, (4) and the labour markets (Browne, 2013; Asfaw et al., 2015).

Some theories of change are also grounded on social justice to promote holistic socially inclusive policy, owing to the premise that there must be transformative social protection that deals with the foundations of society, that is, its social institutions, laws and norms. These theories of change envision much more than either poverty reduction or food security, they also aim to bring about societal change (Jones and Shahrokh, 2013; Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2007).



Table 1: Theories of change for cash transfers

<u>Holistic approach</u>	theories of change <u>Vulnerability/risk reduction</u>	human capital investment and <u>productive assets theory</u>	Conditions	Growth
			improve human capital outcomes and promote resilience through impacts on behaviour.	Transfers improve human capital and productive capacity, which leads to economic growth - Lifting restrictions on household productive capacity, - facilitating access to credit, providing more certainty and security in consumption, and helping overcome cost restrictions, which can influence household decision-making.
CTs can play a transformative social role as well as reduce poverty (little evidence to support this)			Evidence base points towards positive impacts on human capital outcomes through improved resilience.	
Strong conceptual support for this idea.			They incentivise investment in mid- to long-term human capital accumulation.	
Health and Nutrition				
Bailey and Hedlund, 2012: CTs can immediately improve household food intake and quality, and free up carers' time by reducing the need for income.	Gaarder, Glassman, and Todd (2010): 9 assumptions, e.g.: CCT interventions lead to an increase in the use of preventive health services among the poor who are currently under-utilising these. 2. An increase in utilisation of healthcare services will improve health status, and in particular an increase in public health services will have this effect. 3. Cash affects health primarily by ensuring service utilisation and improved food consumption.		Glassman, Duran and Koblinsky, 2013: Income effect: Household income increases and/or share of income that women control increases, thus there is more disposable income to spend on health. Conditioning cash specifically on the usage of maternal health services. Removal of costs associated with service utilization via subsidies for defined health benefit plans that include maternal care. Knowledge effects resulting from health or nutrition training/talks, especially in Latin American programs.	



Social Justice

Jones and Shahrokh, 2013; Devereux and Sabates and Wheeler, 2004: social protection must engage with structural influences, including fiscal space, the labour market structure, the care economy, social institutions, and international laws and norms.

Institutional dynamics, especially of the state, include budgetary constraints, political decisions on spending, decentralisation, state-citizen relations, and monitoring and evaluation - Jones and Shahrokh, 2013

Nutrition outcomes

Leroy, Ruel, and Verhofstadt (2009): cash increases income, which allows purchase of better quality food, leading to increased food security and diet quality. distribution of cash to women may directly increase women's control over resources, empowerment and decision-making power. The condition to receive nutrition education may change household preferences to nutrient-rich food, better hygiene and sanitation practices, and improved feeding and caregiving practices through raising women's knowledge and awareness. Fortified products may directly increase nutritional status. On the right, the condition of receiving health visits may increase overall use of health services, depending on contextual factors such as quality and distance of health services. The final education pathway can provide a long-term positive effect on child nutrition.

Education

Baird, Ferreira, Özler, and Woolcock (2012): UCTs, CCTs and supply/quality of education all constitute educational inputs. CTs affect the demand for schooling, but UCTs do this only by raising incomes, and CCTs do so through raising incomes and lowering the opportunity cost (price) of schooling. CTs impact on intermediate outcomes, and over time, on final outcomes. CTs may increase households' ability to demand more from education providers.

State-Society Relations

HelpAge International (2011): tool to increase state legitimacy and support and to strengthen state institutions; tackling some of causes of fragility and strengthening the state-citizen relationship; Social Protection Rights component. Jones and Shahrokh, 2013: transformative social protection role in rebuilding trust in public institutions - supporting the state-citizen social contract. See, also McConnell, 2010.

Source: Browne, 2013. Prepared by the author.



4. What is Bolsa Família?

Bolsa Família is a tax payer program funded through the National Treasury of the Federal Government of Brazil, or the Union, as it is also known. The National Treasury of Brazil is a secretariat under the Ministry of Finance through which a series of bureaucratic channels directs the budgeted amounts to the operating agent, the Caixa Econômica Federal (the Federal Savings Bank – a 100% government-owned financial institution). Caixa is paid for managing the cash transfers and the Unified Registry (Cadastro Único) and, on national level, the National Citizenship Secretariat (Senarc), a department of the Ministry of Social Development (MDS) is in charge of the implementation of the National Citizenship Income Policy (Política Nacional de Renda e Cidadania), which includes Bolsa Família, making the link between public policies and income building programs for the Federal District and municipalities (MDS, 2015).⁴

The main objective of the Bolsa Família Program (BFP) is to overcome the reproductive poverty cycle, that is, intergenerational poverty cycles, in Brazilian families by (1) promoting present and on-going relief by infusing cash into the covered families' budget; (2) strengthening families' fulfilment of basic social rights, specifically in education, healthcare and social assistance by demanding from them the satisfaction of the conditionality clauses present in the cash transfer mechanism; and, promoting opportunities for households through the actions which aim at overcoming beneficiaries' vulnerability and poverty (World Without Poverty, 2017).

⁴ Caixa Econômica Federal's role is central to Bolsa Família's operation as it is not just an operator and paying agent, but also its main data processor. The state bank receives Cadastro Único's data, collected by the 5,570 municipalities in the 26 federated states and Federal District, creates bank accounts based on the registry, calculates the cash transfer amount per household according to criteria established by Senarc, issues automated teller machine (ATM) magnetic cards to beneficiaries, and ultimately makes monthly payments. Such a prominent role limits some of the discretionary powers of municipal and federal managers, obviously within its administrative limits and under Senarc's established criteria (Soares and Satyro, 2009).



The targeted population are households living in extreme poverty and households in moderate poverty with children. Families in poverty are defined as having a per capita income between R\$ 85.01 and R\$ 170.00, and extreme poverty – families with income at or below R\$ 85 per person, with children from 0 to 17 years old that are enrolled in the Cadastro Único – the Unified Registry for Social Programs of the Federal Government of Brazil.⁵

There are conditions to be met by households in the areas of education, healthcare and social assistance. In education, children and adolescents between the ages of 6 to 15, need to have a minimum monthly attendance of 85%, while youth aged 16 to 17 years, have to meet a 75% minimum attendance requirement. In healthcare, families must follow through the national vaccination program and monitor the growth of children under seven. Women between the ages of 14 and 44 who are pregnant, or nursing must undergo pre-natal care and monitor their child/ren's health through the Basic Health Units (UBS) of the Brazilian Unified National Health System (SUS).

As of June 2017, 13.2 million Brazilian families are registered and participating in BFP in all of the 5,750 Brazilian municipalities. That is, 1 in every 4 Brazilians is included in the program, some 45.8 million beneficiaries. The distribution is far from uniform, with most beneficiaries congregated in the poorest regions, namely the northeastern region. Some half million families have received the benefit since the implementation of the program in October 2003 (see Chart 1), most of those reside in the wide strip between the north of the state of Minas Gerais and the capital of the state of Pará, Belém.

