

Conditional Social Assistance and the Politics of Social Exclusion in Latin America

By

Matthew Lloyd Layton

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Approved:

Mitchell A. Seligson, Ph.D.

Elizabeth J. Zechmeister, Ph.D.

Jonathan Hiskey, Ph.D.

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my grandparents and my father-in-law

and

To my beloved wife, Cinira, for time and for all eternity

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, Latin American societies made tremendous progress in their efforts to eradicate extreme poverty (see Figure 1-1) and inequality.¹ Led by the process of democratization, the election of pragmatic leftist leaders, and the implementation of progressive social policies, these recent gains arguably provide evidence that social, political, and economic structures in the region have been fundamentally altered in ways that will provide for more inclusive development in the future which, if true, would be no small feat for the region that has historically been the most unequal in the world (Huber and Stephens 2012; López-Calva and Lustig 2010). In fact, López-Calva and Lustig (2010, 17) raise the intriguing possibility that “transfers that targeted the poor may also have given traditionally disenfranchised groups more voice in the political process.” Thus, not only have Latin American countries promoted the material well-being of their citizens, they may also have promoted the political and social autonomy of the poor in contexts where, traditionally, the poor rarely “count” in politics except to the extent that they are linked to clientelistic party machines (Taylor-Robinson 2010).

¹ In terms of poverty, World Bank estimates show that at the turn of the century more than one out of every five Latin American citizens lived in poverty (defined as living on the equivalent of \$2 per person per day) and just over one out of every ten lived in extreme poverty (defined as living on the equivalent of \$1.25 per person per day) (see Figure 1-1). Strikingly, these high rates of poverty were no aberration of a single bad economic downturn: the region had confronted similarly high rates of poverty at least since the early 1980s. Still, just ten years later poverty rates had fallen by more than half across the region; by 2010, only about one in ten Latin Americans still lived in poverty, and less than one in twenty lived in extreme poverty. Likewise, in terms of inequality, during the period between 2000 and 2007 Gini scores declined by over 1 percent a year across twelve Latin American countries, a significant achievement in the most economically unequal region in the world (López-Calva and Lustig 2010, 1–3).

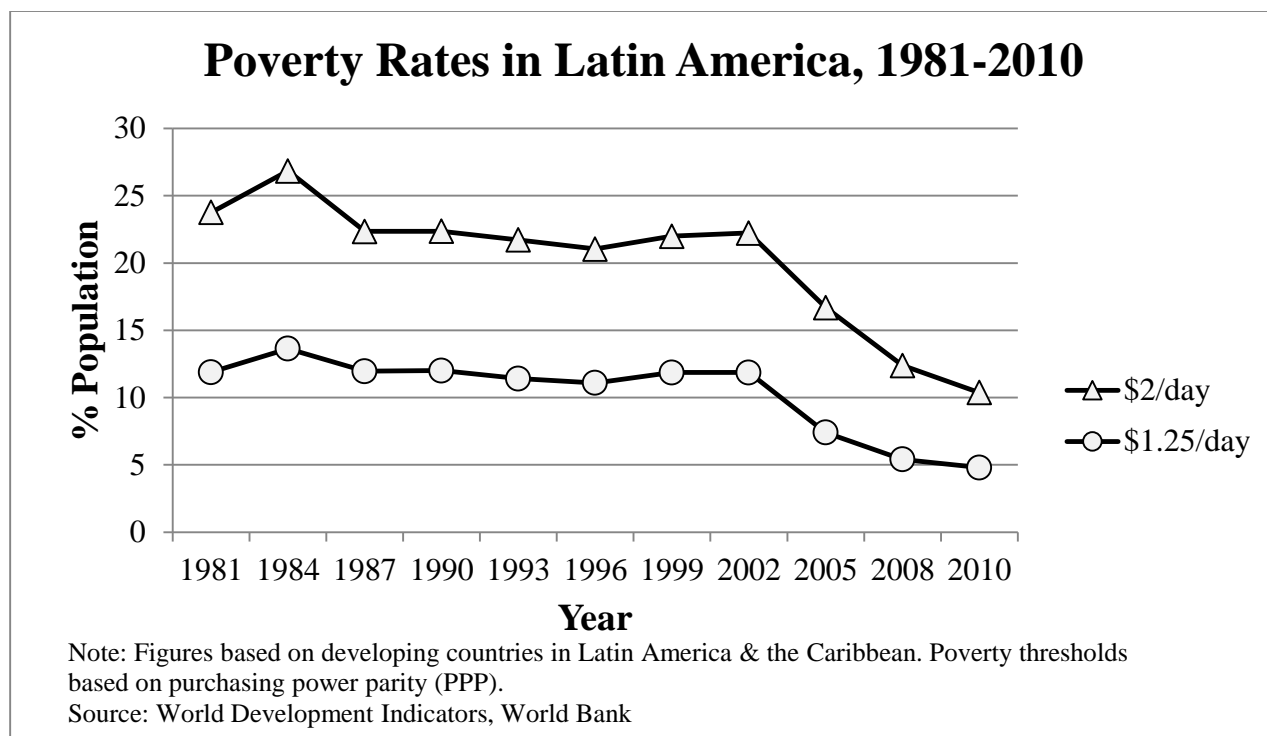


Figure 1-1. Poverty Rates in Latin America, 1981-2010

Still, economic gains alone will not necessarily correspond with political empowerment and social inclusion for the poor. In fact, despite its recent progress towards greater economic equality, Latin America retains the title of the most unequal region in the world (López-Calva and Lustig 2010), which raises the possibility that Latin American societies are eradicating destitution at the margins without truly empowering autonomous citizens.² This observation leads to the following empirical questions: have the expanded economic opportunities reflected by the trends in the region’s poverty and inequality indicators been matched with the expansion

² Indeed, there is clearly still work to be done in terms of human development within Latin America given that the region’s level of human development has not kept pace with the overall reduction of poverty. Although poverty rates were cut in half between 2000 and 2010, data from the UNDP shows that between 2000 and 2013 the average annual Human Development Index growth for the region was 0.62%, smaller than the world average of 0.73% and the smallest of the regions that the UNDP tracks, including the Arab States (0.85%), East Asia and the Pacific (1.29%), Europe and Central Asia (0.80%), South Asia (1.39%), and Sub-Saharan Africa (1.37%). As of the 2014 Human Development Report, the average Latin American adult has only completed 7.9 years of schooling compared to 11.7 years in countries with very high human development; average life expectancy in the region (74.9 years) still falls short of the average in countries with very high human development (80.2 years); and gross national income per capita in Latin America (\$13,767) pales in comparison with that in countries with very high human development (\$40,046). See <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data> for the statistical tables containing these figures.

of citizens' opportunities to participate effectively in the political life of the country, through more accountable and responsive political institutions, effective and autonomous political participation among the poor, and the negation of social stigmas and discrimination against the poor and other vulnerable or marginalized groups?³ More particularly, have conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs, among the most indispensable policy tools for combating poverty in recent years, promoted these processes of empowerment for their beneficiaries?

In this project I study the politics of social exclusion, meaning the politics of self-interested and strategic ambition on the part of political elites, the politics of dependent civic and political participation among the poor, and the politics of intergroup discrimination directed towards assistance recipients, all of which limit the potential for CCT programs to contribute to the political empowerment of the poor in Latin America. I will argue that political elites, non-recipients, and beneficiaries all respond to the enactment of these programs in ways that are consistent with their respective interests, but that simultaneously undermine the capacity of these programs to break cycles of social exclusion and empower autonomous citizens.

CCT programs ostensibly represent an important shift towards more programmatic and technocratic antipoverty and redistributive efforts in Latin America and throughout the developing world (Adato and Hoddinott 2010; Barrientos and Santibáñez 2009; Cecchini and Madariaga 2011; Dion 2010; Fiszbein and Schady 2009; Hall 2006; Pero and Szerman 2010; Rawlings 2005). These programs, which originated in Brazil and Mexico in the mid-1990s, have three primary objectives: 1) alleviate immediate poverty; 2) improve access to social services (primarily education, health, and social assistance); and 3) promote recipient families' human

³ For this definition of empowerment, I draw on the World Bank's World Development Report of 2000/2001 (7).

development thereby reducing long-term vulnerability.⁴ More specifically, CCT programs target households living in extreme poverty to receive supplementary cash benefits linked to conditions that require these families to enroll their children in school and ensure that they meet attendance thresholds, take their children for mandated vaccinations, and comply with growth monitoring and early childcare requirements, including antenatal and postnatal care for expectant mothers. In turn, as part of the “co-responsibilities” of these programs, governments and implementing agencies guarantee that they will provide the necessary services for beneficiaries to comply with these conditions, thereby presumably promoting a more inclusive provision of state services and benefits. The fact that these programs operate for a relatively small cost while providing an electoral boost to incumbents helps to explain why they have been adopted so enthusiastically by governments from across the ideological spectrum in recent years (De La O 2015).

Proponents of these programs point to evidence of their economic impact as vindication of their innovative design. For instance, López-Calva and Lustig (2010) and Huber and Stephens (2012) both point to the widespread adoption of redistributive policies, and CCT programs in particular, as crucial factors in the reduction of poverty and inequality rates in Latin America in recent years. Barros et al. (2009) report similar findings regarding the effect of Brazil’s CCT program on the country’s level of inequality. Likewise, Soares et al. (2010) note that CCT programs have proven highly effective at targeting and distributing benefits to the poorest of the poor and that this, together with the sheer number of beneficiaries, has allowed the programs to have a significant impact on reducing poverty. Scholars have also found that the programs have robust effects on recipients through their conditionalities that link beneficiaries to public services like schools and health clinics. These effects include inducing more consistent school enrollment,

⁴ These objectives differ starkly from the more traditional social insurance schemes that Latin American governments long endorsed, but which disproportionately favored organized groups of public sector, military, and unionized laborers in society (Haggard and Kaufman 2008; Malloy 1979; Mesa-Lago 1978).

attendance, and grade completion, compliance with growth monitoring campaigns and greater uptake of health care services including prenatal care, higher caloric intake and greater dietary diversity, and a reduction in the reliance on child labor (Adato and Hoddinott 2010).

Yet beyond their primary policy objectives of relieving short and long-term poverty and expanding access to state services, these programs also have potential secondary social and political impacts. For instance, Hunter and Sugiyama (2014) provide evidence that Brazil's CCT program promotes social inclusion and agency among beneficiaries. Some analysts even claim that these potential secondary effects are implicit to the original objectives of the programs: in their technical overview of Brazil's CCT program Lindert et al. (2007, 6) note that "the BFP [Bolsa Família Program]...seeks to help empower BFP beneficiaries by linking them to complementary services." Indeed, on the website for the Brazilian Ministry of Social Development (MDS, Ministério de Desenvolvimento Social), which coordinates the Bolsa Família program, the agency explicitly claims that "through cash transfer programs, like Bolsa Família, MDS provides citizenship and social inclusion to the beneficiaries." Thus, whether by design or not, the language of social inclusion or the "social rights of citizenship," to use Marshall's (1964) term, is unavoidable when discussing CCT programs. In fact, one might reasonably argue that in order to fulfill the third objective of CCT programs, to reduce the long-term vulnerability of beneficiaries, these programs must ensure that beneficiaries have additional opportunities to voice their opinions and participate effectively in making political decisions that affect their livelihoods and their beneficiary status.

Throughout the course of the following chapters I more fully develop and test the argument that despite their innovative design CCT programs fail to effectively empower their recipients. There are a number of reasons for this, each of which I take up in the analyses that

follow. First, the implementation of CCT programs has not constrained the efforts of politicians to strategically manipulate the distribution of program benefits. Second, recipients are more participatory in their communities than their non-recipient peers for instrumental reasons related to ensuring the receipt of their benefits; accordingly, their participation results in dependent relationships that ultimately prove unhelpful in developing recipients' sense of political efficacy. Third, CCT programs, in spite of their innovative design and evident success at targeting extremely poor households and reducing extreme poverty rates, have failed to negate social stigmas related to poverty and welfare receipt. In other words, although these programs have proven highly effective at ensuring high rates of school attendance and vaccination among young children, current beneficiaries are no more engaged in the broader political processes of their society than their non-recipient peers. They face the same social stigmas and discrimination as welfare beneficiaries under more traditional programs and political elites, while perhaps more programmatic in their deployment of benefits through CCTs than under less technocratic programs, continue to make self-interested strategic use of these popular and electorally rewarding policies. This is not to say that CCT programs are responsible for the existence of exclusionary socio-political processes in Latin America; rather, the point is that CCT programs *alone* are unable to guarantee the emergence of more inclusive societies or greater political empowerment and autonomy among their target population.

Indeed, a first, naïve exploration of individual-level data from Latin America suggests that, if anything, assistance recipients have much less of a sense of their own individual political autonomy (i.e., internal efficacy) than their non-recipient peers even after accounting for the relative level of wealth of individual households. The AmericasBarometer survey by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) asked respondents from across Latin America and

the Caribbean to indicate to what extent they agree or disagree with the statement “you feel that you understand the most important political issues of this country.” Answers are given on a 1-7 scale where 1 indicates ‘strongly disagree’ and 7 indicates ‘strongly agree.’ After recoding responses from 0 to 1, Figure 1-2 shows the mean response by CCT recipient status and household quintile of wealth (where quintile ‘1’ is the poorest quintile and quintile ‘5’ is the wealthiest quintile) based on responses to the 2014 survey.⁵ Strikingly, even after more than a decade of seemingly effective policies directed towards pro-poor development in Latin America, CCT recipients, who are among the clearest targets and beneficiaries of those policies, express a significantly lower sense of internal political efficacy than their non-recipient peers across all the wealth categories. In this project, I seek to explain why that is the case.

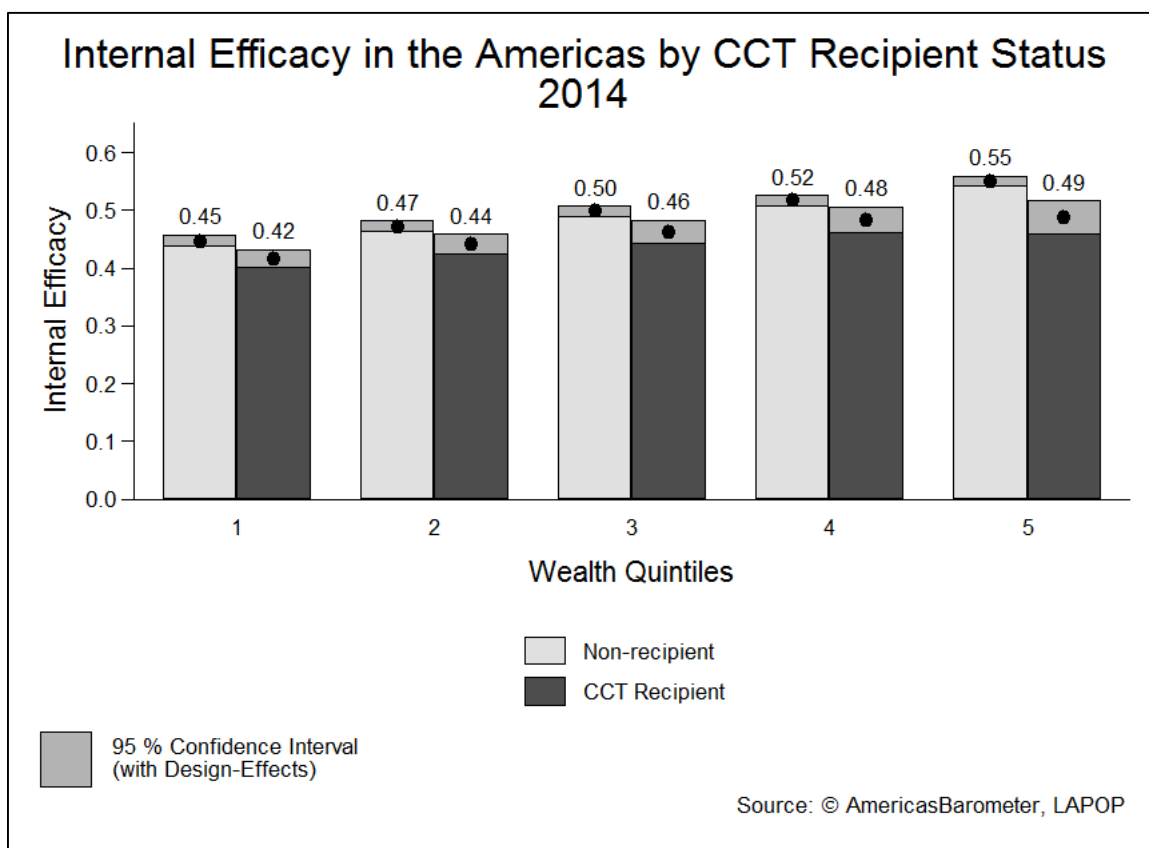


Figure 1-2. Internal Efficacy in the Americas by CCT Recipient Status, 2014

⁵ For a description of the wealth quintiles variable see Córdova (2009).

Scholars' understanding of the role of policies like CCT programs in shaping politics and the opportunities available to citizens to augment their political autonomy has expanded rapidly in the last several years with the emergence of the policy feedback literature (see Campbell 2012). This literature takes as a starting point the observation that not only does politics shape policy outcomes, but that the resulting policies in turn shape politics by placing constraints on political actors, providing resources to target populations, or shaping citizens' perceptions and attitudes. For instance, in the case of social assistance programs in the United States, scholars have found evidence of at least two types of social assistance policy: those like Social Security that "make" citizens (Campbell 2003) who can actively and effectively petition their government in favor of their policy objectives and interests; and those like TANF (formerly AFDC) that "regulate" (Piven and Cloward 1971) or "discipline" (Soss 2000; Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011) recipients to avoid broader social unrest yet do so without allowing individual beneficiaries to develop and express their autonomy. These theories have only rarely been applied to the context of the developing world; indeed, until the fairly recent emergence of CCT programs in Latin America, there were relatively few opportunities to do so in relation to structured programs targeted at the poor.

To the extent that political scientists have studied the political consequences of enacting CCT programs in Latin America, it has largely been to test the electoral impact of these programs on voter mobilization and vote choice or popular support for incumbent governments (Baez et al. 2012; Hunter and Power 2007; De La O 2013; Layton and Smith 2015; Licio, Rennó, and Castro 2009; Linos 2013; Manacorda, Miguel, and Vigorito 2011; Zucco 2013). More recent efforts have considered how institutional structures shape the politics of CCTs and their resulting electoral impacts (De La O 2015; Layton and Smith 2015). As a result of this focus in the

literature, the broader impact of the programs on beneficiaries' standing in the political arena has only rarely been addressed.

When scholars have pushed their analyses beyond the electoral impact of these programs, they have reached contradictory conclusions regarding their effect on the political role of beneficiaries as citizens in democratic societies. On the basis of focus group research, Hunter and Sugiyama (2014) claim that Brazil's CCT program leads to social inclusion and autonomy for beneficiaries. Likewise Rego and Pinzani (2013) claim that the cash benefits empower Brazilian women within the household, particularly vis-à-vis their husbands, because it gives them an independent source of income to control. By contrast, Hevia (2009, 2011a, 2011b) notes that the programs produce the benefit of breaking down clientelistic relationships between beneficiaries and local authorities because these programs encourage the institutionalization of benefit provision, but nonetheless limit the political autonomy and empowerment of beneficiaries because those same automatic and institutionalized processes of inclusion in the program make collective action amongst the beneficiaries difficult to organize and mobilize. Finally, Adato (2000) also provides evidence on both sides and notes instances of both "social solidarity" and "social divisions" that emerged as a consequence of the enactment of Mexico's PROGRESA (now *Oportunidades*) program.

This project thus has a dual purpose: the following chapters push the existing literature forward in terms of highlighting the importance of understanding the broader impact of CCT programs on their recipients' political lives and, by bringing to bear original data that is both qualitative and quantitative in nature, further clarifies what conclusions to draw concerning their impact. The chapters have been written to stand as individual contributions to the literature apart from the overall project. Consequently, the reader will note that each chapter will revisit basic

definitions of terms, including the definition of a CCT program, but will do so in ways that are focused on the aspects of those definitions that are relevant within the specific argument of the chapter in question.

In answering the research questions that I have laid out here, I draw on data from the case of Brazil's CCT program. Bolsa Família (Family Stipend) was introduced by executive order during the first term of President Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva and quickly received congressional approval through legislation that ensured its political sustainability. It consolidated a number of preexisting government transfer programs that had been introduced during the prior administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, in an effort to expand access to and the efficiency of these programs (Lindert et al. 2007). It has now been functioning for over a decade under the remainder of the administration of President Lula and his political ally and current incumbent, President Dilma Rousseff. This stability in the political administration of the program has provided a number of benefits for researchers interested in studying CCT programs. It has ensured that the Bolsa Família program has not suffered drastic reforms or amendments to its core functions and it has given the program sufficient time to penetrate in its operation and implementation to municipalities throughout the vast and diverse nation of Brazil. Thus, it is now possible to begin to test the long-term effects of CCT programs across sub-national contexts.

Moreover, Brazil's Bolsa Família program has been held up, together with Mexico's *Oportunidades* (formerly *PROGRESA*) program as a model for other developing nations in Latin America and elsewhere to follow. This makes it even more imperative to understand the impact Bolsa Família has had on its beneficiaries so that other countries that adopt such programs can better understand what the impacts, both intended and otherwise, of such programs might be in their societies.

The plan for the empirical chapters of this project is as follows:

- **Chapter 2:** Prior research has shown that CCT programs pay electoral dividends for incumbent elected officials and their political parties by mobilizing electoral support among program beneficiaries. What is as yet unknown is whether elected officials strategically manipulate the distribution of CCT programs for their own electoral advantage as has been observed in prior anti-poverty schemes, particularly in the Latin American region. Given the size of the potential assistance beneficiary pool in developing countries, I argue that the incentive of gaining the support of a large base of voters will prove attractive for political elites and that they will consequently time the allocation of benefits in the program to coincide most favorably with their electoral interests. To test this argument this chapter analyzes the month-by-month growth in beneficiary families in the Brazilian conditional cash transfer program, Bolsa Família, as a function of the proximity of elections from January 2004 through December 2012. The results of the analysis provide strong evidence that, on average and independent of other factors, benefits in the program are distributed according to the presidential electoral calendar. The findings highlight how difficult it is to separate the functions of an assistance program from the electoral incentives of top-level political elites and their loyal political appointees.
- **Chapter 3:** This chapter examines the link between participation in Brazil's conditional social assistance program, Bolsa Família, and the political empowerment of the program's beneficiaries by using statistical matching methods and analyses of original focus group studies. Evidence from the 2008,

2010, 2012, and 2014 AmericasBarometer surveys in Brazil shows that benefit receipt correlates most consistently with increased parental participation in parent-teacher association meetings in local schools. At first glance, this seems to support the notion that programs like Bolsa Família enhance citizen empowerment; however, as in Figure 1-2, analysis of the survey evidence shows that recipients feel less politically efficacious than their non-recipient peers. Focus group interviews conducted with parents and public school teachers in Manaus and Brasília suggest are consistent with these results. While it is true that the Bolsa Família program has structured individual behavior along a key policy-relevant dimension, the practical effect of that structuring has been to place recipient parents at risk of asymmetrical, stigmatized, and dependent relationships with school officials. Thus, rather than augmenting democratic citizenship by empowering its recipients, the assistance program actually reinforces stigmatization and social hierarchy in Brazil.

- **Chapter 4:** CCT poverty alleviation programs have gained wide traction throughout the developing world over the last several years. The conditional nature of these programs allow their supporters to frame them as more than mere “handouts” to the poor because they require recipients to engage in “good behavior” like ensuring that their children attend school and receive basic vaccinations. Some observers even claim that these institutionalized conditions limit the stigma of taking welfare and thereby promote social inclusion for beneficiaries. This chapter uses data from the 2014 AmericasBarometer in Brazil to test these claims in relation to Brazil’s Bolsa Família Program. The results

show that, in spite of their innovative design, CCT beneficiaries continue to encounter the very stigmatization and negative self-stereotypes that characterize more traditional anti-poverty programs. Many Brazilians, recipient and non-recipient alike, endorse explicitly negative stereotypes of Bolsa Família assistance recipients. Moreover, the level to which respondents endorse these stereotypes strongly predicts their level of support for the Bolsa Família program. These results highlight the pervasive nature of negative stereotypes towards the poor, even in the context of the developing world, and are consistent with the predictions of social psychological theories of system justification.

- **Conclusions:** In the conclusion to the project I summarize my findings and discuss the direction of future research on CCT programs. I conclude that given the undertow of self-interested behaviors and attitudes among political elites, CCT beneficiaries, and non-beneficiaries that, taken together, create barriers to beneficiary empowerment and political autonomy, governments and funding agencies that adopt and support CCT programs must tread carefully when designing these programs to ensure that beneficiaries ultimately have the opportunity to overcome the politics of social exclusion and develop an autonomous and empowered political voice in their respective societies.

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Chapter 2

STRATEGIC TARGETING: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CONDITIONAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE COVERAGE IN BRAZIL, 2004-2012

Introduction

The potential for elected officials to strategically use public resources for their own electoral benefit is a universal phenomenon (e.g., Alesina and Roubini 1992; Alt and Rose 2007; Ames 1977; Franzese 2002; Keech and Pak 1989; Schady 2000; Schuknecht 2000; Tufte 1978). This pattern of behavior reflects the interests of incumbents as they attempt to achieve reelection for themselves or their political party. Regrettably, some of the most brazen examples of the electoral manipulation of public policy uncovered by scholars relate to programs targeted at the poor and vulnerable populations in society. Social assistance programs are a prime target for electoral manipulation because they can potentially deliver the electoral support of large, relatively unorganized segments of the electorate at a comparatively lower marginal cost than other policies or programs targeted at more privileged and ostensibly more organized citizens. Transfer payments to beneficiary citizens have been found to increase markedly around elections, particularly in electorally competitive districts, as political elites and political coalitions have attempted to bolster their chances for reelection through explicit vote-buying (e.g., Bruhn 1996; Brusco, Nazareno, and Stokes 2004; Calvo and Murillo 2004; Diaz-Cayeros 2008; Graham and Kane 1998; Penfold-Becerra 2007; Rocha-Menocal 2001; Schady 2000). After the elections have past, spending often falls back to “normal” levels until a new need to mobilize electoral support arises.

Over the last several years, policy-makers in Latin America have shifted their approach to poverty alleviation away from a focus on social insurance schemes for favored constituencies

towards targeted assistance programs with broader coverage for those in extreme poverty (Barrientos and Santibáñez 2009). Conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs, in particular, have proven attractive both to incumbent governments and to international funding agencies due to their palatability for governments of nearly all ideological persuasions and given their dual focus on alleviating both short and long-term poverty through cash transfers conditioned on beneficiaries' investment in the human capital development of their family (Adato and Hoddinott 2010b; Cecchini and Madariaga 2011; Fiszbein and Schady 2009). What is more, observers have noted that CCT programs may represent a solution to the age-old problem of elected officials providing cash and other incentives to the poor in exchange for votes. The more technocratic exemplars of these CCT programs transfer payments directly to recipients through individualized debit cards and automate targeting and selection mechanisms, thereby presumably limiting any potential quid-pro-quo vote buying exchanges between elected officials and grateful beneficiaries (Campello 2013). Arguably, the centralized administration of CCT programs provides "an alternative to more traditional, paternalistic approaches to social assistance" (Rawlings 2005, 144) and, in the case of Brazil's CCT program, Bolsa Família, there is both quantitative and qualitative evidence that "the program stands apart from conventional political wheeling and dealing," at least on the question of vote buying on the part of local political agents (Sugiyama and Hunter 2013, 54).

Still, direct vote buying by local political operatives is not the only approach elected officials might take to strategically manipulate the distribution of program benefits for their own advantage. For instance, among other strategies, officials might selectively monitor compliance with program conditions, reallocate fiscal budgets to accommodate more beneficiaries, or, particularly in the case of the central government, pressure or incentivize local governments to

implement program objectives more efficiently as elections draw closer. Prior research has shown that conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs pay electoral dividends for incumbent officials (especially presidents) and their political parties by mobilizing electoral support among program beneficiaries (e.g., Baez et al. 2012; De La O 2013; Layton and Smith 2015; Linos 2013; Manacorda, Miguel, and Vigorito 2011; Zucco 2013). These effects give incumbents a *potential* motive to manipulate the distribution of benefits to help achieve their electoral objectives. Scholars have only recently begun to address whether political elites do so in relation to CCT programs. De La O (2015, 102–104) briefly addresses the question in comparative perspective, arguing that presidents who are unconstrained by checks on their power or by divided government are more likely to boost enrollment in cash transfer programs in an election year. Yet this claim is based on data from the expansion of all cash transfer programs from 1990–2011, a time period that starts well before the adoption of most current CCT programs, and thus it is not clear whether the result applies directly to *conditional* cash transfer programs as presently structured. Nor does the annual, country-level data used in the analysis provide a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of these largely decentralized programs where both federal and municipal level governments play a key role in the implementation and administration of the program. Perhaps most crucially, the analysis does not address the question of the local context in which incumbents target the surges in enrollment. Thus the question remains, do elected officials manipulate the distribution of CCT programs to their own electoral advantage by strategically increasing benefit levels around elections? I take up this question here.

It is important to understand how elites structure the distribution of CCT programs' benefits to properly contextualize and interpret their electoral effect. After all, we would expect recipients to reward officials for the instrumental benefits they gain from these programs with or

without strategic manipulation on the part of elected officials because either way the program directly improves the recipients' economic well-being. The fact that voters reward incumbents electorally says very little about the behavior of incumbent officials. In short, attempts to assess the political manipulation of conditional cash transfer programs fall short to the extent that they focus on voter choice alone. I propose that a more definitive signal of the distributive character of these programs is whether the rate of benefit provision rises and falls in a systematic relationship with the electoral calendar. If CCT programs fail to exhibit systematic electoral cycles, that would suggest that their design has minimized the incentives for or abilities of elected officials to strategically politicize the provision of benefits whereas the presence of electoral cycles would signal their vulnerability to the same strategic pressures found in previous social programs.

I assess whether CCT programs are subject to such manipulation using the case of Brazil's CCT program, Bolsa Família, which has been widely seen as a global model for de-politicized, technocratic poverty alleviation. In order to test whether there is evidence of electoral cycles in the provision of benefits under this paradigmatic program, I use a growth-curve model of the logged municipal-level number of families who are registered recipients of Bolsa Família from 2004 to 2012 (for a total of 108 months of observations across 5,564 municipalities).⁶

The results presented here show that there are regular electoral cycles in the municipal level coverage of Brazil's Bolsa Família and that the benefit surge coincides with presidential elections. Thus, on average, national level elections result in the expansion of Bolsa Família coverage. There are at least two implications that follow from these findings. First, these results

⁶ The MIS-MDS database has 5,565 municipalities in its database through 2012; however, one municipality (Nazária, PI) is missing data on Bolsa Família coverage throughout the entire period. Excluding that municipality, a database with no missing data would provide 600,912 unique municipality-month observations across all the municipalities over the 108 months from January 2004 to December 2012.

illustrate the importance of elections as a catalyst for effective administration on the part of the public bureaucracy. Secondly and more broadly, these findings imply that, on average and in spite of the checks against politicization built into the CCT program, the provision of benefits still parallels the presidential electoral calendar. Thus, political elites have been unable or unwilling to eliminate social assistance cycles that favor the reelection chances of the incumbent president, which reflects the general tendency in Latin America towards dominant central authority concentrated in the executive office and which additionally suggests that presidents may be able to exploit these cycles to more effectively capture the electoral benefits that accrue from assistance policies thereby undermining electoral accountability.

Electoral Cycles and Targeted Social Assistance in Latin America

In general terms, studies of electoral cycles look for empirical evidence that elected officials strategically orient economic policies or public spending to improve citizen economic well-being close to elections. This pursuit of evidence operates under the key assumption that politicians seek reelection either for themselves or for their political coalition and that these officials hope to receive electoral rewards for the economic improvements they orchestrate. Such an outcome requires that one of two further assumptions hold true: either voters will react more positively to recent economic outcomes rather than to more distant economic news or voters are unable to distinguish between governing and campaigning well enough to tell that their elected officials are engaging in cyclical manipulations that benefit the politicians electorally (Alt and Rose 2007, 849–850).

Rational voter models, with support from empirical analyses, largely reject the second of these assumptions (Alesina and Roubini 1992). As one Bolsa Família recipient reported to me during a focus group interview in answer to a question about whether the existence of Bolsa

Família demonstrates that elected politicians are interested in what people like them think, “everything has a political side to it...they [the politicians] are always really self-interested.”⁷ Yet even when people are skeptical about the motivations of politicians in enacting a given policy, efforts by politicians to provide economic benefits in conjunction with the electoral cycle still might pay dividends.

Prior scholarly research on electoral cycle theories has consistently shown that the electoral calendar has a more significant effect on public spending than on economic indicators or outcomes (e.g., Akhmedov and Zhuravskaya 2004; Alesina and Roubini 1992; Franzese 2002; Rogoff 1990). When political elites seek to alter economic conditions leading up to the election, they tend to use policies that will produce swift results for a large number of people, especially if they have limited political capital available to alter the status quo or if they are operating under severe time constraints related to pre-electoral campaigning. They also tend to use policies that are under the direct control of politicians like direct transfers, tax cuts, or public hiring rather than rely on attempting to influence macroeconomic indicators such as output or unemployment rates which they only indirectly control, at best.

Social assistance programs, in particular, are a prime target for political manipulation because the targeted beneficiaries of such programs constitute the segment of the population that is most likely to be responsive to ‘handouts’ and thereby allow cash and in-kind transfers to influence their voting behavior (Brusco, Nazareno, and Stokes 2004; Calvo and Murillo 2004; Taylor-Robinson 2010). Thus, the rational politician who is seeking an electoral advantage may presume that, because even small transfers can be highly impactful in terms of these recipients’ well-being, the votes of poor and vulnerable beneficiaries of large social programs can be “bought” for a lower marginal cost than the votes of wealthier citizens.

⁷ Interview with the author, Brasília 5/30/2014.

The Importance of Context

It is also important to analyze how the patterns of electoral cycles might depend on varying contexts. In particular, I focus on how electoral competitiveness and the level of human development might condition electoral cycles. Prior research on electoral cycles has found that electoral competitiveness is an important variable that affects the willingness of elected officials to manipulate economic policies (Alt and Rose 2007; Franzese 2002; Schady 2000). This is because the expected marginal benefit of increasing economic well-being close to elections is higher in more competitive districts; therefore, elected officials have a stronger motive to expand beneficial policy coverage in districts where their prospects for reelection are most in doubt. If this reasoning is correct, it suggests that there is a curvilinear relationship between an incumbent's vote share in a district and the expansion of economic policies that promote citizen well-being. Districts where the incumbent receives very low and very high support should be less likely to have electoral cycles whereas districts with mid-range levels of support should attract more efforts to tip the vote towards the incumbent as elections draw near.

It also is possible, however, that incumbents prefer to reward districts where their strongest supporters are concentrated and thereby maintain their electoral coalition (Cox and McCubbins 1986). Magaloni (2006, 120) makes this same argument in the case of authoritarian Mexico, noting that "budget cycles took place even when elections were not competitive." Moreover, although local politics do not necessarily follow national trends, strongly pro-incumbent districts may also be more likely to elect local officials that are supportive of the national policy agenda and might therefore be willing to help implement decentralized aspects of a distributive policy in ways that are favorable to the central government.

As for the level of human development, prior research on state-society relations has shown that in “peripheral” spaces, residents and officials are more likely to develop autonomous and informal relationships in relation to the central state (Yashar 2005). Consequently, these “peripheral” actors may be subject to less scrutiny or may be less responsive to centralized oversight than in areas closer to the center and therefore may exhibit more localized patterns of benefit provision. On the other hand, given their low levels of development, such spaces are also more likely to be targeted for higher levels of assistance benefits, thereby receiving higher priority in expansionary spending and more attention from the central state. Beneficiaries in “peripheral” spaces are also more likely to be poor and therefore may give greater value to the benefits provided, thereby increasing the marginal value of the benefits spent in such districts by incumbents (Brusco, Nazareno, and Stokes 2004). Thus, there are competing hypotheses about how the level of development will affect the emergence of electoral cycles. The analysis I provide here will offer an empirical test to adjudicate between the two alternatives.

Conditional Cash Transfer Programs in Latin America

Over the last decades, Latin American nations have shifted the focus of their social assistance regimes from nominally universal pension and social insurance schemes to more targeted spending on the poor (Barrientos and Santibáñez 2009). As transfer programs targeted at citizens living in extreme poverty in the context of developing countries, CCT programs in particular potentially provide a very inviting means of ensuring electoral success for strategic elites. With the enactment of these targeted programs, many presidents throughout the region maintain considerable control over the provision of social assistance benefits. As Cecchini and Madariaga (2011, 151) note in their summary of the Latin American experience with CCT programs, “although several programmes have succeeded in establishing specific legal

frameworks to govern their procedures, many are executive orders or governmental resolutions, which do not ensure consensus among all political sectors and thus threaten to undermine programme sustainability.” These unstable legal frameworks also provide the means for executives to manipulate program objectives and benefit provision to meet their own personal strategic electoral objectives. For instance, even in Brazil, where the legislature passed the initial enabling legislation that created the Bolsa Família program, the president maintains important prerogatives regarding the eligibility thresholds and value of the benefits received by program participants, all of which can be changed through a simple executive order without recourse to legislative action.

