

Vulnerability, Conditional Cash Transfer and Basic Human Rights

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BRAZILIAN CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER (CCT) PROGRAM – Bolsa Família (PBF)

The Bolsa Família Program (PBF) is a program of direct cash transfer with conditionality implemented since 2003. In 2009, the number of beneficiaries reached around 12 million households in poverty (defined as families with monthly income per capita from US\$ 35 to 70) or extreme poverty (those with less than US\$ 35 monthly income per capita). The program's rationale is very similar to that of most CCTs in Latin America, which combines the short-term goals of poverty alleviation, through the direct cash transfers, with the long-term objectives of breaking intergenerational poverty traps, via the conditionalities on health and education.

PBF Survey in Recife city

From November 2006 to January 2007, we carried out a survey with a random sample of 1,367 households located in urban area of Recife, in order to evaluate the impacts of the program on families' reconfiguration, on gender inequalities and on women's empowerment. The sample was drawn from the data base on families who are entitled to participate in social programs combined with the information on recipients of Bolsa Família from Caixa Econômica Federal (State Bank). The Recife data base had 121,273 families registered with 82.7% of PBF beneficiaries. In 93.8% of these households, the legal beneficiary was a woman. Additionally, in more than half (51%) of these families the head did not have spouse (female one parent family). Here we present results only regarding issues related to family arrangements, conjugality, and female autonomy towards poverty reduction.



RESULTS

By applying cluster models (two-step cluster) we set families profiles that are more similar among each other and identify other related characteristics. In model 1 – with 3 clusters - the highest incidence of poverty (measured by per capita household income) was found in the group that brought together beneficiaries women with no spouse (female one parent families). In model 2 - with 5 clusters – it was added the variable paid labor, and the higher incidence of poverty was found in families with a spouse (two-parent nuclear family), but with low participation of the couple in the labor market. The female one-parent family was found in an

intermediate situation, and the lowest incidence of poverty was found in two-parent families where both spouses had remunerated labor activity. The model 3 - with 4 clusters - also indicated that the double insertion of couples in the labor market reduced the intensity of poverty. The existence of a spouse itself in the household does not assure a better income condition, if he/she does not work. What does make the difference, as shown in model 3, in order to reduce the intensity of poverty is whether or not children under age 15 (low demographic dependency ratio) are enrolled in education, mainly in pre-school or kindergarten, for children aged 0-6 years.

Table: Cluster modeling according to household and family characteristics – Recife, Brazil, 2007

Variables	Model 1			Model 2					Model 3				TOTAL
	Clusters			Clusters					Clusters				
	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	
Number of households by clusters	27502	47906	45866	27324	20582	22090	33889	17388	22267	34865	26348	37793	121273
Percentage of households by clusters	22,7	39,5	37,8	22,5	17	18,2	27,9	14,3	18,4	28,7	21,7	31,2	100
Situation of PBF (1 – Man as legal beneficiary, 2- woman as legal beneficiary, 3- no beneficiary)	Benef. Man (23%) and no beneficiary (73%)	Woman beneficiary	Woman beneficiary	Benef. man (21%) and no beneficiary (79%)	Woman beneficiary	Woman beneficiary	Woman beneficiary	Benef. man (9%), benef. woman (70%) and no benef. (21%)	Benef. man (21%) and no beneficiary (79%)	Woman beneficiary	Woman beneficiary	Benef. man (4%), benef. woman (87%) and no benef. (9%)	
Presence of spouse/partner at home	With spouse (50%) and no spouse (50%)	With spouse	No spouse	With spouse (38%) and no spouse (62%)	With spouse	No spouse	With spouse (39%) and no spouse. (61%)	With spouse	With spouse (38%) and no spouse (62%)	No spouse	With spouse (51%) and no spouse (49%)	With spouse	
Spouse/partner labor market participation				Spouse does not work. (100%)	Spouse work (49%) and not work (51%)		Spouse does not work (100%)	Spouse works (100%)	Spouse works (99%)		Spouse works (20%) and spouse do not work (80%)	Spouse works (42%) and spouse do not work (58%)	
Head of the household labor market participation				Head works (47%) and does not work (53%)	Head does not work (100%)	Head does not work (100%)	Head works (100%)	Head works (89%) and does not work (11%)	Head works (46%) and head not work (54%)	Head works (55%) and head not work. (45%)	Head works (44%) and head do not work (56%)	Head works (59%) and head do not work (41%)	
Children under 7 years-old attending kindergarten or preschool									Everyone at school (20%) and outside school (80%)	Everyone at school (20%) and outside school (80%)	Outside school (100%)	Everyone at school (98%)	
Number of persons 15 years-old or less									1,1	1,3	2,5	1,4	1,5
Age of the legal beneficiary or of the head of household for non-beneficiary families	45	38	35	39	36	46	36	38	46	40	32	38	37
Total household income per capita (R\$);	119	78	95	59	71	102	101	151	102	83	72	114	97
Household income from paid job (R\$);	281	129	279	58	161	181	255	528	182	125	201	344	220

Source: Bolsa Família Program Survey in Recife/PE, IE/UFRJ-ENCE/IBGE, Funded by FINEP/PROSARE, 2007

FINAL REMARKS

Among the population covered by PBF in Recife there is heterogeneity and different degrees of poverty incidence. The vulnerability varies depending on the population dynamics and marital status, age structure, the family life cycle stage, the degree of commodization of the labor force, the dependency ratio, and early childhood education enrollment. The empowerment of women depends on their position within the family and the family's relationship with the welfare state:

- Families with many children, generally, are over-represented in situations of greater intensity of poverty, especially those with small children under age 15. Poverty are associated with high birth rates as women with low education and income, lack adequate access to the means of fertility regulation and have high rates of unwanted pregnancies. Having many young children increases the rate of demographic dependency within family, especially in cases of one-parent families;
- Situations of gender inequality and intensification of the traditional social and sexual labor division are correlated with higher incidence of poverty. The sole fact that women are the main clientele of the cash transfer programs does not guarantee greater autonomy and greater female empowerment, especially if the woman is not in the labor market and is responsible for the care of other family members, becoming a "to be for others", strengthening the so-called 'familism'. Early childbearing, still in adolescence, may contribute to the reinforcement of traditional gender roles in the sense that hinders the educational development and the participation of young mothers in the labor market.
- The lesser responsibility and sometimes the absence of the father in childrearing (fatherlessness) contribute to aggravate families' poverty, reinforcing the traditional roles of men and women in the family and worsening gender inequalities.

These three items are mutually reinforcing, because when there is less parental responsibility in a context of high fertility, this tends to strengthen the maternal role of women (motherhood) and the traditional division of gender, making the accumulation of human capital and greater female inclusion women. The defamiliarization and greater female autonomy are essential to end the poverty trap and to break the vicious cycle of low condition of life of successive generations.