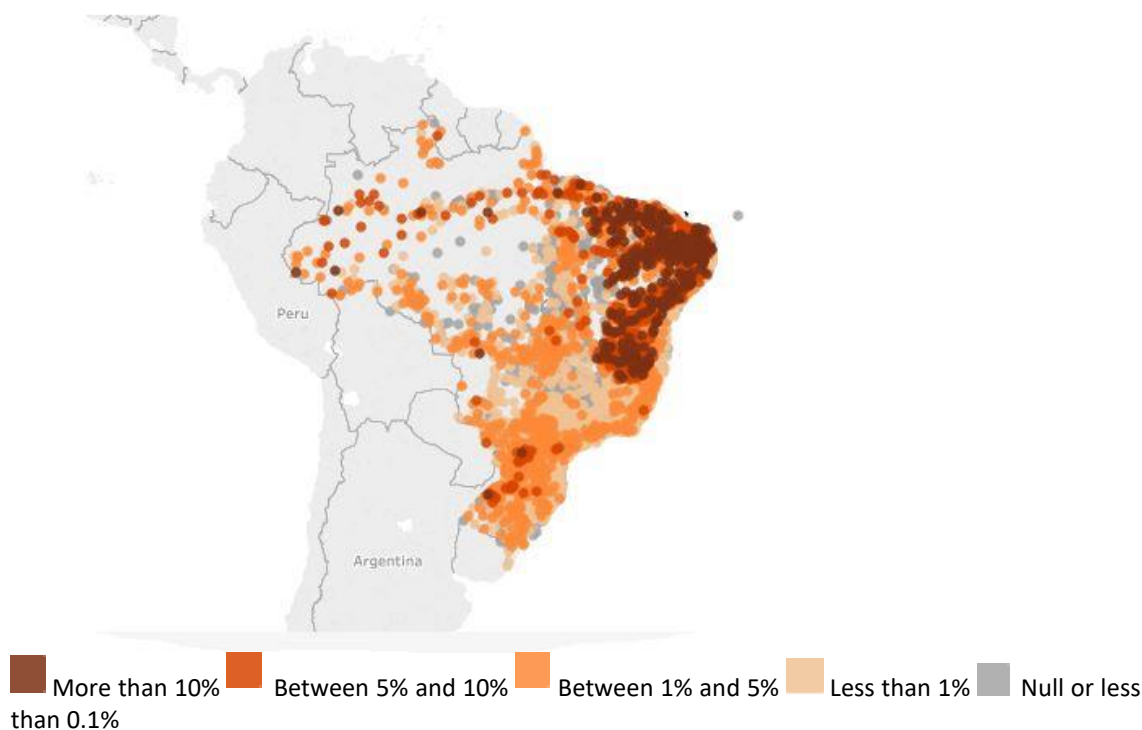
Bolsa Família payments correspond to about 10% of beneficiaries' monthly income (Bastagli, 2008). Payments are made for as long as the household fulfils the eligibility criteria. The absence of a time limit for participation is balanced by a

⁵ “R\$” is the notation for the Brazilian currency, the ‘Real’, BRL. As of March 2018, it was valued at USD1 = BRL3,30.



recertification or reassessment process in which beneficiaries' information is re-evaluated and verified. In Brazil, recertification of beneficiary records takes place every 2 years. Failure to respond positively to conditionality clauses, leads to verification mechanisms being activated such as additional support and person-to-person assistance from local authorities in the municipal level. Only after five consecutive monitoring cycles of non-compliance do authorities consider suspension and eventual cancellation of benefits. In 2015, of the nearly 14 million families served by the Bolsa Família program, 522 thousand had been receiving the benefit since October 2003 (MDS, 2015). See the evolution of the program and the map with the distribution of these families benefited by the program since its inception in Figures 1 to 4:

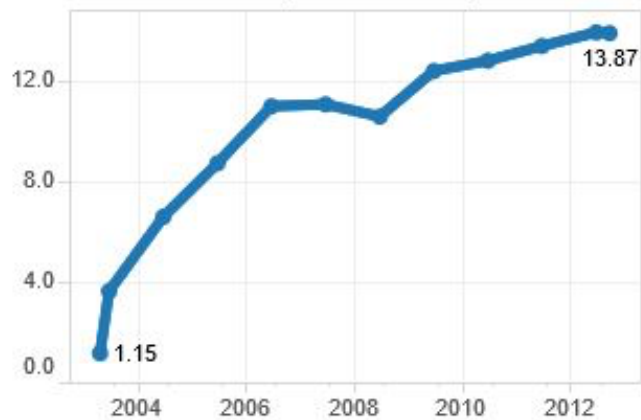
Figure 1: Map of the concentration of uninterrupted Bolsa Família Beneficiaries since October 2003



Source: Daniel Lima – Infograph. O Globo. Mapa: concentração de beneficiários desde outubro de 2003. Available at: <http://infograficos.oglobo.globo.com/pais/a-evolucao-do-bolsa-familia.html>

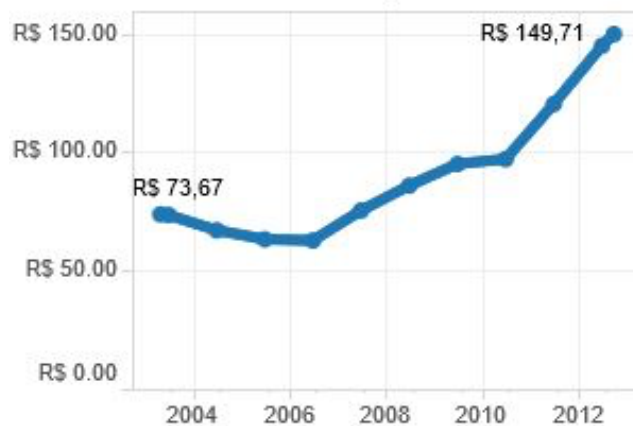


Figure 2: Participating families (in millions)



Source: Daniel Lima – Infograph. O Globo.
Available at:
<http://infograficos.oglobo.globo.com/pais/a-evolucao-do-bolsa-familia.html>

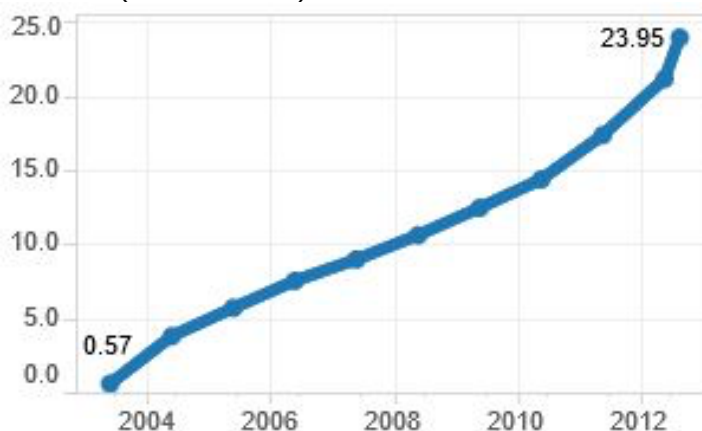
Figure 3: Average amount received per family



Source: Daniel Lima – Infograph.
Available at:
<http://infograficos.oglobo.globo.com/pais/a-evolucao-do-bolsa-familia.html>



Figure 4: Total Government expense with Bolsa Família (in billion BRL)



Source: Daniel Lima – Infograph.

Available at:

<http://infograficos.oglobo.globo.com/pais/a-evolucao-do-bolsa-familia.html>

5. The present situation – what has it achieved this far?

Since the early 2000s, much progress has been made towards the reduction of extreme poverty, only in Brazil, around 40 million, entered the lower middle classes, defeating one of the most socially exclusive and unequal economic playing field in the world. As the per capita household income grew 27 percent, the percentage of Brazilians in extreme poverty dropped from 22 to 11 percent. And despite the continued struggle of these same 40 million not to slip back into poverty, the Gini coefficient of per capita household income fell by 10 percent. The never-ending corruption scandals and the economic downturn brought about by the end of the commodity boom still haunt the country and threaten the achievements of the last two decades. In this context, Bolsa Família can be credited with significant inroads in the fight against extreme poverty, but it must be considered against the larger backdrop of economic growth and resulting labor markets (Barrientos et al, 2016; Tepperman, 2016).



6. Bolsa Família and Food Security

Many studies show that Bolsa Família delivers on Food Security. Nascimento et al (2017) affirm that the program has a positive impact on food access and general standards of living, and even on the development of healthy credit practices. Nonetheless, a correlation between Bolsa Família and improved food and nutrition security is not a straight forward one. For example, Martins et al. (2013), conducted a systematic review of literature of all original, non-duplicated studies, including clinical trials, observational studies and peer-reviewed papers catalogued in terms of results (nutritional status, dietary intake and food security) and level of evidence to conditional cash transfer programs association (adequacy or plausibility) (Martins et al., 2013). Out of a universe of 1,412 non-duplicated studies, only 15 met the eligibility criteria and of those, 12 evaluated Bolsa Família: all studies indicated the positive impact of conditional cash transfer programs (CCTPs).

More specifically, five plausibility studies and two adequacy analyses gave evidence to a positive influence of CCTPs on the nutritional status of children benefitted by the programs. A population-based adequacy study and 3 cross-sectional plausibility analyses indicated that CCTPs participants have higher food intake than non-participants (Martins et al., 2013). Their evidence, however, is somewhat weak, especially in terms of their sampling strategies, study design and data analysis, flaws that thwart more robust evaluations of Bolsa Família's impact on food and nutrition security (Martins et al., 2013).