Of course, determining the value of a benefit and strategically selecting which beneficiaries will receive benefits are two very different processes. CCTs typically include administrative provisions that attempt to diminish the capacity for ambitious elected officials to advance their own electoral prospects when providing assistance to vulnerable populations (Adato and Hoddinott 2010a, 14–15; Fiszbein and Schady 2009, 62; Lindert et al. 2007, 44). For example, some CCT programs, including the Bolsa Família program in Brazil, centralize and automate the selection of beneficiaries to place more distance between the politicians and the recipients, thereby undercutting the ability of elected elites to capture the programs through discretionary mechanisms. As one employee of Brazil’s federal ministry in charge of administering the Bolsa Família program put it, “Another important achievement for citizenship was that the [beneficiary] families now receive the benefits through an indirect process in relation to the municipal administration. So, in fact, a beneficiary provides [identifying] information to the municipal administration, but the administration does not give the benefit; the person who gives the benefit is not the person with whom the family established the relationship.

That relationship is not for an exchange.”⁸ In fact, in the case of Brazil’s Bolsa Família the selection process is automated primarily on the basis of budgetary availability, family composition, and family per capital income.⁹

Yet, even conditional cash transfer programs with a centralized structure may be vulnerable to electoral manipulation. Informal practices (such as strategically scheduling program monitoring and compliance checks or strategically altering recipient household and income data to improve their chances of inclusion in the program) may emerge at both the local and national levels that undermine the formal, legal procedures approved in legislation. Moreover, these programs aim to reduce both short and long-term poverty through targeted interventions that provide cash to program beneficiaries on the condition that they make investments towards the human capital development of their children (Adato and Hoddinott 2010a, 6–7; Fiszbein and Schady 2009). Perhaps unavoidably, the process of guaranteeing delivery of the benefit is more easily centralized than is the process of monitoring compliance with the program requirements (Sewall 2008, 179–180). Consequently, even if there are effective checks against the direct use of benefits for clientelistic purposes, local elected officials can use less direct means (such as less stringent monitoring) to achieve the same strategic ends through CCT programs. Likewise, national leaders may have their own strategic objectives in mind as they administer the program. For instance, they may be able to pressure and provide incentives for local partners to administer the program more efficiently as elections draw closer, thereby making indirect interventions to achieve the same end as directly manipulating access to the program.

⁸ Interview with the author, Brasília 5/9/2014.

⁹ Some groups receive priority access to the program including *quilombola* populations, indigenous groups, individuals rescued from slave labor, waste pickers, and families at risk of engaging in child labor.

As a local coordinator of an intake center for Brazil's CCT program explained regarding the intergovernmental administrative responsibilities for guiding the work of that center in Brasília,¹⁰

The coordinator who is on the front lines [at the intake center] and the administrators in the director's office above us give instructions when needed. SEDEST [the State Department of Human and Social Development] is linked to the Federal Ministry, which is the MDS [Ministry of Social Development], which also administers the Bolsa Família program. So there are certain things that the MDS passes along to SEDEST and the SEDEST passes along to us in the CRAS [the Social Assistance Reference Center]... Sometimes we are here working and the MDS says that we have to find the families in the region that according to them did not receive Bolsa Família, because they did not receive the [beneficiary] card due to the fact that the recipient's address is not current. Then the CRAS has to reorient its resources to find those families so they can receive the Bolsa Família. But it came as an order from the MDS in this sense for us to follow this strategy. I am not saying that it is not our responsibility, but say that we were developing one strategy and then suddenly we have to change course to find these families.... It seems like the CRAS has to adapt like that [laughing] almost every week.

Thus, it is not clear that in practice the centralization of CCT administration is sufficient to check electoral cycles and the potential for strategic politics in these assistance programs. In some ways, the more efficient and effective the intergovernmental linkages are, the better the central government should be able to target their interventions for maximum electoral impact if political officials and their appointees so desire.

Of course, even if politicians have the capacity to strategically influence the distribution of assistance benefits, any such action would also require a compelling motive to do so. Therefore, it is vital to know whether there is an electoral benefit or means to advance a political career for officials who choose to manipulate CCT programs, otherwise there would be no reason to look for evidence of cycles in the provision of benefits. Along these lines, scholars have generally shown that CCT programs have a robust electoral payoff for incumbents (Hunter and Power 2007; Labonne 2013; De La O 2013; Layton and Smith 2015; Licio, Rennó, and

¹⁰ Interview with the author in Brasília 7/24/2014.

Castro 2009; Magaloni, Cayeros, and Estévez 2009; Manacorda, Miguel, and Vigorito 2011; Rocha-Menocal 2001; Zucco 2008, 2013). There are exceptions to these findings (e.g., Bohn 2011; but see Zucco and Power 2013); however, the preponderance of the evidence suggests that incumbents have sufficient electoral incentive to motivate them to expand access to these programs in conjunction with the electoral calendar. Importantly, in Brazil this motive exists primarily at the presidential level because citizens mainly attribute responsibility for these programs to the president, not the state governors, city mayors, or even the federal legislature.¹¹ Even so, there may be ambition-driven incentives for local politicians to manipulate access to CCT benefits at the behest of higher authorities like the president (Hall 2006, 706; Sewall 2008, 183). Playing along with the political game may prove fruitful for ambitious politicians who want to advance their partisan and political careers. It may also prove fruitful for ambitious local bureaucrats who want to achieve performance indicators set by their politically appointed superiors.

Brazil's Bolsa Família Program

Brazil's Bolsa Família provides a unique opportunity to test the political dynamics surrounding targeted transfers and to study whether electoral cycles emerge in the provision of benefits to Brazilian CCT recipients. The first key characteristic of the program is its administrative stability. Bolsa Família started in 2003-2004 under the administration of Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva and its underlying design and mission has remained relatively unchanged since then. The 2010 election of Dilma Rousseff, President Lula's co-partisan and hand-picked successor, ensured that the program would enjoy policy continuity and loyalty at the highest

¹¹ This claim is based on an analysis of the AmericasBarometer survey data from 2010. Brazilian respondents were asked who they saw as most responsible for the Bolsa Família program and were given the choice of the president, the governor, the mayor, or the deputies and senators of the federal legislature. 84.5% said the president, 10.2% said the governor, 3.0% said the mayor, and only 2.3% said members of the federal legislature.

levels of government. The stability of the program allows for comparisons of its effects to be made across time with greater confidence in the reliability of the results. Moreover, it leads to a second important feature of the program: broad penetration of Bolsa Família throughout the country. Because the program has had such a long tenure as the premier social policy in the country, it has had time to penetrate into even the most remote municipalities in Brazil. This has also provided time for the government to invest in the fixed costs of setting up and planning the program and to develop the administrative capacity to manage and govern existing program infrastructure.¹² These processes make it possible to analyze the program not only across time but across space at the municipal level in nearly all of the Brazilian municipalities.

In addition, there are several elements of the program design that are important for this analysis. The design of the program has been described in greater detail elsewhere (Fenwick 2009; Fiszbein and Schady 2009; Hall 2006; Hunter and Power 2007; Lindert et al. 2007; Pero and Szerman 2010); here, I draw on those insights to focus on a few aspects of the program that are particularly relevant to the emergence of electoral cycles in the provision of its benefits. First, the Bolsa Família program incorporates both centralized and decentralized responsibilities in relation to the management of the program.¹³ The national government bears full responsibility for the selection and payment of beneficiaries through an automated process. That process also incorporates control over the decision to block or suspend benefits for recipients who fail to comply with program requirements. In turn, municipal governments are responsible for overseeing the registration of *potential* beneficiaries and for monitoring compliance with the

¹² Caldés, Coady, and Maluccio (2010) provide an analysis of this process in Mexico, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

¹³ Lindert et al. (2007, 23) provide a chart that summarizes which level of government is responsible for each aspect of the program.

program conditionalities in education and health.¹⁴ Moreover, both levels of government control program communication and outreach efforts and there are few limits on how or when governments may launch those efforts with the exception of a pre-election quarantine period in effect from July through October (the month when elections are held) in election years (Lindert et al. 2007, 78).

Additionally, the central government has enacted a budgetary incentive scheme to pay municipalities and states for meeting administrative and performance criteria established by the federal government. These transfers are known as the Municipal Index of Decentralized Management (IDG-M, Índice de Gestão Descentralizada Municipal) and the State Index of Decentralized Management (IGD-E, Índice de Gestão Descentralizada Estadual). The federal government pays a monthly transfer to each municipality and state based primarily on their ability to enroll potential beneficiaries on the list for selection into the Bolsa Família program (Curado 2012; Lindert et al. 2007, 25–28). As one Ministry of Social Development (MDS) employee described these transfers, “I think that the IGD plays a role now where without these resources the municipalities might begin to fail to provide the same fantastic service that they are providing today given all the problems that we have with the systems and everything else. But today the IGD helps the municipalities to provide a well-managed program. And it was because of this that the program became what it is today, which is a great government program.”¹⁵ Thus, at least from the perspective of the central administration of the Bolsa Família program, these

¹⁴ Potential applicants are placed on a registry list and then, if they meet the eligibility criteria for the Bolsa Família program, are assigned a priority score based on household income and composition. Beneficiaries are selected off the registry list through an automated process controlled by the Caixa Econômica Federal in the order of the priority score assigned to the family and as the program budget permits. Thus, municipalities have no direct control over enrollment in the Bolsa Família program.

¹⁵ Interview with the author on 5/8/2014, MDS, Brasília – DF.

incentives for local governments have allowed the central government to ensure that its local partners follow its vision for the program.

The administrators of Brazil's Bolsa Família program have ensured that the central vision will dominate the provision of benefits in the program in spite of the decentralized nature of monitoring and enrollment efforts. This gives the central government the necessary leverage to push for its interests in the administration of the program, even in municipalities where local officials would not otherwise share partisan or ideological affinity with the incumbent federal government. Consequently, I expect to observe the presence of electoral cycles that favor the interests of the central government in terms of the provision of coverage under the Bolsa Família program. In other words the presidential election calendar will drive the provision of benefits.

Importantly, the current election calendar in Brazil, which was established prior to the implementation of the Bolsa Família program in Brazil, calls for presidential elections to be held every four years in October and for municipal elections to be held concurrently in all municipalities at the midpoint of the presidential electoral cycle (i.e., in the October that falls two years after the presidential/national election). Thus, I treat the electoral calendar as an exogenous institution with the potential to affect program distribution through politicians' reelection incentives. What is more, the "district" for presidential elections is the nation. There is no electoral college in Brazil nor are there subnational districts; consequently, every individual's vote counts equally. In terms of the contextual effects of electoral competitiveness, this means that incumbents should value every vote equally thereby undermining the strategic value of targeting any given subnational district with additional program benefits. Nevertheless, municipalities may still play a key aggregative role in terms of attracting pro-incumbent voters because the distribution of benefits is organized and implemented primarily at the municipal

level and, consequently, incumbents may find it strategically beneficial to focus their centralized administrative demands related to the implementation of the program on municipalities whose residents have proven themselves to be more supportive of their election efforts. Ultimately, the payoff in terms of maintaining these “clusters” of loyal voters (and local program administrators) through strategic targeting of additional program benefits may prove electorally beneficial to the incumbent.

The structure of the electoral calendar suggests an alternative explanation for the emergence of an electoral cycle in benefit provision. Municipalities clearly have an important role to play in the administration and implementation of the Bolsa Família program; however, local officials must also worry about their reelection prospects. During municipal election years, although municipalities will continue to provide the basic functions required under the program (in large part due to the budgetary incentives provided by the central government), their attention may be pulled away from the program during the course of the local campaigns. Thus, local government effectiveness and efficiency in enrolling and serving beneficiary families may fall, especially in relation to a program that is a federal priority (and where the reputational benefits primarily accrue to the central government), as local bureaucrats focus their energy on programs that reflect well on the local government.

Brazil is also a country of considerable diversity, including in the respective level of development in its municipalities. There are municipalities in Brazil that enjoy high levels of human development; whereas others remain underdeveloped. There are parts of the country, especially in the Amazon region, that are remote and difficult to reach where the state’s presence is minimal whereas the large industrial capitals of the southeast are strongly tied to the central

government. This variation allows me to test whether electoral cycles are more or less prevalent in developmentally “peripheral” communities.

Data, Methods, and Measures

The data I use to analyze whether electoral cycles exist in relation to Brazil’s Bolsa Família program come from several sources. One key dependent variable, *Bolsa Família Families*, comes from the Brazilian Ministry of Social Development (MDS) and its Social Information Matrix (MIS, Matriz de Informação Social). The measure I use is the logged municipal-level number of families who are registered recipients of Bolsa Família.¹⁶ A second way to measure electoral cycles in the Bolsa Família program is to look at the coverage rate based on the *estimated* number of beneficiary families within each municipality. Thus, as a check on my findings, I also use the dependent variable *Bolsa Família Coverage* to test the electoral cycle in government efficiency vis-à-vis potential beneficiary targeting. I collected these monthly data for 5,564 of Brazil’s municipalities for every month between January 2004 and December 2012 for a total of 600,912 unique municipal-month observations.¹⁷ All election data used in the analyses are from the website of the Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (TSE, Supreme Electoral Court). Other municipal level indicators used in the models are from two databases: the Social Information Matrix (MIS) and the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística).

¹⁶ Values are adjusted using the natural log. I use these logged values to account for the extreme skew in the data which results from several exceptionally large municipalities that consequently have a large number of program beneficiaries. The logged values are more nearly normally distributed.

¹⁷ There is missing data for some of the covariates; therefore, the effective number of municipalities and observations is somewhat lower in the analyses presented below. In addition, I exclude observations from Brasília; given its unique status as the national capital it holds the dual responsibilities of municipal and state government.

Bolsa Família Families, 2004-2012

Figure 2-1 shows the total number of families registered as participants in the Bolsa Família program from January 2004 to December 2012. There was considerable growth in the size of the beneficiary pool during the first two and a half years of the program as eligible beneficiaries were incorporated into the program through the consolidation of other social programs under the umbrella of Bolsa Família, the expansion of eligibility criteria in the program itself, and broadening the capacities of municipalities to identify and register beneficiary families. By mid-2006, the program had stabilized at just over 11 million families until a new period of growth began in early 2009. By the end of the period covered in this chapter, nearly 14 million families were beneficiaries of the program.

Figure 2-2 presents the distribution of the total beneficiary data by month and across the full complement of 5,564 municipalities with the mean value and the first, twenty-fifth, seventy-fifth, and ninety-ninth percentiles for the logged number of registered families receiving benefits from the Bolsa Família program. This figure makes clear that there is some growth in the data on the number of families in the program at the municipal level on average, meaning that the growth in total number of families is not simply concentrated in the largest municipalities in Brazil. I exploit the variation seen over time and across municipalities to test my expectations of the nature of electoral cycles related to the Bolsa Família program. Likewise, Figure 2-3 presents similar distribution data for municipal coverage rates based on the estimated number of eligible families in each municipality.

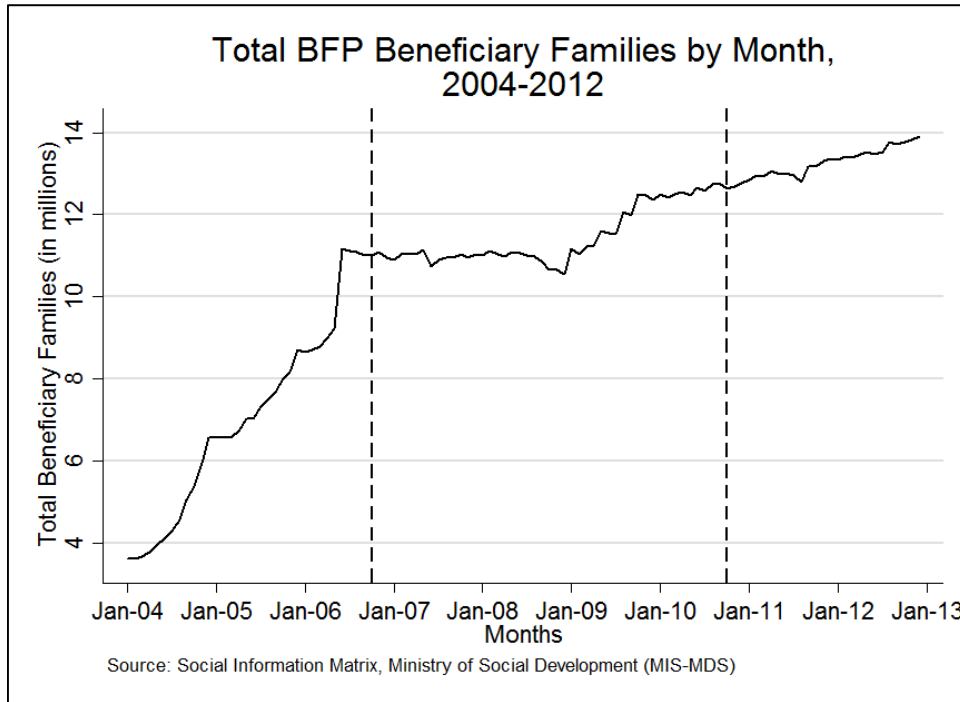


Figure 2-1. Total Bolsa Família Program Beneficiaries, 2004-2012 (with markers for presidential election dates)

Growth-Curve Model

Given the evident growth in the number of recipient families and overall coverage over time, I model the dependent variables using growth-curve models. Growth-curve models are a type of hierarchical random-coefficient model that nests multiple observations over time in individual units (municipalities in this analysis) (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002). This method allows a researcher to model the individual (municipal) growth trajectory for the dependent variable using a random intercept and random slope for time. The inclusion of additional covariates helps determine what other variables systematically explain variance in the observed trajectories of the dependent variables.

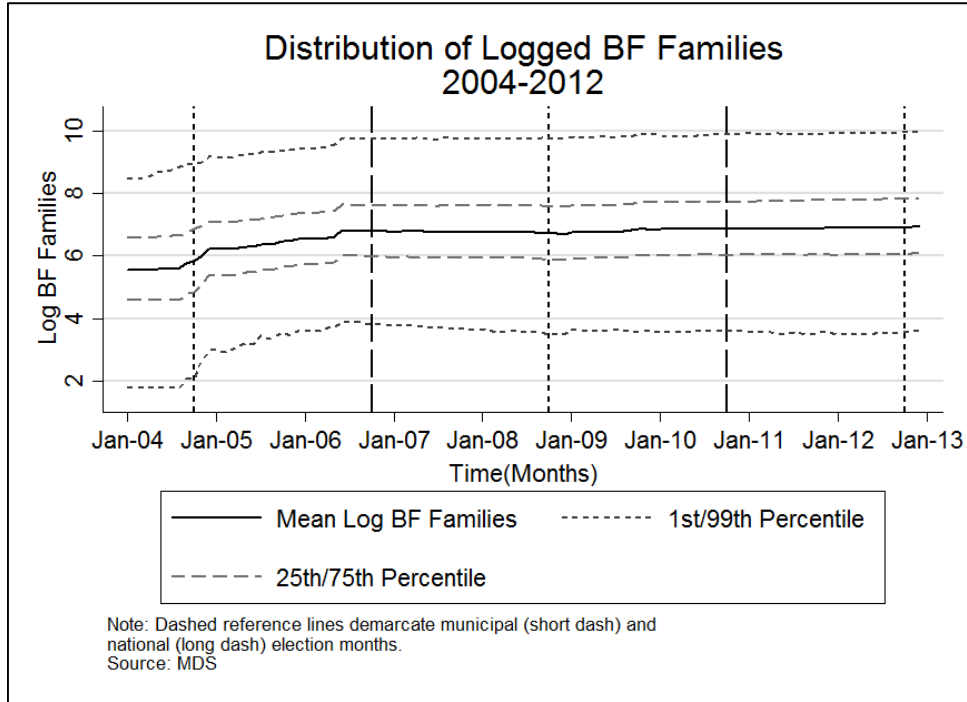


Figure 2-2. Distribution of Logged Bolsa Família Families (Municipal-Level), 2004-2012 (with markers for presidential and municipal election dates)

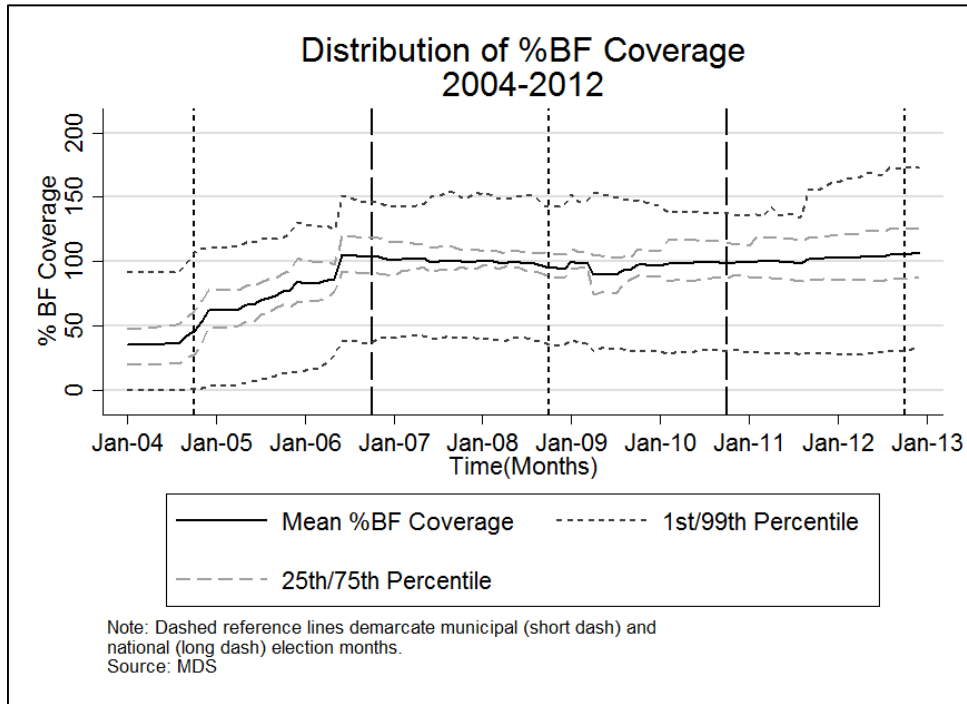


Figure 2-3. Distribution of Bolsa Família Coverage (% Municipal-Level), 2004-2012 (with markers for presidential and municipal election dates)

In the analysis here, I model time using a cubic model with a random intercept and a random slope for time which allows every predicted trajectory to have its own unique path and take on one local maximum and one local minimum across the time series. Figure 2-4 illustrates the logic of the model using only Brazil's state capital cities for the purpose of simplicity. The left of the figure shows the observed trajectories of the logged total of Bolsa Família beneficiaries in each of the state capitals while the right side of the figure shows the predicted trajectories for those same cities modeled with the random intercept, random slope cubic growth model. Visually, the predicted trajectories follow the observed trajectories even prior to the inclusion of additional predictors; likelihood ratio tests confirm that the cubic time model fits the data significantly better than a mixed-effects model that measures growth over time as a linear, quadratic, or a logistic function.

Predictors of Bolsa Família Beneficiaries and Coverage Rates

I present three distinct growth models of the coverage of Bolsa Família in the context of Brazil. In all of the models each month receives a number score that represents the number of months left before the next municipal election. This *municipal election counter* is scaled so that the month furthest from the next election receives a value of '-47' and the month of an election receives a value of '0'. Given the need to test for an electoral *cycle*, I include the counter in the model as a quadratic term.¹⁸

¹⁸ A likelihood ratio test shows that the inclusion of the quadratic term significantly improves the fit of the model.

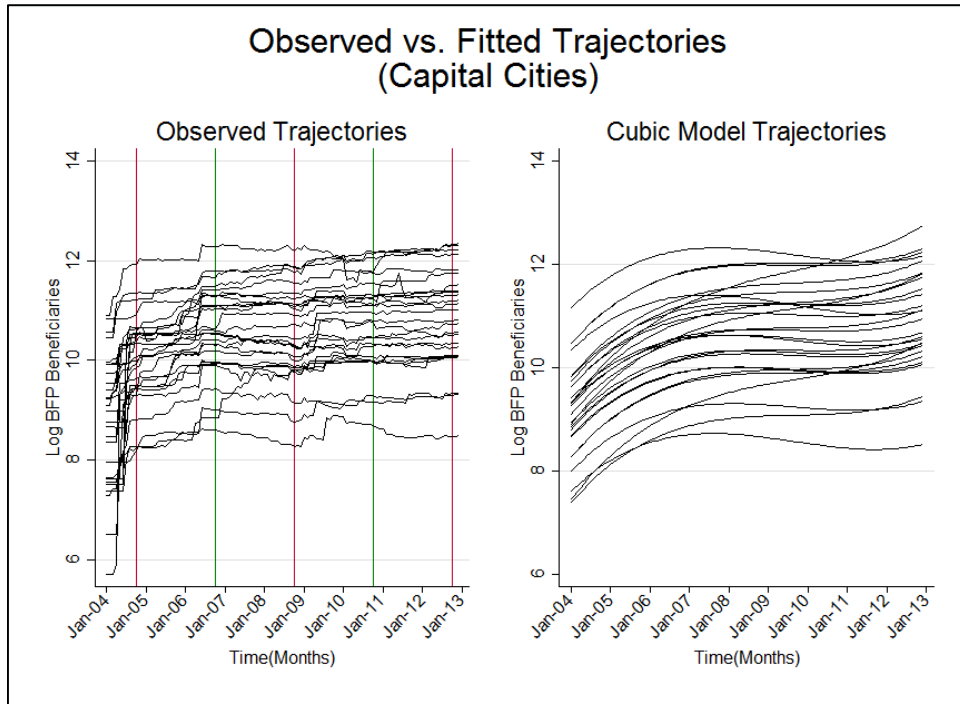


Figure 2-4. Observed versus Fitted Trajectories of Bolsa Família Program Growth (Logged BFP Beneficiaries) in Brazilian State Capitals, 2004-2012 (with markers for municipal (red) and presidential (green) election dates)

Two additional variables are crucial to testing the cross-level contextual theories presented above. First, I include an indicator of the 2000 *municipal human development index score* (HDI-M). This measure is an adapted version of the United Nation’s Human Development Index which is implemented at the municipal level in Brazil. It takes into account life expectancy, education, and income at the municipal level and is scaled from 0 to 1 so that values closer to 1 represent higher levels of human development in any given municipality. I include this measure to account for the fact that Bolsa Família coverage is given priority in places with higher levels of observed poverty; therefore, all else equal, municipalities with lower levels of human development should have higher levels of program coverage than other municipalities. This measure also allows me to test whether the level of human development conditions the presence or strength of electoral cycles in the provision of Bolsa Família benefits. To do so, my

second model includes the interactive term between this measure and the quadratic electoral cycle measure.

Second, I include the 2002 *first round vote share* for Lula (which is also used in a cross-level interaction in the third model). This measure is expressed as the percentage vote share of the valid votes that Lula received in each municipality in the first round of the 2002 presidential elections. It may be that some municipalities were predisposed to cooperate with the implementation of the Bolsa Família program based on their underlying level of support for Lula and his policies. This measure controls for any chance that those motives drive the systematic patterns in program coverage growth in the time series.

I include two additional controls to account for any potential co-partisan sympathy between local leaders and the Workers' Party (PT, Partido dos Trabalhadores) president. I code each municipal month as a 1 if that municipality elected a *PT mayor* in the prior election and do the same if that municipality's state elected a *PT governor* in the prior election.¹⁹

There are also some elements of the program design to address in the model. Although the underlying purpose and structure of the Bolsa Família program has remained unchanged throughout its existence, there have been several significant alterations to the threshold for participation and the value of the cash benefit. The MDS website keeps track of the legislative and executive changes enacted in the program since its initial promulgation through executive order and legislative action. I include a categorical measure that divides the time series into ten distinct "*decree periods*" based on those recorded changes.²⁰ These periods refer to the space of

¹⁹ Newly elected officials only take office in January even though elections occur in October. I take that into account with my coding here.

²⁰ I count ten relevant alterations to the terms of the Bolsa Família program. 1) 9 Jan 2004 – legislature approves the enacting legislation; 2) 17 Sept 2004 – presidential decree clarifying administrative responsibilities related to the program; 3) 11 April 2006 – increase in the eligibility threshold; 4) 16 July 2007 – increase the size of the benefit; 5) 26 June 2008 – increase the size of the benefit; 6) 16 April 2009 – increase in the eligibility threshold; 7) 30 July 2009 – increase in the eligibility threshold and in the size of the benefit; 8) 1 March 2011 – increase the size of the

time between the previous program alteration and the next alteration: all months between each alteration receive the same decree period value to account for any overall change in beneficiary coverage that resulted from that change. In addition, the MDS adopted a new estimate of the number of Bolsa Família-eligible families in each municipality in April 2009.²¹ I include a dummy variable that takes on the value of 1 from April 2009 to the end of the time series to account for that *new baseline* and its effect on the number of registered Bolsa Família households in each municipality. Additional controls include a dummy variable if the municipality is a *state capital*, the *logged municipal population* from the 2010 census, and fixed effects for *state* and *month*.

Results

Table 1 presents the results of the three models for the total number of beneficiary families per municipality. Table 2 presents similar results with the coverage rate as the dependent variable, which I will discuss below. Looking first to Table 1 and the Baseline Model, the coefficients for time reflect the significance of the underlying growth model. After accounting for growth patterns in the number of beneficiary families from 2004 to 2012, the coefficients for Municipal Election Counter and its quadratic term show that there is a statistically significant electoral cycle in the extension of benefits to families. The negative sign on the quadratic term indicates that the peak of the curvilinear relationship is in the middle of the municipal election calendar.

benefit; 9) 2 June 2011 – increase in the eligibility threshold by allowing families to receive benefit for 5 children under the age of 15 rather than the previous limit of 3 children; 10) 14 Oct 2011 – alteration in the penalties assessed to public officials and recipients for falsification or fraud associated with the provision of benefits from Bolsa Família.

²¹ The prior estimate was based on the 2004 PNAD survey through March 2009. Beginning in April 2009 the estimate is based on the 2006 PNAD survey.

Table 2-1. Determinants of Logged Municipal-Level Bolsa Família Program Coverage (Families), 2004-2012

	Baseline Model	HDI-M Model	Vote Share Model
<i>Fixed Effect Parameters</i>			
Time	0.045** (0.000)	0.045** (0.000)	0.045** (0.000)
Time*Time	-0.001** (0.000)	-0.001** (0.000)	-0.001** (0.000)
Time*Time*Time	0.000** (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)
Municipal Election Counter	-0.016** (0.000)	0.041** (0.000)	-0.012** (0.000)
Municipal Election Counter*Municipal Election Counter	-0.000** (0.000)	0.001** (0.000)	-0.000** (0.000)
HDI-M (2000)	-5.306** (0.110)	-6.227** (0.111)	-5.306** (0.110)
State Capital	0.171* (0.066)	0.171* (0.066)	0.171* (0.066)
Logged Municipal Population (2010)	0.955** (0.005)	0.955** (0.005)	0.955** (0.005)
<i>Decree Period Start Date</i>			
2) 17 Sept. 2004	0.311** (0.003)	0.312** (0.003)	0.312** (0.003)
3) 11 April 2006	0.432** (0.004)	0.432** (0.004)	0.431** (0.004)
4) 16 July 2007	0.440** (0.005)	0.441** (0.005)	0.440** (0.005)
5) 26 June 2008	0.479** (0.006)	0.481** (0.006)	0.479** (0.006)
6) 16 April 2009	0.470** (0.007)	0.472** (0.007)	0.470** (0.007)
7) 30 July 2009	0.504** (0.008)	0.506** (0.007)	0.505** (0.008)
8) 1 March 2011	0.513** (0.008)	0.514** (0.008)	0.513** (0.008)
9) 2 June 2011	0.512** (0.008)	0.513** (0.008)	0.512** (0.008)
10) 14 Oct. 2011	0.541**	0.542**	0.541**

	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
New Denominator	-0.022**	-0.022**	-0.022**
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)
PT Mayor	0.014**	0.017**	0.012**
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
PT Governor	-0.019**	-0.002	-0.018**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Lula 1st Round Vote Share (2002)	0.002**	0.002**	0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
<i>State Fixed Effects</i>			
AC	-0.337**	-0.355**	-0.338**
	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.070)
AL	0.027	0.027	0.027
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)
AM	-0.308**	-0.308**	-0.308**
	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)
AP	-0.185*	-0.185*	-0.185*
	(0.081)	(0.081)	(0.081)
BA	0.142**	0.129**	0.141**
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)
CE	0.290**	0.290**	0.290**
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)
ES	0.012	0.013	0.012
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)
GO	-0.057*	-0.057*	-0.057*
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)
MA	-0.085*	-0.085*	-0.086*
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)
MS	-0.175**	-0.179**	-0.175**
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)
MT	-0.134**	-0.134**	-0.134**
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)
PA	0.000	-0.008	-0.000
	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)
PB	0.005	0.005	0.005
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)
PE	0.176**	0.176**	0.175**
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)
PI	0.061*	0.050	0.061*
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.028)
PR	-0.153**	-0.153**	-0.153**
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)

RJ	-0.170** (0.037)	-0.170** (0.037)	-0.170** (0.037)
RN	0.193** (0.029)	0.193** (0.029)	0.193** (0.029)
RO	-0.045 (0.046)	-0.045 (0.046)	-0.045 (0.046)
RR	0.034 (0.084)	0.034 (0.084)	0.034 (0.084)
RS	-0.279** (0.020)	-0.285** (0.020)	-0.280** (0.020)
SC	-0.558** (0.023)	-0.559** (0.023)	-0.559** (0.023)
SE	0.062 (0.040)	0.048 (0.040)	0.061 (0.040)
SP	-0.371** (0.018)	-0.371** (0.018)	-0.371** (0.018)
TO	-0.029 (0.030)	-0.029 (0.030)	-0.029 (0.030)
<i>Month Fixed Effects</i>			
January	0.024** (0.002)	0.024** (0.002)	0.024** (0.002)
February	0.016** (0.002)	0.016** (0.002)	0.016** (0.002)
March	0.007** (0.002)	0.007** (0.002)	0.007** (0.002)
April	0.008** (0.002)	0.007** (0.002)	0.008** (0.002)
May	-0.000 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.002)
June	0.011** (0.002)	0.011** (0.002)	0.011** (0.002)
July	0.008** (0.001)	0.008** (0.001)	0.008** (0.001)
August	0.007** (0.001)	0.007** (0.001)	0.007** (0.001)
September	0.025** (0.001)	0.025** (0.001)	0.025** (0.001)
November	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
December	0.014** (0.002)	0.014** (0.002)	0.014** (0.002)
Municipal Election Counter*HDI-M		-0.082**	

		(0.001)	
Municipal Election Counter*Municipal Election Counter*HDI-M		-0.001**	
		(0.000)	
Municipal Election Counter*Vote Share			-0.000**
			(0.000)
Municipal Election Counter*Municipal Election Counter*Vote Share			-0.000**
			(0.000)
Constant	0.027	0.674**	0.083
	(0.075)	(0.075)	(0.075)
<hr/>			
<i>Random Effect Parameters</i>			
<i>Variance Component</i>			
<hr/>			
Time (Slope)	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant (Intercept)	0.296**	0.296**	0.296**
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Covariance (Slope,Intercept)	-0.003**	-0.003**	-0.003**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Residual (Level-1)	0.049**	0.048**	0.049**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
<hr/>			
<i>Number of Observations (Municipality-Month)</i>	592,387	592,387	592,387
<i>Number of Groups (Municipality)</i>	5,499	5,499	5,499
<i>Wald Test</i>	763,394.77**	794,660.73**	765,088.22**

Note: Mixed-effects maximum likelihood regression estimates reported where Level 1 is time measured in months and Level 2 is municipality. Standard errors in parentheses. Reference category for decree period start date is 1) 1 Jan 2004; for state it is Minas Gerais; for month it is October. Estimates significant at ** p < 0.001; * p < 0.05.

This result is more clearly illustrated in Figure 2-5. As shown in the figure, the predicted peak number of families benefitted by the Bolsa Família program occurs around the month of the presidential election (the 24th month prior to the next municipal election). The predicted logged number of beneficiary families in the month of the presidential election is 6.73 whereas in the

month of the municipal election, the value is 6.53 (a substantive difference of about 152.2 families on average).

