

Policy Transfer and International Organisations: The Complex Relationship between Brazil and the World Bank in the Implementation of the Bolsa Família Program

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Abstract: This article discusses the complex relationship between the World Bank and the Brazilian government regarding the implementation of the Bolsa Família Program (Family Allowance Program) from 2004 onwards. The hypothesis is that there was an alignment of the agendas for combating hunger and poverty among the entities. This made it possible to transfer Brazilian instruments and experiences to the world through World Bank. Based on a triangulation technique, it argues that the development of state capacity for the implementation of the program took place on a more cooperative basis than an imposition on the part of the World Bank, in a positive-sum game. Brazil gained the World Bank's seal of approval as a model of policy transfer to the world and the international organisation found new experience of best practices, which renewed the Bank's portfolio of policy instruments. As a result, in the last years of Lula's second term, Brazil became an export platform for social policies in an international context, specifically concerning conditional cash transfer and poverty reduction policies.

Keywords: Bolsa Familia program, public policy transfers, international organisations, World Bank, public policy implementation, public policy instruments.

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Introduction

The year 2003 was a landmark for social policies in Brazil. For the first time, a President of the Republic was elected on a platform based on fighting hunger and poverty, which presented a challenge: implementing social programs articulated within the context of the new institutional framework, the Extraordinary Ministry of Food Safety and the Fight against Hunger (MESA), which in 2004 was reformed into the Ministry of Social Development and the Fight against Hunger (MDS), articulating Social Assistance and the Fight against Hunger and Poverty (Tomazini and Leite 2016). The MDS programs took on an international scale, transforming the country into one of the great social policy exporters (Porto de Oliveira et al 2020). This was an unprecedented turn of events given that it inverted the logic of policy internationalisation, which traditionally involved the importing of economic and social policies (Mattos 2001; Pereira 2018).

The internationalisation process of Brazilian social policies is not new and has involved municipal initiatives since the 1970s (Justo 2009, Porto de Oliveira 2016), such as Curitiba's transport model and the Participatory Budgeting (PB) of Porto Alegre. In this century, the process attained a new level, with screening by international organisations such as the UN and the World Bank (PNUD/RDH 2014; Nações Unidas Brasil 2011; Wetzel 2013), which began to recommend Brazilian models of conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs and family farming programs (Milhorange 2013; Porto de Oliveira, 2016, 2019; Morais de Sá and Silva 2017).

Starting in 2007, systematic evaluations of the Bolsa Família Program (Family Allowance Program – BFP) seem to have played an important role in the creation of a positive and successful policy image (True, Jones & Baumgartner 1999) in terms of its efficiency in reducing poverty and effectiveness in leveraging social changes in various areas¹. The plasticity of the institutional design and the simplicity of the Brazilian model also favoured its adoption and adaptation in distinct contexts. Besides that, there was an increase in technical cooperation, such as the one between the Brazilian government and the World Bank. To illustrate this, from 2003 to 2014, 79 out of the 169 MDS projects in partnership with the World Bank were related to overcoming poverty (47% of the total) (Lorenzo 2013; Mafra 2014). At the time, there was a growing frequency of projects related to overcoming poverty, which reached 77% of all agreements made in 2013. In comparative terms, in 2013 nine projects were implemented with the World Bank, with seven of them designed to eradicate extreme poverty in Brazil, six of which featured technical cooperation (Lorenzo 2013; Mafra 2014).

The purpose of this article is to discuss the implementation and diffusion of the BFP from 2004 onwards from a transnational perspective. While there are several different publications related to the domestic dimensions of BPF in the literature (e.g., Bichir 2010; Campello and Neri 2013; Cobo 2012), there is less research on its international dimension (with a few exceptions – see Morais de Sá e Silva 2017; Oliveira 2018) and especially about the relationship between the Brazilian government and the World Bank. Drawing on document analysis, interviews and fieldwork, this article aspires to propose a discussion about the instruments, power and strategies that emerged in the relationship

between the Brazilian government and the World Bank, during the implementation and diffusion of BFP. Three main questions are at the core of our analysis: Under which circumstances and how has the relationship between the World Bank and Brazil around BFP emerge? What instruments were used to implement and diffuse PBF? Which type of power relations between these two agents took place?

Our findings reveal that the Brazilian government played a leading role in the formulation and implementation of the BFP due to the favourable political context, but also above all, the accumulation of learning from previous cash transfer experiences on the subnational (Paulics 2004), and federal levels (Leite and Peres 2015; Coelho 2013). There already existed a context in Latin America of conditional cash transfer policies before and after the turn of the century (Osorio Gonnet 2018). They were focused programs that varied in terms of their paradigms: food security, human capital and unconditional income (Tomazini 2010). Furthermore, whereas historically, in general, the actions of the World Bank in Latin American countries have been characterised by prescriptions and ‘golden models’ of economic and social development in loan agreements, within asymmetrical power relations (Mattos 2001), it may also be observed that in the BFP experience, the World Bank was an interlocutor for technical cooperation projects and the improvement of state capacities.²

This article draws on different kinds of literature – policy transfer and diffusion studies, policy instruments and policy capacities – to address our questions and analyse BFP from the aforementioned perspective. It is argued that the World Bank and Brazil engaged in a partnership of mutual gains. Brazil has benefitted from the loan of the World Bank to develop BFP instruments and the seal of approval of this international organisation, helping to make this public model an international one as well. The World Bank, in turn, benefitted from the Brazilian experience by increasing its fight against poverty portfolio of solutions, which could be applied in different countries. This article expects to stimulate discussions around the relations between the World Bank and Brazil and the transnational dimension of BFP, in particular, and CCTs, in general. The contribution of this article is limited by the data herein gathered and analysed; for this reason, it is encouraged for this field to be more investigated by scholars in public policies and international relations. The article is divided into four sections. The first presents the literature review and methodological strategy, focusing on the main concepts used in this article. The second presents the aspects of the World Bank’s poverty agenda and its first contact with Brazil for implementing BFP. The subsequent section consists of the analysis of the transnational relations between the World Bank and Brazil on the diffusion of BFP. The last section, finally, presents our discussion and conclusions.