7. Bolsa Família and general living standards – anecdotal qualitative evidence

Testa et al (2013), analyzed nine attributes connected to ways Bolsa Família's beneficiaries are expected to be impacted by the program's cash transfers and



conditionalities: education, family relations, food security, housing, leisure, risk (including violence), sociability, and work, based on Amartya Sen's 'Freedom from Want' concept (Sen, 2002). Using qualitative and quantitative surveys, the researchers evaluated beneficiaries and social workers impressions on how Bolsa Família was affecting their lives. They interviewed three social workers from two different Social Assistance Reference Centers (Cras), four Bolsa Família beneficiary families and collected quantitative data through structured questionnaires from 103 households in the southern Brazilian city of Porto Alegre.

In the Testa et al. (2013) study, to 90.3% of respondents, the general situation of their family improved with Bolsa Família. Education, or more precisely, school attendance, was perceived by social workers as the most relevant to beneficiary households in terms of behavioral change. The social workers' perception is supported by the families' survey responses, as 76.7% of households indicated an improvement in their children's school attendance, and none of them indicated a worsening compared to life before BF.

In what concerns health related changes, Bolsa Família only requires families to have children checked for their weight/height and keep their vaccination cards up-to-date (WWP, 2017). However, social workers interviewed highlighted the need to have families' mental health monitored and the need for therapeutic follow-up. For them, the mental health situation is a complicating factor to beneficiaries' lives, and consequently, to family organization and income generation. Extreme poverty often triggers extreme suffering, particularly in children,⁶ and the most vulnerable are the most at risk of not fulfilling the program's conditionalities and of going under the radar of the very program that is designed to specifically target them.⁷ Mental health issues

⁶ See, for example, Richter (2003).

⁷ Interestingly, the authors mention a response in which a woman claims that BF improved her life because she no longer suffers with back pain. Before, she used to have to go out to collect water with a bucket and carry it home on her head. When she started receiving the benefit, she was able to buy (certainly, on instalments) the necessary water pipes to install running water in her house, so she does not need to carry water on her head any longer; and on top of that, she bought a proper mattress. Testa et al, 2013, p. 1532.



are augmented and part of a down-spiral driver linked to the presence of family members demanding special care and multiple cases of substance abuse – alcohol and/ or drugs (Testa et al., 2013, p. 1532).

The families, however, also testified to the fact that despite their situation of poverty, they were able to administer their income and direct it to their highest priority of the moment they were going through. The cash was used according to their perceived needs and not according to what government program officials thought, such as it used to be the case when they used to receive gas, milk or food coupons. Food security was the highest scorer in the survey, 88.3% of respondents pointed that their food situation had improved since they started receiving the cash benefit. Social workers also mentioned the improvements, which reflected on the households' general health, and specifically of that of the children (Testa et al., 2013).

A more recent study by Martins and Monteiro (2016), designed “to assess the impact of the Bolsa Família Program on food purchases of low-income households in Brazil”, found that households included in the program enjoyed higher food expenditure, fresh food and culinary ingredients availability, including produce associated with a diet of better quality and diversity (Martins and Monteiro, 2016).

Work and income is, according to the survey, the aspect that Bolsa Família has the lowest impact. Close to 60% of respondents answered that their work situation has not improved since starting to receive the benefit. Notwithstanding the high proportion of negative responses, 29.1% responded that their work and income situation had improved. Among the respondents, 40% of those who have job are in the informal economy, that is, workers that are not formally employed and, therefore, are not protected by Brazil's labor laws. In the narratives presented by the researchers, there is much emphasis on the desire of respondents to be employed and not to depend on government programs. A clear indication that they are aware of the criticisms emanating mainly from urban middle-classes and some political



leaderships that regard Bolsa Família beneficiaries as lazy and “enslaved” to the program.⁸

On the supply side, Tavares (2009), investigates the possibility of a BF adverse incentive in relation to labor supply in terms of market participation and work hours in mothers included in the program. Tavares used a propensity-score matching technique as a tool to compare beneficiary mothers to non-beneficiary ones in three control groups. On one hand, she finds an incidence of a “wealth effect” correlated to the benefit amount, i.e., the larger the benefit received by a mother in the sample, the less active she is likely to be in the labor market. On the other hand, her evidence suggests a positive net effect in being a program beneficiary mother as there is a substitution effect probably as a result of three factors: (1) a decrease in children’s labor supply, (2) an increase in the mother’s time availability, and (3) self-imposed or third-party stigma attached to program participants (Tavares, 2009, p. 629).

8. Breaking the intergenerational poverty ‘curse’

The adoption of a cash transfer program with behavioral obligations such as Bolsa Família is, according to its implicit theory of change, a tool for Brazil to defeat intergenerational transmission of poverty. Bolsa Família’s mechanism to break intergenerational transmission of poverty is attached to the enforcement of its conditionality terms for health and education as the cash transfer itself deals with short term, immediate poverty (Paiva et al, 2016).

In terms of poverty and correlated indicators, in general, a large number of studies give quantitative and qualitative evidence that BF seems to be working. For

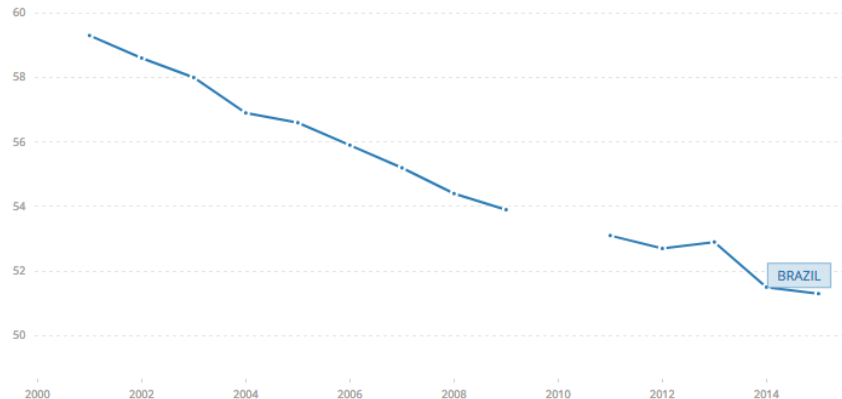
⁸ In January 2018, the president of the Brazilian House of Representatives, Rodrigo Maia, voiced a common criticism against the program, stating that Bolsa Família enslaved its beneficiaries, in his words, “[c]reating a program to enslave people is not a good social program. A good program includes the person and gives her conditions to insert herself back into society, and with her own legs, be able to get a job.” (Carazzai, 2018).



example, Soares et al. (2007), note that cash transfer programs have progressive impact on total income distribution, and, consequently influence variables in ways that lead to inequality reduction. As Brazil is a middle-income country, changes in levels of poverty are more influenced by changes in inequality than changes in average income (Soares et al., 2007, p. 4). Therefore, one should look for changes in inequality indicators rather than average income to find evidence of Bolsa Família's impact on poverty in general and its transference across different generations.

On a different paper, the same lead researcher notes that the Gini index for Brazil fell 4.7 per cent from 1995 to 2004, and that 21 per cent of this change was on account of BF (Soares et al., 2006). As can be seen in Figure 5, despite a setback in 2013, the Gini index for Brazil has been steadily falling, an unassessed percentage might be attributed to BF.

Figure 5: Gini Index for Brazil (World Bank estimate)



Source: World Bank.

Available at:

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?end=2015&locations=BR&start=2000>. Accessed: 25 February 2018.

Silveira Neto and Azzoni (2012), highlight the role of spatially blind social programs in the context of Brazil's highly unequal income distribution between



regions. The authors aggregated personal income micro data at state level, identified nine different income sources and evaluated the weight each of them had on regional inequality indicators. The strengthening of deconcentrating market-related income activities in manufacturing and services is the most significant driver in inequality reduction for the period analyzed by the authors. Bolsa Família and other social programs are responsible for 24% of inequality reduction (Silveira Neto; Azzoni, 2012). Working against inequality reduction are labor income in agriculture, retirement and pension payments, real estate rents and other (Silveira Neto; Azzoni, 2012). The pleasant surprise is that, although BF is a spatially blind social program, it has had such an overall positive impact on regional concentration.

