

Education in Brazilian Social Programs: poverty and work

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ABSTRACT – Education in Brazilian Social Programs: poverty and work¹. This article approaches the role of formal education as a conditionality to Brazil's social programs. The analysis focuses on developing social cash transfers programs to evidence the moral, political, and cultural foundations that maintain access to formal education as central to eliminate poverty in a long way. In this sense, the role of education as a conditionality serves to manage aspects of convincement about social mobility expectations between the beneficiaries in poverty and unemployment. Therefore, formal education is an argument that validates cash transfer programs to balance tensions and antagonism between opposite classes.

Keywords: Education. Bolsa Família Program. Brazil's Social Programs.

RESUMO – A Educação nos Programas Sociais Brasileiros: pobreza e trabalho. Este artigo analisa o papel social da educação como condicionalidade dos programas sociais brasileiros. A abordagem centra-se na elaboração e no desenvolvimento das políticas sociais de transferência condicionada de renda no Brasil e explicita sob quais argumentos morais, políticos e culturais o acesso ao ensino formal foi elevado à centralidade das ações de combate à pobreza. Nota-se que a educação como condicionalidade atua no convencimento acerca de expectativas de mobilidade social entre os sujeitos atendidos pelos programas frente às baixas condições materiais de vida. Desta forma, a educação compõe argumento de legitimação para a transferência de dinheiro, ofuscando tensões e antagonismos entre classes. **Palavras-chave: Educação. Programa Bolsa Família. Condicionalidades.**

Introduction

Between the 1990s and 2014², Brazilian conditional cash transfer social programs underwent intense institutional reformulations and rearrangements (De Sordi, 2019). However, regardless of such reformulations, access to formal education remained the main conditionalities for the entry and permanence of workers' families in these programs.

Analyzing the permanence of this conditionality is necessary to understand a social process that correlated education and work to the category of poverty, as a social issue to be managed by the State, amidst expectations for greater employability and social development, given the precariousness of jobs, unemployment, and informality.

We consider the access to formal education as a conditionality for the period of the 1990s and early 2000s, in order to assume that in this period the social role of education and formal education shifted, caused by scholarship-type programs School, at a local level, throughout the 1990s, and at a national level with the Bolsa Escola Federal, in 2001, and the *Bolsa Família* Program, from 2003 onwards (De Sordi, 2019).

What is observed is that access to formal education was presented to impoverished parts of the population and measures of a socio-educational nature, loaded with meanings of moralizing the habits and living conditions of the families (Gohn, 1997). In the early 2000s, with the experience of nationalizing these programs, the technical application of targeting the target audience is observed, and the link to education becomes both a program management mechanism (Teles; Stein, 2016) and control of targeting in order to legitimize the transfer of income.

Therefore, in the following sections, this article presents the political debates that registered education as a conditionality of social programs throughout the 1990s; addresses the tendency to reconfigure the relations between education and work noted in the social dynamics imposed by the Bolsa Família Program (PBF) and analyzes conceptions around the role of school and formal education in a context of discourses of combating poverty and developing human capital.

Conceptions around Poverty and Education for Social Programs

In the 1990s, in an effervescent political and economic scenario, proposals for the institution of a minimum income gained strength as a possibility to lessen the effects of the intensification of labor exploitation. During this period, poverty, as an expression of the social issue, guided the national political scene as a political category (Oliveira, 2007), which the State translated into philanthropic campaigns and social assistance programs. During this period, poverty, as an expression of the social issue, guided the national political scene as a *political category* (Oliveira, 2007), which the State translated into philanthropic campaigns and social assistance programs. These campaigns intended

to deal with the impoverishment of Brazilian workers as a social issue to be addressed (Telles, 2013) in the contours of individual life situations, subordinated to the deepening of neoliberal policies in the country (Gentili, 1996).

In dialogue with Behring and Boschetti (2006), it is possible to state that Social Policy is the field of conflict between social classes, developed not necessarily to dilute antagonisms but also to balance concepts between Social Law, forms of access, and enforcement of social services. Assuming that education is a mediating practice within the global social practice (Saviani, 1999), the relationship between impoverishment, work and education occurred – and occurs – mediated by the intention of permanent control of the conflict that can erupt from the abstraction of conditions experienced concerning capitalist production relations (Leher, 1999).

In social programs linked to education, the conditioned forms of access to social rights are the obfuscation point of social tensions. They aim to model individual behaviors based on the introjection of habits and values in a kind of legitimization of “[...] exclusion as a form of integration” (Gohn, 1997, p. 297). For example, for the field of education, there is a social consensus that unemployment is related to the absence of formal education/qualification, so that it is necessary, therefore, to offer education so that people can get employment and change their life others. That is a process of self-accountability which considers the lack of responsibility of the State concerning the “[...] ‘social issue’”, which can only be understood in “[...] its articulation with *the self-responsibility of the needy and with the exemption of capital* in social intervention, in the context of the new neoliberal project” (Montaño, 2010, p. 234-235, emphasis in the original).