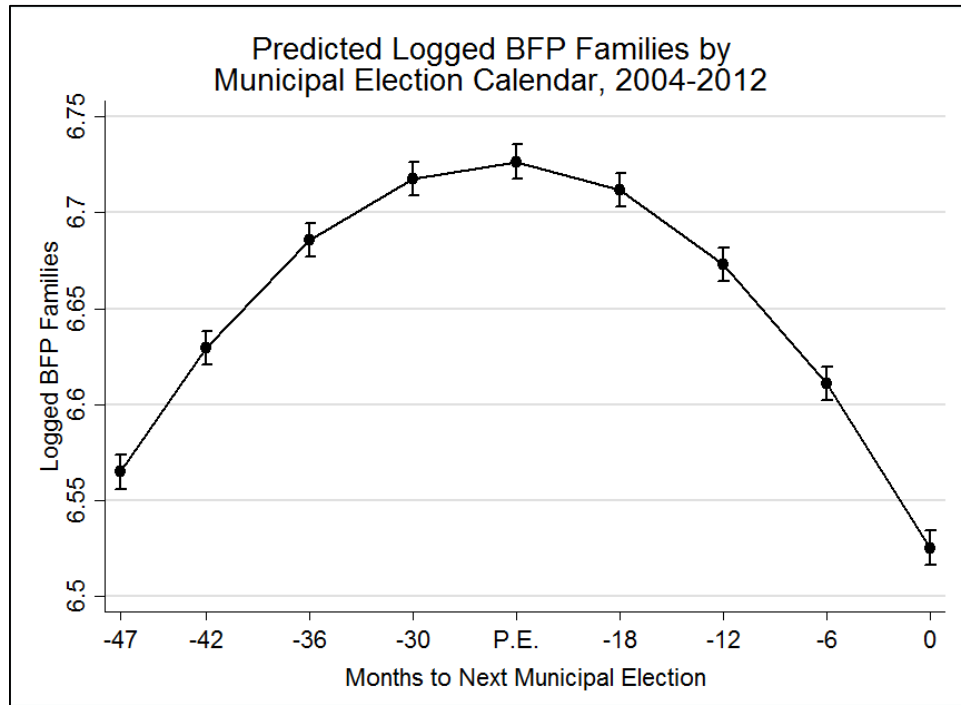


Figure 2-5. Predicted Values for Logged Bolsa Família Coverage by Municipal Election Calendar, 2004-2012 (Baseline Model)

These results are robust to the inclusion of the control variables listed above, all of which have statistically significant effects of their own. Given that the dependent variable is log-transformed, I interpret the coefficients in terms of their effect on the percent change in the dependent variable.²² Municipalities with a higher level of human development in 2000 had significantly fewer beneficiary families than less developed municipalities. Theoretically the HDI-M variable ranges from 0 to 1 and, unsurprisingly, the exceptionally strong coefficient for HDI-M suggests that changing from a municipality with an HDI-M score of 0 to one with a score

²² For assistance in the interpretation of the coefficients, I looked to the UCLA Institute for Digital Research and Education website: http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/mult_pkg/faq/general/log_transformed_regression.htm. Last accessed 5/22/2015.

of 1 would result in a 99.5% reduction in the number of beneficiary families; however in the year 2000 Brazilian municipalities had observed HDI-M scores ranging from 0.47 to 0.92, meaning that changing between the least developed and most developed municipality is predicted to lead to a reduction of about 90.8% in the number of beneficiary families, all else equal.

As would be expected, state capitals and cities with higher overall population have significantly more Bolsa Família beneficiaries. Based on the results presented here, a 10% increase in municipal population leads to a 9.5% change in the number of beneficiary families. In addition, all else equal, state capitals will have about 18.7% more beneficiaries than other municipalities.

The controls for program changes also have statistically significant effects on the number of families benefitted by the program in an average municipality. The early policy alterations to the program had a particularly strong effect in the number of beneficiaries: the second decree period increased the number of beneficiary families by 36.5% compared to the first period. In addition, all else equal, municipal-month observations after the introduction of the new eligibility denominator have 2.2% fewer families in the program.

In terms of co-partisan factors, PT mayors are correlated with a significant increase in the number of covered families in their municipality on average, whereas PT governors are correlated with a significant decrease in the number of benefitted families in their state on average. In substantive terms, however, the effect is fairly small: the results suggest that, all else equal, municipalities with PT mayors have about 1.4% more beneficiary families compared to a municipality with a mayor of any other party. Similarly, all else equal, municipalities in states with a PT governor benefit about 1.9% fewer families compared to municipalities in states with governors of any other party. In terms of electoral support, on average, each percentage point

increase in vote share for Lula in the first round of the 2002 presidential election is significantly correlated with a 0.2% increase in the number of families benefitted by Bolsa Família.

Finally, the fixed effects for state and month show a number of statistically significant differences between the baseline category and each comparison category based on geographic location and time during the course of the year. In substantive terms looking at the two states with the largest negative and positive coefficients respectively, municipalities in the state of Santa Catarina have 42.8% fewer beneficiary families on average than those in Minas Gerais (the reference state). Municipalities in the state of Ceará on the other hand, have 33.7% more beneficiary families on average than those in Minas Gerais. This reflects the economic reality in Brazil: states in the North and Northeast regions are among the poorest in the country whereas those in the South are much more prosperous and their citizens should have less need for the transfer payments available through the Bolsa Família program. The fact that these effects appear even after controlling for municipal level Human Development Index scores and municipal population suggests that states, in spite of their limited role in the administration of the program, still shape enrollment in the Bolsa Família program.

The results from the month fixed effects show that, on average, observations in May and November (the only months with negative coefficients) tend to be statistically indistinguishable from those in October (the reference month) in terms of the number of beneficiary families. All else equal, observations in September (the month with the largest positive coefficient) are 2.5% higher than in October. Thus, the month-by-month dynamics of the program are substantively small after accounting for the other variables in the model.

The second model in Table 1 includes the interaction term between the municipal election counter variable and the 2000 municipal human development index score. With the

exception of the variable for PT Governors (which loses statistical significance), the effects of the control variables in the model remain substantively unchanged. What is more, the interaction term is statistically significant.

Figure 2-6 illustrates the substantive effect of including the interaction between the Municipal Election Counter, the quadratic counter term, and the municipal human development score. Predicted values of logged Bolsa Família program beneficiary families are presented for the minimum (0.47), maximum (0.92), and inter-quartile range (0.63 and 0.77) values for HDI-M scores across the municipal election calendar. The figure shows the substantive impact of human development scores in terms of the average number of beneficiary families receiving benefits in the municipality, and provides important evidence that Bolsa Família benefit provision reflects objective needs in the municipalities. Still, there is also evidence that even accounting for the important conditioning effect of human development, electoral cycles are an important factor in the dynamics of the program. Remarkably, there is evidence that electoral dynamics in low human development municipalities leads to a true *municipal* electoral effect. In other words, based on predicted values calculated from the model, in municipalities at the low end of the human development scale, more families are covered under the program at the time of a municipal election than any other point in the election calendar, all else equal. In substantive terms, the predicted peak of coverage is 529.5 families higher at the time of a municipal election than in a month immediately following the previous municipal election and 228.1 more families covered than at the time of a presidential election.

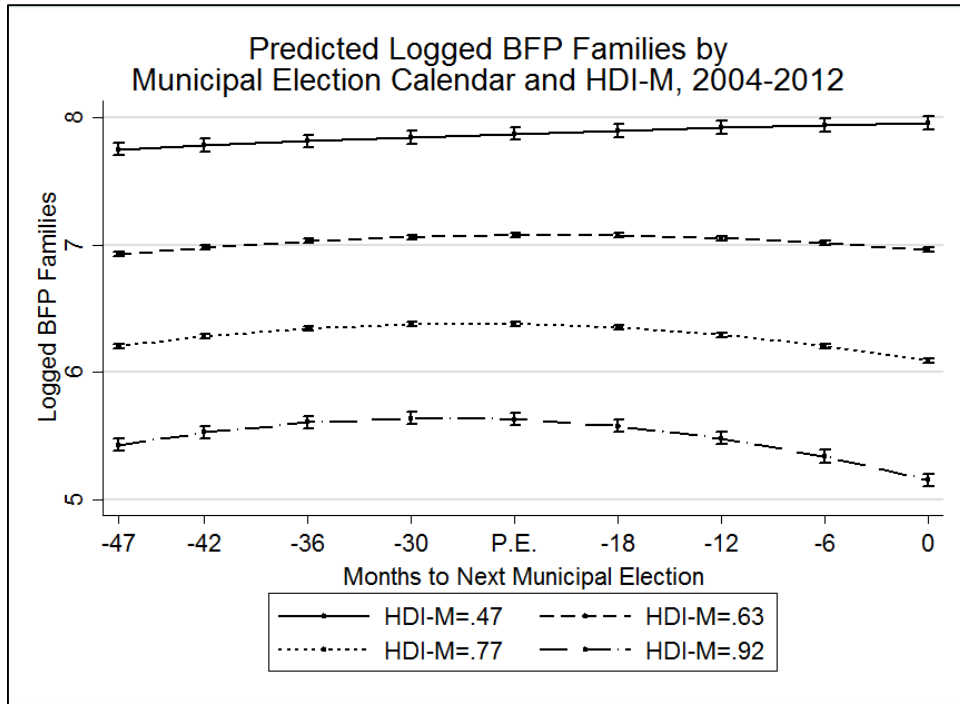


Figure 2-6. Predicted Values for Logged Bolsa Família Coverage by Municipal Election Calendar and 2000 Municipal Human Development Index Score, 2004-2012 (HDI-M Model)

For most municipalities, however, the previous pattern where more beneficiary families are included in the program around *presidential* elections than any other point in the calendar still holds true, even if, at the high end of the development scale, the estimated peak occurs about six months prior to the presidential election. For municipalities at the low end of the inter-quartile range for human development the difference between a month of a presidential election and the month of a municipal election is 164.8 families. For municipalities at the high end of the inter-quartile range for human development, at the time of a presidential election, coverage is 147.8 families higher than in the month of a municipal election. For municipalities at the high end of the human development scale, there is a 108.1 family difference between the month that falls six months prior to a presidential election and the month of a municipal election. Notably, the difference between the predicted values in the month six months prior to a presidential

election and a presidential election month is not statistically significant, which suggests that the peak in coverage contains the presidential election month. Thus, even accounting for the strong effect of human development scores on benefit provision, electoral cycles in benefit coverage are evident.

The third model included in Table 1 includes the interaction term between the municipal election counter and the 2002 first round vote share for Lula. In this case, all the effects on the control variables remain substantively unchanged from the Baseline Model. The interaction term between vote share and the election counter is statistically significant.

Figure 2-7 illustrates the substantive effect of including the measure of support for Lula during the presidential election prior to the implementation of the Bolsa Família program. Predicted values of logged Bolsa Família program beneficiary families are presented for the minimum (5.78%), maximum (79.79%), and inter-quartile range (34.43% and 50.36%) values for Lula's vote share in the first round of the 2002 presidential election across the municipal election calendar. In this case, the figure illustrates how municipalities that were already predisposed to support Lula in the 2002 election have slightly stronger swings in their coverage of beneficiary families throughout the election calendar. Still, in all cases, the predicted peak of beneficiary coverage falls around the presidential election. The estimated difference in the number of families between a month of a presidential election and a month of a municipal election is 99.6 families for municipalities with the lowest vote share for Lula, 140.3 families for municipalities at the low end of the inter-quartile range, 164.4 families for municipalities at the high end of the inter-quartile range, and 212.0 families for municipalities at the high end of electoral support for Lula in the 2002 presidential election. Thus, even though strong support for Lula prior to the introduction of Bolsa Família provides a bonus in terms of the strength of the

electoral cycle, it is clear that potential beneficiaries across all municipalities are targeted for more efficient inclusion in the program near the presidential election.

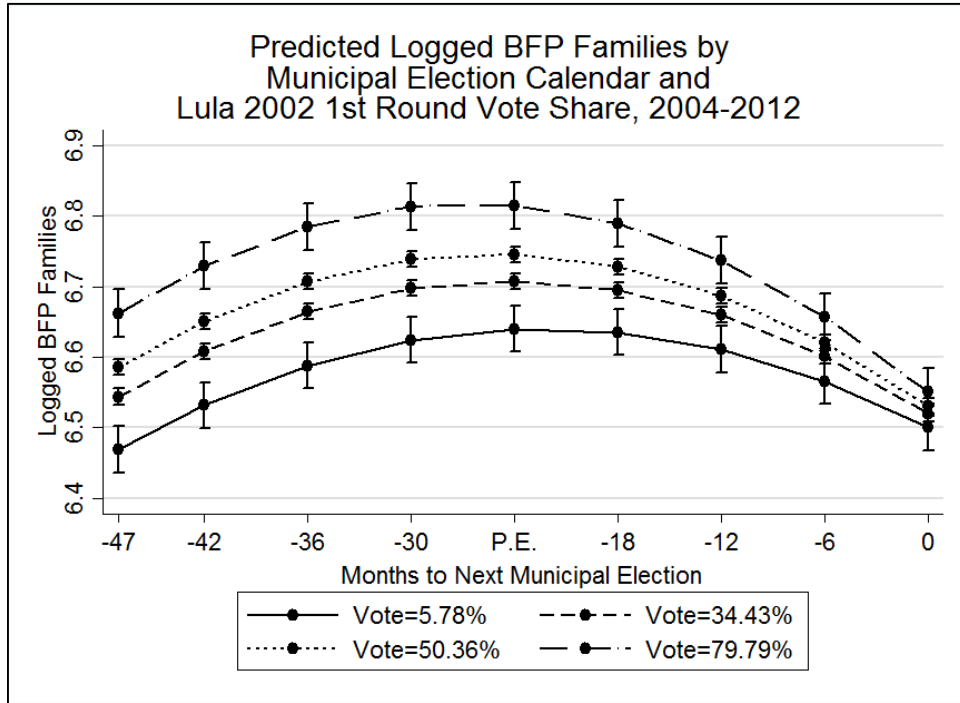


Figure 2-7. Predicted Values for Logged Bolsa Família Coverage by Municipal Election Calendar and Lula Vote Share in 2002 Presidential Election (1st Round), 2004-2012 (Vote Share Model)

Turning to the results from Table 2 based on models using *Bolsa Família Coverage* as the dependent variable, the statistical interpretation of the results is largely the same as when looking at the total number of families.²³ In short, there are also significant electoral cycles that emerge when looking at the *efficiency* of government action to distribute benefits as well as the absolute outcomes of its efforts. Given that the coverage rate is not log transformed as was the total number of beneficiary families, the interpretation of the results in Table 2 is fairly straightforward. The coefficients can be interpreted as the effect on the percent coverage

²³ One notable change is that the effect of state capital is no longer statistically significant.

produced by a one unit change in the independent variable in question. Still, the results of this analysis are most clear when presented in the form of predicted values.

Table 2-2. Determinants of Municipal Level Bolsa Família Program Coverage (% Eligible), 2004-2012

	Baseline Model	HDI-M Model	Vote Share Model
<i>Fixed Effect Parameters</i>			
Time	2.437** (0.016)	2.436** (0.015)	2.437** (0.016)
Time*Time	-0.040** (0.000)	-0.040** (0.000)	-0.040** (0.000)
Time*Time*Time	0.000** (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)
Municipal Election Counter	-1.061** (0.009)	1.971** (0.000)	-0.529** (0.017)
Municipal Election Counter*Municipal Election Counter	-0.022** (0.000)	0.028** (0.001)	-0.013** (0.000)
HDI-M (2000)	-57.683** (4.536)	-103.513** (4.557)	-57.732** (4.537)
State Capital	-2.168 (2.717)	-2.177 (2.717)	-2.148 (2.717)
Logged Municipal Population (2010)	1.602** (0.190)	1.599** (0.190)	1.606** (0.190)
<i>Decree Period Start Date</i>			
2) 17 Sept. 2004	9.699** (0.139)	9.710** (0.138)	9.701** (0.139)
3) 11 April 2006	23.124** (0.196)	23.130** (0.195)	23.124** (0.196)
4) 16 July 2007	23.330** (0.258)	23.346** (0.255)	23.332** (0.257)
5) 26 June 2008	25.683** (0.341)	25.740** (0.338)	25.690** (0.340)
6) 16 April 2009	24.991** (0.401)	25.046** (0.398)	24.998** (0.401)
7) 30 July 2009	27.527** (0.408)	27.591** (0.404)	27.534** (0.407)

8) 1 March 2011	27.598** (0.425)	27.657** (0.421)	27.605** (0.425)
9) 2 June 2011	27.057** (0.443)	27.117** (0.439)	27.064** (0.442)
10) 14 Oct. 2011	29.633** (0.436)	29.697** (0.432)	29.642** (0.436)
New Denominator	-10.094** (0.189)	-10.089** (0.187)	-10.092** (0.189)
PT Mayor	-0.475* (0.138)	-0.366* (0.136)	-0.650** (0.137)
PT Governor	-2.815** (0.100)	-2.006** (0.100)	-2.742** (0.100)
Lula 1st Round Vote Share (2002, %)	0.048* (0.018)	0.048* (0.018)	-0.082** (0.018)
<i>State Fixed Effects</i>			
AC	-6.256* (2.887)	-7.102* (2.886)	-6.275* (2.887)
AL	-8.163** (1.557)	-8.157** (1.557)	-8.179** (1.557)
AM	-10.580** (1.826)	-10.574** (1.826)	-10.587** (1.826)
AP	-4.078 (3.326)	-4.083 (3.326)	-4.070 (3.326)
BA	-2.032* (0.922)	-2.454* (0.922)	-2.081* (0.922)
CE	-0.350 (1.196)	-0.345 (1.196)	-0.357 (1.196)
ES	-8.268** (1.576)	-8.262** (1.576)	-8.276** (1.576)
GO	-6.216** (0.970)	-6.211** (0.970)	-6.222** (0.970)
MA	-8.008** (1.205)	-7.985** (1.205)	-8.024** (1.205)
MS	-10.016** (1.573)	-10.402** (1.573)	-10.033** (1.573)
MT	0.499 (1.277)	0.501 (1.277)	0.498 (1.277)
PA	-4.676** (1.248)	-5.012** (1.248)	-4.703** (1.248)
PB	3.163* (1.134)	3.171* (1.134)	3.146* (1.134)
PE	-5.436**	-5.426**	-5.452**

	(1.184)	(1.184)	(1.184)
PI	1.511	0.803	1.435
	(1.147)	(1.147)	(1.147)
PR	0.642	0.647	0.637
	(0.803)	(0.803)	(0.803)
RJ	-5.915**	-5.909**	-5.918**
	(1.518)	(1.518)	(1.518)
RN	3.116*	3.128*	3.104*
	(1.184)	(1.184)	(1.184)
RO	-6.416*	-6.417*	-6.415*
	(1.884)	(1.884)	(1.884)
RR	-23.447**	-23.445**	-23.450**
	(3.438)	(3.437)	(3.438)
RS	-6.095**	-6.192**	-6.099**
	(0.823)	(0.823)	(0.823)
SC	10.027**	10.017**	10.022**
	(0.957)	(0.956)	(0.957)
SE	5.428*	5.001*	5.381*
	(1.654)	(1.654)	(1.654)
SP	-8.327**	-8.326**	-8.327**
	(0.741)	(0.741)	(0.741)
TO	-4.973**	-4.974**	-4.971**
	(1.229)	(1.229)	(1.229)
<i>Month Fixed Effects</i>			
January	1.043**	1.032**	1.042**
	(0.085)	(0.084)	(0.085)
February	0.784**	0.775**	0.783**
	(0.085)	(0.084)	(0.085)
March	0.167*	0.160	0.167*
	(0.085)	(0.084)	(0.084)
April	0.115	0.109	0.115
	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.086)
May	-1.138**	-1.141**	-1.138**
	(0.083)	(0.082)	(0.083)
June	0.123	0.122	0.124
	(0.083)	(0.082)	(0.083)
July	-0.257*	-0.260*	-0.257*
	(0.079)	(0.078)	(0.079)
August	-0.085	-0.088	-0.085
	(0.078)	(0.077)	(0.078)
September	0.535**	0.534**	0.535**
	(0.078)	(0.077)	(0.078)
November	-0.183*	-0.184*	-0.184*

	(0.085)	(0.084)	(0.084)
December	0.474**	0.474**	0.473**
	(0.084)	(0.083)	(0.084)
Municipal Election Counter*HDI-M		-4.337**	
		(0.050)	
Municipal Election Counter*Municipal Election Counter*HDI-M		-0.072**	
		(0.001)	
Municipal Election Counter*Vote Share			-0.013**
			(0.000)
Municipal Election Counter*Municipal Election Counter*Vote Share			0.000**
			(0.000)
Constant	46.879**	79.033**	52.435**
	(3.066)	(3.081)	(3.069)
<hr/>			
<i>Random Effect Parameters</i>			
<i>Variance Component</i>			
<hr/>			
Time (Slope)	0.173**	0.172**	0.172**
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Constant (Intercept)	500.045**	499.008**	499.825**
	(10.737)	(10.703)	(10.730)
Covariance (Slope,Intercept)	-7.531**	-7.506**	-7.525**
	(0.172)	(0.171)	(0.171)
Residual (Level-1)	143.400**	140.711**	142.942**
	(0.266)	(0.261)	(0.265)
<hr/>			
<i>Number of Observations</i> <i>(Municipality-Month)</i>	593,448	593,448	593,448
<i>Number of Groups</i> <i>(Municipality)</i>	5,499	5,499	5,499
<i>Wald Test</i>	746,153.32**	771,415.61**	750,383.15**

Note: Mixed-effects maximum likelihood regression estimates reported where Level 1 is time measured in months and Level 2 is municipality. Standard errors in parentheses. Reference category for decree period start date is 1) 1 Jan 2004; for state it is Minas Gerais; for month it is October. Estimates significant at ** p < 0.001; * p < 0.05.

Figures 2-8, 2-9, and 2-10 present the results for *Bolsa Família Coverage* that correspond to those presented for *Bolsa Família Families* in Figures 2-5, 2-6, and 2-7, respectively. As seen in Figure 2-8, all else equal, predicted coverage rates reach their peak near the presidential election at 94.4% of the estimated eligible population, compared to the average predicted low across all municipalities of 81.6% coverage at the time of municipal elections. Bringing in HDI-M scores, Figure 2-9 shows a pattern that mimics that of Figure 2-6. The least developed municipality (based on the 2000 HDI-M scores) is predicted to have the highest coverage rates, but those rates peak in the run-up to municipal elections around 105.6%, not around presidential elections like in most other municipalities. The lowest predicted coverage rate for such a municipality falls in the month immediately following the municipal election (at 96.1%). Municipalities at the other plotted values for HDI-M are all predicted to peak at the time of the presidential election (97.2% for a municipality that scores 0.63 on HDI-M; 91.5% for a municipality that scores 0.77; and 85.4% for a municipality that scores 0.92). Turning to the effects of electoral competitiveness, Figure 2-10 illustrates the role of prior political support for Lula's election bid in 2002 at the municipal level in predicting *Bolsa Família* coverage rates. Municipalities that supported Lula at the highest rate in 2002 also are predicted to have the highest rate of *Bolsa Família* coverage. In most municipalities, again, the highest rates of coverage appear in the presidential election month: 98.0% for municipalities with the highest rate of electoral support for Lula; 95.1% for municipalities at the high end of the inter-quartile range; and 93.6% for municipalities at the low end of the inter-quartile range of support for Lula. In municipalities that had the lowest rate of electoral support for Lula, the predicted peak occurs slightly after the presidential election (90.79% six months after the election), although the

difference between the predicted value at the time of the presidential election and that six months later is not statistically significant.

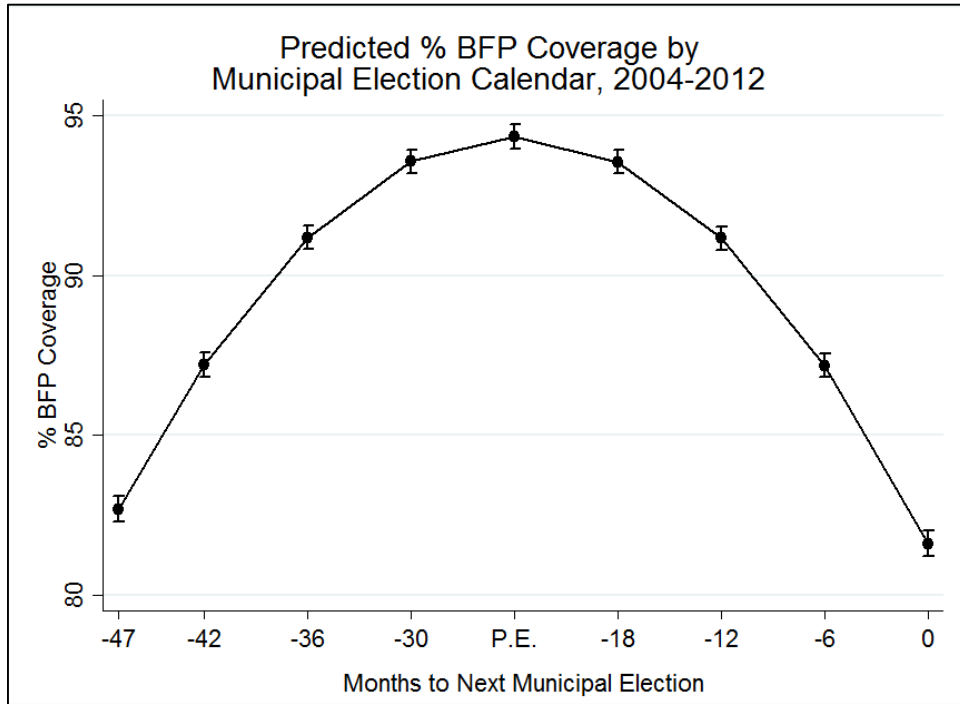


Figure 2-8. Predicted Values for Bolsa Familia Coverage by Municipal Election Calendar, 2004-2012 (Baseline Model - % Coverage)

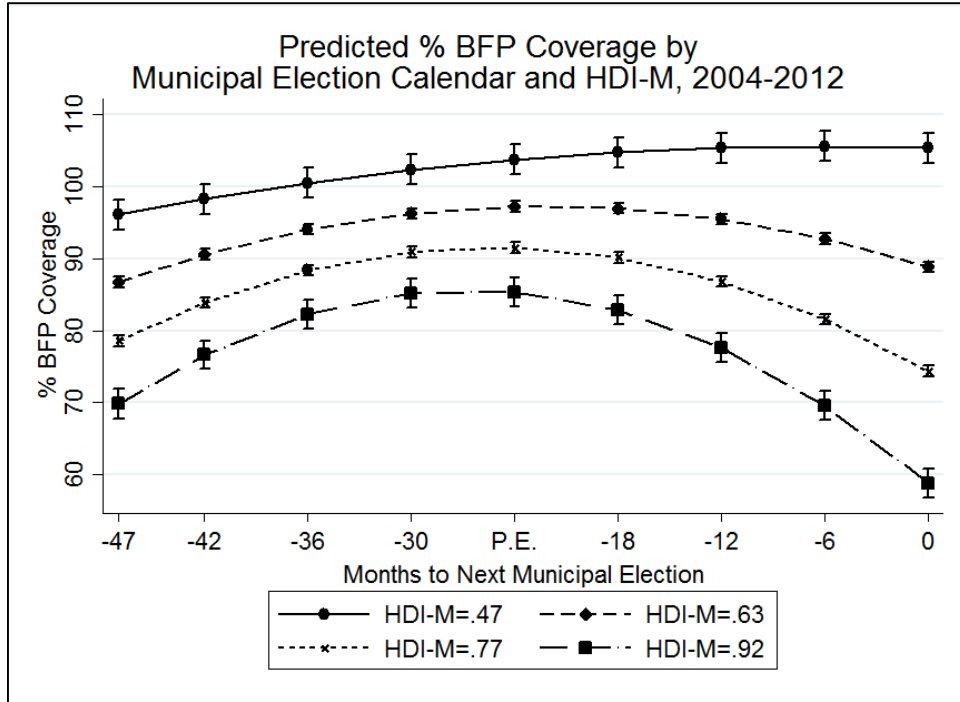


Figure 2-9. Predicted Values for Bolsa Família Coverage by Municipal Election Calendar and 2000 Municipal Human Development Index Score, 2004-2012 (HDI-M Model - % Coverage)

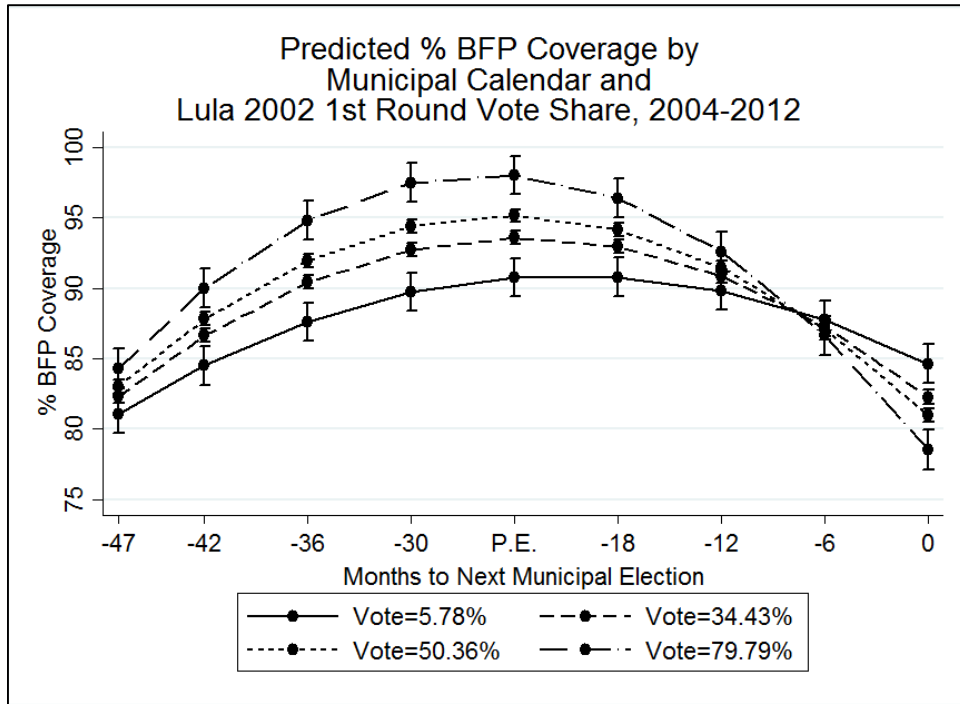


Figure 2-10. Predicted Values for Bolsa Família Coverage by Municipal Election Calendar and Lula Vote Share in 2002 Presidential Election (1st Round), 2004-2012 (Vote Share Model - % Coverage)

These results continue to tell a consistent story that implies that on average and all else equal, Brazilian municipalities expand both the number of families and the rate of coverage of the estimated eligible number of families in Bolsa Família in ways that correspond with presidential and national level elections.

Discussion and Conclusion

Prior research has shown that elected incumbents use public expenditures strategically to bolster their chances for reelection. Expansion of expenditures tends to coincide with the run-up to elections, whereas after elections, expenditures are cut to “normal” levels. Elected officials are particularly likely to exploit programs that have a sizeable pool of potential beneficiaries where the potential electoral payoff of extending further benefits is sizeable.

When elected officials distribute public goods in a cyclical pattern based on the electoral calendar it constitutes a potential threat to representative governance. This is particularly true when electoral manipulation is related to social assistance efforts because those electoral cycles may severely undercut the ability of such programs to alleviate societal inequities programmatically. Expanding benefits around elections reflects the incumbents' interests rather than the true needs of beneficiaries or the socially optimal level of benefit provision.

The results presented here provide evidence that electoral calendars shape the provision of benefits for Brazil's Bolsa Família program at least for the period between its inception in 2004 and 2012. In light of previous findings that show an electoral effect among the program's recipients, these results suggest that, in the bulk of Brazil's municipalities, national and local officials work in tandem on the basis of the central government's vision to increase Bolsa Família's coverage in the population close to presidential elections and thereby increase the likelihood of the presidential incumbent achieving reelection. Thus, it would appear that political expediency has a significant effect on the provision of benefits under this program.

Still, it is important to note that even though the provision of benefits responds to electoral incentives, objective poverty criteria also strongly determine the provision of benefits. The results presented here do not speak to whether the transfer of benefits to impoverished municipalities triggers accompanying gains in human development, but at the very least there is some indication that policy makers are directing resources at some level based on the objective need observed in the municipalities where targeted beneficiaries reside. Moreover, these findings also highlight the importance of elections. The electoral process clearly fails to produce a programmatic incentive to ensure that benefit levels remain constant across the year, but

elections still provide strong incentives for elected officials to produce visible results that can provide a basis for credit claiming directed towards their constituency.

The patterns uncovered in the analyses presented here have broader implications for future studies of CCTs and of representation in Latin America. Even though most Bolsa Família beneficiaries are unlikely to experience a cyclical pattern in their individual coverage, these findings still suggest that the degree to which the needs of a portion of the vulnerable population in Brazil are met is subject to the needs and interests of the political elite. This pattern seems to create the conditions that, if taken to the extreme, would allow for the perpetuation of old patterns of unrepresentative state-society relations where politicians are able to trade on illegality and informality as a political commodity (Fischer 2008). To the extent that other CCT programs adopt policy institutions similar to those used in Brazil my expectation would be that these results would generalize across all such programs.

These results are limited in the sense that I cannot adjudicate between the possible mechanisms driving the electoral cycle. It may be that the pattern is driven entirely by the interests of the federal government as ministry bureaucrats push their local counterparts to more effectively target potential recipients as the national election draws closer. On the other hand, this pattern might emerge as a result of the diversion of local resources and a marked lack of efficiency around local elections. Answering that question will require a more systematic survey of the experiences of local bureaucrats in their efforts to appease two masters: the central government, which provides budgetary incentives that might allow the local bureaucrat to better achieve performance goals, and the local administration, which provides the local official's paycheck.

Overall, these findings underscore how challenging it is to design and implement a targeted government assistance program without political interference. The fact that elected officials derive electoral benefits from these CCT programs makes it more likely that they will implement such programs and target public spending towards the economically marginalized populations of their country; however, strategic use of the program has the potential to undercut broader public support for such measures to the extent that middle and upper class citizens perceive the program as legalized vote-buying. If elected officials can reign in the tendency to use such programs strategically, these programs may prove more sustainable and may gain broader societal support, which should ultimately provide better outcomes for those who truly need the economic security these programs provide.

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Chapter 3

INCLUSION WITHOUT EFFICACY: CONDITIONAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND THE POLITICS OF PARTICIPATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Introduction

“In democratic societies... [the citizen] is expected to have the virtues of the subject – to obey the law, to be loyal – but he is also expected to take some part in the formation of decisions.”
- Almond and Verba (1989, 118 [1963])

At the turn of the twenty-first century, efforts to promote global economic development began to explicitly recognize the need to design anti-poverty policies that would address multiple dimensions of poverty. As noted in the World Bank’s World Development Report in 2000/2001, “poverty” consists of more than material deprivation; lack of education, poor health care, vulnerability to risk, and social exclusion, meaning political powerlessness due to a lack of voice or participation vis-à-vis unresponsive or unaccountable political institutions all contribute to the social condition known as “poverty” (The World Bank 2001, 15–16). The conclusion derived from this conceptual shift was that given the complex complementarities of poverty, *anti-poverty* policy must likewise address multiple dimensions of poverty by not only providing additional economic opportunities to the poor, but by politically empowering the poor and ensuring their security (6-7). In this chapter I address anti-poverty efforts to *empower* the poor, meaning efforts “[to enhance] the capacity of poor people to influence the state institutions that affect their lives, by strengthening their participation in political processes and local decisionmaking” (The World Bank 2001, 39). In other words, pro-poor policies should arguably promote individual and collective action within poor communities to voice their demands and express their political interests through involvement in local civic and political organizations and the political process, even when the primary policy objective of the policy is targeted at some other condition of

poverty like material deprivation or low investment in education and health care. In this chapter I test whether one of the more recent innovations in anti-poverty policy, conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs, has done so in the context of Latin America.

Partly in response to the aforementioned shift in the conceptualization of poverty and in perceptions of how to attack poverty, over the last fifteen years there has been a global trend toward the use of CCT schemes as one of the primary anti-poverty policies employed by governments hoping to reduce inequality and poverty and promote economic and human capital development, especially in developing countries (Adato and Hoddinott 2010a; Barrientos and Santibáñez 2009; Cecchini and Madariaga 2011; Fiszbein and Schady 2009). These programs, originally adopted in the Latin American region, provide targeted cash benefits for extremely poor households on the condition that they adopt behaviors to promote the education and health of their children, thereby tending to beneficiaries' immediate needs while simultaneously addressing the tendency for poor families to underinvest in the long-term well-being of their families (Adato and Hoddinott 2010a, 6–7; Fiszbein and Schady 2009). Optimistic observers have hailed the adoption of these programs as an important advance in extending access to the “social rights of citizenship” (Marshall 1964; Stephens 2010, 514–515) for previously marginalized populations, because, at least in some cases, there is evidence that CCT programs enhance individual economic autonomy and give beneficiaries unprecedented access to state services and resources, all supposedly without relying on local, clientelistic power brokers (Ansell and Mitchell 2011; Fenwick 2009; Hunter and Sugiyama 2014; Rego and Pinzani 2013; Sugiyama and Hunter 2013). In this chapter I critically assess these claims and provide an empirical test of their argument that CCT programs empower beneficiaries.

The connection between citizen *political* empowerment and poverty reduction efforts is arguably based on four key elements: access to information, inclusion and participation, accountability, and local organizational capacity (Narayan 2002). In this chapter, I focus on the individual-level effects of CCT programs on inclusion and participation as an indicator of the role that CCT programs play in the political empowerment of their beneficiaries. To the extent that CCT programs increase the level of beneficiary inclusion and participation in their communities and in the decision-making processes of their polity (through voting, participation in community organizations, involvement in electoral campaigns, etc.) as well as their sense of efficacy in those processes, they may help to lay the foundation for the political empowerment of poor welfare recipients. Still, I will argue that they are unable to do so because they engage recipients in instrumentally-motivated behaviors to ensure continued receipt of their benefit, thereby creating dependency dynamics with local authorities who are skeptical about these programs, ultimately undercutting the potential impact of the programs on individual political efficacy.