Goés and Karpowicz (2017), using a panel regression framework, suggest that BF directly played a positive role, as growth in income, formalization of labor relations and improved schooling were factors in the decline of inequality between 2004 and 2014. They corroborate Silveira Neto and Azzoni 2012 findings, as wages and salaries remain the most significant source of income to the poorest of the poor. Studying the evolution and drivers of income inequality in Brazil, they found that the continuing recession – that stagnated the Brazilian economy between 2014-2015, continued in 2016 and showed signs of waning in 2017, – reclaimed some of the equality gains of the previous 3 to 4 years. Job destruction and high inflation contributed to the creation of a new group, the ‘new poor’: young, skilled workers who used to be employed in the service sector that now make up the majority of those who lost their jobs and fell below the poverty line, victims of the most recent economic crisis (Goes; Karpowicz, 2017, p. 11).

9. Six fake news regarding Bolsa Família

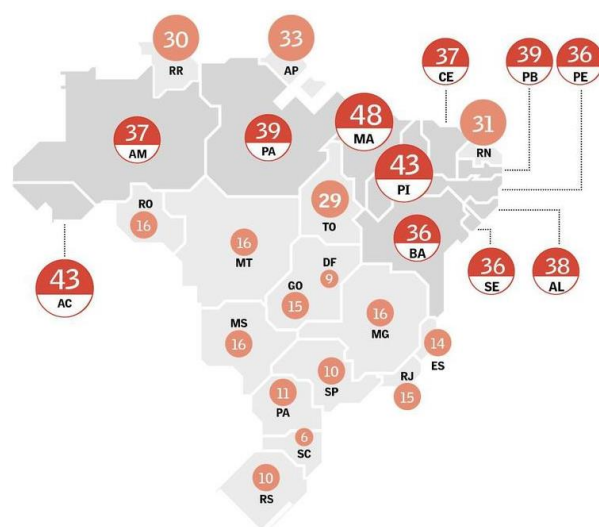
By 2012, Bolsa Família benefited 13.9 million households, which at the time corresponded to the total eligible families estimated by the 2010 Brazilian



Demographic Census. Since then, the program most probably peaked in 2017, covering some 56 million Brazilians divided in 14 million households, that is, around a quarter of the country's population (MDS, 2018). Bolsa Família beneficiaries are more than a third of the population in 11 Brazilian states (Marchesini, 2018), as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Destination of resources – beneficiaries' participation in the total state population, in %

80



Source: Valor Econômico; Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social (MDS);. Available at: <http://www.valor.com.br/brasil/5306087/beneficios-do-bolsa-familia-sustentam-21-da-populacao-do-pais>: Last accessed 18 February 2018.

Probably because of this widespread coverage, a number of urban (and rural) myths plague Bolsa Família, despite mounting evidence to the contrary, namely, (1) Bolsa Família discourages job hunting by beneficiaries; (2) Bolsa Família leads to higher crime rates; (3) Bolsa Família has no impact on educational outcomes; (4) Bolsa Família beneficiaries have more children in order to receive more cash; (5) Bolsa Família is very expensive and diverts funds from growth-related policies; and, (6) Bolsa Família is a populist program that undermines democracy in Brazil. The



following section presents a summary of scientific evidence that counters each of these false arguments.

9.1. Bolsa Família discourages job hunting by beneficiaries

Barbosa and Corseuil (2013), based on microdata of the 2006 National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), demonstrate that Bolsa Família's cash income has no effect on the occupational choice of beneficiaries in terms of formal or informal employment. They failed to detect any effect that Bolsa Família might have on the propensity of household heads to remain in, hunt for or prefer informal jobs (Barbosa and Corseuil, 2013).

The Ministry of Social Development made public the 2005 and 2009 Impact Evaluations of the Bolsa Família Program (AIBF) and their data – which were used in a number of studies – gives much valuable insight into the program regarding job hunting and employment by Bolsa Família beneficiaries. The 2009 Ministry of Social Development study clearly shows that those who receive cash transfers, do not stop looking for work. Among beneficiaries, in the 18 to 55 age group, 65.3 per cent were looking for employment, compared to 70.7% among non-beneficiaries. For the 30 to 55 years old group, about the same percentage, 70 percent were looking for work in both groups.

The unemployment rate of beneficiaries is also not affected either positively or negatively by Bolsa Família. The 2009 Impact Evaluation of the Bolsa Família Program (AIBF), revealed that the unemployment rate of non-beneficiaries aged between 18 and 55 was 11.4%, compared to Bolsa Família's 14.2%. As in employment, the difference between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in the 30 to 55 age group is smaller, 7% for people without benefits and 8.9% in the group with benefits (MDS, 2012).

Another positive impact is on child labor, a ubiquitous challenge in Brazil (and in most developing countries), as Bolsa Família is delaying labor market entrance age, albeit timidly. In 2005, in the 5 to 15 age group among non-beneficiaries, 3.6 percent of girls and 5.5 percent of boys were working, while 2.2 percent of girls and 4.3 percent of boys in households included in Bolsa Família were also working. In 2009, 1.9 percent of non-Bolsa Família girls and 3.2 percent of boys were working, while 2 percent of BF girls and 3.7 percent of the boys were working (MDS, 2012).

In 2005, in the 16 to 17 non-beneficiaries age group, 17.6 percent of the young women and 30.4 percent of the young men were working, while 15.4 percent of the BF young women and 32.6 percent of the BF young men, respectively. By 2009, 11.6 percent of the ladies and 21.7 percent of the young men in families not receiving the cash transfer were working, while 9.7 and 19.3 percent of beneficiaries were working (MDS, 2012).

9.2. Bolsa Família leads to higher crime rates

On the contrary, as Chioda et al. (2012), in a pioneering paper present what seems to be the first conclusive and robust evidence of a Cash Transfer Program on crime, conditional cash transfer programs have vast potential to depress crime rates because of the age and crime relationship.⁹ This is due to the association that exists between education, socioeconomic conditions, and crime. The authors mention the data they collected for the city of São Paulo on robberies, thefts and auto-theft for which the age of the suspect had been established, up to 25 percent have been committed by young people aged below 18 years of age (Chioda et al., 2012, p. 2). Cash transfer programs have a large number of ways by which they can influence

⁹ In the United States, the FBI's Uniform Crime Report arrest data for 1935-1997 for the Crime Index - homicide, robbery, rape, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, auto theft – corroborates the relationship, as the peak age-crime involvement is 14 to 25, and “a long-term trend toward younger age-crime distributions in more modern times.” Ulmer and Steffensmeier, 2014, p. 377. See also Levitt and Lochner, 2001.



these statistics as there is much evidence on long-term effects of schooling and learning on violence and crime (Chioda et al., 2012). Nonetheless, it was one short-term effect that especially interested the authors, the so-called “incapacitation effect” played by schools, as it keeps young people out of the streets and reduces the window of opportunity for some crimes and hazardous behavior.¹⁰

Another way CCTs influence the behavior of youth is by the effect it has in the household’s budget, allowing members to afford basic goods and services that work as a disincentive to “economically motivated crimes”. There is much evidence on how additional cash changes families’ exposure to delinquency and victimization, as a function of additional parental supervision, amount and timing of welfare payments and many other variables (Chioda et al., 2012, p. 6; Lauritsen, et al., 2013).

Finally, there is the role played by school attendance and its consequent effects on youth social interaction. As Chioda et al. (2012) explain, in case the peer group of the youth in question is also subject to school enrolment and attendance, school has the potential to positively affect their lives, despite the increased risk of attrition, and as long as on average the in-school group in question is a better influence than the not-in-school group.

In their study, Chioda et al. (2012), used São Paulo city youth-implicated crime data and Bolsa Família coverage to identify ways in which they correlated. They were able to show that the Brazilian cash transfer program Bolsa Família has a negative impact on crime in the city of São Paulo, pushing down economically motivated crime rates not only on school days but also on weekends and holidays. Those results suggest that the incapacitation effect played by school attendance is not as relevant as the income effect played by Bolsa Família.

¹⁰ And as mentioned by the authors, simultaneously, there is also the possibility that the gathering of young people in a confined space might increase the probability of violence. See Anderson 2014; also, Machin et al., 2011.