Concepts and methods

Methodological strategy

To address the questions raised in the introduction, regarding the relations between the World Bank and Brazil in the implementation and diffusion of BFP, different techniques

were combined. First, a process tracing was conducted to assess the engagement of the World Bank with BFP in Brazil and the internationalisation of the program. Second, through a triangulation technique (Teixeira et al 2012), the instruments, techniques and experiences reported in World Bank documents based on the Brazilian experience were observed. It is acknowledged that the World Bank reports are political documents, which reflect and produce political processes in the thematic areas to which they refer. Despite this, the information drawn from the reports was crucial to understanding when and how the World Bank was implicated with BFP. The 14 documents that made up the project 'BR Bolsa Familia 1st APL' followed partnerships such as, for example, the PIDs (Project Information Document – Appraisal stage) and the ISDSs (Integrated Safeguard Data Sheets), culminated in the officialization of the World Bank's loan³ to the federal government in May 2004. However, since there were a series of agreements, we have used the most recent documents before the officialization of the loan⁴, which consist of the PIDs of April 26 and May 7 2004 and the ISDSs of April 12 and April 21 2004. For the analysis of issues related to the transfer of the BFP and its relationship with multilateral organisations, we used the *Summary of Foreign Policy from 2003 to 2010* published by the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE 2010) and the secondary data cited by Lorenzo (2013).

The analysis of the reports was triangulated with interviews carried out with agents who participated directly in the implementation of the PBF at two different moments: one academic who worked at the Brazilian Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS) from 2011 to 2013 and an expert with vast experience in designing and implementing CCT programs in Brazil, who worked with PBF in 2003 and the *Brasil Sem Miséria Program* (Brazil without Misery Program) in 2011 (two interviews were conducted with this expert, in 2012 and 2016). The article also analyses academic publications on the transfer and diffusion of PTRC, as well as international cooperation, which support the section of this text about the export of public policy. In addition, field research missions to Brasília were carried out, including a visit to the MDS in 2018, which included interviews with Brazilian government officials. Finally, documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were analysed. The data collected and reviewed were important to reveal the relationship between the World Bank and Brazil. However, the authors acknowledge that to identify political conflicts, the positions of these two agents and other issues related to the macrodynamics of this relationship, more research is needed, especially with a broader set of in-depth interviews with key informants. The next section will outline the main concepts used in this study.

Literature review and analytical categories

This study uses analytical categories derived from the field of policy studies, specifically policy transfer and diffusion, policy capacity and the approaches of the French scholarship on the political sociology of policy process (*sociologie politique de l'action publique*). Among these, the cognitive analysis of the diffusion and transfer of public policies (Weyland 2004; Porto de Oliveira 2019) and the notion of public action instruments (Halpern et al. 2021; Halpern and Le Galès 2011) stand out. The field of research in the transfer, diffusion and

circulation of public policies is emergent in Brazil (Pimenta de Faria et al 2016; Porto de Oliveira 2019). To understand this phenomenon entails paying attention to ‘a process that is mediated or not, in which an element or group of elements of political order [...] situated in a place in time or space, are adopted in another place’ (Porto de Oliveira 2016: 60).

This research observes two movements. On the one hand, there is the role of the World Bank in the development of the state instruments and capacities of the BFP and, on the other, the international diffusion of this model. By the diffusion of BFP, we understand that the model was spread to a wide variety of contexts, such as Latin American and Asian countries, among others (see Porto de Oliveira and Milani’s introductory article in this Special Issue for a detailed account on the different streams of policy transfer and diffusion research). In addition, one may observe the power relationships within the geopolitical context of the international diffusion of public action instruments through interactions between the Brazilian government and the World Bank.

The resignification of national public policies, specifically the creation of international models and the characterisation of the potential for policy diffusion based on the perceptions and beliefs of actors, is an element of reflection to Weyland (2004: 12). According to the author, not all successful public policies become models of international diffusion. If there is a break of paradigm within the context of a crisis, the chances of the diffusion process increase. The author also distinguishes between two mechanisms of diffusion: direct and indirect (p. 12). The direct form results from the relationship between transmitting and receiving countries based on their similarities and points of convergence, without the intermediation of international organisations. The indirect form of transmission occurs through the participation of international organisations that promote public policies and can operate as policy advisors, as the World Bank in the case herein analysed.

The author argues that indirect transmission presents a series of risks (p. 13). In the first place, transmission by international organisations may be based on the erroneous belief that there are universal models that apply to all countries, resulting in excessive standardisation which can compromise results, given that economic, cultural, social and political contexts can vary widely (Weyland 2004: 13). Secondly, there is a great risk of the model following the technical-normative orientation of the institution, using its influence over the receiving country to transmit, based on public policy, its political-ideological agenda, a movement that the author terms ideological blinders. Finally, we call attention to the risk of financially fragile countries submitting to the power of international organisations. Such organisations may dislocate resources and use the channel of loans to impose political-ideological conduct on the receiving country, and in this manner take advantage of the potential diffusion of its ideas on a global scale (p. 13).