To test whether beneficiaries of Brazil's Bolsa Família program, in particular, are more active and efficacious citizens compared to similar non-recipients I use propensity score matching to analyze data from public opinion surveys collected by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) in Brazil in 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014. I complement these findings using data collected during semi-structured focus group interviews conducted with beneficiaries and public school teachers in Manaus, Brazil in 2012 and in Brasília, Brazil in 2014. Studying the Bolsa Família program is important for the purposes of this project because, parallel to its anti-poverty mission and like many other CCT programs, the Bolsa Família program has the stated objective to empower its beneficiaries and ensure their social inclusion. In fact, the

webpage for the government agency that oversees the Bolsa Família program, the Ministry of Social Development (MDS, Ministério de Desenvolvimento Social), explicitly claims that “through cash transfer programs, like Bolsa Família, MDS provides citizenship and social inclusion to the beneficiaries.”²⁴ Likewise, in their technical description of the program Lindert et al. (2007, 6) note that “the BFP [Bolsa Família Program]...seeks to help empower BFP beneficiaries by linking them to complementary services.” Accordingly, as one of the state coordinators for the Bolsa Família program in the Federal District of Brasília told me, “the [Bolsa Família] program promotes opportunities because it is not a program that is just about redistribution of income, right. Bolsa Família aggregates many other kinds of access: literacy campaigns, workforce training, access to health, education. So it is an aggregator program.”²⁵ Moreover, given that Brazil’s CCT program serves as an international model of the effectiveness of these kinds of policies, it is imperative to understand to what extent the program actually achieves these socio-political objectives.

In my analysis of the LAPOP survey data I find that Bolsa Família recipients report more active participation than their non-recipient peers in their local parent teacher associations (PTAs). Even so, program beneficiaries who attend PTA meetings report levels of political efficacy that are no higher than their non-recipient peers who, on average, already feel a low sense of efficacy in relation to the political system. Findings from my focus group discussions in Manaus and Brasília provide additional evidence that is consistent with these findings. Many beneficiaries reported that they participate in meetings at their local public school more often than they would otherwise if not for the benefit, yet there is little indication that recipients feel considerably more efficacious as a result of the benefit.

²⁴ See <http://www.mds.gov.br/aceso-a-informacao> (last accessed on 5/19/2014).

²⁵ Interview with the author in Brasília 5/21/2014.

Although at first greater inclusion in the school community seems like an ideal catalyst to empower participatory citizens, the interviews I conducted suggest a less promising interpretation of these behavioral effects and help explain why the survey data show that the average beneficiary continues to feel politically inefficacious. To be sure, beneficiaries express appreciation for the material assistance they receive through the program; unfortunately, there is a divisive gulf between parents and public school employees that makes it difficult for these relationships to provide the support necessary to promote further political empowerment. Assistance recipients are keenly aware of power asymmetries in their relationships with school employees that stem from reporting requirements placed on the schools through the CCT program; teachers reveal that CCT participants and their children are often stigmatized; and parents are keenly aware that they are economically dependent on the benefits that the school employees indirectly control. In other words, the program produces participatory behavior closely linked to its policy objectives; however, in a prime example of the unintended consequences of public policy, that participation fails to integrate and empower assistance beneficiaries as citizens because it places them in a dependent position relative to skeptical state actors who have yet to fully accept the legitimacy of the assistance program.

These findings highlight the value-added of integrating both quantitative and qualitative data in research designs. By better understanding the nature of the relationships and behaviors influenced by the Bolsa Família program, it is possible to begin to develop recommendations to improve the CCT program in ways that maximize the program's potential societal benefit. In the conclusion of the chapter, I offer some recommendations with respect to reforms that could improve the capacity of these programs to empower recipients as full democratic citizens.

Political Participation and Social Policy

As noted in the epigraph drawn from Almond and Verba's (1989 [1963]) classic work, scholars have long seen participation in a society's decision-making processes as a vital attribute of democratic citizenship.²⁶ Indeed, the opportunity to participate politically is seen by some scholars as a definitive feature of democracy itself (Dahl 1971). In any case, political participation provides the opportunity for citizens to affect the distribution of public goods and thereby secure their well-being (Dietz 1998).²⁷ Yet, it is by no means a guarantee that additional participation will always empower citizens (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002; Theiss-Morse and Hibbing 2005). In fact, some observers argue that efforts to expand participatory activity on the part of citizens tend to primarily benefit privileged classes even in democratic regimes (e.g., Przeworski 2010). As World Bank observers have noted in regards to efforts to expand active engagement on the part of citizens, "the tendency among most government agencies is to revert to centralized decision making and to hold endless public meetings without any impact on policy or resource decisions" (Narayan 2002, 20). Thus, I argue that adjudicating between empowered citizenship and marginalized citizenship in relation to CCT programs requires answering a two-part question. That is, are beneficiaries of CCT programs more *participatory* in their communities and do they also feel more politically *efficacious* as citizens as a result of their benefit?

Scholars have now developed a large body of evidence showing the electoral impact of CCT programs in Latin America (e.g., Baez et al. 2012; Dion 2010; Horcasitas and Weldon 1994; Hunter and Power 2007; De La O 2013; Layton and Smith 2015; Licio, Rennó, and Castro

²⁶ For other classic comparative perspectives on political participation see the following: Booth and Seligson (1978); Seligson and Booth (1979); and Verba, Nie, and Kim (1978).

²⁷ As Sen (1999, 156) puts it, "in a democracy, people tend to get what they demand, and more crucially, do not typically get what they do not demand."

2009; Linos 2013; Manacorda, Miguel, and Vigorito 2011; Nicolau and Peixoto 2007; Rocha-Menocal 2001; Zucco 2008, 2013). These claims that CCT programs have an electoral effect on beneficiaries have not gone unchallenged (e.g. Bohn 2011, but see Zucco and Power 2013), but the preponderance of evidence suggests that these social policies have had a significant political-electoral effect on benefit recipients.

Nevertheless, even with this evidence in hand, it is not apparent whether CCTs have this electoral effect because newly empowered and economically autonomous beneficiaries reward incumbents for programmatic, rights-based policy-making or because political elites are strategically manipulating beneficiaries' political preferences and behaviors with state-financed cash handouts, returning to the *assistencialismo* model of the past. In other words, it is still unclear whether CCT programs contribute to the political democratization of the countries that adopt them or whether they serve merely as a mechanism of social control or as a means to "regulate the poor" (Piven and Cloward 1971), reinforcing hierarchical and dependent social relationships between recipients and state actors. Given that economic, social, and political inequalities produce conditions where the poor often lack effective representation even under democratic governments (Bartels 2008; Przeworski 2010; Taylor-Robinson 2010; Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978), it is imperative to understand what effect these new social policies have on recipients' political empowerment to better comprehend how they might affect democratic consolidation in Latin America and the rest of the developing world.

CCT programs have thus far been unable to fully escape the long shadow cast by previous social policies that carried the derogatory "*assistencialismo*" label. There are any number of empirical examples that illustrate the historical pattern of Latin American political leaders using or attempting to use social policies for their short-term electoral gain rather than as

a programmatic means to permanently lift the most vulnerable citizens of their country out of poverty (e.g., Bruhn 1996; Brusco, Nazareno, and Stokes 2004; Calvo and Murillo 2004; Graham and Kane 1998; Magaloni, Cayeros, and Estévez 2009; Penfold-Becerra 2007; Schady 2000). Given these historical examples, a skeptic would be understandably reluctant to accept the widespread adoption of CCTs as sufficient evidence of a revolutionary shift in the political role of social policy in these countries.²⁸

What is more, the argument that technocratic CCT programs undercut mediated or clientelistic relationships between recipients and local power brokers (Campello 2013; Hunter and Sugiyama 2014; Sugiyama and Hunter 2013) provides insufficient grounds to claim that these programs politically empower their beneficiaries. Independent of the nature of such linkages, CCTs still may or may not influence whether individuals decide to participate more actively in the decision-making processes of society and may or may not influence how they feel about their own political efficacy as citizens. Furthermore, to date, no study has provided a compelling analysis of the *causal* relationship between participation in a CCT program and the political empowerment of program beneficiaries. In fact, the handful of prior studies that have studied CCT recipient empowerment have reached contradictory conclusions regarding the relative empowerment of CCT beneficiaries as citizens (e.g., Hevia 2011b; Hunter and Sugiyama 2014). Although these prior efforts have made significant contributions to understanding the role of these programs in recipients' lives, they lack analyses of representative samples of the broader population of interest and hence their conclusions may not be generalizable. As I explain in more detail below, my analysis relies on a mixed-methods approach that provides a stronger basis for

²⁸ Indeed, if institutional structures are in fact “sticky” (i.e., resistant to change) as some scholars have claimed (e.g., Fukuyama (2008, 212)), then it would be unlikely to find evidence of a radically modified approach to social assistance.

making causal inferences about the capacity (or lack thereof) of CCT programs to politically empower beneficiaries.

Because CCT programs target the most vulnerable groups in the population with non-contributory cash benefits, they should create strong instrumental motivations for recipients to pursue behaviors that will increase the likelihood that they maintain their benefits. Thus, the behavioral effects of these programs should be strongly tied to the formal conditions built into the CCT policy design and to the informal criteria that are used or are widely perceived as being used to determine eligibility for the cash benefits. This raises the question: do those behavioral effects do anything else for recipients other than ensure their eligibility to remain in the program? When policy channels citizens into behaviors through which they have an active and influential role in governing, whether intentionally or otherwise, that experience has the potential to empower citizens, especially when those activities promote the development of social capital through horizontal linkages within a community (Putnam 1993, 2000). Accordingly, if through its instrumental effects, a CCT program can develop and empower a diverse and pluralistic pool of capable and active beneficiary citizens who can freely and directly give voice to the spectrum of needs and values found in the population and simultaneously defend access to their benefit as a matter of social rights, then I claim it will have contributed to the broader campaign to eradicate cycles of poverty. Indeed, such a pattern would provide evidence that it meets Sen's (1999, 153–154) criteria for citizen empowerment by enabling autonomous individuals to make use of the rights-based prerogatives entailed by a democratic form of government; otherwise, it might contribute to lessening material deprivation, but it will be unlikely to contribute to sustaining pro-poor policy over time.

Nevertheless, it may be too much to ask any such assistance program to fully empower citizens.²⁹ A more complete test of the ability of CCTs to promote democratic citizenship requires evidence that, in addition to any behavioral effects of these programs, beneficiaries feel more politically efficacious as a result of receiving their benefit. Indeed, when government policy coerces participation – as CCTs do through “conditionalities” to receive assistance benefits – citizens may be less likely to internalize a sense that they possess “subjective power” (i.e., the ability to compel representative governance and accountability on the part of elected officials) (Holston 2008, 16) either because coercion typically reflects negative social constructions of target populations that can result in stigmatization or because external coercion potentially emaciates a citizen’s sense of internal efficacy (Rothstein 1998; Schneider and Ingram 1993, 1997; Soss 2000; Theiss-Morse and Hibbing 2005, 238). Thus, coercion may play a dual role in the marginalization of assistance recipients: first, it sends a strong social signal about the social value of recipients that may ultimately result in stigmatization and second, it may place citizens in a hierarchical and dependent relationship with officials who enjoy a higher social status and hold discretion and leverage over recipients’ well-being, thereby creating the potential to marginalize recipients anew.³⁰

Of course, a full test of the effects of social policy on the political empowerment of recipients may require the passage of a significant amount of time. After all, political empowerment among recipients of Social Security in the United States took decades to emerge and resulted primarily from the organization of interest groups representing the views of seniors

²⁹ This is especially true if the government enacts such a program without simultaneously making the necessary supplementary investments in other social services, like public schools and the public health system, that promote the development of citizen capabilities.

³⁰ They may also lack the other necessary elements of citizen empowerment including access to (or the ability to digest) information, the means to hold elected officials accountable, and local organizational capacity (Narayan 2002).

from across the country (Campbell 2003). Still, in the short term it should be possible to observe whether such effects are emerging and what the general trends are regarding the political behavior and attitudinal shifts among the program's target population.

Political Empowerment and Democratic Consolidation

In terms of its relationship to inclusion and participation, I conceptualize political empowerment as an individual-level trait that incorporates both political engagement, through participation in the decision-making processes of society with the objective to influence policy both during and after elections (Almond and Verba 1989 [1963]; Putnam 1993, 2000), and political efficacy in both its external and internal dimensions, which include an individual's belief in the responsiveness of the government to citizen demands and an individual's belief in their own capacity to understand and/or influence the political process (Anderson and Tverdova 2001; Clarke and Acock 1989; Lane 1959). Therefore, this inclusionary element of political empowerment consists of behavioral and attitudinal features, each of which is a necessary component of the overarching concept. Thus, in my empirical analysis below I test whether access to a CCT program entails an effect both on the political behavior of recipients and on their sense of political efficacy within their political system.

In the context of Latin America's transitional democracies, empowered citizenship is often juxtaposed with more traditional types of linkages between citizens and politicians, like clientelism (Bethell 2000; Fox 1994; Kitschelt 2000). In line with this assertion, Holston (2008, 247–8) argues that “to distinguish between incidents of citizenship and clientelism, it is necessary to analyze the *basis* of people's claims for benefits on the one hand and their provision on the other. The key is not whether people accept a load of bricks...or vote for those candidates

who deliver them. ... Rather, the key is whether alternatives exist to direct and coerced exchanges of resources for political support.” In other words, empowered citizens are more likely to emerge from a situation where government officials do not hold a monopoly on the power to aggregate the interests of citizens, independent of whether those officials engage in clientelism or not.

One potential alternative to politicians for aggregating citizen interests is civil society organizations (Fox 1994). Thus, arguably, one reliable signal of the existence of alternative sources of power comes from individual participation in civil society organizations like parent-teacher associations (PTAs) or neighborhood associations that connect citizens to their community. By extension, the difference between a policy used for social control and a policy that develops empowered citizenship among its recipients depends on the types of engagement that these respective policies foster. If a given public policy strengthens beneficiaries’ horizontal ties to civil society organizations where they have an effective voice it will strengthen liberal democracy. Conversely, a policy that creates vertical political linkages between powerful patrons and their dependent clients reinforces social hierarchy and social control of the poor by elites.

As an example of the type of positive citizenship-building organization that helps individuals feel empowered, Putnam (2000) provides an extensive description of the role PTAs often play in the development of social capital in the United States. Indeed, Putnam (2000, 290) notes that “the PTA serves to establish and enforce norms of commitment and performance on the part of school officials, teachers, and perhaps even students. It also allows for the deepening of interpersonal bonds and ‘we-ness’ between families and educators. On a more personal note, the PTA meetings are bound to establish, or strengthen, norms of reciprocity and mutual concern among parents.” Arguably, the development of social capital in these terms that Putnam uses is

the equivalent of developing a sense of uncoerced citizenship along the lines of what Holston describes. Moreover, Putnam further argues that the development of social capital in one arena likely catalyzes participatory behavior in other forms of community life. In his words, “community organizations need time and money, and members call upon one another to pitch in, not only for that organization, but also for others. If I join the PTA, I’m very likely to be asked to volunteer for the fund-raising picnic, and someone I meet there may well invite me to help with the Cancer Society walk-a-thon. Once on the list of usual suspects, I’m likely to stay there” (121). As always, there is the caveat that Putnam himself recognizes: “regular connections with my fellow citizens don’t *ensure* that I will be able to put myself in their shoes, but social isolation virtually guarantees that I will not” (340). The question, then, is whether CCT programs in the developing world can catalyze a more robust community life that will build citizenship in the way that Putnam describes, perhaps even to the extent that CCTs fundamentally alter the relationship between beneficiaries and their community and state.

Still, in order to understand whether individuals are in fact empowered citizens in a *democratic* political community it is not enough to know they engage each other in a vibrant participatory culture; rather, it is important to understand whether they feel politically efficacious because of that engagement. As Holston (2008, 16) notes, “empowerment happens when a citizen’s sense of an objective source of right in citizenship entails a corresponding sense of subjective power—power to change existing arrangements (legal and other), exact compliance, compel behavior.” If citizens of a particular society feel that political leaders do not care about their opinions or if citizens feel that they are incapable of understanding the important political issues in their community – in other words, if those citizens feel politically *inefficacious* – then that society is lacking one of the key catalysts for the exercise of democratic political power.

According to Sen (1999), the principal advantage of a democracy, when compared to other possible political systems, is that the political elites in a democratic system have a strong incentive to listen to the concerns of citizens – thereby engaging the capacities of all citizens in a common effort to improve objective outcomes for that society. When citizens perceive that elites remain unresponsive even under democratic institutions, democratic legitimacy suffers, which may result in political instability (Booth and Seligson 2009). As such, without a strong sense of political efficacy promoting active involvement in decision-making processes and reflecting a sense of government responsiveness among its citizens, a democracy is weak at its core.

Political Empowerment among the Poor

The poor face significant barriers to becoming politically empowered that potentially place them on unequal footing as citizens. In the developing world, these barriers may prove to be a daunting obstacle for the development of strong consolidated democracies. First, there is the possibility that the poor do not have equal access to the rights of citizenship in practice (Holston 2008, 21–2; Yashar 2005, 50–2). This is of particular concern if certain groups of citizens are marginalized on the basis of socially stigmatized characteristics, as is common with the impoverished and/or homeless, ethnic minorities, the disabled, and other so-called “undesirable” or “undeserving” people. Furthermore, even if the poor have nearly equal access to rights in practice, the fact remains that the opinions of wealthy citizens often carry more weight in political outcomes than the opinions of the poor (Bartels 2008; Taylor-Robinson 2010), which may in turn discourage empowerment through the loss of one’s sense of efficacy within the political system. Third, poor citizens, by definition, have relatively limited resources in terms of time, money, or education. Theoretically, these limitations should restrict their capacity to

participate effectively given their preoccupation with meeting more basic needs (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995; Inglehart 1990, 310; Maslow 1954; Sen 1999). Fourth, marginalized groups typically carry a negative “social construction” that, in conjunction with their lack of resources, means that they will likely bear a disproportionate cost of public policies enacted by political elites and that they will consequently internalize conceptions of citizenship that discourage political empowerment (Schneider and Ingram 1993; Soss 1999). Finally, there is considerable inertia in political engagement; many citizens, regardless of other external forces, may freely choose not to exercise their rights of citizenship (Holston 2008, 83; Jelin 1996, 108). Even with the most generous assistance it may be impossible to spur further engagement among the willfully disengaged.

Consequently, assistance programs target individuals who may already confront insurmountable obstacles to the realization of empowered citizenship. To the extent that social assistance represents a social right (Marshall 1964; Stephens 2010), participation in such a program may signal that the policy beneficiaries have overcome barriers to gaining the formal rights of citizenship; nevertheless, the other barriers to empowerment, including limited access to resources such as time, money, and skills, may still remain. What is more, assistance programs may compound these issues even if they marginally improve the economic well-being of their recipients; after all, social policies often fail to meet recipients’ actual needs, provide convenient labels for the creation of negative stereotypes, and, particularly among means-tested and conditional programs, manifest state paternalism. In other words, poorly designed assistance programs may depress beneficiary participation in the political process and further marginalize those whose voices are often already suppressed.

Still, there are at least three reasons why it may be possible to observe political empowerment among the poor, especially when they receive assistance benefits. First, there are moments when poor citizens overcome the resource limitations they face to participate effectively in their political system. This may be particularly true when these citizens face a significant and imminent threat to their well-being which causes them to break out of their habitual behavioral patterns (Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen 2000). For instance, there is evidence that the urban poor mobilize more effectively to call attention to their needs in moments of extreme crisis (Dietz 1998; Lawless and Fox 2001). Along these lines, assistance programs may provide a catalyst to civic and political engagement if recipients believe that those efforts are necessary to continue to receive their benefit and provide the necessities of life. Indeed, Campbell (2003) shows that lower income Social Security recipients in the United States mobilize at a higher rate than high income recipients to protect their social benefit when it is threatened by legislative action because it directly and substantively affects their ability to meet their basic needs. Thus, if nothing else, assistance benefits may provide the resources and instrumental motivation needed to push poor welfare recipients towards active political engagement. If those efforts prove fruitful, their sense of efficacy may also improve thereby fully empowering the individuals involved.

Second, it may be that researchers have looked in the wrong places to find evidence of civic and political engagement among the poor. When assessing political behaviors among welfare participants in the United States Soss (2000, 88) argues that “because poor people rarely wield organized influence in the representative branches of government, their political efforts are more likely to be found at the margins of the political system, especially in institutions that implement public policy at the community level.” In line with this argument, analyses of political

behavior in Latin America have found that when poor citizens participate politically their behavior most often connects them to local political officials and agencies (Booth and Seligson 1978, 2008; Seligson and Booth 1979). In fact, the poor in Latin America often participate in these arenas at a *higher* rate than other social classes. From this perspective, welfare agencies, schools, hospitals, and other local institutions are the most salient political arenas for poor citizens, especially when there are conditions attached to the receipt of assistance benefits that require citizens to interact with these complementary services, as is the case in most CCT programs. Just because such participation happens on the periphery of the political system is no reason to automatically dismiss it as meaningless or powerless. The crucial question is what happens to beneficiaries once they are engaged with those local institutions. If they feel more efficacious as a result, then there is good reason to believe that the net effect of the program is to empower the recipients.

Finally, assistance programs may also have positive interpretive effects on beneficiaries. For citizens who previously subsisted at the margins of society, the extension of the social rights of an assistance program may signal that their government and society value them as citizens. Such was the case in the United States after World War II when the government enacted the original G.I. Bill to pay for the expenses of higher education or technical training for returning soldiers. Veterans who used those benefits became more participatory not only during their tenure in school, but throughout the remainder of their lives (Mettler 2005). Even with assistance aimed toward impoverished recipients, who typically hold much lower social esteem than veterans, it is possible that political elites could frame the provision of traditional social assistance in a positive light, particularly when they target mothers and children (Skocpol 1992).

Such frames may not endure for the life of the program, but they will set the tone of the debate in a way that may initially encourage empowerment among benefit recipients.

In addition, there is also an economic argument that suggests that cash transfer programs can lead to more active political participation. By providing beneficiaries with cash, or so the argument goes, assistance agencies provide the means for beneficiaries to take more risks to escape poverty. In effect, cash transfers provide “a springboard for the economic growth of poor countries” and the opportunity for individuals to “participate actively in the economy” (Hanlon, Barrientos, and Hulme 2010, 31). Participating more effectively in the political and civic arena of the local community might be one of the risks (in the sense of the opportunity costs of such participation) that the poor might be more willing to take while receiving their benefit.

The Role of Social Policy in Political Empowerment

In prior research, political scientists who have studied CCTs’ political effects have largely focused on the ability of these programs to create an electoral base for the governing party responsible for the implementation of the program. For example, scholars of Brazilian politics have argued that the consolidation of state social policy in the Bolsa Família CCT program and the votes of the impoverished beneficiaries of that program provided the electoral margin necessary for President Luis Inácio “Lula” da Silva to win reelection in 2006 (Hunter and Power 2007; Nicolau and Peixoto 2007; Zucco 2008, 2013). Moreover, support from beneficiaries continued to influence Lula’s job approval ratings post-election (Licio, Rennó, and Castro 2009). Similarly, in the case of Mexico’s Oportunidades (formerly PROGRESA) CCT program, De La O (2013) exploited Mexico’s randomized implementation of the program to show evidence of a causal link between beneficiary status and higher voter turnout in the 2000

presidential elections, which in turn benefitted the incumbent PRI party even though their candidate did not ultimately win that election. Unsurprisingly then, Dion (2010, 211) argues that these “programs continue to be popular with politicians because they target a growing segment of the unorganized voting population, which is important in the context of fierce electoral competition.” Thus, because the poor are perceived as being responsive to transfers and often vote on the basis of the delivery of particularistic benefits (Brusco, Nazareno, and Stokes 2004; Calvo and Murillo 2004; Taylor-Robinson 2010), incumbents have been strongly motivated to implement these programs.

These previous findings offer important insights into the political elite’s electoral incentives to implement CCT programs, but such a focus risks overlooking the impact of these programs on a broader spectrum of political participation of beneficiaries as well as their sense of political efficacy. After all, voting is only one, relatively infrequent means for citizens to participate in making decisions, even if it is the most common form of political participation. There are many other avenues of political and civic activity for them to pursue, particularly at the local level, which may prove to have a higher payoff in terms of citizen empowerment. It is vital to also understand whether there is a systematic pattern of engagement across multiple forms of behavior and what those behaviors entail in practice. This is because not all political behaviors are equal. Some forms of participation bridge communities together, while others reinforce partisan, ideological, ethnic, or other exclusionary identities (Putnam 2000). Moreover, there are behaviors that create horizontal linkages between members of a community, while others forge vertical, institutional linkages between the mass public and political elites (McLeod, Scheufele, and Moy 1999). Thus, certain participatory experiences may result in empowered democratic

citizens, while others comprise a subtle, or not so subtle, form of social control (Finkel 1985; Theiss-Morse and Hibbing 2005).

The handful of prior studies that assess the grassroots impact of CCT programs all rely heavily, though not exclusively, on qualitative methods including ethnographic study, participant observation, and focus group interviews (Adato 2000; Adato and Roopnaraine 2010; Hevia 2011a, 2011b; Hunter and Sugiyama 2014; Rego and Pinzani 2013). These authors report mixed results in terms of the impact of conditional cash transfers on promoting meaningful political inclusion and participation for recipients: in some ways these authors claim that CCTs empower recipients, especially in terms of the role of women within the household (Rego and Pinzani 2013) or in terms of beneficiaries' belief that they can hold presidents accountable for maintaining the CCT benefit (Hunter and Sugiyama 2014), but in other ways the programs create societal divisions both horizontally between members of communities who receive or do not receive benefits (Adato 2000) and vertically between state actors and recipients (Hevia 2011a). These seemingly contradictory findings illustrate how difficult it is to assess the impact of these programs and reinforce the need for further study of the topic.

Importantly, these studies overlap with efforts in the United States and Europe to document “policy feedbacks” that affect the civic engagement and political participation of beneficiaries of social policies like Social Security, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Head Start, and other similar programs (Campbell 2003; Mettler 2005; Mettler and Soss 2004; Pierson 1993; Skocpol 1992; Soss 2000; Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011).³¹ The crucial insight from this literature is that beneficiaries of social assistance programs may become either further *marginalized* in society, if the lesson they learn in their interaction with government assistance services is patronizing and stigmatizing, or further *empowered* in society,

³¹ For a comprehensive review of this literature see Campbell (2012).

if beneficiaries gain a greater sense of their participatory capacity and political efficacy through participation in the assistance program (Soss 1999, 2000). Thus, social policy in particular has a “feedback” effect on its target population that will determine both the level of beneficiary inclusion and participation in their community and the downstream effect of that engagement in terms of a beneficiary’s sense of political efficacy (Campbell 2012; Skocpol 1992).³²

This prior literature implies that there is no guarantee that social assistance will empower a target population. The content and design of the policy will matter, especially in relation to the resource and interpretive effects entailed by the policy in question (Mettler and Soss 2004; Pierson 1993). In the context of CCT programs, resource effects refer both to the direct material transfer inherent in a cash transfer program and to the skills and capacities acquired through program participation, whereas interpretive effects refer to the “social constructions,” whether positive or negative, of the populations targeted by the enacting legislation for a policy program (Schneider and Ingram 1993). Given the size of the beneficiary pool in countries that have adopted CCT programs (Cecchini and Madariaga 2011), these policy effects may prove decisive in terms of empowering a broad base of citizens.

The Potential for Political Empowerment through CCT Programs

Adato and Hoddinott (2010a, 6–7) explain that CCT programs have three characteristics that distinguish them from other social programs, each of which has important implications in light of the theoretical discussion presented in the previous sections. First, they are targeted based on socioeconomic criteria using both geographic and household data. Second, they provide cash benefits directly to recipients. Third, recipients must invest their time and resources toward

³² Flavin and Griffin (2009) provide evidence of feedback effects from foreign policy and tax policy as well.

the human capital development of their children, usually by enrolling them in school, ensuring that each school-age child attends at least a minimum percentage of their classes (the specific percentage varies by program but is usually between 80 and 90 percent), and following through on vaccination schedules and other health care requirements. Governments monitor recipient compliance with the program conditions and can suspend or cancel the benefits if beneficiaries demonstrate a chronic inability or unwillingness to meet their obligations.³³

I use Brazil's Bolsa Família program to more substantively illustrate how a functioning CCT program relates to the theoretical discussion from the previous sections. This choice is not arbitrary. I focus on Brazil for several reasons. Bolsa Família has existed in its current form with only moderate changes in the eligibility criteria and benefit thresholds since 2004.³⁴ The program has been administered across two presidential administrations drawn from the same party with strong continuity, which has provided additional stability for the program. In turn, this has given the government agencies and localities responsible for the administration of the program time to achieve high levels of coverage across eligible families. Consequently, Bolsa Família now has strong branding and members of families who participate in the program readily recognize the name of the program when asked about it in interview settings. Moreover, the program is now omnipresent in Brazilian municipalities, which ensures that it is possible to achieve broad national representativeness regarding program effects.

³³ More detailed discussions of the design features of CCT programs are available in Adato and Hoddinott's (2010b) edited volume, in Cecchini and Madariaga's (2011) report for the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, or in Fiszbein and Schady's (2009) World Bank report. At least in the case of Brazil's Bolsa Família program, the government will not punish beneficiaries for non-compliance with program conditions if the local government has not provided the necessary level of access to education and health services or if access to those services is cut off due to natural events like floods or heavy rainfall.

³⁴ See Hall (2006) for a discussion of the Brazilian government's transition to the Bolsa Família program. According to government estimates, more than 14 million families now receive benefits, which means that anywhere from 20 to 25 percent of the national population participates in the program.

In terms of achievements related to the program's primary objectives, Bolsa Família has been credited for at least a portion of the significant improvements in the level of inequality and poverty rates observed in Brazil during the first decade after the turn of the century (Barros et al. 2009; Soares, Ribas, and Osório 2010). Still, there is rather sparse evidence of the social impact of the program (de Brauw et al. 2014; Oliveira et al. 2007). School enrollment and attendance increased among beneficiaries, but there is little evidence that would signal that the program had an effect in terms of education achievement among beneficiary children. Likewise, there is little evidence of an effect on health related indicators. The fact that the program seems to have had a limited impact on its primary social objectives raises the question of whether the program can effectively empower its recipients politically.

Even so, why might a CCT program lead to political empowerment? The first link between CCT programs and the theoretical discussion presented above is that targeting conditional cash transfers based on geographical and household data has ensured that the poorest citizens receive benefits in spite of the scale and complexity of the programs. According to efficiency studies, Brazil's Bolsa Família program has shown "exceptional targeting results, with 73% of transfers going to the poorest quintile and 94% going to the poorest two quintiles" (Lindert et al. 2007, 6). Moreover, the central planners for the Bolsa Família program explicitly aimed to remove quid pro quo exchanges between local program administrators and beneficiaries (Campello 2013). In part, this is accomplished in the Bolsa Família program by delivering benefits directly via electronic debit cards, meaning that there is less political discretion in the distribution of benefits to an individual household. The program also ensures that selection into the program is controlled remotely through an automated process and there is some evidence that these efforts have proven successful in undermining local clientelism (Sugiyama and Hunter

2013). In fact, in one focus group interview I conducted with recipient parents in Brasília, the parents recounted how representatives of local politicians would often come around their neighborhood to “tie up your vote” by offering to pay for school tuition and fees in exchange for showing support and voting for the given candidate; yet they also noted that Bolsa Família was not caught up in vote buying behavior because it is a federal program unassociated with local-level politicians who are more likely to use such tactics.³⁵ Thus, it may be that effective and efficient targeting leads beneficiaries to feel more valued as citizens. Still, at the same time, when I asked recipients whether they felt that the existence of Bolsa Família provided evidence that politicians cared about people like them, recipients emphatically answered in the negative, noting that such programs typically benefitted elected officials and seemed to be a way for politicians to “buy” the support of the poor. Hence, while it may be that recipients note that local politicians avoid using the program in direct exchanges for electoral support, it is unclear that the program’s technocratic targeting mechanisms make recipients feel more empowered as citizens in part because they remain skeptical about the motivations of politicians even at the federal level.

A second potentially empowering factor of the CCT programs is the value of the benefit to the beneficiary household. Even though the cash benefit of most CCT programs is small in absolute terms, when studied as a relative income, it may be meaningful for beneficiaries, in part because their incomes are so low to begin with. To the extent that recipients see that the benefit has an important impact on their well-being, it may be that they will have a strong instrumental motivation to do everything necessary to guarantee access to their benefit, including complying with program conditions and perhaps even engaging with politics in defense of the program

³⁵ Interview with the author in Brasília – DF, 5/30/2014. The Portuguese phrase interviewees used for “tie up your vote” was “amarrar o seu voto.”

should they have reason to believe that it is threatened, all in spite of whatever limitations in individual capacity or resources that they would otherwise face. This motivational effect may prove empowering for a beneficiary when considered in conjunction with the third point discussed below regarding the conditions attached to receiving the benefits.

The example of Bolsa Família is informative on this second point as well. Cash benefits in the program are paid to recipients on a monthly basis. As of July 2014, the primary poverty threshold is set at a monthly household per capita income of R\$77 (just over \$30). Households below that threshold receive R\$70 in monthly benefits plus a per child credit of R\$35 for up to five children ages 0 to 15 and a per child credit of R\$42 for up to two adolescents ages 16 and 17.³⁶ Depending on the composition of the family in terms of the number of parents and children, those benefits can significantly increase the monthly household income even though in absolute terms the amount of the benefit will be much less than the legal minimum monthly salary. For families that fit within the program's primary constraints (that is they have a declared monthly household per capita income below R\$77 and no more than 5 children under the age of 15) the *minimum* impact of the program benefit is a 46.8% increase in household income.³⁷ Consequently, these families should notice the difference in their consumption power that results

³⁶ These statements are based on information from the Brazilian government website for the Ministerio de Desenvolvimento Social accessed most recently on 4/14/2014 (<http://www.mds.gov.br/bolsafamilia/beneficios>). Expectant mothers are also eligible for a credit of R\$35 during each month of her pregnancy. This benefit counts towards the limit of five benefits received for children under the age of 15.

³⁷ The impact is potentially much larger in families with different demographic and income configurations. I base this calculation off the official benefit and income threshold levels provided by the Brazilian government and I assume that the family consists of a two-parent household. The impact in a single parent household is slightly higher at 54.5%. The government also has an adjustable benefit that they provide on a case by case basis to ensure that the income of all families in the program reaches R\$77 per person at a minimum, which means that in some families the impact of the benefit on household income may be much larger. The Bolsa Família program also has a second eligibility threshold set at a monthly household per capita income of R\$154. These families do not receive the baseline benefit of R\$77, but can still receive the per-child credits. Although the impact of the benefit is much smaller on their household income (the *minimum* impact is in two-parent households at the income threshold with 1 child under the age of 15, where it produces an increase of 7.6%), it can more significantly increase the household income in families with more children (18.7% for a two-parent household and 21.0% in a one-parent household for households with up to 7 children, including 5 under the age of 15 and 2 ages 16-17; after that point, the marginal impact of the benefits will decrease).

from their participation in the program. If nothing else, they will have a strong instrumental incentive to maintain the benefit. Crucially, whether the benefit proves empowering or marginalizing depends on the conditions attached to the benefits.

As a CCT, the receipt of the Bolsa Família benefit depends primarily on the ability of the family to meet the conditions entailed upon them as a requirement to participate in the program. These conditions link recipients to complementary government services at the local level like the public school system and public health providers. In Brazil, recipient families must ensure that their school age children ages 6-15 attend at least 85% of their classes, whereas their adolescent children ages 16-17 must attend at least 75% of their classes. Moreover, parents must ensure that their children receive regularly scheduled early-childhood vaccines and mothers must adhere to regular preventive, prenatal, neonatal, and postnatal care at public clinics. Thus, the quality of interaction that recipients have with these complementary services may also have a profound influence on their empowerment, an effect that may extend well beyond that of receiving the cash benefit alone. To be sure, the program may channel and focus the energy of recipients towards engagement in behaviors like attending school meetings or using health clinics which are linked with its policy priorities and will do so largely out of the instrumental motivation of maintaining the benefit. Still, through their involvement with these local services, participants may have opportunities to engage with their community and neighbors in ways that would not otherwise exist. Those interactions have the potential, in theory, to empower recipients as citizens. They may create spillover effects that lead recipients to become more participatory in other activities not directly linked to the Bolsa Família program and they may entail recipients with a stronger sense of their political efficacy.

On the other hand, to the extent that public school and public health officials hold leverage over benefit recipients, these services may simply provide another avenue of social control over marginalized groups thereby limiting the impact of the programs on recipient citizenship. In the case of Brazil, school and health officials monitor compliance with program conditions thereby granting them indirect control over an individual beneficiary's benefits. Crucially, if the official reports a pattern of noncompliance, the beneficiary's benefit may be suspended or blocked; moreover, these officials also are given some degree of discretion regarding what constitutes a justifiable excuse for nonattendance or noncompliance. This places these officials in a powerful position vis-à-vis the recipients, one which the recipients may be hard pressed to counter. Overall, given the long-standing lack of effective citizenship in Brazil (Bethell 2000; Fischer 2008), it would be encouraging to observe political engagement and a stronger sense of efficacy among Bolsa Família recipients, but it would also run counter to historical expectations, especially when considered in conjunction with the empirical findings noted above regarding the limits of the social impact of Bolsa Família.