9.3. Bolsa Família has no impact on educational outcomes

As previously presented in this article, some of the most important Bolsa Família conditionalities are related to education and despite mounting evidence to the program's efficacy to impact educational outcomes, there persists a popular belief in Brazil contesting all scientific research. Fiszbein et al. (2009), in a World Bank research report present evidence that CCTs have general positive effects on improving the lives of the poor, as did the World Bank (2011). Brauw et al. (2015), in an International Food Policy Research study, using longitudinal household data and propensity score weighting methods estimated that Bolsa Família, "increased average school participation among all children age 6 to 17 years by (a weakly significant) 4.5 percent" (Brauw et al., 2015, p. v), and there was also significant increase in girls' school participation and grade progression. The National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira - INEP (2010), found that Bolsa Família has positive impact on children's school enrolment. Oliveira and Soares (2013), found an association between compliance with educational conditionalities and increased income and a decrease in grade retention.

Cireno et al. (2013) analyze the association between being and not being a participant of the Bolsa Família Program, and performance in a standardized national exam (Prova Brasil), grade retention and school dropout rates and the 'age - school year' distortion. Their results suggest that children in families that are included in the program, on average, perform worse than non-participants in the Prova Brasil examination, and much of this poorer performance is due to socioeconomic conditions and schools' conditions. This scenario is common in the fifth and the ninth grades. Nonetheless, there is, however, a clear trend – when comparing 5th and 9th year students: there is either a reversal of the disadvantage (in performance and grade retention/ repetition), or an advantage starting from the fifth grade (year) in favor of participating students. As there is a high degree of exposure to the program, the evidence suggests that Bolsa Família's education



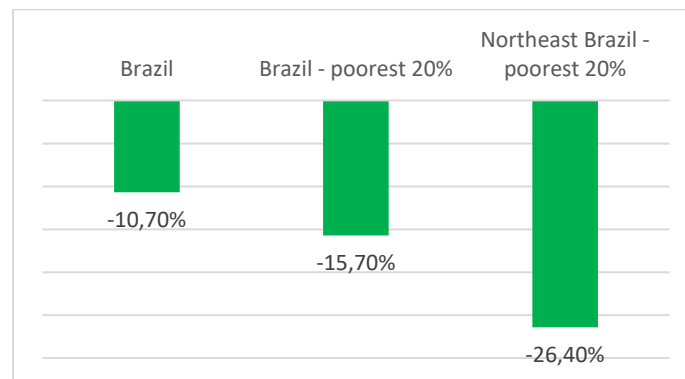
conditionality leads to positive outcomes in the educational trajectory of participating families' children. Bolsa Família has a positive influence in decreasing educational inequality, and consequently the intergenerational cycle of poverty in Brazilian society (Cireno et al., 2013, p. 303).

9.4. Bolsa Família beneficiaries have more children in order to receive more cash

85

The poorest of the poor are routinely ridiculed as promiscuous, sloths, only interested in receiving their free government cash and making more children to get more. In fact, in the ten first years of Bolsa Família, as Figure 7 illustrates, the average number of children in the poorest families in the country fell more than the Brazilian average, which demonstrates that Bolsa Família families do not have more children to earn more (MDS, 2015). Data from the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), showed that, in 2003, the average number of children per family in Brazil was 1.78. By 2013, that number dropped to 1.59. Among the poorest 20%, the averages recorded were 2.55 and 2.15, respectively. Among the poorest 20% in the Northeast, the region with the highest concentration of Bolsa Família beneficiaries (Figure 7), the numbers went from 2.73 to 2.01.

Figure 7: Reduction in the number of children per family (2003 - 2013)



Source: Ministry of Social Development, 2015; IBGE, 2015.



The number of children of up to 14 years of age per woman, collected in successive Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), reinforces that it is completely false the claim that beneficiary mothers seek to have more children to receive more government money. Paiva (2016), points out that the steepest drop in the number of children has been taking place exactly among the poorest families in the most covered region. At the same time, over the years, a number of studies have shown that Bolsa Família has null or close to zero effect on the fertility rate (Rocha, 2009; Signorini and Queiroz, 2011; Simões and Soares, 2012; Cechin et al., 2015).

The most recent, Cechin et al. (2015), looked into potential Bolsa Família incentives to beneficiaries to having more children, leading to higher fertility rates as a result of the program's "pro-natalist" policy design. Cechin et al. (2015), developed a counterfactual which they asserted was more suitable to their research question and to impact analysis of Bolsa Família beneficiaries' exposure to a longer period of participation in the program and its resulting effects. According to the authors, theirs was the first study to evaluate Bolsa Família effects beyond the initial phases of the program, as it takes a longer period of exposure for beneficiaries to internalize the cash transfer benefits and decide whether it compensates or not to have an extra child in order to be able to increase the amount received through the program.

Cechin et al., (2015), controlling for observable variables and using Propensity Score Matching (PSM), utilized a matching technique proposed by Imbens (2014), and found that nationwide the average treatment effects on the treated (ATT) was 1.31 percentage points for women who had a second child, i.e., a Bolsa Família recipient has a 1.31 percentage points higher probability of begetting a second child in comparison to her match in the control group at level of statistical significance of 1 percent. For women who had a third child, the ATT was 0.91 percentage points. In sum, despite the ATT values being statically significant, their values in the national level are low. If for the group of women who had only one child



in 2009, Bolsa Família activated a 1.31 percent incentive to fertility, among the poorest of the poor, the effect in the national level was also very low, a higher probability of begetting a second child of 2.24 percentage points, in comparison to their match in the control group. Their results suggest that Bolsa Família has low economic relevance on the fertility rates of the program's recipients.

9.5. Bolsa Família is very expensive and diverts funds from growth-related policies

87

As shown in Table 2 below, Bolsa Família has consistently cost less than 1% of the Brazilian GDP and is credited for being the most affordable income transfer program in Brazil (Neri et al., 2013).

Table 2: Bolsa Família Cost as percentage of Brazil's GDP (in million BRL), 2008-2012

Year	BF cost	GDP	BF cost/GDP
2008	10,522.1	3,032,203.0	0.35%
2009	11,844.3	3,239,404.0	0.37%
2010	13,457.0	3,770,084.9	0.36%
2011	16,644.0	4,143,013.3	0.40%
2012	20,530.0	4,402,537.1	0.47%

Sources: MDS, SIC, IBGE. Tesouro Nacional, CESEF – Coordenação-Geral de Estudos Econômico-Fiscais, GEEFI – Gerência de Estudos Econômico-Fiscais, n.d.

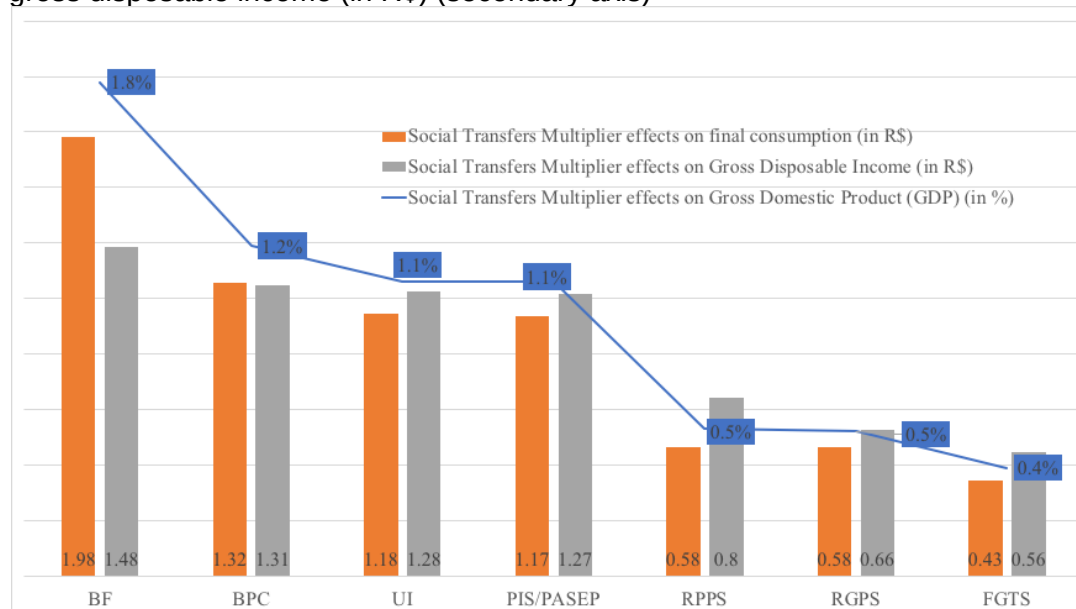
Neri et al. (2013), analyzed the short-term effects of social transfers on Brazil's national accounts system economic aggregates, taking into account the economy's circular flow of income, namely, the General Social Security Policy (RGPS), the Special Social Security Policies (RPPS), the Bolsa Família Program, the Continuous Benefit Provision (BPC), the Unemployment Insurance, PIS / PASEP Salary Bonus and withdrawals from the Government Severance Indemnity Fund for



Employees (FGTS). Their conclusions were based on a Social Accounting Matrix for 2009 in which they looked into the flow between products, activities, factors of production and institutional sectors (families, companies, government and rest of the world), inspired by Mostafa, Souza and Vaz (2010), incorporated an extensive breakdown of products, activities, factors of production, types of families and sources of income, as well as the consumption and income structure of the 2008-2009 Household Budgets Survey (POF).