The French political sociology of policy process has been innovative in broadening the classic notion of policy instruments (Howlett 1991; Hood and Margetts 2007). According to Halpern and Le Galès (2011), the analysis of the instrumentalization means observing the group of problems presented by the choice of instruments (techniques, operational methods, devices) which enable governmental policies to be materialised and operationalised. The BFP is composed of a group of norms and techniques which can be read as instruments of public action in the sense of Halpern and Le Galès, or, in other words, they

are associated with the ideas defended by the agents who implement them, whether they belong to Brazil or the World Bank. With respect to this, a study by Osorio Gonnet (2018) about CCTs in Latin America has shown that parties holding different ideological positions (left, centre and right) have implemented policies of this type in the region.

On top of the assistance with policy instruments, the World Bank also helped Brazil in the development of policy capacities for the implementation of the program. Wu, Ramesh and Howlett (2015: 166) define policy capacities ‘as the set of skills and resources—or competences and capabilities—necessary to perform policy functions.’ In discussing capacities in the context of policy diffusion, Porto de Oliveira and Milani (in this Special Issue), present the innovative notion of ‘capacity to transfer,’ which is related to a group of competencies, forms of knowledge and resources needed to implement and operationalise policy transfers. In this sense, there are two dynamics in play in the process analysed in this article: the capacities necessary to implement BFP and the capacity to transfer knowledge to other countries.

In the next sections, the relationship between Brazil and the World Bank in the implementation and diffusion of BFP will be presented. The focus of these sections will be on the data collected and the narrative will follow from such reconstructed processes. The concepts of diffusion, instruments and capacities will be brought back in the final section along with our conclusions.

The World Bank and the fight against poverty agenda: brief notes

The fight against poverty debate began to occupy a central position in the agenda of various Latin American countries in the 1990s. Within this context, some international organisations such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank were important in the diffusion of policies in the fight against poverty and were key to ‘softening’ the damaging social effects of neoliberal remedies ‘taken’ by various countries to combat the economic crisis that persisted after the 1980s (Pereira 2018). However, there was nothing new to this. This is a longstanding debate that has gained various meanings in specific historical contexts and has occupied a central and marginal role in the World Bank agenda depending on each period of the institution’s direction (Pereira 2010, 2018).

In the context of the diffusion of neoliberal ideas in Latin America, the World Bank elaborated strategies to fight poverty and face the elevated social costs created by neoliberal policies, according to reports about world development from 1990 to 2000 (Ugá 2004). Based on the influence of the works of Amartya Sen in the reports of 2000, it laid out a new cognitive map in the international debate about poverty, breaking the monopoly of the image (True, Jones & Baumgartner 2007) of poverty restricted to ‘income.’ Poverty came to be understood as a multifaceted phenomenon, relating multiple privations of capacities – economic, social and political.

In this same period, several left-leaning presidents were elected through a series of progressive coalitions in Latin America (Leite and Peres 2020), opening a window of opportunity for the implementation of new social policy paradigms. One of the pioneering

CCT programs in Latin America was a Mexican program called *Progresas/Oportunidades*, implemented in 1997 (after programs in Venezuela and Honduras at the end of the 1980s)⁵. Eight years later, the BFP was launched during Lula's first term, in early 2004. In general, both programs were designed to immediately alleviate poverty through financial transfers to the poorest portion of the population, demanding in return conditions linked to health and education, which would generate an interruption of the intergenerational cycle of poverty (Leite and Peres 2020).

In 2013, there was a broad banner on the façade of World Bank offices in Washington that said 'End poverty'⁶. This topic has been debated for decades within the institution, with various forms of content and meanings according to the historical and political context. Moreover, in the 21st century, the idea of fighting poverty became central to the action strategies of the World Bank. This process is confluent with the affirmation of the Millennium Goals and the Monterrey Consensus (United Nations 2008). According to Cling et al (2011), three innovations were registered in the Strategic Document on the Reduction of Poverty: the resumption of previous policies which included the theme of poverty reduction; the appropriation of policies designed to help the fight against poverty by destination countries; and the follow-up and evaluation of these policies in developing countries. As a development agency, the World Bank initiated a process of re-evaluating its role beginning in the 2000s. In the next section, the beginning of BFP will be outlined, as well as the first contacts between Brazil and the World Bank on the issue.

The Bolsa Família Program and the World Bank: a brief overview

The Bolsa Família Program: initial challenges

If we keep in mind the international dynamics of the circulation of ideas, the BFP can be understood as a collective construction that resulted from processes that originated from federal and subnational experiences (Leite and Peres 2015; Fonseca 2014; Coelho 2013). Despite this, there were initial difficulties in the program's formulation and implementation processes. According to Bichir (2014), in the beginning of the program, there was still great institutional fragility, which extended until approximately 2005, mainly in terms of the operational aspects of the program. In other words, at the beginning of the implementation, the bureaucracy was strongly dependent on external support from the point of view of technical expertise which would bring institutional 'muscle' to the program to improve the capacity of the federal government as a whole, as argued by Wu, Ramesh and Howlett (2015).

Within that context, the first great challenge the program faced was to guarantee the unification of four federal income transfer programs: School Stipend, Food Stipend, Gas Voucher, and Food Card. Even though they were designed for the same public, each had its specific objective, administrative structure, and budget. Apart from reaching a much smaller number of families than the BFP, these programs presented high administrative costs, coverage errors and duplications, compromising effectiveness in the fight against poverty.