Hypotheses

The discussion thus far has addressed two questions. First, does a conditional cash transfer program increase the level of civic and political participation among its beneficiaries and second, if so, does the benefit provide a corresponding sense of political efficacy? Even in the early years of a program, it should be possible to test whether there are trends in one direction or another on these questions. Given the premise that motivates conditional cash transfers – namely, that cash incentives can induce individuals to change their behavioral patterns, and that they do so relatively quickly once a beneficiary joins the program – the strong *a priori* expectation (H1)

is that these programs will cause recipients to be more likely to engage in instrumental behaviors that are necessary or are perceived as necessary to maintain access to the cash transfer. In the case of CCTs this is most likely to connect recipients with their local schools.³⁸ As parents send their children to school to meet the program requirements, they will likely also attend meetings (e.g., parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings, etc.) that they believe may help to ensure that their families continue to receive their benefits.³⁹

Still, the question of whether CCTs produce political empowerment requires a broader assessment to determine whether there are observable spillover effects in recipient efforts to influence the political process. After all, successful engagement (i.e., engagement by which the poor “[obtain] material goods and/or a favorable distribution of governmental resources”) in one interaction should breed further engagement in other potential interactions (Dietz 1998, 139).

If receiving the Bolsa Família benefit leads recipients to be more participatory, the next question is whether benefit recipients have a stronger sense of political efficacy as a result of the benefit they receive. In particular, assuming that there is an effect on participation, do participatory recipients have a different sense of their own political efficacy than their participatory non-recipient peers? As already noted, public officials hold a great deal of leverage over recipients when compared to non-recipients and, historically, Brazil has been a very

³⁸ Likewise I would expect that recipients would make more use of vaccination drives and other public health services linked to their benefit when compared with their non-recipient peers. I focus on the schools and exclude the health services in my analysis because the only measure of use of public health services in the data I use asks about use of these services in general rather than specific uses like getting vaccinations. It may be that receiving the cash benefit *improves* other health outcomes for beneficiary families because it allows the family to provide better nutrition. In addition the program requires mothers to procure pre-natal care and it may encourage the use of other preventative care. If this is the case, it is not clear what the net effect of beneficiary status would be on the general use of health services. If beneficiaries are more healthy because of the program, all else equal they may have *less* need to seek medical care than their non-recipient peers. Moreover, in Brazil, local governments have been much more effective at monitoring the education requirements than the health requirements.

³⁹ In the case of attendance at school meetings, parents may engage in such behavior for at least two reasons: they may believe that their engagement will help their child fulfill their obligation to attend classes; they may also believe that their engagement will facilitate current or future interactions and/or petitions involving the school or health officials who ultimately hold discretion over the benefit.

unequal, hierarchical society. In spite of the implementation of targeted social policies like Bolsa Família, these underlying structural conditions persist in Brazilian society, even in social contexts like public schools that, elsewhere, could provide a nurturing environment for the development of community unity and democratic citizenship.⁴⁰ Therefore, my expectation (H2) is that even if beneficiaries are participating more in public forums, their sense of political efficacy will not have improved. In fact, their sense of political efficacy may even be worse if recipients feel compelled to participate in these social arenas as a pseudo-condition of receiving their benefit.

Data, Methods, and Results

To test these hypotheses, I use survey data from the 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 rounds of the AmericasBarometer in Brazil conducted by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP).⁴¹ Each round of the survey has an identifying question that asks respondents if someone in their household participates in the Bolsa Família program. This question serves as the key treatment variable in the analyses and receives a value of 1 if the respondent indicates that they or someone in their household receives Bolsa Família benefits and 0 if not.⁴² I examine the correlation of this indicator variable with eleven different potential forms of political

⁴⁰ In fact, in a comparative analysis with the rest of the Latin American region using LAPOP data from the AmericasBarometer, Brazil has consistently scored relatively poorly in terms of its citizens' sense of political efficacy.

⁴¹ The 2008 survey has a total of 1,497 respondents, the 2010 survey has a total of 2,482 respondents, and both the 2012 and 2014 surveys have a total of 1,500 respondents. Unfortunately, there is no indicator of how long respondents have been receiving benefits to provide a test of the influence of time under the program in relation to the hypotheses I test in this chapter.

⁴² Recent government estimates claim that more than 14 million families currently receive benefits through the Bolsa Família program. If accurate, this figure means that nearly 25 percent of the total population of Brazil benefits from the program. In the 2014 round of surveys, 25.43 percent of respondents reported receiving the benefit. In the 2012 round of surveys, 18.88 percent of the respondents reported receiving the benefit. In 2010 the comparable figure was 22.27 percent and in 2008 it was 15.75 percent.

participation.⁴³ The most important of these behaviors for the first hypothesis is attendance at a parent-teacher association (PTA) meeting.⁴⁴ I subsequently test the effect of Bolsa Família participation on additional civic and political behaviors that include voting in the most recent presidential election, protest, contact with a federal congressman, contact with a local official, contact with a government agency, submission of a request for assistance to a local government official, work for a candidate's campaign in the most recent presidential elections, attempts to convince others to vote for a party or candidate (i.e., opinion leadership), attendance at a neighborhood association meeting, and attempts to help solve a problem in the neighborhood. This cluster of political behaviors includes behaviors that can be labeled as conventional, unconventional, community-oriented, vertically-oriented, occasional, and everyday forms of engagement; therefore, it provides an informative spectrum of behaviors that can help determine what inferences to draw about the broader behavioral consequences of the Bolsa Família program.

The AmericasBarometer surveys also include two questions that tap into the respondents' sense of political efficacy. The first targets their sense of external efficacy through a question that asks to what extent they agree or disagree with the following statement: "Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think." The second targets their sense of internal efficacy and asks to what extent they agree or disagree with the following statement: "You feel that you understand the most important political issues of this country." Responses are provided on seven point scale to each question where a score of 7 indicates that they "strongly agree" and 1 indicates that they "strongly disagree". I recode responses to these variables to range from 0 to 1 and I then model responses to each of these questions using OLS regression.

⁴³ All quantitative analyses were performed using Stata v.14.

⁴⁴ Given the importance of school participation, I restrict the analyses to focus on the subpopulation of respondents who report that they had a child in school during the previous year.

The key hurdle in measuring the average treatment effect of participation in Bolsa Família using observational data like that available in the LAPOP surveys is that participation in the program is distributed non-randomly within the population by design.⁴⁵ As a consequence, some individuals may be more likely than others to claim program benefits and some individuals have no chance of receiving benefits. The variables that determine participation in a CCT program may also correlate with participation. Thus, by virtue of the design of the program, there are serious concerns that confounding covariates may create spurious relationships between participation in Bolsa Família and the outcome variables of interest here. One solution to this problem is to recover a matched subsample of control units to compare with the “treated” observations in a way that approximates randomized assignment and thereby test the potential causal relationships between the treatment variable and the outcome variables.

To create the matched sample necessary to isolate the relationship between Bolsa Família participation and the political behaviors of interest independent of other individual and contextual characteristics, I employ propensity score matching (Guo and Fraser 2010; Rosenbaum and Rubin 1983).⁴⁶ To make causal inferences using propensity scores, there are three key stages of analysis. First, I estimate the propensity score of receiving treatment through logistic regression on relevant pretreatment covariates. Second, I match treatment and control observations based on the proximity of their propensity scores. Third, I analyze the matched sample to estimate the treatment effect. So long as the ignorable treatment assignment assumption and the stable unit treatment value assumption (SUTVA) are plausibly met, this

⁴⁵ This is in addition to the “fundamental problem of causal inference” (Holland 1986) which in the context of the current analysis means that it is impossible to simultaneously observe any given individual’s outcome both as a recipient and as a non-recipient of a cash transfer program. Because of this fundamental missing data problem I am only able to estimate *average* treatment effects, not the individual treatment effect for each observation collected in the survey.

⁴⁶ Notably, matching approximates a randomized experiment only in the sense that it can improve balance on observed covariates. Unlike true randomization, however, there is no formal expectation that matching improves balance on *unobserved* covariates (Guo and Fraser 2010, 280–281).

method can provide less biased estimates of the treatment effect than OLS and other traditional forms of regression in observational studies (Guo and Fraser 2010, 55–84). In other words, assignment to treatment must be independent of outcomes and the value of the outcome for a given individual cannot depend on the mechanism of assignment to treatment or the treatment status of other individuals (Guo and Fraser 2010, 30–36). In the current context, this means that I assume that inclusion in the Bolsa Família program precedes reported civic and political participation and that each respondent’s reported participation does not depend on the prevalence of the level of Bolsa Família participation in a given social context.⁴⁷ In order for the average treatment effect to be a meaningful estimate of the treatment effect of Bolsa Família on a beneficiary’s behavior, I also assume that the causal effect of the program is constant across individuals.⁴⁸

To begin the process of propensity score matching, I first estimate two conditional probabilities of participation in Bolsa Família within each wave of survey data: the first using a logit regression estimated for the subpopulation of respondents with children in school and the second drawing on the full sample.⁴⁹ Doing so allows me to conduct two parallel analyses

⁴⁷ In reality, these assumptions may be violated in some municipalities. Some localities (especially in rural areas) recruit beneficiaries primarily through participatory venues like public schools which means that individuals who are more participatory by nature may be more likely to be included in the program. Moreover, each municipality has a quota of the number of benefits available based on census estimates of the number of eligible families in each locality which means that families that would otherwise be eligible may be left out of the program because the quota for their municipality has already been met. Consequently, these assumptions can be more accurately described as simplifying assumptions. Even so, given the multi-stage selection process for Bolsa Família there is no guarantee of inclusion in the program even by turning out at a recruitment meeting. Potential beneficiaries first register for Brazil’s Cadastro Único and only then is an automatic evaluation conducted to determine eligibility for Bolsa Família based on household income and composition data provided during the initial interview. What is more, the government can make exceptions to municipal quotas for families with critical needs and there are some specific populations (indigenous, quilombolas, etc.) that receive preferential treatment in terms of receiving the benefit. Thus, in practice, the government provides benefits for well over 100% of the estimated number of eligible families in a large number of municipalities, especially in the more impoverished Northeast and North regions of the country.

⁴⁸ This may not be true if the value of the benefit is variable. For instance, some localities might have a lower cost of living meaning that each benefit they receive has more purchasing power. Again, I make the simplifying assumption that the effect of receiving the benefit is constant.

⁴⁹ The 2010 data includes sampling weights, therefore I incorporate these into the calculation of the propensity score for that year.

showing the difference of treatment effects between recipients with children in school and the full sample of potential recipients. My propensity score model includes predictors chosen for their substantive and theoretical importance in determining participation in Bolsa Família. These include reported household size⁵⁰, household wealth (a household asset index measured relative to other households in the country by dividing the sample into wealth quintiles)⁵¹, the respondent's level of education, the employment status⁵² of the respondent, gender, age, urban residence, region of residence, and, in the full sample, whether the respondent reports having children in school. After calculating the propensity scores, I match observations in the data using 1:1 nearest neighbor matching without replacement and with a caliper equivalent to one quarter of the standard deviation of the pooled propensity scores.⁵³ I then compare the covariate balance pre- and post-matching to ensure that the matching procedure has improved the overall balance of the matched sample. Figure 3-1A/1B, Figure 3-2A/2B, Figure 3-3A/3B, and Figure 3-4A/4B show the pre-matching and post-matching biases between treatment and control groups for 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 respectively. The improvement in balance is readily visible in the graphs.⁵⁴ After matching there are no statistically distinguishable differences that remain between the two groups on the observed covariates used in the propensity score models. This particular matching procedure cuts the sample size significantly; nevertheless, the matching procedure successfully

⁵⁰ This variable is only available as a self-reported response in the 2012 data. In the 2010 and 2008 data I calculate a household size measure based on responses to questions about civil status and number of children living at home.

⁵¹ More details on the construction of the measure of household wealth can be found in Córdova (2009). The measure is calculated using a factor analysis which is run separately for urban and rural households and then combined into a single relative index for the whole country.

⁵² Measured as a dichotomous variable that compares respondents who are formally employed to those who are informally employed, seeking employment, students, retired, homemakers, or who are not working and not seeking employment.

⁵³ I use the *psmatch2* program developed by Leuven and Sianesi (2003) to conduct the matching. Sometimes potential control observations are tied on their propensity scores. In this case the selection of the matched control depends on the order of the data. To avoid any inadvertent bias due to data order, I sort the data on a uniformly distributed random variable prior to implementing the matching program. The caliper ensures that no matches are made outside the $0.25*SD$ range.

⁵⁴ These are calculated using the *ptest* command which is linked with *psmatch2*.

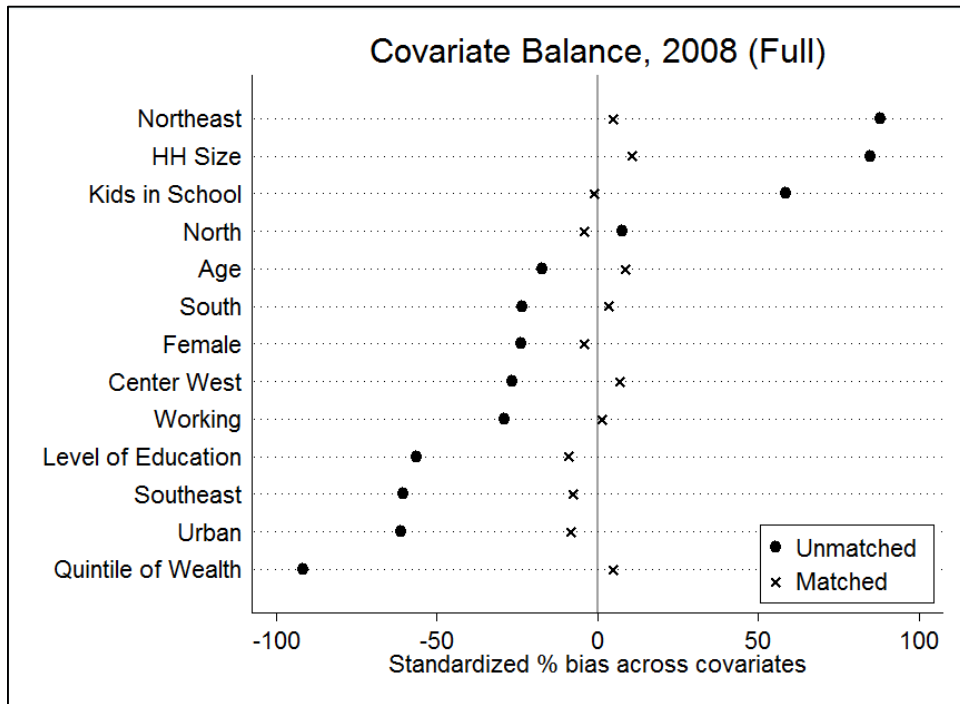
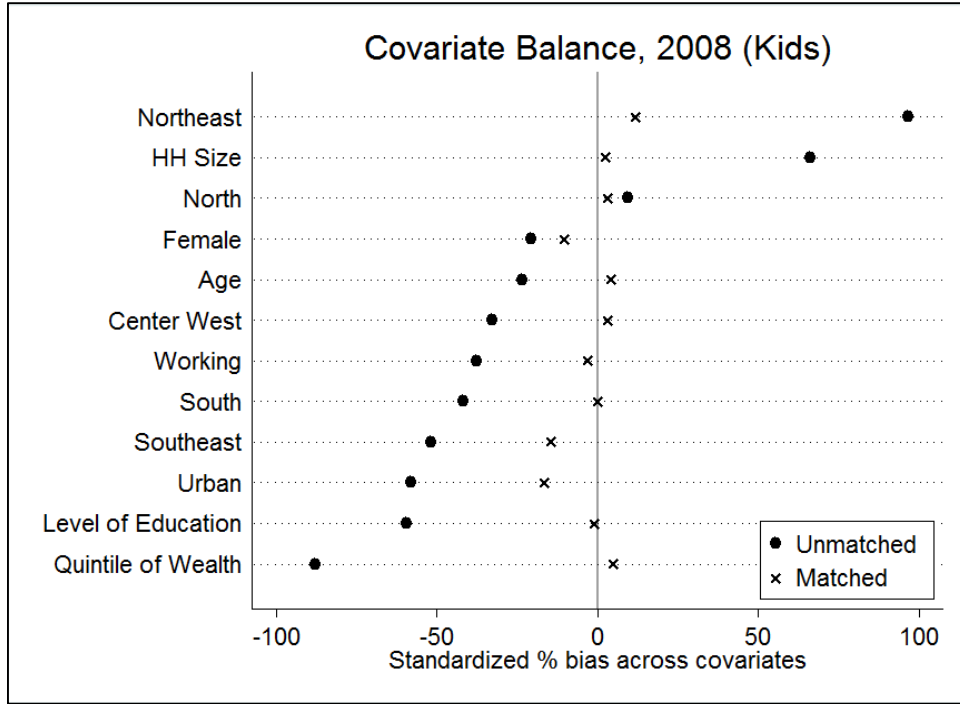
produced significant gains in covariate balance, thereby promoting the reliability of the causal inferences drawn from comparisons of the remaining treatment and control observations.⁵⁵ Moreover, I pool the data from the four waves of matched data to improve the sample size in the analysis.⁵⁶

At this point, analysis of the effect of Bolsa Família participation on the outcome variables is relatively straightforward. After including a fixed-effects control variable for the year each observation is collected for inclusion in the data and for its regional strata, I run a logit regression model on each respective dependent variable with the indicator of Bolsa Família receipt as the key treatment variable. I then estimate the difference in the predicted probability of engaging in any given behavior between Bolsa Família recipients and non-recipients.⁵⁷ I present the results from the pooled regressions in Table 3-1 and Table 3-2 and I show the estimated differences in predicted probabilities of reporting participation in the given political behavior based on recipient status graphically in Figures 3-5 and 3-6.

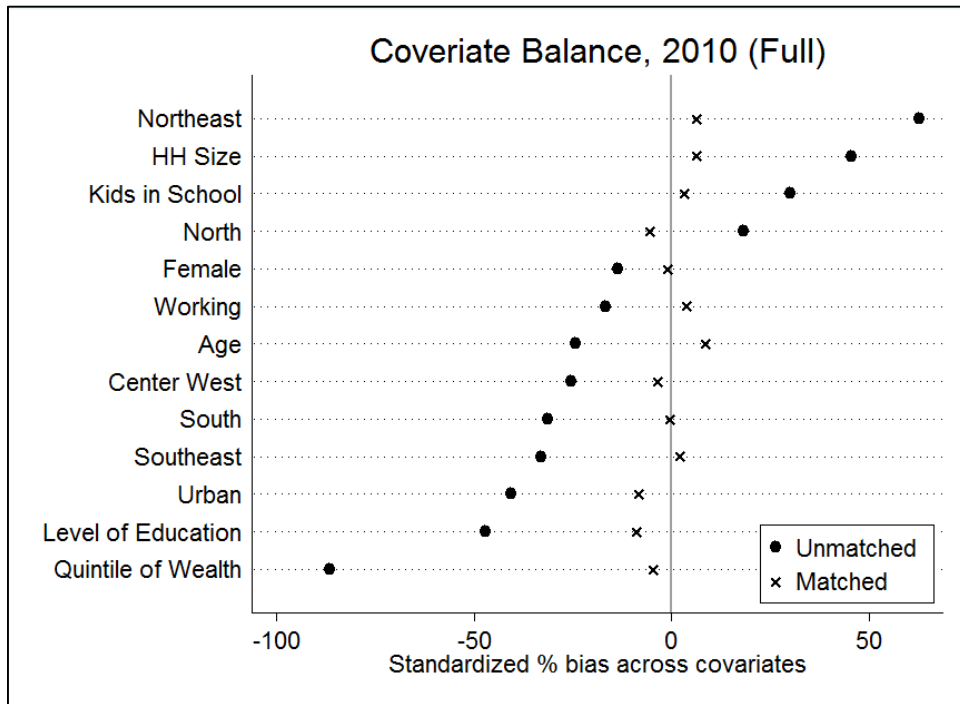
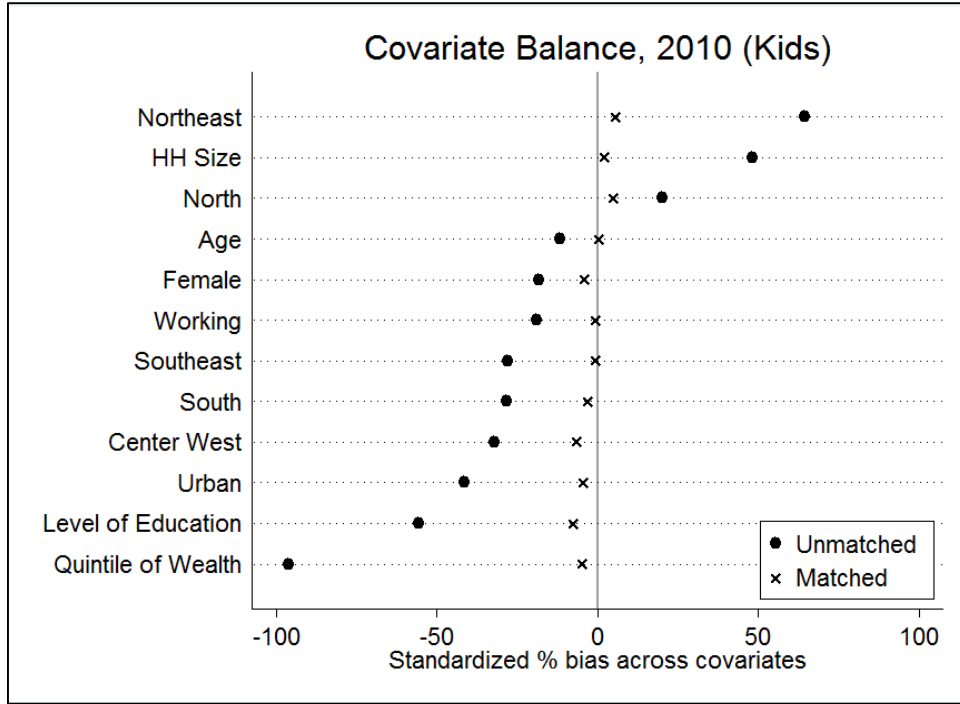
⁵⁵ The results reported below are not substantively different from results obtained using the full sample without matching.

⁵⁶ Pooling creates its own complications for analyzing the data. For one, the size of the matched sample is not even across the waves. I account for this by standardizing the sample size to 1500 (an arbitrary number that has no effect on the estimates). I also restratify the data essentially making the survey wave into an additional strata, thereby ensuring that Stata will recognize the clusters from different years as independent from each other. In the subsequent analyses I account for these complex survey design features in calculating the estimates.

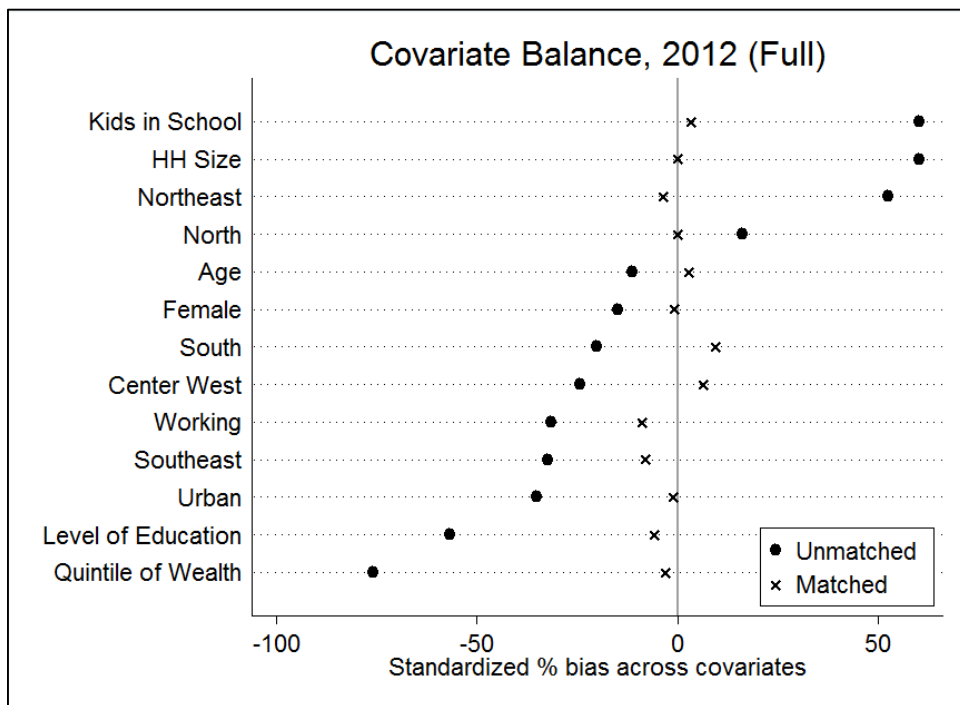
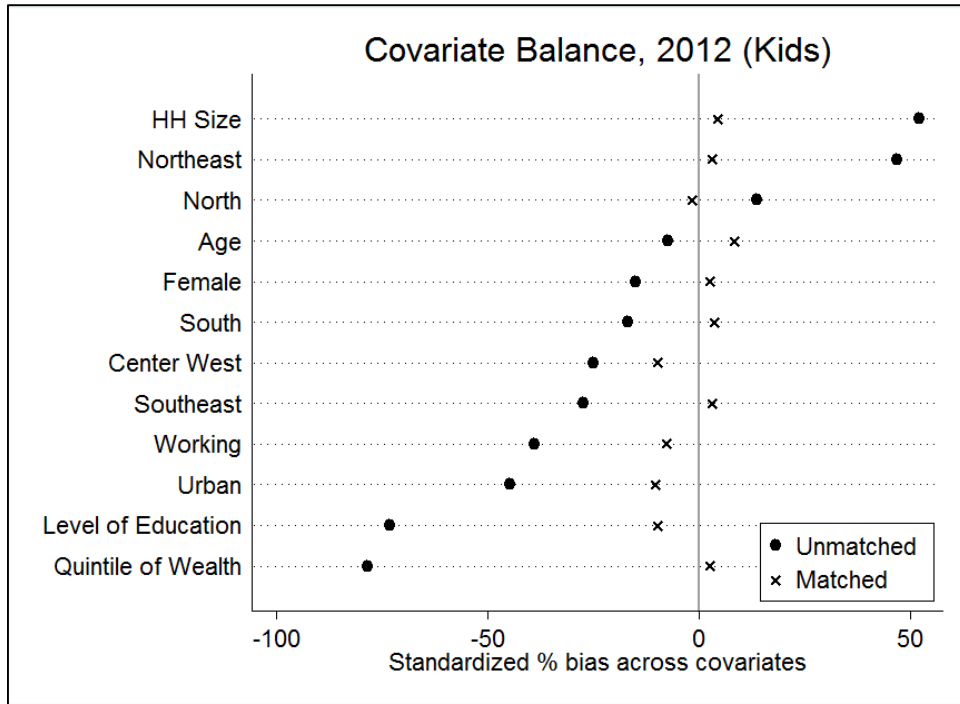
⁵⁷ I calculate this difference using the *margins* command in Stata.



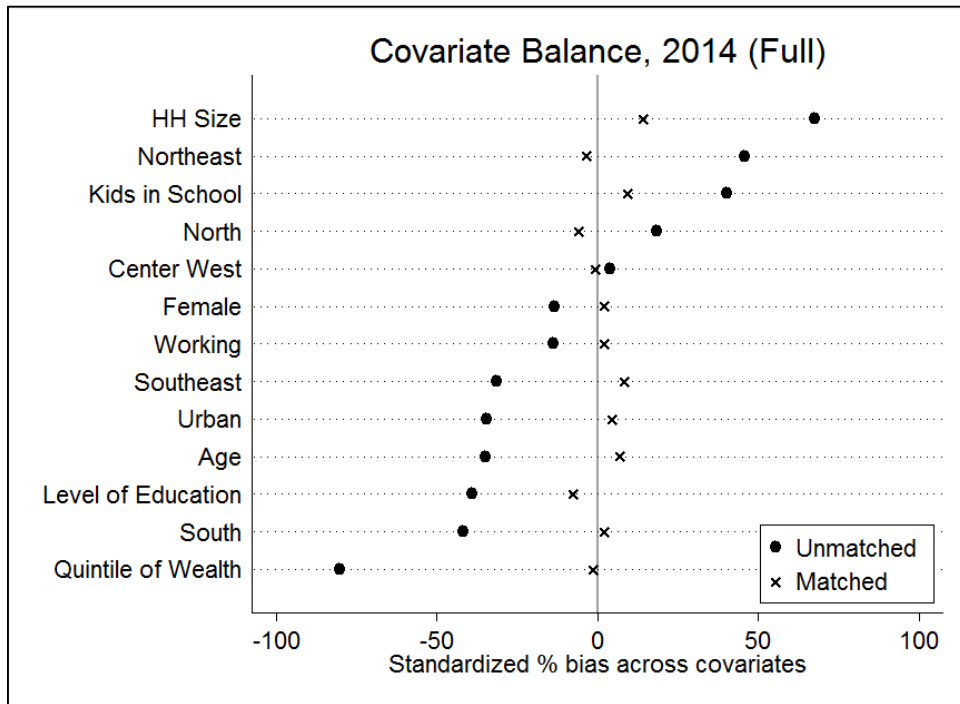
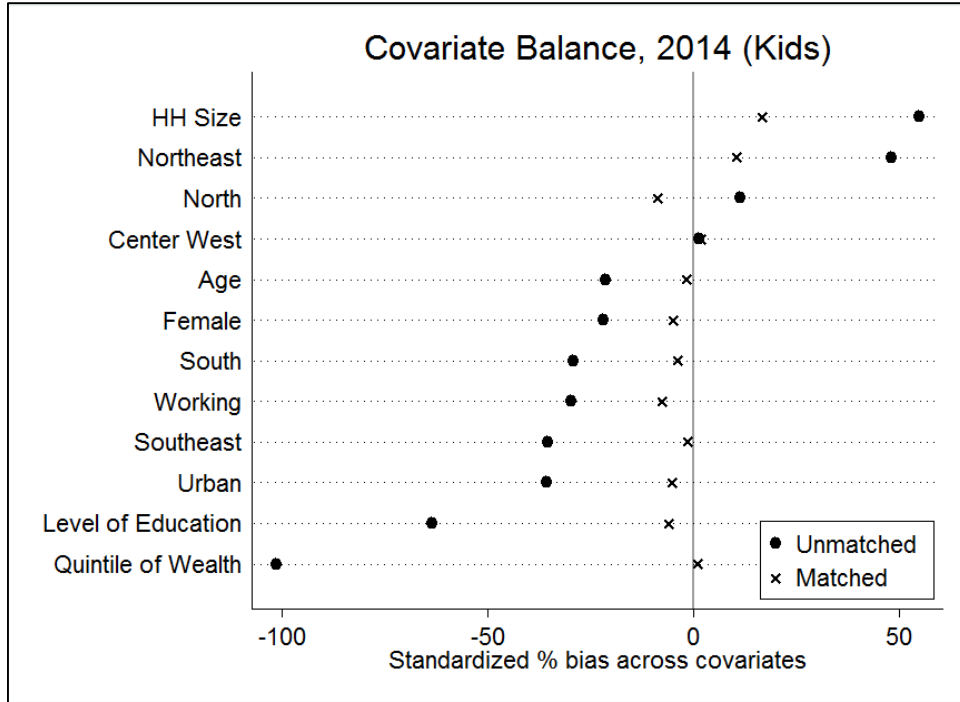
Figures 3-1A & 1B. Covariate Balance Pre- and Post-Matching for Sample with Children in School and for Full Sample, 2008



Figures 3-2A & 2B. Covariate Balance Pre- and Post-Matching for Sample with Children in School and for Full Sample, 2010



Figures 3-3A & 3B. Covariate Balance Pre- and Post-Matching for Sample with Children in School and for Full Sample, 2012



Figures 3-4A & 4B. Covariate Balance Pre-and Post-Matching for Sample with Children in School and for Full Sample, 2014

Table 3-1. Logit Regression Estimates of BFP Effect on Civic and Political Behaviors, Pooled Matched Sample (Children in School) Brazil, 2008-2014

	PTA	Opinion Leader	Ask Local Official for Assistance	Vote	Contact Local Official	Campaign for Pres. Candidate	Neigh. Assoc.	Protest	Contact Public Agency	Contact Cong.	Help Solve Local Problem
BFP Recipient	0.522*** (0.124)	0.156 (0.139)	0.183 (0.151)	0.363^ (0.195)	0.210 (0.148)	0.028 (0.198)	0.167 (0.156)	-0.111 (0.253)	-0.443 (0.284)	-0.463 (0.291)	-0.140 (0.126)
Constant	0.164 (0.232)	0.282 (0.248)	-1.904*** (0.369)	3.090*** (0.407)	-1.302*** (0.269)	-1.351*** (0.319)	-0.828** (0.301)	-1.230** (0.387)	-2.244*** (0.478)	-2.604*** (0.499)	0.040 (0.251)
Fixed effects for year	yes	yes†	yes	yes	yes	yes†	yes	yes	yes†	yes†	yes
Fixed effects for region	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Number of Observations	1443	1116	1435	1445	1441	1085	1435	1424	1119	1125	1424
F-score	4.19***	1.34	2.13*	2.72**	1.49	1.01	2.84**	3.03**	2.11*	1.75^	3.21**

Note: Logit regression coefficients reported. Standard errors are in parentheses. Estimates account for complex survey design effects. All models control for the year of the survey and for the respondent's region of residence in Brazil.

^p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001

†No observations for 2014 survey

Table 3-2. Logit Regression Estimates of BFP Effect on Civic and Political Behaviors, Pooled Matched Sample (Full Sample) Brazil, 2008-2014

	PTA	Opinion Leader	Ask Local Official for Assistance	Vote	Contact Local Official	Campaign for Pres. Candidate	Neigh. Assoc.	Protest	Contact Public Agency	Contact Cong.	Help Solve Local Problem
BFP											
Recipient	0.429*** (0.094)	0.023 (0.114)	0.114 (0.125)	0.253* (0.118)	0.305** (0.116)	0.313^ (0.164)	0.085 (0.122)	-0.150 (0.181)	0.028 (0.229)	-0.322 (0.232)	0.041 (0.105)
Constant	0.019 (0.196)	0.525* (0.265)	-1.912*** (0.313)	2.055*** (0.242)	-1.577*** (0.251)	-1.740*** (0.314)	-0.830*** (0.250)	-1.485*** (0.345)	-2.408*** (0.493)	-2.542*** (0.421)	-0.073 (0.229)
Fixed effects for year	yes	yes†	yes	yes	yes	yes†	yes	yes	yes†	yes†	yes
Fixed effects for region	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Number of Observations	2445	1805	2434	2445	2446	1754	2439	2422	1822	1827	2424
F-score	6.63***	2.27*	2.54*	7.45***	2.29*	1.10	3.23**	4.01***	3.59**	1.61	3.91***

Note: Logit regression coefficients reported. Standard errors are in parentheses. Estimates account for complex survey design effects. All models control for the year of the survey and for the respondent's region of residence in Brazil.