Their results are summarized in Figure 8. Bolsa Família is by far the income transfer with the strongest impact: for every R\$1 marginal shock spent on Bolsa Família, the Brazilian GDP would grow R\$1.78, that is, an additional expenditure of 1 percent of the GDP into the Bolsa Família Program would translate in a 1.178 percent growth in economic activity, in case all model assumptions were respected, including the assumption that supply is perfectly elastic (Neri et al. (2013)).

Figure 8: Social transfers multiplier effects on Brazil's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in % (primary axis), on final consumption (in R\$) (secondary axis), and on gross disposable income (in R\$) (secondary axis)



Source: Neri et al., 2013, p. 201,202, 203

RGPS - General Social Security Policy

RPPS - Special Social Security Policies (RPPS),



BF - Bolsa Família Program
BPC - Continuous Benefit Provision
UI - Unemployment Insurance
PIS/PASEP - PIS / PASEP Salary Bonus
FGTS - Government Severance Indemnity Fund for Employees

Neri et al., (2013), argue that multiplier effects are boosted when they are more focused on cash transfers to the poorest of the poor, simply because those families have a higher marginal propensity to consume (MPC) due to, for example, a suppressed demand for consumer products and services, even when one considers that a relevant part of their consumption is not contingent on their income. As family savings come from the circular flow of income and, therefore, do not have multiplier effects on economic activity, the sheer scale of the Bolsa Família multiplier effects makes the case for an even more poorest of the poor focused Bolsa Família Program stronger and more urgent. The program plays a conspicuous role in the present Brazilian macroeconomic undercurrents, contributing towards poverty and inequality reduction, and food security. Notwithstanding all the positive points that entail the acceptance of a number of principles and assumptions,¹¹ Neri et al. (2013), close their argument by reminding us that multiplier effects are marginal variations, inherently confined to the short-term dynamics of the economy, and that lasting prosperity is related to how consumption expansion translates into investment and greater production capacity.

9.6. Bolsa Família is a populist and clientelistic program that undermines democracy in Brazil

As any other public policy, Bolsa Família does not serve only economic and welfare objectives, but also political ones. In the case of Brazil, if there were any

¹¹ Such as, the principle of effective demand, the existence of production and supply elasticity and the stability of the propensity to save and the consumption profile of the families (Neri et al., 2013, p. 204).



political perpetuation dreams in the Workers' Party (PT) efforts in implementing its flagship social program Fome Zero, which morphed into Bolsa Família's during its tenure in power, it failed miserably (Tiburcio, 2016). Former president Dilma Rousseff was impeached in April 2016, and the Workers' Party historic founder and also former president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, was facing imprisonment and loss of political rights as of mid-2018.

Recent studies counter the premise that Bolsa Família is just one more populist program at the service of the party in power (Fried, 2012; Hunter and Sugiyama, 2009; Pereira, 2015). BF has become a state policy and is a 'whoever is in power popular program', rather than a government program. In financial jargon, it has become "too big to fail", and has become almost politically untouchable to any relevant political agent, party or person.

Bolsa Família is the result of a robust multiparty effort aimed at curbing rampant inequality and wealth concentration, that was established across party lines, through the national State's bureaucracy, with strong municipal level participation and civil society oversight (Sargeant-Hu, 2016; Pereira, 2015). Interestingly, although Brazilian politicians persist on abusing pork and clientelism, there is no evidence of political interference in the distribution of the program's beneficiaries (Fried, 2012).

Bolsa Família was rolled out and expanded over the years relying on a 'new federal – municipal pact' that completely circumvents state governors, and has mostly steered clear of the usual legislative-executive concessions, horse-trading and patronage system (Fenwick, 2009; 2015; Pereira, 2015). And, in spite of occasional glitches, the MDS, Caixa, and municipal authorities' partnership works well and delivers according to plan. This strong institutional edifice has led to a strengthening of beneficiaries' democratic rights, citizenship and participation in the Brazilian political scenario. The populist and 'clientelistic' labels do not stick to Bolsa



Família as beneficiaries increasingly understand the program as a State policy and not as a favour from this or that politician (Daief, 2015; Sugiyama et al., 2013).

10. The Way Forward

On one hand, Bolsa Família is inseparably intertwined with Brazil's ongoing "transition to the Anthropocene", as it pushes its unknown boundaries and governance mechanisms to accommodate a growing, albeit battered, middle-class. On the other, it is undoubtedly not a panacea to all of Brazil's ills (Hall, 2013). At present, it has transcended party politics and it is now enshrined as a national State policy, and as presented in this article it is contributing to sustainable human development. But, what is the way forward? Can policy outcomes, design and implementation inform and improve the existing Bolsa Família and help in the design and implementation of new programs?

Neri (2017), proposes a next generation of conditional cash transfer programs, incorporating best practices, latest research and lessons learnt. His main ideas are summarized in the Table 3 below. Sugiyama (2016), argues for greater community-driven participatory oversight, while Sánchez-Ancochea and Mattei (2011), argue that there needs to be a reduction of inequalities in public provision of health and education for BF to have a more enduring impact.

Table 3: A next generation of conditional cash transfer programs

Item	Present	Next	How?	Why?
Income	Self-reported income	Estimated permanent income	Single Social Registry information set	Better targeting
Targeting	Self-reporting for inclusion	Personalized needs-based	Amount individual needs to break even/ surpass established poverty line.	Gradual exit
References and Standards	National	Best practices and international commitments (UN targets)	Policy programs	Neutral ground to connect different political mandates across time and different government levels.
Inter governmental program communication	Self-enclosed programs. No progression	Interconnected income programs/ graduation schemes	Create bridges between income programs	Gradual exit strategies/ graduation

Source: Neri, 2017.

Bolsa Família could be fused with other cash transfer programs that also target children, for example, the Salário Família and the Income Tax Deduction (tax credit based on the number of children), so as to cover more children (Soares and Souza, 2012). A further step would be to simply universalize the program as a strategy to leave no child out (Bailey-Athias, 2016; Kidd, 2014).¹²

Kerstenetzky (2013), also advocates universalization, but as a rejection to all pauperism-inspired policies, and in favor of a world-view that rejects the deeply ingrained belief that the poor are poor simply by choice, poor choices. The non-pauperistic view, recognizes the role played by the broader context of economic

¹² *Brasil Carinhoso* originally covered children from 0 to 48 months, enrolled in state and subsidized day-cares whose families were beneficiaries of Bolsa Família. From November 2012, it was expanded to cover all families with children aged 0 to 15 living in extreme poverty, and from February 2013, to all families in extreme poverty regardless of family composition. It automatically transfers to municipalities and the federal district resources earmarked to cover expenses related to early childhood education, development and maintenance, and it contributes towards comprehensive care, food and nutritional security, as well as ensuring access and permanence of young children in daycare centers (FNDE, n.d.; Osório and Souza, 2013).

opportunists and protection, and the transference of responsibility from the beneficiary to the State: the State provides quality service to all, including the poorest of the poor.