In this manner, the program's bureaucracy presented concerns in terms of developing an efficient mechanism to identify its target public – families living in poverty and extreme poverty – which would avoid or even eliminate errors in the originally identified coverage. This mechanism, currently known as the Unified Registry (*Cadastro Único*) for social programs, provides the state with knowledge of the socioeconomic reality of these families. This includes information about the family as a whole, individual members, the characteristics of their home, and their forms of access to basic services, functioning as an important source of data for all social policies developed in the country. Another essential element for the institutional construction of the program from its inception was the development of a monitoring and evaluation apparatus converging with the institutionalisation of the evaluation function in Latin America and Brazil, in the words of Pimenta de Faria (2005).

It was in that initial implementation context that the partnership between the World Bank and the federal government began. An analysis of the loan concession documents and others derived from it (PIDs and ISDSs)⁷ indicate, as cited by Bichir (2014), that this partnership emerged from the need to provide the bureaucracy with sufficient capacity and support operationalisation of the program. This meant receiving support not in terms of its conception and design, but by regarding specific elements in which the World Bank is recognised as a specialist, or, in other words, the articulation of the operational elements of public policies.

It should be emphasised, according to Lindert (2006), that before the signing of the loan agreement, the World Bank team worked very closely with the MDS in the design of the partnership, reinforcing the argument that the relationship between World Bank consultants and the technical corps of the BFP was based on their exchange of experiences:

Even prior to Senate approval and the loan signing, the Bank team has been working closely with ministry counterparts to engage in continuous dialogue and ongoing technical assistance on how best to define, measure, monitor, and evaluate beneficiary targeting and other support systems, and more broadly, the sustained quality and longer-term output of the project (Lindert 2006: 70)

We may observe that the World Bank approach was to work closely to accompany and evaluate public policy, but without apparent impositions and conditions, operating through indirect transmission, as conceptualised by Weyland (2004). In the following section, we will address the specific instruments and the terms agreed on and negotiated by the international organisation and the Brazilian government within the context of the BFP.

The implementation of BFP: the tailor-made World Bank package

The World Bank developed a tailor-made package to overcome the specific difficulties initially experienced by the Brazilian program. According to the institution's official documents, this package sought to offer technical support so that the BFP would achieve its

objective of reducing poverty and inequality in Brazil and promoting investment in human capital for poor families through the direct transfer of income and complementary social policies (World Bank 2004). Analysing the content of these documents, terms such as ‘provide support’ and ‘assist’ stand out, suggesting the plausibility of the hypothesis that the institution appears as a complementary agent in the structuring of the program and not as a central agent and imposing protagonist that uses induction and conditionality mechanisms on development policies as it did in the 1990s. Fonseca also noted that the

World Bank did not participate in the design of the program. In fact, the proposed unification of the cash transfer programs was already in the plans of the candidate Lula da Silva in the Transition Group Report of 2002. The BFP is the result of collective construction. The narrative that confers the leading role to the World Bank is not innocent. The production of memories is always part of a dispute of interests (Fonseca 2014; translated by the authors).

The technical assistance that the World Bank provided the Brazilian government was constructed around four pillars⁸, based on discussions between President Lula and World Bank President Wolfensohn, beginning in March 2003 (World Bank 2004): *i*) the unification and consolidation of the conditional cash transfer program, reducing errors in coverage; *ii*) strengthening the target public identification system; *iii*) the development of a BFP evaluation and monitoring system; and *iv*) the structuring and strengthening of the program’s basic institutional functions⁹. As one of our interviewees stated, ‘[t]he World Bank was not the protagonist [...] they wanted to be close [to the Brazilian implementation experience]’.¹⁰

It is important to emphasise that the project proposed by the World Bank to support the implementation of the BFP was under the umbrella of the Programmatic Brazil Social Assistance Program, which included technical assistance in the general conception of the programs, specifically the identification and selection of the beneficiary public, monitoring and evaluation. The BFP support program was also part of and completed the Integrated Human Development Policy Sector Reform Loan (PSRL), which emphasised the development of the country’s actions to promote the quality and efficiency of social programs and encouraged accountability in the social area (World Bank 2004). This project had synergy with the Human Development Technical Assistance Loan (TAL), which sought to assist the Brazilian government in the development of an institutional capacity to monitor the implementation and evaluate the impact of social policies. Specifically in the case of Brazil, the TAL promoted support for the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) to strengthen its household survey system, including the generation of data that would be highly relevant to the monitoring and evaluation of the BFP.

The World Bank proposal for the unification of previous federal programs required the elaboration of a loan program (Two-phase Adaptable Program Loan - APL), which improved the effectiveness and results of the financial application. There were two phases: the first, from 2004 to 2006, focused on the unification of the existing CCT programs and

the institutional strengthening of the program; and the second, from 2007 to 2008, focused on the consolidation and elaboration of the techniques developed in the first phase.

According to World Bank documents (Lindert 2006), the first phase (2004-2006) consisted of four components:

1. The support of the BFP implementation process and the introduction of the Sector Wide Approach (SWAp¹¹ - US\$ 6.174 million): it involved the development of the National Treasury reimbursement system for part of the program's expenses, following the attainment of the stipulated targets. This system was considered by Lindert to be one of the most important and perennial tools that the World Bank created based on the experience of the Brazilian program (Lindert 2006).
2. Unification of the four cash transfer programs (School Stipend, Food Stipend, Gas Voucher, and the Food Card) (US\$ 3.2 million)¹²;
3. Reduction in program coverage errors through the improvement of the system's beneficiary public identification (US\$ 4.4 million), promoted with the assistance of the Unified Registry¹³;
4. Development of an effective system of monitoring and evaluation with three tools to improve the program's basic architecture (US\$ 7.0 million), the M&E Monitoring and Evaluation System. This system, which had been strongly supported by the government since its conception, is considered by Lindert (2003) to be the structural base of the BFP and this is directly reflected by the logical design of the World Bank support project. The implementation of this system included an internal capacity building process, adaptations in the information management system, the development of new monitoring and evaluation techniques for the program's implementation process, and the forecasting of long-term results.