^p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001

†No observations for 2014 survey

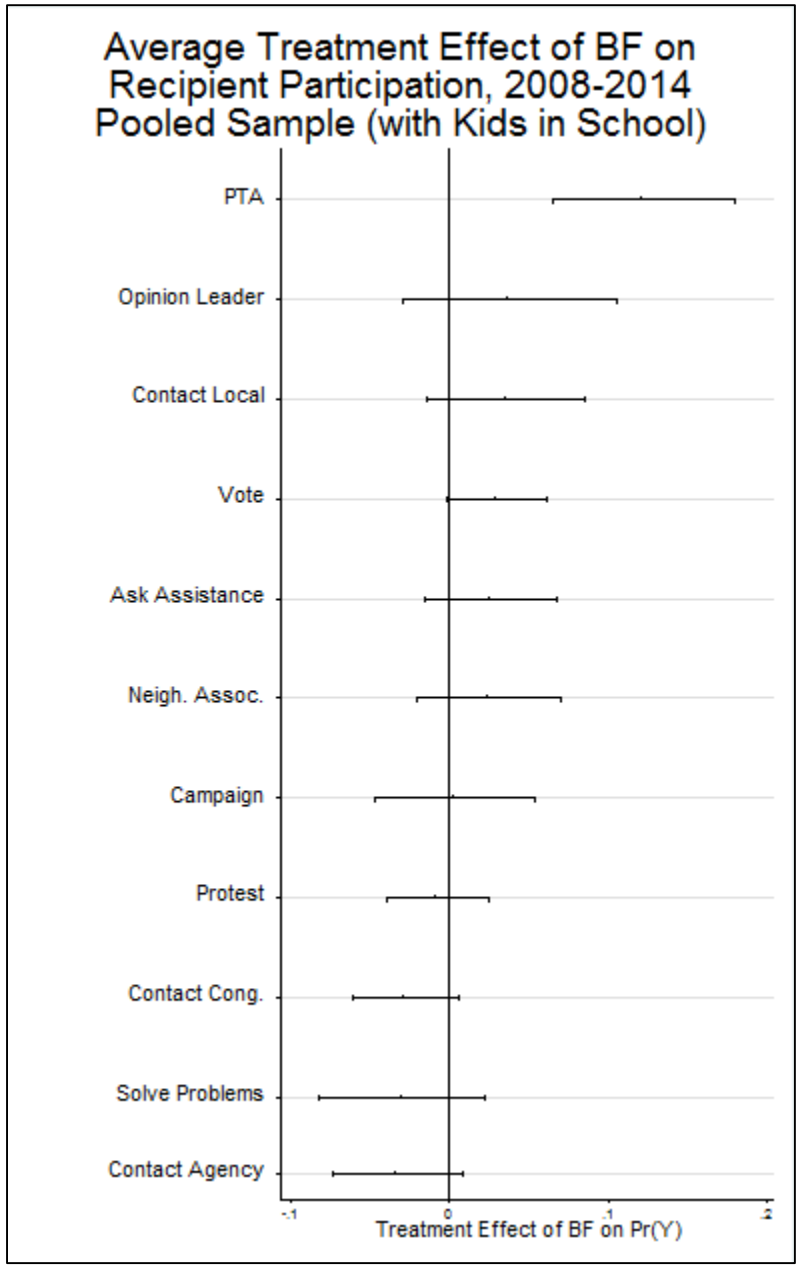


Figure 3-5. Average Treatment Effect on the Treated (ATT) of Bolsa Família on Civic and Political Behaviors (Kids in School Sample), 2008-2014

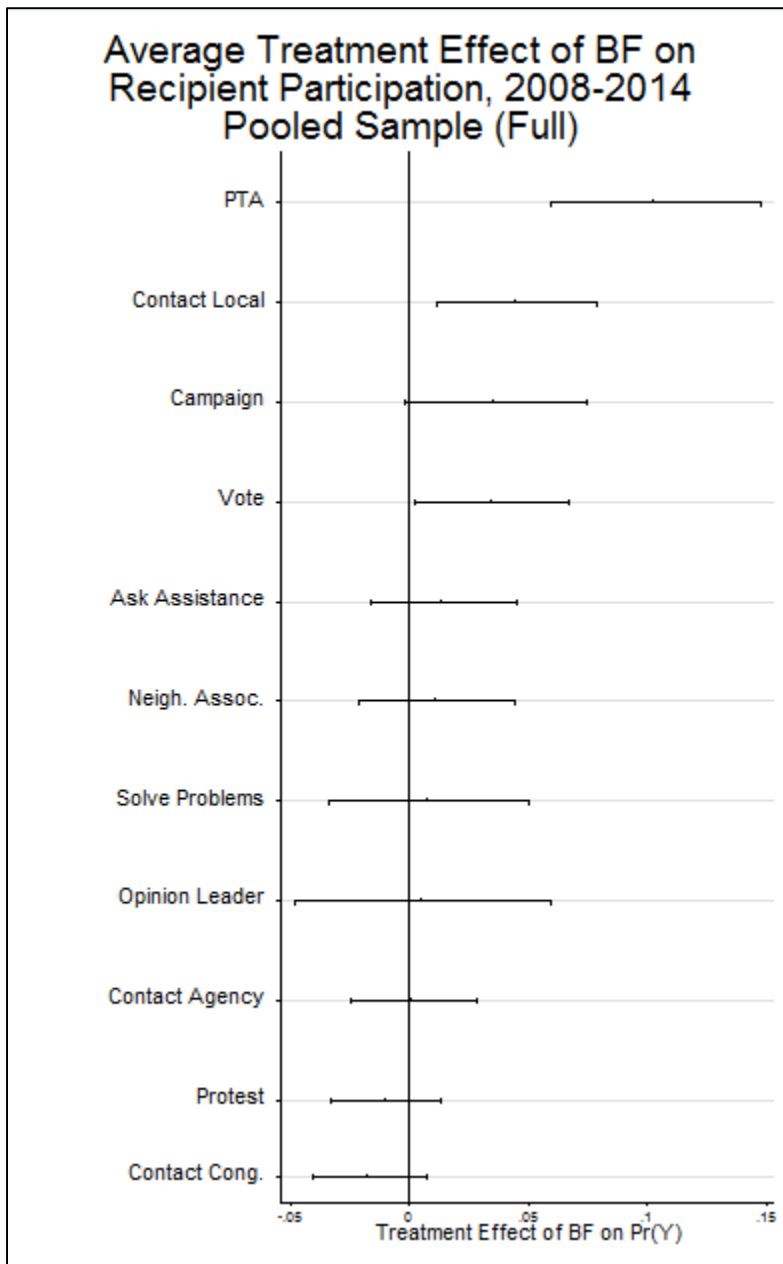


Figure 3-6. Average Treatment Effect on the Treated (ATT) of Bolsa Família on Civic and Political Behaviors (Full Sample), 2008-2014

To summarize the significant findings, pooling the matched samples across all four waves of the AmericasBarometer survey and analyzing responses from respondents who had children in school, Bolsa Família recipients are 12.2 percentage points *more* likely to participate

in a meeting of a parent-teacher association (PTA)⁵⁸ than non-recipients and marginally (3.0 percentage points, $p=0.064$) more likely to report turning out to vote in the previous presidential election. No other effects reached even marginal statistical significance.

Analyzing responses from the matched sample based on the full set of respondents, Bolsa Familia recipients are 10.3 percentage points *more* likely to participate in a meeting of a parent-teacher association (PTA) than non-recipients. Likewise, they were 4.5 percentage points more likely to contact a local authority to help resolve their problems and 3.5 percentage points more likely to report turning out to vote in the last presidential election. Moreover, they were marginally (3.6 percentage points, $p=0.061$) more likely to work for a candidate's campaign in the previous presidential election.⁵⁹ No other effects reached even marginal statistical significance.

These results confirm the first hypothesis (H1). Bolsa Família makes its recipients more participatory than non-recipients for the behaviors most closely connected to receiving their benefits. As expected, the strongest effect is in relation to participation in school-related PTA meetings. These results suggest that as beneficiary children attend school as a condition of participation in the cash transfer program, their parents also become more involved in meetings at the school. Even so, with the lone exception of PTA attendance, there is limited evidence of any additional community based participation among Bolsa Família recipients. Asking local officials for assistance is expected of cash transfer recipients; after all, it is the first step to receiving benefits. What is more, campaigning for a candidate – while certainly related to a respondent reaching out horizontally to connect to their peers – is more appropriately categorized as an effort to connect other voters vertically to political elites than as an effort to build strong

⁵⁸ The finding for PTA attendance is not dependent on the pooled analysis. It holds in single year analyses as well.

⁵⁹ This result should be interpreted with some caution given that the F-score for the model is not statistically significant.

communities. The effect on reported turnout is consistent with the current literature on the electoral impact of CCT programs. The lack of other statistically significant spillover effects is more consistent with a null expectation regarding the broader spectrum of participatory behavior, and suggests that the Bolsa Família program does not cause its recipients to broadly engage in community and political decision-making processes.

The results from the analysis of the efficacy questions appear in Table 3. I again report results from both matched samples. Bolsa Família recipients with children in schools reported lower levels of both external and internal efficacy; however, only in the case of internal efficacy does this effect reach statistical significance. On a 0 to 1 scale, Bolsa Família recipients with children in school score 0.044 points *lower* on their sense of internal efficacy than their non-recipient peers. Intriguingly, when the full matched sample is used, this effect drops to 0.022 points and loses statistical significance ($p=0.119$). This suggests that it is Bolsa Família recipients *with children in school* that have the lower internal efficacy scores. Running the same model on the full matched sample after including an interaction term between Bolsa Família recipient status and an indicator for having children in school shows a statistically significant effect for the interaction. Overall the results show that Bolsa Família recipients without children in school are statistically indistinguishable from their non-recipient peers who likewise do not have children in school in terms of their reported level of internal efficacy, but Bolsa Família recipients with children in school score 0.051 points lower in terms of internal efficacy than their non-recipient peers who also have children in school. These results also hold (becoming only slightly less statistically significant) if the sample is restricted to those who report attendance at PTA meetings. This finding is even more striking considering that Brazilians, on average, report

exceptionally low levels of both external and internal efficacy.⁶⁰ Thus, the findings are consistent with the second hypothesis (H2). That Bolsa Família recipients with children in school report a significantly lower sense of political efficacy than their non-recipient peers is troubling to say the least given that this is the target demographic for the program.

An Interpretive Analysis: Evidence from Manaus and Brasília

Given the findings from the quantitative analysis, I believe that it is necessary to conduct a more detailed and interpretive study of the lived experiences through which citizens learn about and interact with the policy (Maluccio, Adato, and Skoufias 2010). I turn to my qualitative fieldwork from Manaus and Brasília to better understand why benefitting from the program fails to empower Bolsa Família beneficiaries in spite of the fact that beneficiaries seem to engage with their local public schools at a significantly higher rate, on average, than their non-recipient peers.

Based on the results stemming from the quantitative test of H1, I argue that understanding beneficiaries' participation in their local schools is the key to adjudicating why CCT programs are unable to further integrate their recipients as empowered democratic citizens in society. After all, the quantitative results indicate that PTA participation is the predominant behavioral pattern associated with CCT beneficiary status. Yet, although the PTA would seemingly be the epitome of a civil society organization that provides opportunities for citizens to create horizontal linkages within their community, even Bolsa Família beneficiaries who attend PTA meetings continue to believe that they are politically inefficacious.

⁶⁰ For example, taking the average across the entire 2012 AmericasBarometer sample, Brazilians score an average of 2.88 on the 1-7 external efficacy scale and an average of 3.36 on the 1-7 internal efficacy scale. Their external efficacy score is the third lowest in the Latin American and Caribbean region and the internal efficacy score is the second lowest.

Table 3-3. OLS Regression Estimates of BFP Effect on Political Efficacy, Pooled Matched Samples Brazil, 2008-2014

DV= Sample=	External Efficacy <i>Kids</i>	Internal Efficacy <i>Kids</i>	External Efficacy <i>Full</i>	Internal Efficacy <i>Full</i>	Internal Efficacy <i>Full</i>	Internal Efficacy <i>PTA</i>
BFP Recipient	-0.010 (0.019)	-0.044* (0.017)	0.010 (0.015)	-0.022 (0.014)	0.022 (0.023)	0.055 (0.054)
Kids					0.045* (0.021)	0.102* (0.051)
BFP*Kids					-0.073* (0.029)	-0.110^ (0.057)
Constant	0.450*** (0.041)	0.486*** (0.031)	0.429*** (0.038)	0.472*** (0.031)	0.442*** (0.036)	0.476*** (0.060)
Fixed effects for year	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Fixed effects for region	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Number of Observations	1386	1379	2334	2326	2326	1011
F-score	5.62***	5.51***	7.06***	3.13**	3.31***	4.59***
R ²	0.050	0.036	0.036	0.017	0.021	0.048

Note: DVs coded from 0 to 1. Sample=Kids refers to the matched sample for those with children in school; Sample=Full refers to the matched sample on all respondents; Sample=PTA refers to a full matched sample restricted to those who report attending PTA meetings. OLS regression coefficients reported. Standard errors are in parentheses. Estimates account for complex survey design effects. All models control for the year of the survey and for the respondent's region of residence in Brazil.

^p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001

What explains this seemingly contradictory result? To answer this question, I conducted a series of semi-structured focus group interviews in Manaus, Brazil during August and September 2012. I visited three public schools (two within the urban limits of Manaus and one in the rural zone outside the city's urban limits) and conducted nine group interviews (four with teachers, three with recipient parents, and two with non-recipient parents) as well as individual interviews with each of the three principals.⁶¹ Following the guidelines set out by Hennink (2007, 29–31, 177–191) I recruited and trained a local resident to be the moderator for the interviews to ensure that respondents understood the questions and could respond freely and feel that the interviewer also understood their response. The discussion guide included questions that asked both parents and teachers about their opinions regarding public schools in Manaus and regarding their perceptions of the Bolsa Família program and its impact in their lives. I recorded their responses and then transcribed those recordings as written text for analysis. I complemented these interviews with a series of additional focus groups interviews (four with teachers and one with a mixed group of recipient and non-recipient parents) conducted in a satellite city of Brasília, Brazil in May and June 2014.

In my analysis of the interviews, four key themes emerged that coincided with my research questions and the findings from my quantitative analysis. First, the answers from the focus group interviews with recipient parents are consistent with the findings regarding PTA participation from the quantitative analysis. Second, I observed a strained relationship between parents and school officials that is amplified by the structure of the Bolsa Família program. Third, I noted the discretion that school administrators hold over reporting absences. The final

⁶¹ School staff helped recruit parents for the interviews by sending short notes home with their children asking that the parents attend a scheduled meeting to discuss the Bolsa Família program. The principals helped recruit teachers to participate in the discussions based on teaching assignments and availability at the time scheduled for the discussion.

recurring theme was that the teachers hold largely negative stereotypes of their Bolsa Família students. I report on each of these themes here and I provide representative quotes to illustrate the tenor of the interviews.

I first studied parents' answers to questions related to their participation in meetings at the school to determine whether the pattern I found in the quantitative analysis was replicated in the focus group setting. In fact, the responses of recipient parents who participated in the focus group interviews in Manaus largely coincide with the quantitative findings reported above. When asked whether their participation in Bolsa Família had changed the way that they participate in the schools, one recipient mother replied, "Mine changed. Because I was – I will be honest – I was not the type of person to be at the school and everything. But from the moment that – because we have to have a higher rate of participation when you are participating [in Bolsa Família]. You should not miss meetings, so my understanding is that it changed a lot."⁶² Notably, some confusion surrounding this requirement was also evident. Later in the interview, the group to which this mother belonged categorically (and correctly) denied that there was any formal obligation to attend meetings at the school when asked explicitly if any such requirement existed. Even so, parents in both of the other Manaus groups made the same connection between Bolsa Família and participation in school meetings. A second mother even more explicitly linked her participation in the school to the benefit she receives:

We have to participate because of the students, because if the student misses class, they cut, our card is blocked and if you do not resolve the situation it is cut... This money that we receive every month, this social assistance is meant to keep our children in school. So it depends on the agency of the parents to not let – if we want our benefit, to have that benefit for our children, then we are going to keep our children in the school, try to make sure that they are not absent, try to go to the meetings, sign their notes, sign their report cards, do you understand, to make sure that we do not lose the benefit – to not be blocked or cut.

⁶² All translations of the focus group discussions are my own.

Thus, on the whole, these parents see a connection between activity in the school (beyond ensuring that their children meet the attendance threshold) and the ability to receive their benefit even though there is no such requirement formally established in the Bolsa Família program. This is consistent with the quantitative finding and supports the observation that the requirement that the children go to school has the largely unanticipated side effect of bringing their parents along with them.

The next question is what types of social interactions parents have with officials at the school when they go to their meetings. The interviews suggest that rather than providing opportunities to connect with the local community, the school context reinforces a social hierarchy where school officials have the dominant role. One of the principals explained the role of the school in monitoring Bolsa Família compliance with the conditions of the program: “We have oversight of all the students. Because every two months the school needs to report, for the students that receive [the benefit], which students are attending school. We need to report their attendance.” The principal and the school’s administrative support staff have access to the official list of recipients enrolled at the school to fulfill this role. Moreover, even though teachers do not officially have access to the list of recipient children who attend their school, they know which children receive the benefit. As one teacher explained, “We know who they are. Most of the time we know because the parents tell us when their children are absent.”⁶³ Given the attendance requirement built into the program recipient, parents approach the teachers and the

⁶³ This statement suggests that parents unknowingly reveal their beneficiary status (in the sense that they do not understand the various roles of teachers, administrators, and principals in monitoring compliance with the program) in an attempt to appeal to the *teacher*, who is not formally supposed to know that information, regarding the child’s absence from school. At times the children may also reveal their status in conversations with friends, or directly to the teacher. Some children might face consequences at home (ranging from discipline to outright abuse) if they are marked absent mistakenly, particularly if the absence results in the suspension or blockage of the family benefit. The consequences are potentially severe: lack of compliance from one child results in the entire family’s benefit being suspended.

school to negotiate over specific absences to try to ensure that they do not run the risk of losing their benefit.

In fact, one parent reported an occurrence that provides a strong illustration of the kind of relationship recipients have with the school. Because it is so illuminating, I quote at length from the transcript.

There was one case here when the teacher missed one week [of classes] because she was on medical leave and we did not know that and the children missed a lot of class. In this case my child got marked absent because the teacher was missing class. I came to ask the principal here, the principal at the time, to ask for a signed statement because the social assistance office asked me to take one to them. The principal did not give it to me saying that the social assistance office had to send the request directly to the school in writing...Meaning that I was lying as a mother...But it is the mothers that have to go after everything. Things stayed like that. Then when it was the end of the month (I have four children). Because of one child I was suspended from Bolsa Família entirely.

In general, many parents expressed exasperation at the bureaucratic snafus that complicate their lives as program beneficiaries. The information provided by one public employee does not match what they receive from another, which leads to a good deal of frustration. As this mother noted, she felt like she was being blamed and having her integrity questioned when the school employee was unwilling to meet a seemingly simple request. In the end her well-being and the well-being of her family was jeopardized because of an apparently unnecessary (in her view) bureaucratic requirement.

Some respondents who had specialized knowledge of the bureaucratic aspects regarding the monitoring of beneficiary compliance with program conditions provided key insights into what happens from the perspective of the school when parents come to the school to plead their case. In short, principals have considerable discretion over which absences they will excuse.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Formally, the federal government has established a coded list of potential motives for which a student might miss class that it expects schools to use when they report beneficiary attendance. These motives are categorized as justified motives (do not result in the loss of a benefit) and unjustified motives (may result in the loss of benefits) for lack of compliance with program conditionalities. They are meant to be used as a tool to provide additional support

Moreover, these interactions rarely occur as a collective negotiation; rather, parents are isolated when they negotiate with principals and teachers regarding their children. This is evident when looking at responses to another question from the interviews that asked respondents about the possibility for parents to resolve absences with the school before they lost access to their benefit. One non-recipient parent who had worked as a teacher at a state school in Manaus offered the following explanation of how her former school approached that scenario:

Every month the administration of the school has to report the attendance of the children [who receive benefits]. So what did we do? If you receive Bolsa Família and you are able to justify the absences then we – we did not report the absences – so we avoided this problem. Is it justified? We would look into it and review everything. If the child had really given up - stopped coming to school – the program is not working, then we reported the absence. But other than that we did not report them to avoid that problem [of losing the benefit]. So if the school knows what is going on and the parent came and explained the situation then the school can vouch for (*abonar*) the absence. Not in the attendance book, but when they go to report it online.

Moreover, one principal offered the following description of how some absences are excusable:

It is like I am telling you, the question of the justification. The parent comes, justifies the absence of the student, the school puts a note there without any problem. “Student is absent because of illness.” Or “the student needed to travel because they did not have anyone to stay with them.” If they traveled with their mother or father and did not have anyone to stay with them then they needed to be absent during this time period. We excuse the absence. Now if the child shows up, “Child, why didn’t you come?” “Ah, because my sandal was broken.” Things like that are not valid excuses. So, do you understand? Otherwise, did you have a justification? It is excused.

Thus, parents have to come up with a justifiable excuse to ensure that their benefit will not be suspended or cut if their child misses too many classes.⁶⁵ To make their appeal they must come to the school, either on their own initiative or during one of the normally scheduled meetings, to lobby school officials.

to families in danger of losing their benefits. Still, in practice, it is difficult for the federal government to enforce these norms and to ensure that teachers and principals are trained in the purpose and proper use of the formal table of motives as was reflected in the responses that I received.

⁶⁵ The 85 percent threshold in Brazil means that Bolsa Família children can only miss about 3 days of class a month for their family to remain eligible for the benefit.

The crucial problem for parents is that teachers and principals are skeptical regarding the legitimacy of Bolsa Família, even though some recognize that recipients have real needs that are met by the program. It is unlikely that most school officials consciously take discriminatory action against Bolsa Família recipients, but their skepticism about the value of the program can predispose them to draw negative assessments of recipient children and families. To give a sense of the perceptions of teachers and principals, consider the following statements made in answer to the question of whether the Bolsa Família program affects their work:

Teacher: Bolsa Família is a program that was not well interlaced - tied to conditions for the students to get good grades. It is only conditioned on attendance...When there is a negative output there is nothing we can do because the student is there in the classroom merely as a spectator.

Teacher: With Bolsa Família the child only has a right [to the benefit] by going to school. So there are children that really only go to school every day just to go. There is no family participation. So the parent is not sending the child with the intent for the child to learn.

Principal: A lot of the time a child is held back – ten times – they spend ten years in the same grade. But the parent is there. During those ten years the child never misses a day of class. The child has developmental issues, in school. The student is unable to learn. There is some kind of handicap. But the parent does not care. What is important is that the child is in school.

Teacher: People are getting comfortable (*acomodadas*). For them it does not matter if they are malnourished, if they have a low quality of life, it does not matter. They are comfortable. They have a little money. They will not look for work, opportunities to study, better themselves, nothing. [Bolsa Família] only stimulates population growth. [Now play acting the role of a recipient parent.] “The more children, the more I receive.”

Teacher: It is that old story that we talk about: paternalism, right? ... Politicians love to do it. They want to give a fish instead of a rod. The government changes, the name of the program changes, but it is still the same thing.

Given assessments like these, it is unlikely that beneficiary parents find a sympathetic listener when they interact with school officials. As one recipient noted, “People do not say these things to your face,” but recipient parents certainly sense the prejudice that they face as recipients of government assistance. Thus, Bolsa Família has given school officials a ready-made

label and stereotype that they can take and apply to children in their classes and to the families of those children even as those families and children rely on them to pass judgment on which absences to excuse or report. The tension that results from that relationship undercuts the potential to develop vibrant empowered citizenship among recipients. Even when parents show up for meetings at the school, they encounter school officials who doubt their ability and willingness to effectively contribute to the community and consequently, consciously or unconsciously, the school officials actually truncate their opportunities to do so.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this project I show that Brazil's conditional cash transfer program, Bolsa Família, encourages instrumentally motivated participation by its recipients; however, that behavior does not lend itself to develop more empowered citizens. Based on the pooled national surveys used here, Bolsa Família increases recipient participation in PTA meetings, yet is unable to provide recipients with a greater sense of political efficacy. Qualitative evidence from focus group interviews conducted in Manaus and Brasília, Brazil clarify that recipient parents participate in their local schools out of a sense of obligation to maintain their assistance benefit. Simultaneously, teachers and school administrators are skeptical about the paternalistic effects of the program on the students and parents even as they play a vital role in monitoring parental compliance with the program. That role also grants teachers and administrators at the school considerable discretion over parents' ability to continue to receive the benefit and the tension this relationship produces weakens the sense of community between parents and teachers and thereby hinders the ability of parents to effectively participate in democratic decision-making and demand making within the school.

Overall, this chapter shows that conditional cash transfer programs are effective at structuring recipient behavior along key policy and political goals, although in this case the result is not ideal for empowering recipients. More than anything, this finding illustrates the consequences of policy design. It is illuminating that the three main participatory behaviors associated with the Bolsa Família program (i.e., attendance at PTA meetings, soliciting local officials for help, and attempting to persuade others to vote for a favored candidate) are linked either to elections or to maintaining a recipient's benefit through participation in schools. Thus, the incentive structure of CCT programs gives recipients instrumental and self-interested motives that help them defend their prerogatives as needed, yet provide little additional capacity or motivation for them to mobilize in ways that would affect national or municipal core political institutions. Indeed, these spillover effects have yet to materialize in the case of Brazil and would be unlikely to emerge in other countries that adopt programs with a similar design. The findings presented here call into question the ability of CCT programs, alone, to promote the political empowerment of the poor in the developing world. While the benefits may prove economically empowering, political empowerment of the poor is still a crucial goal in the effort to sustain pro-poor policies over time and ultimately eradicate cycles of poverty.

There are several concrete steps that governments could take to improve the capacity of current programs to help politically empower CCT recipients. First, local and national governments could formalize the role of the PTA in local communities to provide it with further leverage and a more meaningful role in making decisions about school priorities and budgeting. Schools and local governments should also explore ways to organically expand membership in the PTA to ensure that it is not simply an exclusive club, but a true asset to the community.

Perhaps more importantly, given the prominent role for schools as a complementary service to Bolsa Família and many other CCT programs, governments need to provide more extensive sensitivity training for teachers and school administrators to help professionalize them in relation to their *de facto* role as social workers. It is not clear that teachers understand the role the government expects them to play in the administration of the program or that they believe that it is the role that they *should* play. Along these lines local and national governments might consider requiring educators to conduct home visits where teachers and/or school administrators visit the home of beneficiary children thereby providing more productive opportunities for them to learn about the challenges the recipient parents face and offering the chance to better understand the needs of the children in their classrooms.⁶⁶

Moreover, governments should consider whether they can provide more resources to local schools to hire school nurses and social workers who would work in the schools to thereby integrate health, education, and social services in the physical space of the public schools. This would make it easier for parents to comply with program conditionalities given that they would be able to access all these services in one convenient location. Having nurses and social workers available in the school may also relieve school officials from some of the burden that they carry within the program and allow them to focus on their primary mission as educators. In particular, removing the more disciplinary functions from teachers might ease some of the tension between parents and the school and thereby facilitate the creation of a stronger sense of community and citizenship for recipients and non-recipients alike. More directly, governments should consider whether there are sufficient resources or more effective ways to use current resources to provide for smaller class sizes or more specialized instruction for CCT recipient children who face significant limitations to learning in a traditional classroom.

⁶⁶ A similar requirement is a key component of the Head Start program in the United States.

Empowering citizens is not easy, as this project makes clear. Nevertheless, it is a worthy goal to foster conditions under which traditionally marginalized social groups have a greater sense of their power and ability to influence outcomes that matter to them and to their communities. Conditional cash transfer programs are not the only means to that end nor are they necessarily the best means to that end, but as long as these programs are used to help alleviate short-term economic needs among their beneficiaries, governments can make more consistent efforts to help recipients gain a greater sense of their value and become more participatory and more capable citizens.

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Chapter 4

DO CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFERS NEGATE THE STIGMA OF WELFARE RECEIPT? EVIDENCE FROM BRAZIL'S BOLSA FAMÍLIA PROGRAM

Introduction

Conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs, which provide poor families with regular cash benefits on the condition that they invest in the human capital development of their children, have been a crucial component of Latin America's turn towards more targeted aid for the politically unorganized poor over the last several years (Adato and Hoddinott 2010b; Barrientos and Santibáñez 2009; Cecchini and Madariaga 2011; Dion 2009, 2010; Fiszbein and Schady 2009; Handa and Davis 2006; Huber and Stephens 2012; Lomelí 2008; Rawlings 2005; Sewall 2008). These programs, which were pioneered in Brazil and Mexico in the 1990s, represent an innovative attempt to move anti-poverty efforts beyond "ad-hoc and mostly in-kind transfers intermediated through various service providers, nongovernmental organizations, and local governments" towards a more technocratic, programmatic, and inclusionary pattern of anti-poverty policy (Fiszbein and Schady 2009, 10–11). This policy shift also represents a significant "widening" of the welfare state in a region of the world where most systems historically benefitted highly organized and mobilized corporatist segments of the population (Haggard and Kaufman 2008; Malloy 1979; Mesa-Lago 1978). Thus, development agencies and international organizations now see these programs as important tools in the global effort to eradicate extreme deprivation.

The crucial “innovation” in conditional cash transfer programs is the *conditional* nature of the benefits.⁶⁷ Conceptually, the conditions attached to receiving benefits under these programs serve a dual purpose: not only do they aim to ensure that the poor invest in the long-term well-being of their children and families at a higher rate than they might otherwise, but they also presumably serve to help ensure that a skeptical non-recipient public is more willing to support the implementation of the programs (Fiszbein and Schady 2009, 8–11; Handa and Davis 2006, 523). Thus, according to the conceptual logic of these programs, by requiring CCT recipients to engage in “good behaviors” like ensuring that their children attend school and receive basic vaccinations as a prerequisite to receiving their benefit, sponsoring agencies can frame the programs as more than mere “handouts” to the poor; rather, they can argue that these programs explicitly seek to help poor families build their long-term human capacity and develop economic autonomy in the hope that this will allow them to break out of the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Consequently, elected officials and bureaucrats can more plausibly claim to be laying the groundwork for individuals to meet their own needs and can thereby frame the CCT program as a social investment that will make future redistributive efforts less costly or at least less extensive.

Taking the argument one step further, some scholars claim that the conditions, or “co-responsibilities,”⁶⁸ of CCT programs limit or even negate the stigma of taking welfare and empower beneficiaries through social inclusion (Adato and Hoddinott 2010a, 14; Hunter and Sugiyama 2014). For instance, on the basis of evidence from focus group interviews with beneficiaries of Brazil’s Bolsa Familia program, Hunter and Sugiyama (2014, 835) claim that in

⁶⁷ Conditions *per se* are not new to welfare schemes; however, in the context of Latin America, conditions tied to human capital investment represent an innovative approach to assistance provision.

⁶⁸ The term “co-responsibilities” reflects the notion that, in order to effectively fulfill the purposes of CCT programs, governments take on the obligation to *provide* the necessary services for beneficiary families, who in turn accept the obligation to *use* those services as a condition of receiving the benefit.

spite of the means-testing and enforcement of conditionalities inherent in the program's design, "no one reported targeting or monitoring to be degrading, shameful, confusing, or onerous" when asked what they would change about the program. Moreover, they report that "when asked whether the Bolsa Família made them feel proud, ashamed, or neither, the vast majority of Bolsa recipients said they were 'proud' (75 percent) or 'neither' (18.8 percent), with only a small number (1.6 percent) reporting 'shame'" (836). In part on the basis of this evidence, they conclude that Brazil's CCT program promotes both a sense of social inclusion and individual autonomy among beneficiaries.

Yet, even recognizing the value of Hunter and Sugiyama's evidence in terms of providing insight to the lived experiences of beneficiaries, it is essential to note that their findings ignore the crucial question of whether the *non-recipient* public stigmatizes recipients. In short, independent of whether beneficiaries list "shaming" as their primary concern with the program or whether beneficiaries feel shame for accepting the benefit (which it is their legal right to do, so long as they meet the statutory criteria for inclusion in the program), intergroup discrimination may still prove costly to program recipients in terms of their potential level of social inclusion if non-recipients are unwilling or unable to perceive them as their social equals. After all, it is society's advantaged groups that predominantly structure and distribute power and the corresponding costs and benefits of public policy (Schneider and Ingram 1993). The level of self-esteem among the poor is certainly important, but if the non-poor stigmatize the poor, economic, social, and political opportunities will likely be highly constrained for those who are disadvantaged no matter what they think of themselves.

Indeed, there is compelling evidence that people have a strong tendency to stereotype and engage in discriminatory behaviors against the poor, particularly when the poor receive targeted

assistance from the state (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, and Tagler 2001; Walker 2014; Walker et al. 2013; Withorn 1996).⁶⁹ Although poverty is a complex phenomenon that results from the interaction between individual and social choices, stereotypes of welfare recipients are often constructed around perceived *individual* character “flaws” (e.g., the “undeserving” poor (Gilens 1999; Hancock 2004; Kinder and Kam 2009, 182–199; Oorschot 2000; Petersen 2012; Petersen et al. 2011; Seccombe 1999)). The fact that these patterns are evident across numerous social contexts, including both developed and developing countries, begs the following question: are CCT recipients truly exempt from this seemingly universal social pattern of discrimination against welfare recipients as some proponents of CCTs have suggested? And if they are not, do such discriminatory attitudes produce observable political costs in terms of public support for the program in question?

In this chapter I develop and empirically test the argument that CCT recipients are not, as CCT proponents have argued, exempt from the social stereotypes attached to welfare receipt, including those of indolence, licentiousness, and material self-indulgence, and that there are significant political costs in terms of public support for CCTs associated with the endorsement of these stereotypes. In particular, I test the argument that CCTs activate intergroup discrimination through a system justification response (Jost and Banaji 1994), and that the system justification response among both non-recipients and recipients is associated with a lower likelihood of supporting government efforts to expand or maintain the CCT program in question.

⁶⁹ In the case of the United States, Skocpol (1992) traces the origins of negative stereotypes against recipients of social assistance at least as far back as the Civil War pensions awarded to veterans and their families in the late 19th century. In the case of the veterans’ benefits, perceived corruption in the administration of the pension program reflected poorly on recipients of the benefits. What is more, Skocpol argues that perceptions of overly generous pensions to Civil War veterans constrained future social policy choices, ultimately precluding the development of an expansive welfare state.

To test my argument, I draw on nationally representative survey data from the 2014 round of the AmericasBarometer in Brazil, in which I have included an original battery of questions that measure the country-specific content of stereotypes of beneficiaries of Brazil's Bolsa Família program. The results presented here are consistent with predictions drawn from system justification theory and show that a significant portion of the non-recipient population in Brazil endorses explicitly negative stereotypes of Bolsa Família assistance recipients and that non-recipient respondents who endorse the negative stereotypes are also significantly less likely to support the further expansion or maintenance of the program. What is more, many recipient respondents endorse negative self-stereotypes and subsequently report attitudes that likewise reflect an unwillingness to further expand the program which likewise corresponds with the predictions of system justification theory.

These results suggest that, all else equal, the innovative structure of conditional cash transfer programs is insufficient to counter social tendencies to stigmatize the welfare-eligible population and that such stigmatization entails substantive political costs for policies that provide assistance to the poor. This is further evidence of the universality and entrenchment of the stigma of poverty, even in the context of developing countries. Consequently, funding agencies will find that CCT programs face hurdles to fully empower beneficiaries and that even a relatively popular program like Brazil's Bolsa Família may ultimately face political challenges.⁷⁰ Amidst these challenges, recipients who self-stereotype will be less likely to defend the further expansion of social benefits, thereby potentially perpetuating cycles of poverty and the social vulnerability of prospective recipients who have yet to benefit from the program. Thus, this chapter contributes to a broader comprehension of the barriers to enacting social assistance policy that promotes

⁷⁰ This risk will likely be heightened if funding agencies withhold or withdraw their support of programs and thereby force governments to replace external funding with domestic revenues.

social inclusion in the Latin American region and highlights the pervasive nature of negative stereotypes towards the poor.

Attitudes towards the Poor

Poverty is a social condition based on a lack of the resources that contribute to meeting basic needs (Lemieux and Pratto 2003). It is perhaps most reasonably understood as the culmination of a complex interaction between individual and societal choices. Indeed, when asked for their opinion on the origins of poverty, people typically attribute the existence of poverty to either structural, individualistic, or fatalistic causes (Hine and Montiel 1999). Yet prior research has shown that, despite the complex causes of poverty, attitudes about the poor themselves are largely driven by beliefs about the individualistic explanations for poverty (Furnham 1983, 1985; Lemieux and Pratto 2003; Walker 2014; Walker et al. 2013). For instance, Cozzarelli et al. (2001) use a student sample to show that respondents typically attribute negative characteristics to the poor at a higher rate than the middle class. Of particular interest to the argument here, recent work in the field of social policy (e.g., Walker 2014; Walker et al. 2013) shows that the relationship between poverty and shaming is evident in diverse contexts, crossing both the urban and rural divide and the divide between developed and developing countries. Crucially, people draw stark distinctions between the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor (Gilens 1999; Hancock 2004; Kinder and Kam 2009; Oorschot 2000; Petersen 2012; Petersen et al. 2011; Secombe 1999). Thus, stereotypes about the poor tend to reflect perceived negative attributes of the poor, including racial or ethnic minority characteristics where these out-group identities are salient in society, rather than the negative attributes of society that also contribute to the perpetuation of poverty. These effects are only amplified by the portrayals of the poor in

the media (e.g., Bullock, Fraser Wyche, and Williams 2001; Gilens 1999). As a result, the poor often confront strong negative social constructions that carry heavy costs for them in terms of their economic, social, and political standing and well-being.

According to social psychology's System Justification Theory (SJT), negative stereotypes, like those directed against the poor, "justify the exploitation of certain groups over others, and...explain the poverty and powerlessness of some groups and the success of others in ways that make these differences seem legitimate and even natural" (Jost and Banaji 1994, 10). Moreover, social stereotypes can be framed at the individual, group, or system level. At the individual-level, "the probability of stereotyping poor people as lazy and therefore deserving of their plight is correlated positively with one's socio-economic status, which suggests that those occupying high positions in society need to justify themselves by denigrating others who are less fortunate" (4). Similarly, at the group level, "stereotypes serve intergroup functions of rationalizing or justifying the in-group's treatment of the out-group" (6). Finally, SJT posits that "stereotypes follow from social and political systems in that certain systems lead people to stereotype themselves and others in such a way that their status, role, and the system in general are explained and justified. In this way, stereotypic beliefs both reflect and justify existing social arrangements" (13). Even more perversely, SJT claims that these social processes of system justification may cause the powerless to develop a "false consciousness" whereby they hold "beliefs that are contrary to one's personal or group interest and which thereby contribute to the maintenance of the disadvantaged position of the self or the group" through a process of self-stereotyping (Jost and Banaji 1994, 3, 13). Thus, not only do more advantaged individuals and groups tend to actively work to ensure their continuing social dominance, but the poor may unconsciously adopt attitudes about themselves that serve to undercut their civic, political, or

social empowerment and that simultaneously uphold the status quo of the system under which they live.

SJT further hypothesizes that “system justification levels will be higher in societies in which social and economic inequality is more extreme rather than less extreme” both because the advantaged have to justify their position and because the disadvantaged seek to rationalize their condition by justifying the system in which they exist thereby reducing “ideological dissonance” and any consequent threats to the system (Jost, Banaji, and Nosek 2004, 910). In this way, SJT may help to explain why acquiescence as opposed to competition or revolt is the predominant political strategy used by disadvantaged groups (Jost, Banaji, and Nosek 2004, 886). This particular hypothesis derived from SJT has only rarely been tested,⁷¹ but the full implication of SJT here is that, independent of non-recipients’ attitudes, the target population of CCT programs may also unconsciously contribute to undermining political support or, at the very least, further expansion for these policies, especially in countries with high levels of inequality.