Soares (2012), opposes any idea of making Bolsa Família transition from a benefit to an entitlement as it would reduce existing incentives to self-help.¹³ In his view, the program should be absorbed into the existing social protection system, taking advantage of Brazil's relative efficiency in identifying and targeting the poor. A similar program could continue targeting the poorest of the poor, while through experimentation and evaluation, Bolsa Família would focus on opportunity generation for the poor (or vice versa).

Finally, Stampini and Tornarolli (2012), once again hit on the key of the need to make improvements in the quality of services, or in the public and private services providers that are part of the Bolsa Família support system (or, better, of which Bolsa Família is a supplement): schools, hospitals, the Social Assistance Reference Centers (CRAS), and governmental institutions that deal with the poorest of the poor in general. They are the key to the optimization of the program's objectives: the maximization of social assistance efforts and the development of the human capital – the beneficiaries.

11. Conclusions

True, inclusive development entails efforts to eliminate extreme forms of poverty. And for the foreseeable future, Bolsa Família is the best tool Brazil has to keep a quarter of its population out of extreme poverty. A non-systematic review of a relevant slice of what can be termed as “Bolsa Família literature” leads to the

¹³ “Once again the choice is clear-cut. If the objective is to get people to make their own money, of course it should not. Making the benefit an entitlement will only weaken the incentives to get out of poverty by your own effort. If the objective is to protect those most in need, then there is no doubt that the benefit should be an entitlement.” (Soares, 2012, p. 31)



conclusion that although the importance of Bolsa Família and the effective fulfillment of its mission is almost universally acknowledged, the means, the tools, the ways in and the ways out are as disputed, fragmented and elusive as ever. The unanswered question: 'how Bolsa Família can adapt and evolve with present and future needs', urgently demands more research, and as importantly, data. Presently, policy-makers, practitioners and researchers lack the expensive data that comes from regular surveys and program census. There is a need for much, much more empirical research and ethnographic studies of all of Bolsa Família tenets, practices, actions and outcomes. Smart governance mechanisms and arrangements can calibrate the adaptation and change that needs to come through decision-making that is informed, empirically-built, evaluated and tested. The poorest of the poor Brazilians are waiting.

12. References

Anderson, Mark. **In School and Out of Trouble? The Minimum Dropout Age and Juvenile Crime.** *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 96(2):318–331. 2014.

Ansell, Aaron. *Zero Hunger: Political Culture and Antipoverty Policy in Northeast Brazil.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

Asfaw, Solomon; Davis, Benjamin; Dewbre, Josh; Handa, Sudhanshu; Winters, Paul. **Cash Transfer Programme, Productive Activities and Labour Supply: Evidence from a Randomised Experiment in Kenya,** *The Journal of Development Studies*, 50:8, 2014, p. 1172-1196, DOI: 10.1080/00220388.2014.919383.

Bailey-Athias, Diloá. **What is the Future of Bolsa Família? Development Pathways.** 2016. Available at: <http://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/resources/future-bolsa-familia/>.

Barrientos, Armando; Debowicz, Darío; Woolard, Ingrid. 2016. **“Heterogeneity in Bolsa Família outcomes”.** *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance*, Volume: 62, Pages: 33 – 40.

Bastagli, Francesca. **“Poverty, inequality and public cash transfers: lessons from Latin America.”** Background Paper for the European Report on Development



(ERD) 2010 on Social Protection for Inclusive Development, European University Institute, Florence. 2010. Available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/36840/>. Accessed 17 February 2018.

_____. **“The design, implementation and impact of conditional cash transfers: An evaluation of Brazil’s Bolsa Família.”** PhD thesis, London School of Economics. 2010.

_____. **Conditionality in Public Policy Targeted to the Poor: Promoting Resilience?** *Social Policy and Society*, 8(1), 2009, p. 127-140. doi:10.1017/S1474746408004648

Brazil. Gerência de Estudos Econômico-Fiscais. Sistema de Informações de Custos do Governo Federal (SIC): **uma análise gerencial aplicada ao Programa Bolsa Família.** [n.d.]. Disponível em: http://www.cepal.org/ofilac/noticias/paginas/3/43813/17_Gadelha.pdf. Acesso em: 03 March 2018.

Brazil. Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social. **Relatório de Informações Síntese dos programas sociais.** Available at: <http://aplicacoes.mds.gov.br/sagi/Rlv3/geral/index.php>. Accessed on January 2018.

_____. Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social. **“Avaliação de Impacto do Programa Bolsa Família - 2a Rodada (AIBF II).”** 2012. Available at: <http://acervodigital.mds.gov.br/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/77/AvaliacaodelmpactoProgramaBolsaFamiliarII.pdf?sequence=1>.

_____. Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social. **“Senarc - Secretaria Nacional de Renda de Cidadania.”** Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social (MDS). [n.d.]. Available at: <http://mds.gov.br/aceso-a-informacao/institucional/estrutura-organizacional/senarc>.

_____. Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira – INEP. **Resumo técnico: Censo escolar 2010.** Brasília, DF: MEC; INEP, 2011. Available at: <http://portal.inep.gov.br/resumos-tecnicos>

Cechin, L. A. W.; Carraro, A.; Ribeiro, E. G.; Fernandez, R. N. **“O Impacto das Regras do Programa Bolsa Família Sobre a Fecundidade das Beneficiárias.”** *Revista Brasileira de Economia*, 69(3), 303–329. 2015.

Cireno, F.; Silva, Joana; Proença, Rafael Prado. **“Condicionalidades, desempenho e percurso escolar de beneficiários do programa Bolsa Família”** in T. Campello and M. Côrtes Neri (eds), **Programa Bolsa Família: uma década de inclusão e cidadania.** Brasília, Ipea, capítulo 19: 297-304, <http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/images/stories/PDFs/livros/livros/livro_bolsafamilia_10anos.pdf>.



Chioda, Laura; De Mello, João M. P.; Soares, Rodrigo R. **“Spillovers from Conditional Cash Transfer Programs: Bolsa Família and Crime in Urban Brazil.”** Discussion Paper series, Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit, No. 6371.

Conway, Arnold C.; Greenslade, M. DFID **Cash Transfers Literature Review.** DFID, London, UK. 2011.

Fenwick, Tracy Beck. **“Avoiding governors: the success of Bolsa Família.”** Latin American Research Review 44.1 (2009): 102-131.

Fiszbein, Ariel; Schady, Norbert; Ferreira, Francisco H.G.; Grosh, Margaret; Keleher, Niall; Olinto, Pedro; Skoufias, Emmanuel; Fiszbein, Ariel; Schady, Norbert; Ferreira, Francisco H.G.; Grosh, Margaret; Keleher, Niall; Olinto, Pedro; Skoufias, Emmanuel. **“Conditional cash transfers: reducing present and future poverty”.** A World Bank policy research report. Washington, DC: World Bank. 2009. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/914561468314712643/Conditional-cash-transfers-reducing-present-and-future-poverty>

Góes, Carlos; Karpowicz, Izabela. **“Inequality in Brazil: A Regional Perspective.”** International Monetary Fund Working Paper, WP/17/225, 2017.

Hall, Anthony. **“Political Dimensions of Social Protection in Brazil.”** In Social Protection, Economic Growth and Social Change: Goals, Issues and Trajectories in China, India, Brazil and South Africa, edited by James Midgley and David Piachaud, 166–183. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2013.

Hulme D., Hanlon J., Hanlon J., Barrientos A. **“Social Protection, Marginality, and Extreme Poverty: Just Give Money to the Poor?”** In: von Braun J., Gatzweiler F. (eds) Marginality. Springer, Dordrecht. 2014.

Imbens, G. W. **Matching methods in practice: Three examples.** NBER Working Paper No 19959. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. 2014. doi: 10.3386/w19959

Kidd, Stephen. **“Social exclusion and access to social protection schemes”.** Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 2014.

Kerstenetzky, C.L. Aproximando Intenção e Gesto: Bolsa Família e o Futuro in T. Campello and M. Côrtes Neri (eds), **Programa Bolsa Família: uma década de inclusão e cidadania.** Brasília, Ipea, chapter 29. p. 467-480. 2013. <http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/images/stories/PDFs/livros/livros/livro_bolsafamilia_10anos.pdf>

Laurisen, Janet L; Gorislavsky, Ekaterina; Heimer. **Economic Conditions and Violent Victimization Trends among Youth: Guns, Violence, and Homicide,**



1973-2005. In: Rosenfeld, Richard, ed. *Economics and Youth Violence: Crime, Disadvantage, and Community*. New York: NYU Press, 2013, p. 85-120.