The World Bank proposal was one of the four components operationalised and implemented by a 'Management Centre' composed of Brazilian technical specialists from the MDS. The first analyses indicate that the World Bank consultants had a high level of confidence in the expertise and technical capacity of the Brazilian government in the management of the program. In the next section, the transfer of knowledge between Brazil and the World Bank will be presented, opening the discussion to the transnational dimension of public policies, in particular the BFP.

The transnational dimension of *Bolsa Família*

The World Bank and the Brazilian government: transfer of knowledge

The World Bank was in contact with Brazil about CCT at the national level at least since 2003. In March of that year, Lula received James Wolfensohn, the Senior World Bank Economist for Latin America, and Santiago Levy, one of the main figures behind *Progresso/Oportunidades* (Morais de Sá e Silva 2017: 127). The analysis of the four components described in the previous section suggests that World Bank specialists provided technical assistance and increased the potential of actions that had already been designed by the Brazilian technical specialists, such as the card unification process and the structuring

of the Unified Registry. According to our informants, there was no imposition of a fixed model or prescription by the World Bank and BPF started to operate before the loan was implemented. In the words of our interviewee, ‘the Bolsa Família was launched on 20 October 2003. Lula told me that he wanted 3.6 million families in the program by the end of the year.’ The informant goes on by saying that ‘the Bolsa Família was already ongoing, we were doing it with our own funds, the loan of the Bank is from 2004, so there was no prescription.’¹⁴

The analysis of the reports also reveals that this process was a strong source of learning for the technical specialists of the World Bank, who searched for elements that could be transferred to other countries based on the Brazilian case. The official documents as well as the texts of consultant Kathy Lindert highlight the contribution of the Brazilian case to the diffusion of the CCT program as an effective strategy to fight poverty. In the document that formalises the loan (World Bank 2004a: 29), there is a section devoted to ‘Lessons learned and reflected in the project design,’ which presents a summary of the lessons learned from the Brazilian case and the international experiences, highlighting:

1. Instruments: The SWAp as an opportunity to leverage the financial contribution focused on the general development of the policy and not just the project level;
2. The mutual commitment to lead and take ownership of the policy objectives: The Brazilian government acted strategically, raising the program as the main social banner of the government recently elected in 2003. It enabled the strategy to fight poverty and achieved a high level of acceptance among political parties, the academic circle, civil society and even the media (World Bank 2004a: 29). The report points out that it achieved great international visibility, demonstrating that the policy was politically and operationally viable. It also contributed to countering the argument that cash transfer policies are assistentialist, mainly based on evidence of educational and health conditions and female leadership. According to the World Bank, these two extremely important characteristics are high profile tools of the BFP and certainly an example of success to other countries (World Bank 2004a *apud* Mafra 2014);
3. The precise selection of the beneficiary public: According to the bank, the policy has a greater positive impact when combined with an efficient system to identify the beneficiary public;
4. The impact on education levels: There were already lessons from the School Stipend Program, which presented positive results in terms of educational indicators, even though they were still minor. The Mexican experience of *Oportunidades* was a reference for projecting significant improvements in education through BFP;
5. Impact on health and nutrition: An evaluation of the Food Stipend Program carried out by the IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute) found that it had a significant impact on food consumption and diversity;
6. Empowerment strategies and complementary services: International experiences suggested that efforts to establish ‘bridges’ between program beneficiaries of

conditional cash transfer programs and other complementary programs can help overcome poverty. This lesson appeared at the beginning of the BFP but gained greater density and complexity with the formulation of the Brazilian Without Misery Program in 2011;

7. Continual monitoring and evaluation system: This involved implementation, beneficiary satisfaction, the ability to deliver services, the accompaniment of results and the evaluation of impacts;
8. Institutional and implementation capacity: the World Bank recognises that despite MDS's recent creation at the time, the ministry's accumulated knowledge and previous experience were extremely important to maintaining stability during the program's formulation and implementation.

An analysis of the discussion texts produced within the context of the World Bank and the Executive Summaries (all co-authored or authored by Lindert) makes it possible to affirm that the Brazilian case produced advances in the management of CCT instruments, which should be disseminated to other countries, with an emphasis on its capacity for adaptation. The program's structure, according to the World Bank, made it possible to hold a constant dialogue between actions and the obtained results, or, in other words, maintain feedback mechanisms between the flow of actions and results. According to Lindert (2006), this only occurred due to state capacity development, which was expressed by publicizing the operational guideline practices of the program; in formal agreements which clarified inter-ministerial responsibilities; in the formalisation of a supervisory network responsible for the auditing and control of possible inconsistencies; developing cross-referencing controls for the Unified Registry; and the strengthening of the program's transparency channels, encouraging citizen social control, in addition to local committees (Lindert 2004: 70). The best practices noted by the consultant are some of the explanatory elements of the program's legitimation in a complex network of social and political agents (Mafra 2014). As one of our interviewees mentioned, 'being together with Bolsa Família was a brand [for the World Bank]'.¹⁵ In the next section, the role of the World Bank in the exporting of CCT programs will be discussed.