Thus, social conflicts tied to power differentials that cut along racial, ethnic, gender, or, perhaps most significantly for this chapter, class lines tend to spark discriminatory (or ethnocentric) attitudes and behaviors. Taken together, each of these motives underlying the development of stereotypes point to the strong tendency people have to form in-groups and out-groups in their social relationships and to subsequently perpetuate those divisions and respective identities through both conscious and unconscious action, all of which can have a profound impact on opinions and support for policies that are important for combating social conditions like poverty.

⁷¹ Glick and Flike’s (2001) study of sexism using nationally representative samples from 19 countries provides one of the few comparative studies that tests this hypothesis. Their results are consistent with the hypothesis above, and suggest that women in countries where men express higher levels of sexism towards women are more likely to endorse such gender stereotypes themselves. In addition, Henry and Saul (2006) find evidence of system justification attitudes at work across economic disparities in a sample of schoolchildren in Bolivia.

Arguably, the most important distinguishing factor that can serve as the basis for identifying the disadvantaged in terms of class relationships is whether an individual or household can provide for their basic needs through their own labor, or whether they require additional sustenance from public assistance or private charitable sources to meet those needs. Prejudices form along this social divide as those with more resources in society tend to cognitively distance themselves from those in need (Lott 2002), thereby creating what Lemieux and Pratto (2003, 149) describe as “a barrier that helps to prevent powerful people from entering into close relationships with members of stigmatized groups or needy others.” Moreover, as Bullock (2014, 136) notes, these barriers “include a complex mix of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that devalue people who are poor. Individual-focused attributions for class position equate economic security with personal merit and effort, and poverty with laziness and a lack of interest in self-improvement.” In turn, these barriers help to perpetuate the social, political, and economic structures that contribute to poverty in society, thereby making it more difficult to address destitution through collective social action.

In the realm of public policy, need-based and targeted assistance policies, in particular, arguably provide a point of focus for the ire of those whose prejudices have been activated against the poor. In fact, Rothstein (1998, 158) presents the view that “the very act of separating out the needy almost always stamps them as socially inferior, as ‘others’ with other types of social characteristics and needs, and results most often in stigmatization.” Although, as has been shown, stigmatization of the poor may well exist in human society independent of any state action, the involvement of the state in redistribute efforts imbues what is otherwise perhaps largely a social or economic condition with starkly political tones. Consequently, those who already have a predisposition to dislike the poor will potentially have further self-interested

motives to express dissatisfaction with any assistance programs that are adopted to benefit a stigmatized target population.

Skocpol (1992) traces the history of Americans' distrust of social welfare programs back to the 1800s and the fraud and corruption that was endemic in Civil War veterans' pension schemes, which produced policy feedback effects by constraining elected officials' options during later rounds of social policy negotiation and implementation. Thus, this is a case where a prior assistance program may have even exacerbated stereotypes against the poor. Yet, even when an assistance program is not directly and causally responsible for the emergence of negative attitudes towards that programs' beneficiaries, the underlying societal tendency to stereotype the poor may nonetheless emerge in expressions of negative stereotypes against assistance recipients and then, in turn, affect support for the policy in question. Indeed, in a test of the psychological mechanisms of attitude formation related to social policy, Petersen (2012) uses experiments embedded in nationally representative web surveys to show that both Danish and American respondents rely on a "deservingness" heuristic based on the perceived laziness of potential recipients to form their opinions about social welfare policy. Thus, the endorsement of stereotypical attitudes towards the poor and the social psychological effects of poverty are largely generalizable and seem to be based on fundamental psychological processes embedded in human cognitive and social functions. What is more, these embedded attitudes may have important consequences in the political realm that are reflected in the level popular support, or the lack thereof, for pro-poor social assistance policies.

CCTs and the Promise to Defeat Prejudice

Why might conditional cash transfer programs provide the means to defeat such hardwired tendencies to stigmatize and discriminate against the poor in human society? Some observers argue that “beneficiaries themselves may prefer the ‘hand up’ approach, with less stigma and more dignity attached to a program in which they have ‘co-responsibilities’” (Adato and Hoddinott 2010a, 14). As noted in the introduction, Hunter and Sugiyama (2014) provide empirical evidence to support this notion regarding the beneficiaries. Yet the question remains whether *non-recipients* attach stigma to these programs and whether recipients find themselves endorsing stigmatizing statements to preserve the status quo of their social and political system.

What features of CCT programs might defeat stigmatization amongst the non-recipient population? First, CCT programs arguably have a strong track record in terms of their economic outcomes. Over the course of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Latin America experienced marked declines in both poverty and inequality (López-Calva and Lustig 2010) and observers credit at least some of that success to the adoption of CCT programs by nearly every country in the region. As Huber and Stephens (2012, 9) argue, “the decline in inequality of disposable income was furthered by increases in targeted transfers, most notably conditional cash transfers, by increases in the minimum wage that pushed up transfers that were linked to the minimum wage, and by increased progressiveness of other transfers.” Likewise, Soares et al. (2010) claim that the fact that Brazil’s CCT program is so well-targeted towards the poor has helped that program have a meaningful impact on poverty rates, especially given the sheer size of the beneficiary population.⁷² To the extent that other CCT programs have had at least as much

⁷² In fact, Brazil has become a model country for international funding agencies looking to combat both poverty and inequality. The World Bank’s online profile of the country’s CCT program, Bolsa Família, states that “the results of Bolsa Família show that it is possible to deal with poverty and income inequality in a sustained manner, integrating

of an impact, they may help to lessen the stigmatization of program beneficiaries. After all, if the non-poor perceive that the program is successfully achieving its anti-poverty objectives, they may be less inclined to oppose it or to adopt negative perceptions of its beneficiaries. Of course, this assumes that the CCT program in question is well targeted and well functioning so that all of the poor fall under the protective umbrella of its positive image. It also implies that any perceived negative performance in a program, including any possible distortions of benefits or official corruption in its administration, might reflect poorly on beneficiaries thereby undercutting its potential stereotype-reducing impact.

Second, people care about process as well as performance. For this reason, the conditions in conditional cash transfer programs are highly important. As Fiszbein and Schady (2009, 10) explain, “the same people who object to targeted transfers as ‘pure handouts’ might support them if they are part of a ‘social contract’ that requires recipients to take a number of concrete steps to improve their lives or those of their children.” Thus, these programs, by their very design, are meant to undercut broader conservative objections to social assistance programs by targeting both short- and long-term poverty objectives for beneficiary families. Perhaps by addressing some of the conservative constituency’s core concerns CCT programs can overcome negative stereotyping of beneficiaries. Of course, requiring conditions also provides considerable leverage to those tasked with monitoring compliance by granting these officials some measure of discretion over benefit receipt. As Hanlon, Barrientos, and Hulme (2010, 133) point out, “any program that increases administrative discretion is open to corruption and influence, and this needs to be taken into account.” Consequently, adopting programs with conditionalities may

millions of people into the economic and social mainstream of the country, without giving up economic development.” (See “Bolsa Família: Changing the Lives of Millions in Brazil.”)

prove to be yet another double-edged sword in relation to prejudice against the poor in Latin America.

Third, it is of interest to note that rightist, centrist, and leftist incumbents have all been responsible for adopting CCT programs across the region, and all have benefitted electorally from their adoption (Dion 2009; Layton and Smith 2015). Thus, there is no clear ideological division on the adoption of these programs in the Latin American context. What may be more important in terms of non-beneficiary support of the program is whether their preexisting partisan sympathies link them to an incumbent who is responsible for enacting a CCT. Through the related mechanisms of motivated reasoning and partisan framing, it may be that such pro-enactor sympathies may translate into lower levels of prejudice against the poor beneficiaries of the CCT program. Conversely, these same mechanisms might lead non-sympathizers to activate their latent prejudices at an even higher level. Thus, it is not clear what the net effect of partisanship will be in terms of promoting or inhibiting the endorsement of negative stereotypes of the poor.

Thus, although there are several reasons to believe that CCT programs will be able to undercut social tendencies to stereotype and stigmatize assistance beneficiaries, whether they do so is an open empirical question. This chapter provides a test of the effects of CCT programs along these lines in the context of Brazil, which operates one of the most consolidated and longest-running CCT programs in Latin America: Bolsa Família.

Brazilian Attitudes towards the Poor

In the case of Brazil, which is the focus of the empirical tests in this chapter, there is a long history of prejudice against the poor. Perhaps most illustrative of this point is the fact that

illiterates only gained the right to vote with the promulgation of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution (Bethell 2000). This does not mean that the poor are powerless in Brazilian society; indeed, Perlman (1975, 2010) takes issue with policy makers and social scientists who perceive and portray impoverished residents of Brazilian favelas as “marginal,” arguing that such portrayals are not only inaccurate, they are damaging to the efforts of the poor to achieve further empowerment in society. Yet the fact remains that such perceptions drive negative stereotypes of the poor in Brazil. Rego and Pinzani (2013, 46–50), for instance, discuss the double standard in Brazilian society where those who are unemployed and economically dependent on state assistance are shamed and considered social “parasites,” but those in the business community who depend on state subsidies and tax incentives and exemptions to turn a profit do not face similar stigmas. Moreover, in his argument against the adoption of affirmative action policies in Brazilian universities, Kamel (2006) makes the claim that Brazilians are not racist, they are “merely” classist. Although arguments against the reality of racism in Brazil are quite weak in the face of more systematic evidence (e.g., Rennó et al. 2011; Telles 2004), it is admittedly difficult to disentangle race-based prejudice from class-based prejudice. Still, that is, in its own way, illustrative of the key point for the argument here, which is that the poor in Brazil, whatever their race, face significant social barriers to inclusion.

Even so, there is limited systematic evidence on the breadth of stereotyping in Brazilian society. In fact, much of the available evidence from national surveys suggests that Brazilians rarely express explicit stereotypical views about the poor, or, as one Brazilian welfare recipient told me during a focus group interview, “People do not say these things to your face.” For

example, in 1991⁷³, the World Values Survey asked Brazilians about the causes of poverty in their country and found that 40.3% of Brazilian respondents attributed domestic poverty to “injustice in our society;” 27.1% attributed poverty to “laziness and a lack of will power” (presumably on the part of the poor); 17.8% claimed that poverty existed because “it is an inevitable part of modern progress;” and 12.7% said that the poor were “unlucky.” In 2010⁷⁴, the AmericasBarometer by LAPOP asked about the causes of poverty among Afro-Brazilians and found that 76.9% of respondents attributed poverty among blacks to “unjust treatment;” 12.2% attributed it to a “lack of schooling;” 8.6% claimed that blacks “do not want to change their culture;” 1.7% said that blacks “do not work enough;” and 0.7% claimed that blacks are “less intelligent.” These findings clearly demonstrate that Brazilians typically blame poverty on structural concerns over individualistic concerns.

In addition, Brazilians are highly supportive of state action to address poverty and inequality in their society. Between 2008 and 2014, the AmericasBarometer surveys in Brazil asked respondents to what extent they agree with the following statement on a 1-7 scale where ‘1’ indicates “strongly disagree” and ‘7’ indicates “strongly agree:” “The Brazilian government should implement strong policies to reduce income inequality between the rich and the poor.” Recoding responses from 0 to 100, the average Brazilian respondent scored 81.78 in 2008; 83.53 in 2010; 82.06 in 2012; and 78.26 in 2014.⁷⁵ By way of comparison, the country with the highest average level of agreement in each round scored 90.69 in 2008 (Paraguay); 88.16 in 2010

⁷³ According to the World Bank’s World Development Indicators data, in 1990 about 30.0% of Brazilians lived on less than the purchasing power parity (PPP) equivalent of \$2 per day at 2005 international prices. 17.2% lived on less than \$1.25 per day.

⁷⁴ According to the World Bank’s World Development Indicators, in 2009 poverty rates had shifted dramatically when compared to the rates 18 years earlier: 10.8% of Brazilians lived on the PPP equivalent of \$2 per day at 2005 international prices and about 6.1% lived on less than \$1.25 per day.

⁷⁵ The 2014 score represents a statistically significant drop from all previous years; however, in substantive terms the change in score amounts to a small difference. In terms of percentages, 79.0% of respondents report scores of 5, 6, or 7 on the original scale for the item, all of which indicate at least some level of agreement with the statement. These estimates account for survey design effects.

(Chile); 86.31 in 2012 (Nicaragua); and 85.07 in 2014 (Chile again). Respondents from the United States always scored the lowest: 47.04 in 2008; 43.96 in 2010; 47.19 in 2012; and 48.94 in 2014. Across the four waves of the AmericasBarometer, Brazilians always rank in the top half of countries surveyed in the Western Hemisphere in terms of their level of support for government intervention to reduce income inequality. Furthermore, there is evidence that even Brazilian elites perceive that poverty and inequality are serious problems in the country and that failures of the state are largely responsible for the level of poverty observed in Brazil (Reis 2005). More importantly, Reis shows that elites also largely endorse a strong role for the state in efforts to eradicate poverty, though the preferred mechanism of state action differs depending on which subgroup of elites answers the question.⁷⁶ This case-specific evidence is consistent with cross-national comparative work that has shown that people in less developed countries or countries with high income inequality are more likely to support redistributive policies irrespective of individual economic standing in order to guarantee that everyone has their basic needs met (Dion and Birchfield 2010). It may also reflect political pragmatism shaped by shifting cross-class coalitions, which accompanied Latin America's dual economic and political transition from the 1980s onward (Dion 2010).

Moreover, in spite of economic gains that significantly reduced poverty rates during the first decade of the new millennium, inequality remains endemic in Brazilian society. According to World Bank data, Brazil's poverty rate (based on a poverty threshold of \$2 a day using purchasing power parity conversions) fell from 20.3% in 2001 to 6.8% in 2012. Even so, Brazil's

⁷⁶ For instance, business elites prefer deregulation, population control, and increased efficiency of state services whereas politicians and bureaucrats prefer agrarian reform and increased efficiency of state services and labor union leaders prefer agrarian reform and the implementation of profit sharing schemes with labor groups.

Gini score registered a much smaller change from 59.3 in 2001 to 52.7 in 2012.⁷⁷ Thus, inequality and, to a lesser extent, poverty remain highly salient in Brazilian society despite the economic gains of the last decade; what is more, unlike in the United States, elites and the mass public both agree that there is need for strong state action to reduce inequality in Brazil. It would seem that these two conditions, when taken together, should work against the formation of negative stereotypes of assistance beneficiaries. Thus, it may be that the Brazilian context provides a least-likely test of whether recipients of targeted social assistance are subject to social prejudice and whether the predictions of system justification theory bear out in the context of poverty and inequality.

Even so, attributions about the causes of poverty and opinions about the desirability of government action against poverty are not the same thing as one's feelings towards the poor welfare recipients in one's society. Conceptually, one might be willing to accept that poverty exists because of structural problems, but still endorse negative stereotypes of the poor. Along these lines, in the 2012 AmericasBarometer by LAPOP, interviewers asked Brazilians to what extent they agreed with the statement that "those who receive assistance from government social programs are lazy" on a scale from 1 to 7. The survey showed that 18.6% of respondents scored a 6 or 7, which represent strong agreement with the stereotypical statement. Conversely, 41.2% scored a 1 or 2, which represent strong disagreement with the statement. Recoding the variable on a 0 to 100 scale, the average respondent in Brazil scores 39.4. Thus, although these results highlight the fact that a minority of the population is willing to endorse explicit individualistic negative stereotypes, the average Brazilian respondent seems to shy away from endorsement of such attitudes.

⁷⁷ Among the 17 Latin American countries that have reported Gini scores to the World Bank since 2009, Brazil has the third highest score in the region. Only Honduras (57.4) and Colombia (53.5) report higher inequality than Brazil.

Given the general social psychology theories about the pervasive nature of negative stereotypes targeted towards out-groups, these survey-based findings might be surprising except for two important considerations. First, Brazilians may be reluctant to express explicitly negative attitudes towards the poor. Thus, people may control their explicit stereotypical responses to survey questions due to social desirability bias or some other kind of sensitivity bias even though there are implicit or latent biases in society. Indeed, historically, as Fischer (2008, 6) points out, “vulnerability and weak access to legality, rather than any more overt discrimination, were at the heart of Brazilian rights poverty” at least until the late 1960s. From this perspective, it is not so much what people say, but what they do that constitutes the most impactful prejudice and discrimination in Brazil. Thus, it may be that razing of squatter settlements, police brutality, and unequal access to legal redress, all driven by the implicit biases that exist in society, are the public face of prejudice in Brazil more so than explicit stereotypical attitudes.

Yet even if it is the case that implicit biases are the driving force behind class discrimination in Brazil, it is important to first conduct a fair test of the presence of explicit biases against the poor to establish a baseline of comparison. Thus, a second point to consider is whether previous empirical efforts have accurately captured the content of social stereotypes against the poor in Brazil. Perhaps it is not the general theories of social psychology that need reevaluation in the context of Brazil, but the questions used to measure the presence of stereotypes in Brazil in a survey context. Small changes in question wording might prove highly consequential in terms of measuring stereotypes, which makes it important to understand the full content of popular stereotypes when measuring the level of endorsement they receive in society. For instance, people may use euphemisms for the concept of “laziness” to avoid being socially

insensitive, which could help to explain the low level of endorsement such attitudes received in the 2012 AmericasBarometer.

In 2012 and 2014 I conducted a number of focus group interviews in Manaus and Brasília where I attempted to tease out the content of popular stereotypes against the poor.⁷⁸ Importantly, I found that people rarely described the poor as “lazy.” Rather than referring to welfare recipients as *preguiçosos* (lazy), people were much more likely to say *acomodados* (too comfortable). Yet, despite the difference in terms, the phrase that people often used, “*ficam acomodados*,” is a nuanced expression in Portuguese that still connotes the characteristics of laziness and lack of ambition on the part of recipients and might be reasonably translated as “they get too comfortable.” As one public school teacher explained, “People are getting too comfortable. For them it does not matter if they have a terrible diet or if it is a life of poverty, it does not matter. They are comfortable. They have a little money. They will not look for work, or go to school, or better themselves, nothing.” Similar characterizations of the recipients of Bolsa Família were offered across multiple focus group interviews; this suggests that asking questions about “laziness” may be inappropriate in the context of Brazil, where the popular lexicon has developed a much more euphemistic approach to describing the poor.

The same interviews also provided insight into the complementary stereotypes that accompany the indigence stereotype, including the perception that welfare recipients have more children to get more welfare and that recipients spend their assistance benefits on the wrong things (e.g., perfume, fake jewelry, cell phones, etc., rather than food, clothing, and school

⁷⁸ In 2012, I conducted 9 focus group interviews with Bolsa Família parents, non-recipient parents, and public school teachers at three public schools (two urban and one rural) in Manaus, Brazil. In 2014, I conducted an additional 5 focus group interviews with the same populations at three public schools in a satellite city near Brasília, Brazil. These focus group interviews were conducted in space provided at the local public schools. Moreover, in Brasília I conducted a number of interviews with federal and local program administrators at their places of employment to better understand the bureaucratic functioning of the program.

supplies). Thus, rather than attempting to measure attributions of poverty, or measure whether people think that the poor are “lazy,” I have chosen to focus on these three primary stereotypes that emerged from my interviews: Bolsa Família recipients are “getting too comfortable;” recipients are incentivized to have more children; and recipients spend their benefit money on the wrong things. On the basis of my fieldwork, measuring the incidence of these negative stereotypes should provide a more accurate picture of the level of explicit stereotyping that exists in Brazilian society.⁷⁹

Brazil’s Bolsa Família Program

Before presenting the data and analyses of these stereotypes, it is necessary to provide some background on the Bolsa Família Program (BFP) in Brazil and explain why it is politically salient even among the non-beneficiary population. First, the program affects a sizeable portion of the Brazilian population. As of July 2014, the BFP benefits over 14 million Brazilian households, which represents about 25% of the total number of households nationally.⁸⁰ In other words, about 1 out of every 4 Brazilian households receives direct benefits from the program, making it highly likely that even people who do not receive benefits directly may know someone who does. In fact there is some systematic evidence to support this claim. In the 2010 AmericasBarometer survey in Brazil, respondents were asked: “Over the last three years has someone in your family, who does not live in your house, or someone that you know been a

⁷⁹ Incidentally, a Brazilian report marking the 10 year anniversary of the Bolsa Família program identifies three myths about the program that its proponents wanted to debunk during its implementation (Campello 2013, 16–17): first, that recipients would not know how to correctly use the cash benefits they received; second, that beneficiary families would have more children as a result of receiving the transfer; third, that the benefit would cause families to get too comfortable (i.e., “*que o Bolsa Família atuaria de modo a acomodar as famílias*”), create dependency, and act as a disincentive to work among adult recipients. A fourth myth was also identified related to the “populist” (or politicized) nature of the program, which I address elsewhere.

⁸⁰ According to data collected by Cecchini and Madariaga (2011), Ecuador is the only country in Latin America that benefits a larger proportion of its population through a CCT program than Brazil.

recipient of the Bolsa Família program?”⁸¹ 49.4% of all respondents answered that they knew someone who was a Bolsa Família recipient in the last three years. What is more, 39.1% of non-recipient respondents claimed to know someone who was a Bolsa Família recipient in the previous three years, illustrating the point that there is substantial spillover in terms of exposure to the program. Still, 45.7% of all respondents reported that they were not a program recipient and that they did not personally know anyone who had been a recipient over the last three years, which means that less direct means of exposure to the program may be equally important in shaping people’s opinions.

Accordingly, the program is highly visible in government marketing campaigns and through the bureaucratic apparatus that supports the program. Television and radio advertising related to government initiatives, including the Bolsa Família program, is common in Brazil (apart from campaigning which has also highlighted the incumbent government’s policy accomplishments like the provision of cash benefits through Bolsa Família) and every affiliated lottery house or federal bank where program recipients can receive their benefit payments typically publicly display printed materials explaining the program and providing crucial information like the schedule of dates to receive payouts. Furthermore, Brazil’s national media have provided a reasonable amount of coverage on the Bolsa Família program. For instance, between 2005 and 2012 the *Folha de São Paulo*, Brazil’s largest newspaper by circulation, published an average of 310.5 articles per year that mentioned Bolsa Família by name.⁸²

⁸¹ The Portuguese question reads: “Nos últimos três anos, alguém da sua família, que NÃO vive em sua casa, ou algum conhecido do(a) sr./sra. foi beneficiário do programa Bolsa Família?”

⁸² By comparison, during the same period, the *Wall Street Journal*, the largest paper in the United States by circulation, published an annual average of 543.0 articles that mentioned Social Security and, similarly, the *New York Times*, with the second largest circulation, published an average of 662.9 articles annually that mentioned the topic. I calculated these figures by doing a search for “Bolsa Família” in the Proquest Latin American Newsstand for the *Folha de São Paulo*, and for “Social Security” in the Proquest News and Newspapers Database for the *Wall Street Journal* (Eastern edition) and the *New York Times* (Late edition). The US equivalent of the Bolsa Família program, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, is rarely mentioned by name in either US

Consequently, even if a person does not know any recipients, it is likely that they have heard of the program either directly or indirectly.

A third important observation is that, although there has been fairly broad public support for the Bolsa Família program, there is some emerging evidence that Brazilians are beginning to waver in their support for programs like Bolsa Família in light of the proliferation of social programs across the country. During my fieldwork in Brazil it was common for those I was interviewing to complain about the number of “Bolsas” that have been created. Indeed, given the success of the Bolsa Família program, many state and local supplementary assistance programs have adopted the “Bolsa” moniker to link their efforts to the federal program independent of the existence of any formal agreement across the levels of government.⁸³ What is more, other federal agencies have also exploited the “Bolsa” brand for their policy programs. The Ministry of the Environment, for example, launched their “Bolsa Verde” (Green Stipend) in 2011 to promote sustainable practices in rural areas located primarily in the Amazon region.⁸⁴ Every quarter it pays impoverished recipient families R\$300 to maintain their land and use sustainable practices on their property.

People have noticed this accelerated adoption of social programs. As one respondent told me during a focus group interview, “There are so many *Bolsas*, so many programs! There is so much of this and that, so I believe that it just contributes more to this question of social devaluation. It increasingly creates even more social inequality. And many people take

newspaper. Between 2005 and 2012, its name appeared a total of 16 times in the *Wall Street Journal* and 41 times in the *New York Times*. “Welfare” receives many more mentions, but is such a generic term that it is much more challenging to parse out which articles refer specifically to the cash assistance program. As of December 2014 when I consulted the database, coverage for the *Folha de São Paulo* ran from April 30, 2005 to Nov. 21, 2012, meaning that the estimated average number of articles per year that I provide is a conservative estimate of the news coverage for the program given that the beginning and end years only had partial coverage in the database.

⁸³ For instance, Manaus has a top-off grant that they provide to Bolsa Família recipients that they call Bolsa Família Municipal.

⁸⁴ <http://www.mma.gov.br/desenvolvimento-rural/bolsa-verde>

advantage of it.” Similarly, another respondent told me, “there is a *Bolsa* for everything...It is Milk for My Child, Bolsa Família, Bolsa without end. At what point does the recipient get comfortable and if they receive these Bolsas they suddenly stagnate? Or is it an incentive to receive the Bolsa, to make an effort, more of a supplement to achieve better things? I really question this aspect of the Bolsa because sometimes people see that the situation is very cozy, right?” Later in this latter conversation, another respondent noted that the government had recently implemented what she called “Bolsa Floresta” (Forest Stipend), by which she seemed to mean the Bolsa Verde mentioned above. After another respondent expressed her incredulity at the adoption of yet another “Bolsa” program, she replied in confirmation, “Yes, even Bolsa Floresta...for the guy to not burn it down, right.” From the tone in each of these conversations, there was clearly considerable frustration at the proliferation of programs, even if there was a tacit recognition that some people truly needed the help.

More systematically, the 2010 and 2014 AmericasBarometer surveys included a question that asked respondents: “Do you think that the government should increase the number of families receiving Bolsa Família, keep it as is, reduce or eliminate the Bolsa Família Program? Descriptive results appear in Table 1 together with statistical tests of the differences in the proportion of respondents in each group providing each respective answer to the survey question. In 2010, 60.4% of all respondents answered that the government should increase the number of families receiving the benefits, 31.6% said that the number of families should be kept the same, 3.2% said that the government should reduce the number of families, and 4.8% said that the government should put an end to the program. Excluding Bolsa Família recipients, 55.7% of non-recipients preferred increasing the number of families, 34.2% said the number should be kept the same, 3.9% wanted to reduce the number, and 6.2% wanted to end the program. Among

self-identified Bolsa Família recipients, 74.7% preferred to increase the number of families receiving the benefit, 23.2% preferred to maintain the current level of benefits, 1.3% wanted to decrease the number of beneficiaries, and a mere 0.8% reported a preference to eliminate the program entirely. The differences across non-recipients and recipients are statistically significant in all cases.

In the 2014 round of the AmericasBarometer, these percentages shifted substantially on the same question. Across all respondents 41.4% preferred to increase the number of families, 38.2% wanted to keep the number the same, 10.3% wanted to reduce the number of families, and 10.2% wanted to eliminate the program. Among non-recipients, 35.5% wanted to increase the number of families, 38.2% wanted to keep the number the same, 13.0% wanted to reduce the number of families, and 13.3% wanted to eliminate the program. Among Bolsa Família beneficiaries, 58.5% preferred to increase the number of beneficiaries, 37.8% preferred to maintain current benefit levels, 2.4% wanted to decrease the number of recipients, and 1.3% wanted to eliminate the program. With the exception of the proportion of respondents wishing to maintain the program, the differences between the two groups are statistically significant in all cases. Thus, these data suggest that there has been a notable shift away from support for the Bolsa Família program. The majority of Brazilians still support expanding or maintaining the program, but there is evidence of growing discontent, especially among the non-recipient population.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ A more robust analysis of these data, in which policy support responses are given values ranging from 0 to 3, where higher values represent more support for the policy, and in which those responses are modeled using ordered logit and regressed on the same respondent background factors included in Table 2 below, provides suggestive evidence that, in addition to beneficiary status, changes in the magnitude of the estimated coefficients for a respondent's level of education and partisan sympathies may also have value in explaining some of the change between the two surveys.

Table 4-1. Estimated Policy Support for Brazil’s Bolsa Família Program, 2010-2014 (%)

	2010				2014			
	Full Sample (N=2396)	Non-recipients (N=1755)	Recipients (N=626)	Diff.	Full Sample (N=1471)	Non-recipients (N=1093)	Recipients (N=378)	Diff.
Increase	60.4	55.7	74.7	-19.0**	41.4	35.5	58.5	-23.0**
Maintain	31.6	34.2	23.2	11.0**	38.2	38.2	37.8	0.4
Decrease	3.2	3.9	1.3	2.6*	10.3	13.0	2.4	10.6**
Eliminate	4.8	6.2	0.8	5.4**	10.2	13.3	1.3	11.9**

Note: Estimated percentages account for design-effects. Estimates based on responses to question CCT4BRA in the 2010 and 2014 AmericasBarometer surveys in Brazil. Recipient status based on question CCT1BRA in the 2010 survey and CCT1B in the 2014 survey. Values may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

** p<0.001; * p<0.05

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

Importantly, these changes in opinion coincide with the continued growth of the Bolsa Família program, not only in terms of families but also in terms of the value of the benefits provided. In July of 2010, the Bolsa Família program paid benefits valuing a little more than R\$1.19 billion to more than 12.58 million households. By July of 2014 the comparable figures were about R\$2.41 billion paid during the month to 14.20 million families. Figure 4-1 shows the change in the value of the average monthly benefit paid to Bolsa Família recipients in constant 2011 international US dollars adjusted for purchasing power parity between 2004 and 2013.⁸⁶ Benefit amounts are standardized in US dollars to adjust for inflationary growth in the total benefits paid and thereby give a clearer picture of the true gains in the value of the program for its beneficiaries. As seen in the figure, the period from 2010 to 2013 saw considerable sustained growth in the average value of the benefits provided to recipients. Although it is not evident that this growth in the value of the program has had any causal effect on the change in opinion

⁸⁶ Data for the number of beneficiary families and the total monthly benefits paid are from the Matriz de Informação Social (MIS) collected by the Ministério de Desenvolvimento Social (MDS), the Brazilian federal agency responsible for oversight of the Bolsa Família program. I use beneficiary and transfer data from July of each respective year. The PPP conversion factor I use to convert Brazilian reais to international US dollars comes from the World Bank’s World Development Indicators database and is based on private consumption values (series ID code: PA.NUS.PRVT.PP). I use the conversion factor to convert the monthly transfer value into standardized 2011 international US dollars and then divide that value by the number of beneficiary families in the month.

regarding the program, the fact that opinions have shifted away from support for the policy over the same time period may be an indication that the expansionary phase of the Bolsa Família program is beginning to reach its limits in terms of public opinion.

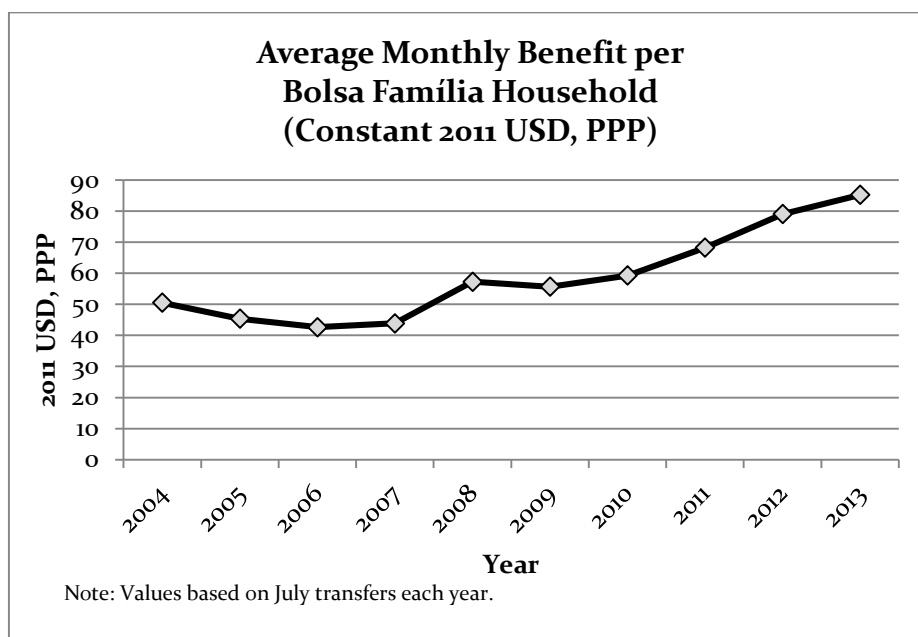


Figure 4-1. Average monthly benefit per Bolsa Família household, 2004-2013

What is more, the program has entered a critical phase in terms of proving its effectiveness and legitimacy as an anti-poverty policy. Although, as noted above, the program has had some notable success at achieving its economic objectives, initial evaluations of the program in terms of meeting its social objectives, such as promoting human capital development and social inclusion, suggest that the program has had a limited impact (de Brauw et al. 2014; Oliveira et al. 2007; Soares, Ribas, and Osório 2010). It may be that the program has proven more effective at meeting these objectives in rural areas (Hunter and Sugiyama 2014; Rego and Pinzani 2013); however, even if that is the case the average recipient resides in an urban setting, as do the vast majority of Brazilian voters. Moreover, only now is the program reaching a point

where observers can conduct systematic analyses about the long-term impact of the program on the children who have benefitted from their parents' adherence to the program's conditionalities over the last decade. Yet many people may already have developed a fixed opinion about the program that will be difficult to change, even with additional evidence on the long-term impact of the program. Thus, it is important to understand the attitudes and opinions of non-recipients regarding the program and its beneficiaries at the present time to better comprehend the political challenges it may face moving forward.

Given the salience of the Bolsa Família program in Brazilian society, and the evidence that there is growing discontent, or at least a growing reluctance to further expand its benefits, people's opinions about recipients may have real political consequences in terms of the program's continuity, especially if there is evidence of negative stereotyping of beneficiaries among the non-recipient public. To this point, however, the evidence presented in this section is consistent with the argument introduced above that Brazil is a least-likely case to find strong negative stereotypes of assistance beneficiaries. After all, even with the reduction in support for the Bolsa Família program and the limited evidence of its effectiveness at achieving its core objectives, the vast majority of both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries prefer to either maintain or expand the scope of the program.

Measuring Welfare Recipient Stereotypes

I draw on the 2014 AmericasBarometer survey in Brazil to address whether people hold negative stereotypes of Bolsa Família recipients and whether those opinions may have any political consequences in terms of support for the policy. This dataset provides a unique opportunity to descriptively assess the presence of stereotypes against the poor and to test their

political effect. In this round of the survey, respondents had the chance to answer three questions regarding their endorsement of negative stereotypes of Bolsa Família recipients. The first question asks: “Some people say that Bolsa Família recipients get too comfortable when they receive their benefit. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?” The second question asks: “The Bolsa Família Program incentivizes its recipients to have more children. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?” Finally, the third question asks: “Bolsa Família recipients spend the money they receive on the wrong things. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?”⁸⁷ Responses are given on a seven point scale that ranges from values of ‘1,’ which signifies “strongly disagree,” to ‘7,’ which signifies “strongly agree.” I combine responses to these questions in an additive index that I call the *Welfare Recipient Stereotype Index* that I rescore from 0 to 1 and that has a Chronbach’s alpha reliability score of 0.75. The mean score on the index for Bolsa Família recipients is 0.48 and 0.58 for non-recipients; the 9.3 percentage point difference between the two groups is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$).

Figure 4-2 shows the distribution of respondents on this stereotype score by their Bolsa Família recipient status; the proportions are calculated within each group. What is immediately apparent is that a significant percentage of both recipients and non-recipients score at the high end of the index. 43.2% of non-recipients score at 0.5 or below on the Welfare Recipient Stereotype Index and 56.8% score higher than 0.5. This 13.5 percentage point difference is statistically significant ($p = 0.001$). By way of comparison, 54.2% of Bolsa Família recipients score 0.5 or below and 45.8% of recipients score higher than 0.5. The 8.5 percentage point

⁸⁷ In Portuguese these three questions read: 1) “Mudando de assunto de novo, algumas pessoas dizem que beneficiários do programa Bolsa Família ficam acomodados ao receber seu benefício. Até que ponto concorda ou discorda desta frase;” 2) “O programa Bolsa Família incentiva os beneficiários a ter mais filhos. Até que ponto concorda ou discorda desta frase;” 3) “Beneficiários do programa Bolsa Família gastam o dinheiro que recebem nas coisas erradas. Até que ponto concorda ou discorda desta frase?”

difference for recipients is not statistically significant ($p=0.177$). Moreover, there is an 11.0 percentage point difference between the proportion of non-recipients that score high on the index and the proportion of recipients that score high, which is statistically significant ($p=0.002$). The distribution observed among non-recipients suggests that negative stereotypes against Bolsa Família recipients are prevalent in Brazilian society,⁸⁸ and is consistent with the general theoretical expectations of stereotype formation founded in social psychological research. The results among recipients are consistent with the predictions of system justification theory given that it is evident that many recipients report agreement with negative self-stereotypes, even if, as would be expected, that proportion is lower than among the non-recipient population.