Levitt, Steven D. and Lance Lochner. **The Determinants of Juvenile Crime**. In: J. Gruber (ed.), *Risky Behavior among Youths: An Economic Analysis*, University of Chicago Press, 327-373. 2001.

Linder, Anja. **Do accountability mechanisms in safety nets improve access to social services? The case of Brazil's Bolsa Família**. An International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) paper. 2011.

Lindert, Kathy; Linder, Anja; Hobbs, Jason; Brière, Bénédicte de la. **"The Nuts and Bolts of Brazil's Bolsa Família Program: Implementing Conditional Cash Transfers in a Decentralized Context."** Washington, DC: World Bank. 2007.

Machin, S., Marie, O. and Vujić, S. **The Crime Reducing Effect of Education**. *The Economic Journal*, 121: 463-484. 2011.

Marchesini, Lucas. **"Benefícios do Bolsa Família sustentam 21% da população do país."** *Valor Econômico*, 05-02-2018. Available at: <http://www.valor.com.br/brasil/5306087/beneficios-do-bolsa-familia-sustentam-21-da-populacao-do-pais>. Accessed 27 February 2018.

Martins, Ana Paula Bortoletto; Monteiro, Carlos Augusto. **"Impact of the Bolsa Família program on food availability of low-income Brazilian families: a quasi-experimental study."** *BMC Public Health*, 16:827. 2016.

McArthur, John. **"How many countries could end extreme poverty tomorrow?"** Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2017/06/01/how-many-countries-could-end-extreme-poverty-tomorrow/>. Accessed 9 February 2018.

Nascimento, Elcio Costa; Carvalho, João P. L. de; Cruz, Benedito E. V. da; Calvi, Miqueias F. 2017. **"The role of Programa Bolsa Família in the food security of families in the Marajó Territory, PA, Brazil"**. *Interações (Campo Grande)* vol.18, no.2, Campo Grande Apr./June 2017, Pages 59-70.

Neri, M.; F. Vaz; P. Ferreira. **Efeitos Macroeconômico dos Programa Bolsa Família: Uma Análise Comparativa das Transferências Sociais**, in T. Campello and M. Côrtes Neri (eds), *Programa Bolsa Família: uma década de inclusão e cidadania*. Brasília, Ipea, 2013, capítulo 11. p. 194-206.

Neri, Marcelo. **A next generation of conditional cash transfer programs**. *Brazilian Journal of Public Administration*, Rio de Janeiro 51(2):168-181, Mar. - Apr. 2017. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0034-76122017-0041>.

Osório, Rafael Guerreiro; Souza, Pedro H. G. **Bolsa Família after Brasil Carinhoso: an Analysis of the Potential for Reducing Extreme Poverty**.



International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth Research Brief, number 41, March 2013.

Paiva, Luis Henrique; Soares, Fabio Veras; Cireno, Flavio; Viana, Iara A. V.; Duran, Ana Clara. **"The effects of conditionality monitoring on educational outcomes: evidence from Brazil's Bolsa Família Programme."** Institute for Applied Economic Research Discussion Paper 213. 2016.

Pereira, Anthony W. **Bolsa Família and democracy in Brazil**, Third World Quarterly, 36:9, 2015, 1682-1699, DOI: 10.1080/01436597.2015.1059730.

Richter, L. M. **Poverty, underdevelopment and infant mental health**. Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health, Volume 39, Issue 4, May 2003, p. 243-248.

Rosenfeld, Richard, ed. **Economics and Youth Violence: Crime, Disadvantage, and Community**. New York: NYU Press, 2013.

Sánchez-Ancochea; Mattei, Lauro. **Bolsa Família, poverty and inequality: Political and economic effects in the short and long run**. Global Social Policy, Volume 11, issue 2-3, 2011, p. 299-318.

Sargeant-Hu, Sally. 2016. **"Sustainable Development: The Contribution of Bolsa Família to High School Education Performance in Brazil, 2004-2014"**. Boise State University Theses and Dissertations. 1166.

Sen, Amartya. **Rationality and freedom**. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002.

Silveira Neto, R.M., Azzoni, C.R. **"Os Programas Sociais e a Recente Queda da Desigualdade Regional de Renda no Brasil"**. In T. Campello and M. Côrtes Neri (eds), Programa Bolsa Família: uma década de inclusão e cidadania. Brasília, Ipea, chapter 13. pp. 217-232. 2013.

Silveira Neto, R.M.; Azzoni, C.R. **"Social policy as regional policy: market and nonmarket factors determining regional inequality."** Journal of Regional Science, v. 52, n. 3, p. 422-450, 2012.

Soares, Fábio Veras; Ribas, Rafael Perez; Osório, Rafael Guerreiro. **"Evaluating the Impact of Brazil's Bolsa Família: Cash Transfer Programmes in Comparative Perspective"**. Evaluation Note number 1, International Poverty Centre, Brasília, 2007.

Soares, F. V., S. S. Soares, M. M. Sousa, and R. G. Osório. **"Cash Transfer Programmes in Brazil: Impacts on Inequality and Poverty"**. Working Paper n. 21, International Poverty Centre, Brasília. 2006.



Soares, Sergei; Sátyro, Natália. **O Programa Bolsa Família: Desenho institucional, impactos e possibilidades futuras, Texto para Discussão, Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), No. 1424. 2009.**

Stampini, Marco; Tornarolli, Leopoldo. **The Growth of Conditional Cash Transfers in Latin America and the Caribbean: Did They Go Too Far?** IZA Policy Paper Series number 49, 2012.

Sugiyama, Natasha Borges. **Pathways to Citizen Accountability: Brazil's Bolsa Família, The Journal of Development Studies**, 52:8, 2016, p. 1192-1206, DOI: 10.1080/00220388.2015.1134779.

Sugiyama, Natasha Borges, and Wendy Hunter. **"Whither Clientelism? Good Governance and Brazil's Bolsa Família Program."** *Comparative Politics* 46.1 (2013): 43-62.

Tavares, Priscilla Albuquerque. **"Efeito do Programa Bolsa Família sobre a oferta de trabalho das mães."** *Economia e Sociedade*, Campinas, v. 19, n. 3 (40), p. 613-635, dez. 2010.

Tepperman, Jonathan. 2016. **"Brazil's Antipoverty Breakthrough: The Surprising Success of Bolsa Familia."** *Foreign Affairs*, 95, Pages 34 –

Testa, Maurício G; Fronza, Paula; Petrini, Maira; Prates, Jane C. "Análise da contribuição do Programa Bolsa Família para o enfrentamento da pobreza e a autonomia dos sujeitos beneficiários." *Revista Administração Pública — Rio de Janeiro* 47(6):1519-541, nov./dez. 2013.

Tiburcio, James A. P. O Programa Fome Zero sob Foco. **Sustentabilidade em Debate**, v. 6, n. 2, p. 280 - 282, ago. 2015. Available at: <<http://periodicos.unb.br/index.php/sust/article/view/14696>>. Accessed: 24 March 2018. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18472/SustDeb.v6n2.2015.14696>.

_____. **Brazilian Inclusive Development and the Post-neoliberalism Experiment: A Critical Analysis.** Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association 74th Annual Conference, Chicago, Il, April 7 - April 10, 2016. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/36256945/The_Brazilian_Post-Neoliberal_Experiment

Ulmer, Jeffery T.; Darrell Steffensmeier. **"The Age and Crime Relationship: Social Variation, Social Explanations."** In *The Nurture versus Biosocial Debate in Criminology*, edited by K. Beaver, B. Boutwell, and J.C. Barnes. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. 2014.

United Nations – Economic and Social Council. **"Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals."** Report of the Secretary-General. 2017. Available at: <https://undocs.org/en/E/2017/66>. Accessed February 16, 2018.



World Bank. **Evidence and lessons learned from impact evaluations on social safety nets**. Washington: World Bank, 2011.

World Data Lab. **“Population.io - world population project”**. Available at <http://worldpoverty.io/index.html>. Accessed February 16, 2018.

World Without Poverty. “Bolsa Família Program (PBF)”. World Without Poverty – Brazil Learning Initiative Program Sheet. 2017.