The World Bank and Brazil as CCT program exporters

The World Bank had been in the business of supporting and developing CCT programs since the 1990s, assuming an increasingly prominent role. An example of this was the loan conceded for a program associating CCTs with education in Bangladesh (Sá and Silva 2017: 14). In a study of CCT programs in the world by Michelle Morais de Sá and Silva (2017: 26), out of the 75 identified programs, 42 received international support, with the World Bank participating in 29 of them. In a study of CCT programs in Latin America, Cecilia Osorio Gonneth (2018: 137) also identified the strong presence of the World Bank in 8 (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, and Paraguay) of the 17 countries that adopted experiences of this nature. As declared by Deborah Wetzel (Director of the World Bank in Brazil) in 2013,

[t]he Brazilian experience is showing the way for the rest of the world. Despite the short time since its creation, the program helps to stimulate an increase in conditional cash transfer programs in Latin America and around the world – such programs currently exist in more than 40 countries. Last year alone, more than 120 independent delegations came to Brazil to learn about Bolsa Família. The World Bank has been a partner in the program from the beginning; we are learning from it and helping to spread it (Wetzel 2013; translated by the authors).

In addition to supporting the development of policy instruments through loans or direct financing, the World Bank also held international workshops about CCT programs (2002 in Puebla, Mexico; 2004 in São Paulo, Brazil; 2006 in Istanbul, Turkey). The report prepared for the Workshop on CCT held in Puebla specifically mentions that ‘[t]he Bank’s objective in organizing the workshop was to provide a forum so that executing agencies or units of different CCTs could share their experiences—both successes and challenges—so that they could learn from one other with the final goal of improving the operation of their programs’ (Ayala Consulting 2003: 3).

Over time, Brazil also developed the expertise and ability to transfer BFP instruments and knowledge to other countries. As Porto de Oliveira and Milani argue in this Special Issue, CCT instruments constitute one of the central pillars of Brazilian South-South cooperation and sectoral diplomacy in the social protection environment fostered by the MDS. According to Lorenzo (2013), from 2004 to 2013, the MDS interacted with 63 countries as a provider of technical cooperation, specifically regarding the BFP, in five distinct categories: bilateral and trilateral technical cooperation; courses for South-South learning; study visits; the welcoming of delegations; and participation in international events. Among the 63 countries, the most sought-after types of cooperation were South-South learning courses and the welcoming of delegations, with 21 countries for each, followed by bilateral and trilateral partnerships with 11. We can perceive the priority placed on South-South bilateral technical cooperation as an articulated element of Brazilian foreign policy at the time (Brasil 2010). Concerning the technical visits, data obtained during field visits to the MDS in 2018 indicated that between 2011 and 2018 the ministry received 508 delegations from other countries, and from 2011 to 2015 it received visits ‘from 97 countries that had an interest in learning more about the program’ (Porto de Oliveira 2020: 13). According to our interviewees, the MDS began to organise international events to meet the volume of demand from other countries that wished to find out more about the Brazilian experience:

[T]hese seminars occurred each year, sometimes more than once, and between 2012 and 2016, 11 editions of the seminar were held. In general, we held a seminar due to the great demand by delegations wishing to know more about Brazilian policies and this ended up overloading the technical areas which needed to stop work to welcome these delegations. So, in order to welcome these delegations,

we developed this seminar which presented all of the ministry's policies: Unified Registry, Bolsa Familia, Food Safety and social assistance policies, and inclusive training programs (Interview with employees of the Secretariat of International Relations of the MDS. Brasília, November 6 2018).

The flow of international policy tours in Brasília to learn more about the BFP was so great that the MDS employees needed to divide their work between internal activities and welcoming delegations, as mentioned above. Therefore, they opted to concentrate international demand within a single annual seminar.

In general, the interest of such countries consisted of the transmission of knowledge related to the program's instruments and tools, associated mainly with the following instruments: the Unified Registry; the eligibility criteria of the target population and focus mechanisms; the concession of payments to beneficiary families; and the accompanying and monitoring of the conditions established for beneficiary families and evaluation. An example of this process was the relationships established with Peru. Motivated to 'make their main social support program for the very poor known as Juntos more effective, [...] they signed technical cooperation agreements with the MDS, counting on the participation of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) of the Ministry of Foreign Relations' (Agência Brasileira de Cooperação 2007: 13). The document also included the dynamics of the transfer of knowledge and techniques from Brazil to Peru:

Technical specialists from the MDS will train technical specialists from the MIMDES, regional and municipal employees, and multiplying agents. The training of local agents to facilitate the transfer of competencies, resources and decisions from the central government to regional and municipal governments, is the new vision for overcoming poverty in Peru. The development of local capacities seeks to redistribute opportunities, overcoming various forms of exclusion (Agência Brasileira de Cooperação 2007: 14).

There were also cases of trilateral agreements between the Brazilian government, multilateral organisations and other countries, which placed Brazil in the vanguard of South-South cooperation (MRE 2010).