⁸⁸ There are surprisingly few studies that provide nationally representative portraits of the prevalence of stereotypes towards welfare recipients. Surveys and polls tend to ask about the causes of poverty or about the effects of welfare itself, but very few ask direct questions about perceptions of recipients. However, one nationally representative poll conducted in the United States by the *Los Angeles Times* in 1985 (“Poverty in America,” available through the Roper Center) is very informative. Based on data from that survey, 33.7% of respondents who provided valid responses claimed that most poor people are lazy, as opposed to the alternative that most poor people are hardworking (the non-response rate on this item, including those who answered “not sure,” was quite high at just over 25.2%). In addition, 50.9% of respondents believed that poor young women “almost always” or “often” have babies so they can collect welfare (non-response was much lower at 6.4%). 25.3% claimed that we coddle the poor (i.e., the poor live well on welfare), as opposed to the alternative that the poor are hardly getting by on what the government gives them (non-response here was 9.3%). Finally, 28.4% of respondents claimed that poor people prefer to stay on welfare, as opposed to the statement that poor people would rather earn their own living (non-response was 12.5%). Based on records from the Polling the Nations database, a 1989 *Los Angeles Times* national telephone poll (N=2095) found that 22% of respondents claimed that most poor people are lazy, 18% said 50/50, and 51% said most are hardworking. A similar 1995 telephone poll for the *Los Angeles Times* (N=1426) found that 15% claimed that most poor people are lazy, 15% said 50/50, and 63% said most poor people are hard working (7% said they didn’t know). A smattering of other polls reported similar results to these. Thus, explicit stereotypes of welfare recipients in Brazil appear to parallel those in the United States and are even arguably stronger in some facets.

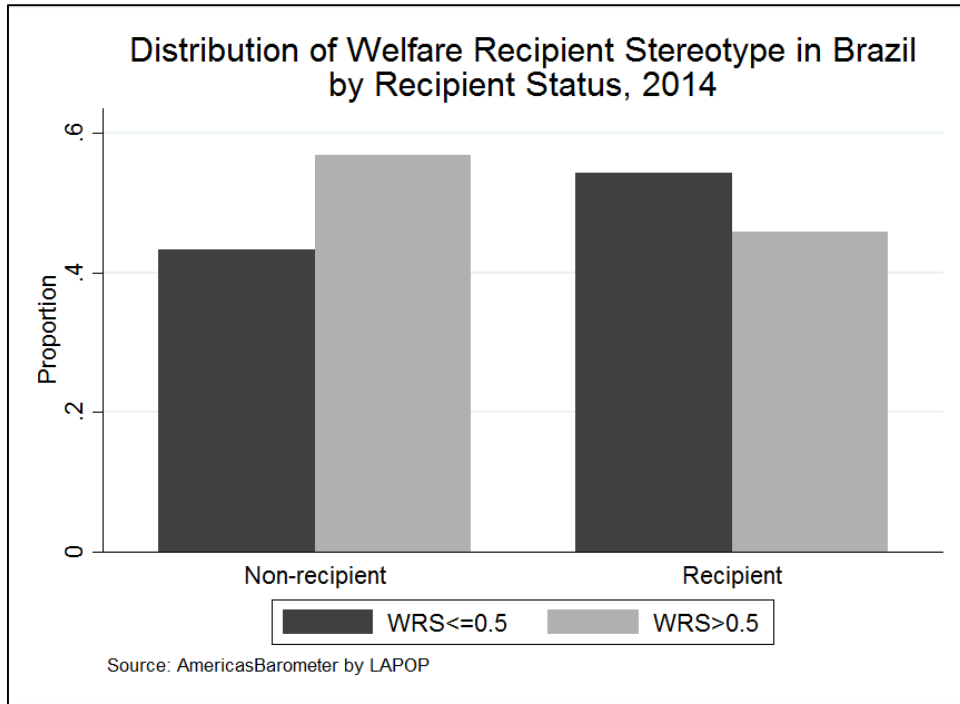


Figure 4-2. Distribution of Welfare Recipient Stereotype by Recipient Status

Are there any systematic patterns that would help predict which individuals strongly endorse negative stereotypes of Bolsa Família’s recipients? To answer this question, I develop an OLS model of scores on the Welfare Recipient Stereotype Index. I regress individual scores on background characteristics like age, gender, skin tone, level of education, household wealth, urban/rural residence, and region of residence. I also include Bolsa Família recipient status and partisan identification (PT sympathizers and other party sympathizers compared to respondents without partisan identification) in the model. Table 2 presents the results from the full sample and then from split samples defined by the Bolsa Família recipient indicator to clarify whether there are important group differences.

Table 4-2. Predictors of Welfare Recipient Stereotype, 2014

	Full Sample	Non- recipients	Recipients
BFP Recipient	-0.070*** (0.020)	-	-
Age	0.002*** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)
Female	-0.042** (0.015)	-0.034^ (0.017)	-0.065* (0.031)
Skin Tone	-0.000 (0.005)	-0.003 (0.005)	0.012 (0.009)
Level of Education	0.043** (0.013)	0.053*** (0.015)	-0.020 (0.034)
Quintile of Wealth	0.011 (0.007)	0.014^ (0.008)	-0.003 (0.013)
Urban	0.025 (0.038)	0.058^ (0.034)	-0.015 (0.056)
PT Sympathizer	-0.012 (0.026)	-0.038 (0.029)	0.039 (0.041)
Other Party Sympathizer	0.025 (0.027)	0.047 (0.030)	-0.061 (0.054)
Northeast	0.086^ (0.045)	0.078^ (0.043)	0.074 (0.063)
Center West	-0.033 (0.047)	-0.026 (0.043)	-0.055 (0.076)
Southeast	-0.028 (0.044)	-0.026 (0.041)	-0.052 (0.067)
South	0.010 (0.048)	0.018 (0.046)	-0.116 (0.073)
Constant	0.368*** (0.062)	0.303*** (0.065)	0.500*** (0.111)
Number of Observations	1438	1072	366
F-score	4.457***	3.843***	3.026**
R ²	0.06	0.05	0.08

Note: OLS estimates reported. Standard errors in parentheses. Estimates adjusted for design-effects. North is the baseline region.

Non-partisans are the baseline category for partisan affiliation.

^ p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

The results based on the full sample show that, all else equal, Bolsa Família recipients score 0.070 points lower on the stereotype score than non-recipients. What is more, older respondents endorse negative stereotypes at a significantly higher level than younger respondents (the estimated maximum difference between the youngest and oldest respondents is 0.146 points), women endorse negative stereotypes at a lower level than men (a difference of 0.042 points), and those who have completed higher levels of education endorse negative stereotypes more so than those who have completed lower levels of education (all else equal, the estimated difference between a respondent with no education and a college educated respondent is 0.129 points). In addition, residents of the Northeast endorse negative stereotypes at a significantly higher level than residents of all other regions. Finally, PT sympathizers do not endorse stereotypes at a statistically higher or lower level than other partisan sympathizers.

Restricting the model to non-beneficiaries produces very similar results: older, male, and higher educated non-recipient respondents endorse negative stereotypes of Bolsa Família recipients at a higher level than younger, female, and lower educated respondents.⁸⁹ In addition, among non-beneficiary respondents those who are wealthier and those who live in urban areas are marginally more likely to endorse the stereotypes. Respondents who reside in the Northeast again endorse the negative stereotypes at a significantly higher level than residents of all other regions with the exception of the South ($p=0.14$). Finally, among non-beneficiaries, PT sympathizers score 0.086 points lower on the stereotype index than other partisan sympathizers which is a statistically significant difference ($p=0.02$).

⁸⁹ If I break out the level of education variable by category, the effect of level of education is not strictly linear, but respondents who have completed each successive level of study (i.e., Primary, Secondary, and University) score higher, on average, on the stereotype index than respondents in the group immediately below. Ultimately, respondents who have completed a university degree score much higher on the index, on average, than all other groups.

Restricting the model to Bolsa Família recipients shows very few significant relationships between background characteristics and endorsement of welfare stereotypes. Women are significantly less likely to endorse negative stereotypes of fellow recipients and, once again, residents of the Northeast are significantly more likely to endorse the stereotypes than residents of any other region, this time with the exception of the North ($p=0.24$). Finally, in this model, the 0.100 point difference in stereotype scores between PT sympathizers and other partisan sympathizers is only marginally significant ($p=0.07$), and is in the opposite direction from the effect found in the non-recipient model meaning that, all else equal, PT sympathizers who are Bolsa Família recipients score *higher* on their stereotype score than other partisan sympathizers.

These results confirm that CCT recipients are subject to stigmatization and appear to be consistent with a system justification perspective, given the fact that SJT predicts that vulnerable groups will adopt externally determined stereotypes. After all, in spite of the fact that half of beneficiary respondents score at least a 0.5 on their Welfare Recipient Stereotype Score, there are few individual level background characteristics that are systematically related to their level of endorsement of negative stereotypes. What is more, among the beneficiaries of Bolsa Família, those who are the strongest identifiers with the current political system (PT sympathizers) express somewhat *higher* levels of negative self-stereotyping than others with weaker identification. The greater concern is whether holding attitudes reflective of negative stereotypes is associated with respondent support for the Bolsa Família program. I address whether this is the case in the next section.

The Policy Costs of Welfare Recipient Stereotypes in Brazil

Are respondents' stereotypes of Bolsa Família recipients related to their support for the policy in a systematic fashion? To answer this question, I model responses to the policy support question in a multinomial logit regression using a series of predictors including Bolsa Família recipient status, welfare recipient stereotype scores, and, because I want to test the conditional relationship of these two factors, an interaction term between these two variables. I also include a series of individual level control variables including age, gender, skin tone, level of education, quintile of wealth, urban/rural residence, partisan sympathy (PT sympathizer or other party sympathizer, with non-partisans as the baseline category), and region of residence.

Table 3 presents the results of this regression analysis where the *Increase* category is the baseline category for the sake of comparisons. There are several statistically significant results. Looking first at statistically significant effects among the control variables, older respondents prefer all options over increasing the number of families receiving Bolsa Família, more educated respondents prefer to either decrease the number of recipients or eliminate the program, wealthy respondents prefer all options over increasing the number of recipients, and urban respondents tend to prefer to maintain the program more so than rural respondents. In addition, PT sympathizers prefer increasing the number of families receiving benefits above all other options, whereas other partisan sympathizers have no clear preference between categories. Finally, there is also evidence of significant regional differences. These are more clearly understood in terms of predicted probabilities as shown in Figure 4-3. In particular, there are significant differences between the North and the Northeast, the two regions that benefit most from the Bolsa Família program, in terms of residents' policy support for the program. Respondents from the North are more likely to prefer to maintain the program at current levels, whereas respondents from the

Northeast are more likely to prefer to increase the number of beneficiaries. Interestingly, respondents from the Northeast are also significantly more likely to prefer to eliminate the program than respondents from the North. This suggests that there is a notable polarization of relative opinions in the Northeast regarding the Bolsa Família program.

Table 4-3. Multinomial Logit Predictors of Policy Support for Bolsa Família Program (Increase=baseline), 2014

	Maintain	Decrease	Eliminate
BFP Recipient	-0.511 (0.332)	-1.132 (0.920)	0.299 (1.011)
Welfare Recipient Stereotype	0.574* (0.289)	1.961*** (0.420)	4.015*** (0.563)
BFP*WRS	0.714 (0.539)	-0.501 (1.504)	-3.724* (1.745)
Age	0.017** (0.005)	0.013^ (0.007)	0.029*** (0.007)
Female	0.043 (0.102)	0.049 (0.177)	-0.234 (0.208)
Skin Tone	0.037 (0.032)	0.070 (0.052)	-0.035 (0.045)
Level of Education	0.183 (0.122)	0.606** (0.195)	0.602** (0.175)
Quintile of Wealth	0.195*** (0.053)	0.300** (0.092)	0.272** (0.096)
Urban	0.490* (0.234)	-0.070 (0.428)	0.313 (0.403)
PT Sympathizer	-0.373* (0.174)	-0.703* (0.326)	-0.848* (0.365)
Other Party Sympathizer	-0.143 (0.216)	-0.190 (0.321)	-0.374 (0.351)
Northeast	-0.751* (0.347)	-1.094^ (0.604)	0.768 (0.646)
Center West	-0.562 (0.365)	-0.612 (0.612)	0.558 (0.649)
Southeast	-0.774* (0.338)	-0.423 (0.589)	0.034 (0.639)
South	-0.310	0.148	0.669

	(0.382)	(0.640)	(0.679)
Constant	-1.826***	-4.564***	-7.108***
	(0.469)	(0.916)	(0.925)
Number of Observations	1414		
F-score	5.25***		

Note: Multinomial logit regression coefficients reported with *Increase* as the baseline category. North is the baseline region. Non-partisans are the baseline category for partisan affiliation. Standard errors in parentheses. Estimates adjusted for design-effects. ^ p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001
Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP

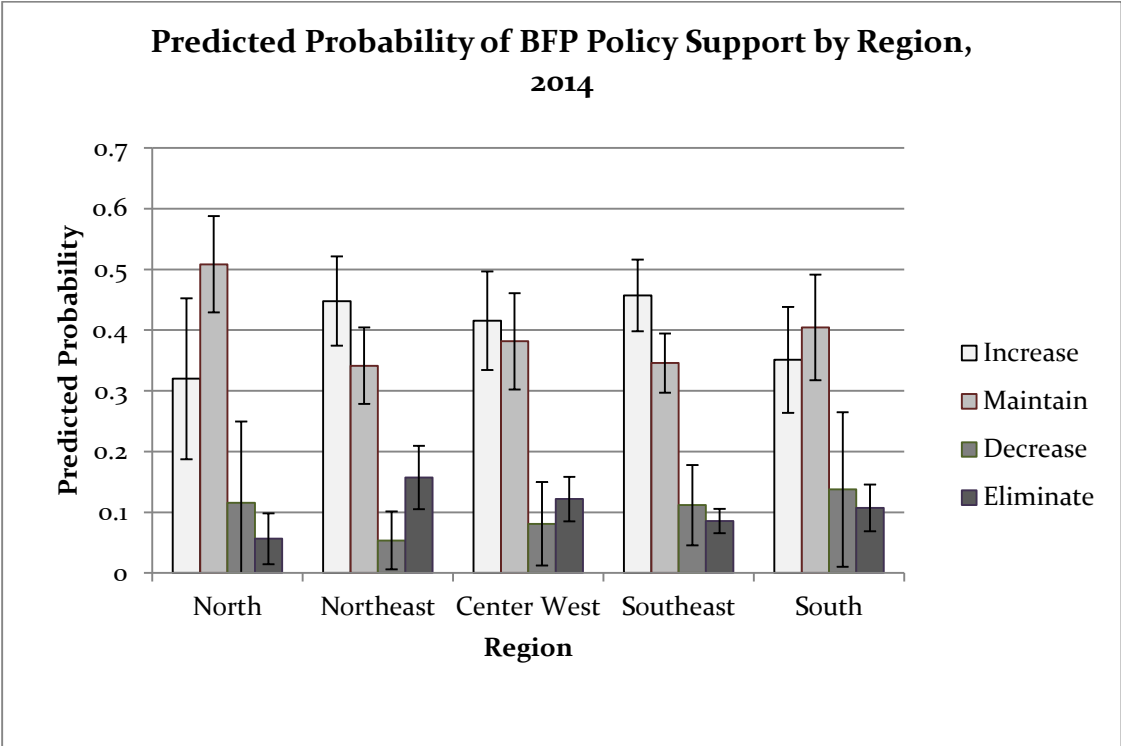


Figure 4-3. Predicted Probability of BFP Policy Support by Region, 2014

In terms of the principal independent variables of the model, including Bolsa Família recipient status, welfare recipient stereotype scores, and the interaction term, there are several statistically significant relationships to unpack. To help interpret the findings from the model, Figures 4-4, 4-5, 4-6, and 4-7 present predicted probabilities of preferences to Increase, Maintain, Decrease, and Eliminate the Bolsa Família program, respectively. Predicted

probabilities are calculated for recipients and non-recipients at the minimum, maximum, median, and interquartile range values of the stereotype score and then graphed for the sake of comparison. Taken collectively, these figures illustrate the point that welfare stereotypes carry steep political costs in terms of support for the Bolsa Família program in Brazil.

Beginning with the effects on BFP recipients, unsurprisingly recipients are highly unlikely to prefer to decrease the number of recipient families or to eliminate the program; however, recipients who endorse negative stereotypes of recipients like themselves are significantly less likely to prefer to increase the number of beneficiary families. Rather, they are significantly more likely to prefer to maintain the program as it currently stands. Thus, at the very least, they are less enthusiastic about the program than their non-stereotypical peers. Again, this is consistent with the predictions of system justification theory.

Among non-recipients, the effects of holding negative stereotypes of Bolsa Família recipients are even starker and have more potential to be directly politically costly. Not only are stereotyping non-recipients significantly less likely to support increasing the number of beneficiary families than their non-stereotyping peers, they are also significantly less likely to support maintaining the program at current levels. Rather, compared to non-stereotyping respondents, they are more likely to prefer to decrease the number of families, or to eliminate the program. In substantive terms, non-recipients who hold the strongest negative stereotypes of Bolsa Família recipients have an estimated predicted probability of preferring to eliminate the program of 0.28 and an estimated combined predicted probability of preferring to decrease the number of program beneficiaries or eliminate it equal to 0.45. By comparison, non-recipients who report the lowest level of stereotype have an estimated combined predicted probability of preferring to decrease the number of program beneficiaries or eliminate it equal to 0.07. Thus,

while the average non-recipient who holds strong negative stereotypes of the poor may have a little better than even chance of actually supporting the increase or maintenance of the program, those odds are significantly and substantively much worse than for the average non-stereotyping non-recipient. What is more, the estimated predicted probabilities show that there are statistically significant differences between individuals at median values of the stereotype score and the two extremes. Thus, the story here is not just about predictions at extreme values; even at more representative values of stereotypical attitudes, there are important differences between the more stereotypical and less stereotypical respondents. These findings are consistent with the predictions of work in social psychology regarding the impact of more advantaged groups' negative stereotypes against the poor.

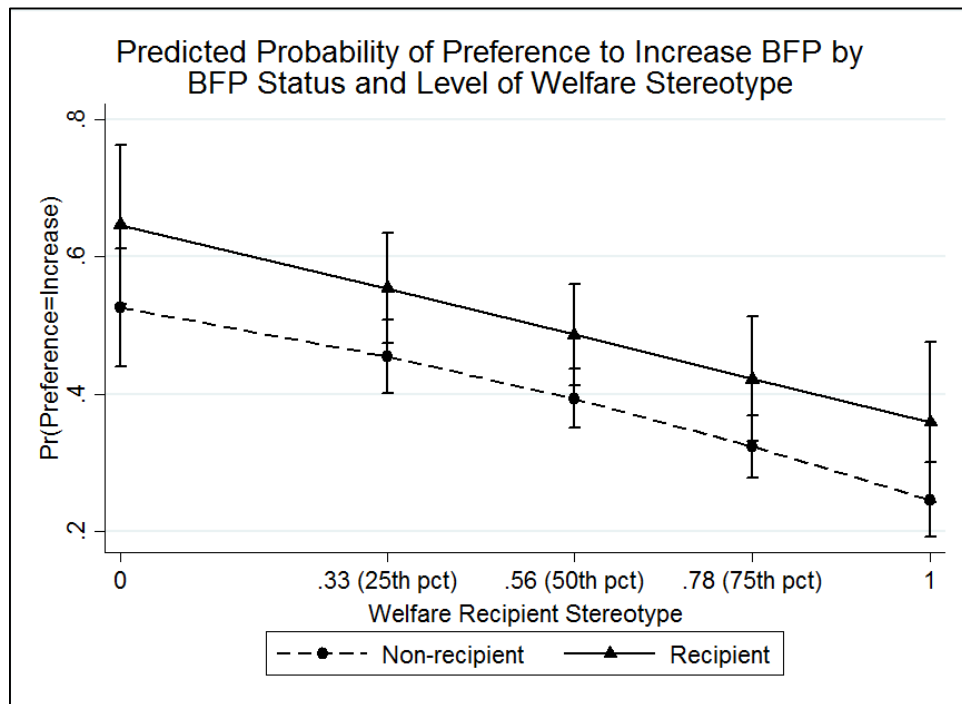


Figure 4-4. Predicted Probability of Preference to Increase BFP by BFP Status and Level of Welfare Stereotype

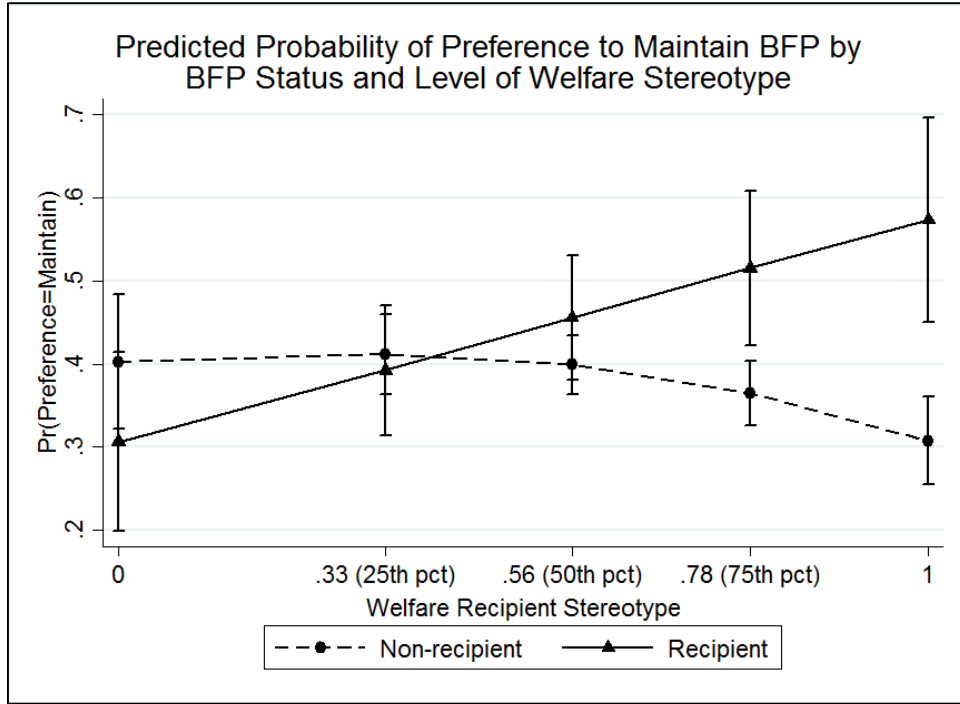


Figure 4-5. Predicted Probability of Preference to Maintain BFP by BFP Status and Level of Welfare Stereotype

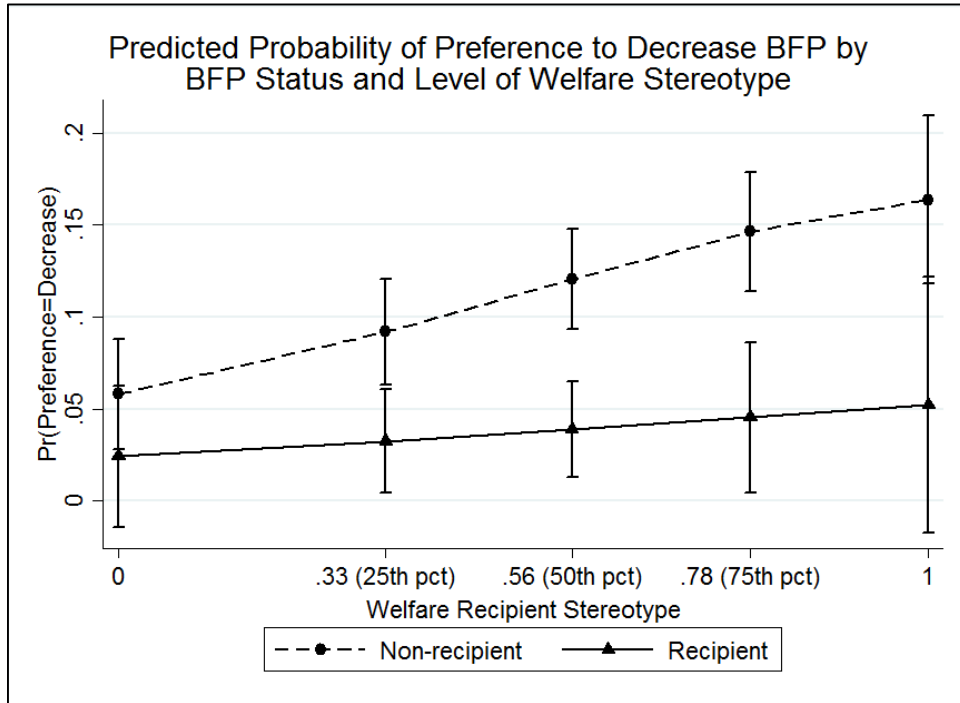


Figure 4-6. Predicted Probability of Preference to Decrease BFP by BFP Status and Level of Welfare Stereotype

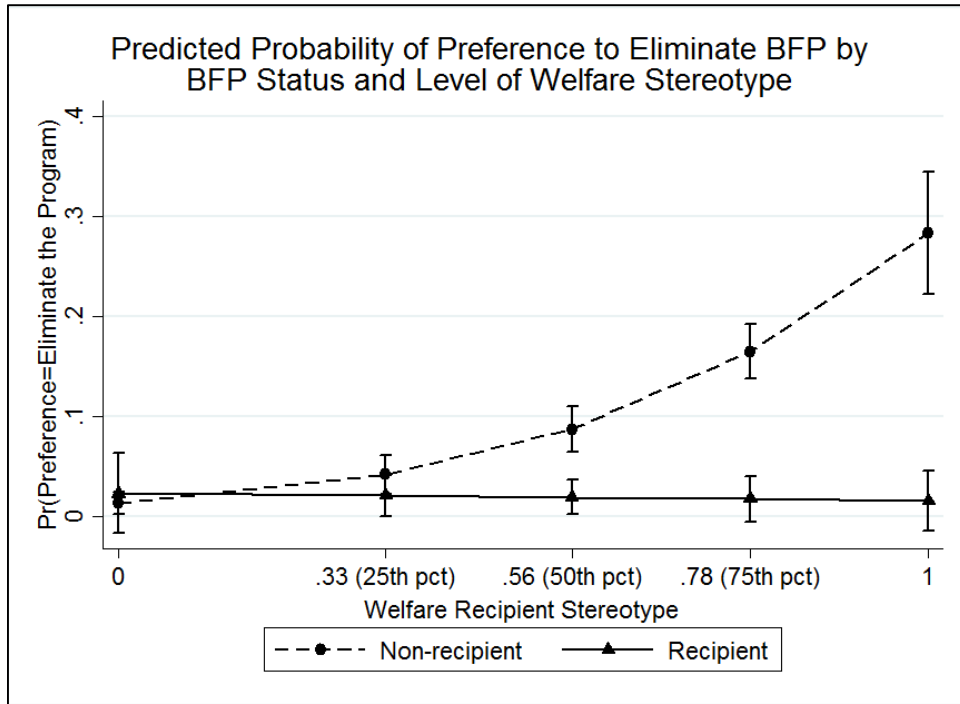


Figure 4-7. Predicted Probability of Preference to Eliminate BFP by BFP Status and Level of Welfare Stereotype

Discussion and Conclusions

The argument and findings presented here provide systematic evidence that negative stereotypes of beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família program are strongly entrenched in Brazilian society, not only among non-recipients, but also among recipients of benefits. They further suggest that the Bolsa Família program will face important political challenges to the extent that such negative stereotypes of its beneficiaries endure and, particularly if they find further acceptance in society. Notably, these findings persist even after controlling for other individual level factors, including partisanship. These findings are consistent with the system justification theory perspective of intergroup relations, particularly given the otherwise unexpectedly high level of negative stereotype endorsement among Bolsa Família beneficiaries.

These findings highlight the importance of understanding the full content of social discourse regarding group identities prior to more systematically measuring the incidence of negative stereotyping. Moreover, they call into question prior research that argues that programs like Bolsa Família empower their beneficiaries (Hunter and Sugiyama 2014). While it may be true that the incumbent Brazilian government has been willing to signal its prioritization of social inclusion for the poor, this has not automatically translated into widespread popular acceptance of the poor beneficiaries of the government's transfer programs. Indeed, there is still a sizeable group of older, more educated, and male Brazilians who, on average, are much less supportive of the government's policy efforts for the poor than their peers. What is more, the discourse of negative stereotypes has even affected some among the recipients who have become much less vigorous defenders of the assistance benefits that they receive while at the same time making them more supportive of the status quo.

In broader terms, the findings presented here provide further systematic evidence of the generalizability of theories of intergroup relations and the political importance of social psychological processes that tend to produce intergroup conflict. These findings also have implications for public policy efforts to promote social inclusion among the poor given that they suggest that such an effort is enormously complicated. The mere act of providing social assistance creates group identities and social divisions between recipients and non-recipients that did not previously exist and that have political consequences. Indeed, given sufficient time and strong salience of the social program, it is likely that social programs will produce political cleavages that may come to define generations of political competition in Brazil and elsewhere.

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CONCLUSION

Latin America achieved significant gains in combating poverty and more equitably distributing economic growth in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Innovative conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs were at the forefront of governments' anti-poverty policy initiatives in the region and proponents of these programs have claimed that they improve the lives of the poor not only through their cash benefits, but by promoting social inclusion, linking beneficiaries to state services like public schools and public health centers, lowering the stigma of receiving welfare, limiting strategic use of assistance programs, and increasing beneficiary autonomy. This project provides an empirical test of these claims and explains why it is that even after years of pro-poor development in Latin America, CCT programs *alone* are not sufficient to break cycles of poverty and social exclusion in the Latin American region.

Ultimately, despite proponents' claims, I find that although CCT programs are highly effective at altering the incentives for the poor to invest in the human capital development of their children at a higher rate than they might otherwise, these programs do little to change the politics of social exclusion in Latin America. Political elites still want to achieve reelection and see CCT programs as an effective strategic tool to achieve that objective; the beneficiaries of the program remain dependent on the good will of employees and administrators of local schools and health clinics to retain their beneficiary status, thereby undermining their capacity to autonomously engage with the most basic public services in their communities; and, in spite of the innovative design of CCT programs, skeptical non-recipients stigmatize beneficiaries of the program much as people tend to do with the poor all around the world.

With these findings, this project makes two key contributions. First, it highlights how important it is to push beyond an understanding of the electoral impacts of CCT programs by

illuminating what may be the broader political consequences of the interaction between these programs and preexisting incentive structures. For instance, as shown in Chapter 2, political elites in Brazil prove adept at making government work efficiently around national elections, but less so at other times in the electoral calendar. Although citizens no doubt are grateful that elections spur some responsiveness on the part of their elected officials, observing such cyclical politics may well lead to cynicism about the capacity of democratic politics to constrain the self-interested and ambitious behavior of current and future leaders which cynicism, if left unchecked, may ultimately threaten the stability of democracy.

Moreover, Chapter 3 highlights an underappreciated factor that may dash the hopes of proponents of CCT programs: public schools are fundamentally political arenas, particularly in Latin America, which may weaken the capacity of CCT programs to induce processes of social inclusion and empower recipients or their children through the mechanism of publicly-funded education. In addition to ostensibly educating and shaping the minds of the next generation of citizens, public schools provide opportunities for bidding on any number of public contracts, they offer opportunities to provide patronage postings for one's supporters, and they frequently inspire vocal activism on the part of students, parents, and teachers whose interests often do not coincide in a mutually beneficial harmony of demands. All of this is to say that achieving human capital development may not always be at the forefront of the discussion where public schools are concerned. Sometimes other (political) objectives take precedence, potentially undermining the positive feedback effects proponents hope these institutions will encourage among the rising generation of assistance recipients and their children.

Finally, Chapter 4 turns the attention away from CCT recipients themselves to look at how non-recipients perceive the program and its beneficiaries. The political costs in terms of

policy support for the Bolsa Família program among those who endorse negative stereotypes of recipients are striking. The data show that calls to eliminate the program are most likely to emerge from those who endorse strongly negative views of recipients. Proponents of this program and others like it need to take heed of these results and work to counter the attitudes and opinions of those who believe that the program promotes indolence, lasciviousness, and material self-indulgence. Otherwise, if such opinions gain broader traction in society, even the electoral bonus that CCT programs offer may not be sufficient to offset the temptation for politicians to answer the call to eliminate them.

The second crucial contribution of the project is to provide further evidence to bolster the small, but growing literature on the impact of CCT programs for promoting social inclusion. It is important first to note that the findings in this project should not be interpreted as a wholesale condemnation of CCT programs or their objectives. Indeed, during the interviews I conducted in Brazil there were a number of positive experiences shared by recipients and non-recipients alike that highlight the potential of CCT programs to lift burdens and help recipients achieve a greater realization of their innate potential than would otherwise have been the case without the program. There were stories of women granted autonomy from absentee or abusive husbands, beneficiaries finding access to workforce training programs, recipients voluntarily withdrawing from the program once they had achieved a modicum of financial stability in an effort to give others the same opportunity, and, perhaps most strikingly, of an unruly child whose behavioral problems at school were tempered after enrolling the family in Bolsa Família thereby ensuring that the child would not go to school hungry. Undoubtedly, the recipients of the program are grateful for the help they receive.

What, then, is the proper interpretation of the findings presented here? If CCT programs have proven transformative to some degree for individual lives, they have not, as yet, proven transformative for Latin American society. The results presented here show that, *on average*, CCT recipients continue to face significant barriers to social inclusion including social stigmatization by non-recipients, the manipulation of program benefits by strategic national elites, skepticism regarding beneficiaries' motives and drive to improve themselves on the part of local school teachers, and, at times, even anti-recipient biases and reluctance to support expansion of further benefits from other beneficiaries.

What is more, based on my admittedly non-representative observations in the field, governments have yet to show a deep commitment to their side of the co-responsibilities inherent in CCT programs. In other words, governments have been quick to ramp up access to the benefits provided under CCT programs; after all, these aspects of the program are relatively inexpensive, despite the fixed costs that are incurred at the start of a program, and they have proven popular with the voters. Yet for these programs to truly benefit recipients and promote social inclusion, governments will eventually need to make more costly investments in the quality of public services beneficiaries and other citizens receive. Public schools are a particular area of concern. As noted as an aside in the introduction, according to the UNDP's 2014 Human Development Statistical Tables,⁹⁰ the average Latin American adult has only completed 7.9 years of schooling compared to an average of 11.7 years in countries with very high human development. Closing that gap will require more resources, more efficient use of existing resources, and a commitment to combat corruption to prevent the diversion of resources away from public investments for private gain. As Latin American societies begin to win the battle

⁹⁰See: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>

against extreme poverty, taking on those very difficult objectives will be the next great hurdle that they must confront.

Thus, it is imperative that the results presented here not be taken as a fundamental indictment of CCT programs. Rather, these programs represent a crucial stage in the evolution of social programs in Latin America. They are markedly different and more concerned with meeting human development objectives than prior programs employed in the region, yet there are important improvements still to be made to the political systems where these programs have been adopted. Improving systemic features where the programs are implemented may better allow CCT programs to empower recipients as autonomous citizens.

For instance, in terms of the allocation of benefits, it is crucial that governments and funding agencies look for ways to insulate program functions from electoral politics. Electoral incentives for political elites are not entirely undesirable; indeed they can prove instrumental in leading political elites to implement pro-poor programs in the first place. Nevertheless, electoral payouts can be abused by strategic elites as shown in Chapter 2. Purposefully structuring administrative agencies to oversee CCT programs in ways that somewhat remove their functions from the realm of political processes (for example, by creating politically independent and professionalized commissions to oversee agency functions or administration, appointing agency heads for terms longer than or off-cycle from the chief executive's electoral cycle, or achieving budgetary autonomy for the agency) may provide opportunities for agencies that oversee CCT programs to develop technocratic expertise and more directly fulfill their anti-poverty missions in ways that look to primarily serve their target populations rather than the political ambitions of elected officials.

In terms of promoting autonomous civic and political engagement among CCT beneficiaries, as noted in Chapter 3 perhaps the most crucial investments governments and funding agencies can make is in helping to train employees of public schools in their roles as social workers who necessarily interact with the beneficiaries of CCT programs and in providing resources to help boost these employees' morale and sense of value as public servants. Currently, public school teachers and administrators clearly lack both the necessary professional and material support to fulfill their roles in promoting social inclusion through CCT programs. It is not enough for central governments to train the municipal administrators of CCT programs; to achieve their deeper objectives, central governments must recognize the crucial role that teachers and school administrators play in the success of these programs.

Finally, in terms of negating stereotypes of CCT recipients, it is crucial that governments recognize that it is not enough to achieve positive policy outcomes in order to combat negative stereotypes of program beneficiaries. As shown in Chapter 4, many people continue to endorse negative stereotypes of benefit recipients in spite of whatever successes the program has achieved overall. Indeed, even some beneficiaries buy into the dominant negative stereotype of people like themselves. When developing marketing materials and in interactions with the media, governments and funding agencies need to strike a delicate balance to portray beneficiaries as both "deserving" of the assistance they receive and as valued and capable members of society in an effort to combat prevailing negative stereotypes in society and the innate tendencies of the media to use stereotypical images of beneficiary recipients in reporting on the issue of poverty and assistance programs in society. Through such efforts, it may be possible to engage a positive feedback cycle that can undercut the social tendency to stigmatize the poor.

In this dissertation I have produced evidence that should give governments and funding agencies pause when trumpeting gains made in combating poverty through the implementation of CCT programs. Although such gains are certainly welcome, the analyses provided in this dissertation show that achieving social inclusion is an ongoing struggle in Latin America. The politics of social exclusion remain firmly entrenched in spite of a decade of poverty reduction and the implementation of innovative policies. Until Latin American societies address the structural biases embedded in their political systems, innovative social assistance policies like conditional cash transfer programs will continue to fail to empower the poor and vulnerable members of society.