In many cases, the World Bank operated in support of its actions increasing the capacities to transfer the CCT program developed by the Brazilian government, as illustrated by the Philippine program Pantawind Familyang (Taliotta 2020), which was inspired by Brazil and designed through an emulation of instruments from Mexico and Colombia (Howlett et al 2018: 278). According to Howlett, Ramesh and Saguin (Howlett, Ramesh and Saguin 2018: 273), the idea of a CCT program 'in the Philippines arose during a discussion at the beginning of 2006 between the country's Secretary of Social Well-Being Esperanza Icasas-Cabral, and the World Bank employee Jehan Arulpragasam [...] He encouraged Icasas-Cabral to participate in a conference about CCT programs organized by the World Bank in Istanbul in June 2006.' Later, in 2008, the President of the Philippines

visited Brazil and met Lula, who ‘gave a speech showing cooperation, union in the fight against poverty and inequality and the growing closeness between the programs’ (Taliotta 2020). That year, ‘President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo cited World Bank data regarding Brazil’s CCT program during her speech to the nation as a justification for the introduction of the Pantawid Program’ (Howlett, Ramesh and Saguin 2018: 273). The data obtained from the MDS in our field research indicated that a delegation from the Philippines visited Brazil in 2015 for training at the ‘International Social Development Policy Seminar – Special Edition ‘Brazil: Overcoming Hunger is Possible’ (Bolsa Familia Program, Brazil Without Misery Plan, and Food and Nutritional Safety)’.

In the case of the Philippines, the World Bank offered loans and technical support and produced learning through the publication of reports. Policy authorities and government employees gave various policy tours, with some of these being held in Brazil. The World Bank acted not only as a financial agent but also assisted in the transfer of state training and was a pivot in the definition of models that inspired the Philippine program. The Brazilian experience, in turn, served as a source of knowledge and legitimation for the Philippine program. There is a myriad of examples like this which combine cooperation for development from international organisations and governments and technical support from Brazil to transfer CCT program instruments. In the next section, we will discuss the main findings of the paper and a few conclusions.

Discussion and conclusion

The analysis of the interaction between the Brazilian government and the World Bank within the context of the BFP reveals different dimensions of policy diffusion, policy instruments and policy capacity, contributing to advancing policy studies in different directions. First, the diffusion process involved the dynamics between a Global South country and an international organisation, where the latter is not imposing the adoption of a specific policy, but rather supporting its development, learning from the experience, and using it as a model for other countries in the Global South. In the political dimension, it was possible to observe a rupture, where the World Bank appears to move from pursuing a traditional dominant power relationship with Latin American countries, towards a co-operative partnership with Brazil, to implement and promote the development of ‘exportable’ CCT policy instruments.

Second, by observing the implementation and diffusion processes it is possible to assume the distance of the stylised views and narratives of political processes that are bounded by the state and broadly access the nature of contemporary public policies, which is frequently transnational. The participation of the World Bank in the BFP shows that the state can be susceptible to international interference even in the design and implementation of domestic policies. In the specific case of Brazil, the country not only received support from an international organisation in the first moments of the BFP implementation but also consolidated itself as a model to be followed by other countries, with the seal of approval of the World Bank and the external actions of the MDS, reinforcing the

internationalisation of domestic public policies. This process also reveals implications for policy capacity studies, which benefit from considering the international dimension of capacity development and capacity for transferring public policies to other governments and agents.

Third, the BFP gained notoriety in Lula's broad foreign policy agenda and established the country as a strategic policy agent among developing countries. In this process, Brazil gained the seal of approval of the World Bank as a CCT program model for the world and the international organisation discovered a new empirical best practice (Lindert 2005), in a nation of continental scale. By establishing meaning and diffusing the Brazilian program in the international realm, the cooperation projects established by the Brazilian government with other countries, without the mediation of the World Bank or any other multilateral organisation, were important, operating in Weyland's terms (2004) as a direct transmission mechanism of diffusion.

Fourth, this work shows the role of the World Bank was not one of protagonism in the sense of imposing a complete package of public policy, from ideas to instruments. It was, in reality, a convenient partnership that provided technical assistance for initiatives designed before the loan agreement was signed. The Brazilian government benefitted from getting the most out of its arrangements and policy instruments; the World Bank gained from this experience a group of recommendations for other countries based on the Brazilian case which reiterated old ideas (control, transparency, focus, evaluation and monitoring), legitimising and capitalising conditional cash transfer programs as viable economic and political alternatives in the fight against poverty throughout the world over the past few decades.

Finally, it is important to mention that the World Bank should not be conceived as monolithic. It is a multifaceted institution, which operates through individual agents – consultants, employees, etc. (such as Kathy Lindert or Jehan Arulpragasam, mentioned in this article) – and group agents, and has distinct organisational structures. These agents can promote specific models according to their experiences and preferences (Porto de Oliveira 2019). Our study is limited to the case of CCTs in the World Bank and the specific relation of this organisation with Brazil, in the period covered by the research. Considering this issue, more research is needed to compare the engagement and behaviour of the World Bank in other policy areas or with specific policy instruments and other countries.

It is worth mentioning as well that the Brazilian case has been highly valued in the past few decades, but the instruments of BFP are not the only ones in circulation. The programs of Mexico, Colombia and Chile have also recognized internationalisation. On the one hand, international organisations and donors such as the World Bank, recommend specific policy instruments of CCTs, drawing on the experience of different countries, such as the Brazilian Single Registry. On the other hand, governments can assemble policy instruments from distinct origins to design their own CCT policy model. This observation reveals important implications for the study of policy instruments, which are not necessarily technical or functional tools, implemented by governments to solve problems. Instead, policy instruments can carry different ideas and ideologies (the leftist government

of Brazil or the World Bank), as well as be involved in decision-making processes that suffer from a pressure from international forces, along with domestic agents supporting or resisting the adoption of policy instruments. These dimensions have not been further explored in this article, but we believe that the microdynamics of the diffusion process, through the analysis of the individual agents, as well as the ideas and specific instruments that they promote, are certainly a promising agenda for the future.

Notes

- 1 See the blog organised by Paulo de Martino Jannuzzi: https://issuu.com/sagi_mds. Regarding the argument on the role of evaluation in the legitimization of the programs, see Tomazini (2013) and Leite and Peres (2015).
- 2 There is rich literature that analyses the asymmetrical historical relationships of the World Bank with the governments of developing countries in various areas: education, agrarian reform, economics, and the environment, among others (Mattos 2001). In a search on the electronic library scielo.br in July 2020, 59 publications with the keyword 'Banco Mundial (World Bank)' were found, 16 of which were about education.
- 3 'Project Appraisal document on a proposed adaptable program loan in the amount of US\$572.2 million to the Federative Republic of Brazil for the Bolsa Família Program,' May 25 2004.
- 4 For PIDs the date used appears as the 'Date of Appraisal Authorization' and for ISDSs as the 'Appraisal Date.'
- 5 '(...) The first wave of programs at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s was a 'small wave' in the cases of Venezuela and Honduras. Beginning in the second half of the 1990s, this small wave turned into a tsunami. In 1997, the *Oportunidades* program was implemented in Mexico; in 2000, it was the *Mi Familia* program in Nicaragua; in 2001 there was the Colombian program *Familias en Acción* and the Ecuadorean *Bono Solidaridad-Bono de Desarrollo Solidario*. In 2002 the *Programa Chile Solidario* and the *Jefas y Jefes de Hogar Desocupados na Argentina* programs were implemented; in 2003, Brazil implemented the Bolsa Família Program. Other cases of the implementation of CCT programs: 2005: El Salvador, *Programa Oportunidades (Red de Protección Social)*; Uruguay, *Ingreso Ciudadano*; Paraguay, *Tekoporã*; *Ñopytyvo* (in the Chaco region); Dominican Republic, *Solidaridad*; Peru, *Juntos*; 2006: Panama, *Red de Oportunidades* (Fonseca and Viana 2007: 1507) (Leite and Peres 2015: 622).
- 6 Field investigation mission conducted by Osmany Porto de Oliveira, May 2013.
- 7 Project information documents (PID) of April 19 2004 and May 11 2004; Integrated Safeguard (ISDS) data from April 12 2004 and May 11 2004.
- 8 In the 'Project information document (PID). Appraisal stage' of April 19 2004, one more pillar was added which was associated with the possibility of promoting vertical integration in the social protection network between the federal government and subnational governments.
- 9 According to the same document, the program also contributed to the alignment of Brazil with the Millennium Development Goals, such as, for example, ending hunger and misery (MDG1), quality basic education for everyone (MDG 2), reducing infant mortality (MGD4), improving the health of pregnant women (MDG 5). See: <https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>
- 10 Interview with BFP expert, Campinas, August, 17 2012.
- 11 SWAp is a loan methodology with programmatic adjustments that offers various reimbursements according to qualitative and quantitative goals and the public policy results achieved.
- 12 This involved the consolidation of the operational structure, including the program's legal apparatus; strengthening the program's management, establishing institutional roles with a 'responsibility matrix,' specifying the flow of information to the Unified Registry, as well as developing and implementing the system for verifying compliance with the conditions as well as technical training and assistance in system maintenance; strategy development for operating the program in remote areas; the definition of possible

intergovernmental partnership mechanisms to help expand the program, expanding coverage and linking BFP beneficiaries with complementary services; and the development of an inter-municipal information network to share best practices and experiences (Lindert 2006).

- 13 According to Lindert (2006), this promotion was accomplished through: a) the strategic definition of the system's structure as a whole; b) a review of the eligibility criteria for the BFP, considering the specificities of Native American and former slave communities (developing a specific survey); c) a review of the data collection strategy; d) a reduction of administration errors in the Unified Registry; e) the strengthening of technical and technological training for the Unified Registry administrators within the MDS and municipalities, and in the BFP partner institutions such as FUNAI/FUNASA and Palmares Foundation/SEPPPIR.
- 14 Interview with BFP expert, Campinas, September 05 2016.
- 15 Interview with BFP expert, Campinas, September 05 2016.

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Transferência de Políticas Públicas e Organizações Internacionais: A complexa relação entre o Brasil e o Banco Mundial na implementação do programa Bolsa Família

Resumo: Este artigo discute a complexa relação entre o Banco Mundial e o governo brasileiro no processo de implementação do Programa Bolsa Família, a partir de 2004. A hipótese é que houve alinhamento entre as agendas de combate à fome e à pobreza entre a instituição e o país. Tornou-se possível a transferência de instrumentos e experiências brasileiras para o mundo por meio do Banco Mundial. Baseado em técnicas de triangulação de dados, argumenta-se que o desenvolvimento de capacidade estatal para implementar o programa ocorreu em bases mais cooperativas do que impositivas da parte do Banco Mundial, em um jogo de soma positiva. O Brasil ganhou do Banco Mundial a chancela de modelo de transferência de políticas de combate à fome e à pobreza para o mundo e a organização internacional encontrou nova experiência de “best practices”, que renovou o portfólio de instrumentos de políticas públicas do banco. Como resultado, no último ano do segundo mandato de Lula, o Brasil tornou-se uma plataforma de exportação de políticas sociais no contexto internacional, sobretudo de políticas de combate à pobreza, à fome e de transferência de renda condicionada.

Palavras-chave: Programa Bolsa Família, transferência de políticas públicas, organizações internacionais, Banco Mundial, implementação de política pública, instrumentos de política públicas.

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