The process of forming a social consensus around individual responsibilities is supported by the principles that organized the social assistance programs in the country. In 1995, the BIRD highlighted that the “[...] lack of education generates poverty”, in the sense that: “[...] as work is the main ‘asset’ of the poor, the improvement in education [...] would be the key mechanism to reduce inequality” (Correio, 1993 p. 2).

This political and social reading around poverty promoted disputes for different formats of social assistance programs (De Sordi, 2019), which were, to some extent, materialized in the creation of the Bolsa Escola Federal Program in 2001. This program was created from the local experiences of Bolsa Escola, especially the one implemented in the Federal District during the governorship of Cristovam Buarque. Other experiences of this type occurred in different locations, but this, in particular, was the case study that informed the practices adopted by the World Bank when opening its credit line for this type of program to Brazil (World Bank, 2002).

In the book *A Revolução nas prioridades – da modernidade técnica à modernidade ética* (A Revolution in Priorities – from Technical Modernity to Ethical Modernity), the fourth volume of a series of project

studies for the development of Brazil, Cristovam Buarque (1994, p. 19) argued that:

The search for a way out [from the social crisis] will not only come about through a better distribution of income, between wages and profits, leaving the market to solve the problems. It will require a national effort to solve global public problems through a revolution in priorities.

After presenting a diagnosis of what he considered the *ten errors* in Brazil's social formation, Buarque (1994, p. 131) proposed ten measures that would be *priorities* for social change, including:

[...] guarantee of official scholarships that keep even the poorest children in Brazil in school. The government would have to guarantee a minimum income for a low-income family that had children in school. The minimum income must not be per child, but per group of children, not for the whole year, but at least during the school term.

In 2012, a year in which there were already significant changes in the situation that had motivated the writing of the book as mentioned earlier – in which the initial thanks were addressed, among others, to Herbert de Souza, Betinho –³ in the book *Bolsa-Escola, história, teoria e utopia* (Bolsa-Escola, História, theory, and utopia), Buarque (2012) thanks, among others, Fernando Henrique Cardoso for the nationalization of Bolsa Escola, which took place in 2001. This gesture is significant about profound changes in the conceptions about the organization of the model of implementation of social policies through Brazilian social programs between the 1990s and 2000s.

In this sense, it is worth noting that, in 1991, Eduardo Matarazzo Suplicy presented a bill that proposed creating of the Minimum Income Guarantee Program (PGRM)⁴. Approved unanimously in the Senate, Fernando Henrique Cardoso considered it “[...] a realistic utopia” (Suplicy, 2002, p. 124). The deputies did not vote on the bill, but it triggered an important debate that focused on the moral perception of the need for access to formal education as a condition for receiving benefits. It was a movement in opposition to Suplicy's original proposal, which did not foresee the fulfillment of what we know today as conditionalities⁵.

The argument in favor of focusing on the family and on access to education, which would eventually reinforce the Bolsa Escola model in the eyes of public opinion, was developed by economist José Márcio Camargo in the *Opinion Economic* column, published in the Folha de S. Paulo newspaper, at the end of 1991. With praise for the PGRM, Camargo suggested to Suplicy that the labor force of poor children would have more value than that of wealthy children due to the characteristics of the Brazilian labor market, which forced the low-income standard for families of workers. For Camargo, poverty in the country was linked by its own ability to reproduce itself, the inefficiency of the educational system, the concentration of land, the fiscal structure, and the labor legislation, which, in his assessment, would promote short, poorly paid

employment contracts, and would not bind the worker to the companies. Praising the Program's failure to promote a bureaucracy for distributing goods and the possibility of breaking the cycle of early entry into jobs, together with the reduction in school dropouts – given the diagnosis made –, Camargo sent two suggestions for the Program.

The first was that the Program should focus on children, not the elderly, as Suplicy had suggested. The second was that because, in his view, the Program encourages informality, it should be restricted to workers with a formal contract or create another program that would complement the income of all workers, with the condition that their children were in public school. At this point, Camargo was emphatic, warning that the supplement should be for all family children and not for each child in the family.

This debate was guided by the characteristic that has remained in all conditional cash transfer programs since then. The focus on the families of impoverished workers and access to education was established as the best approach and found an echo in the suggestions and experiences of international organizations.

With praise and criticism, and in the midst of all the social mobilizations that shook the political and social scenarios of the 1990s, and in line with the pressure of campaigns to fight hunger (Bava, 1998), the debate around the proposal took off with the application of its idea as an expansion of existing protection networks by local governments, encouraging the expansion of local Bolsa Escola programs. The proposal was in the field of political possibilities when, according to Rocha (2013, p. 23), only 88% of children of compulsory school age attended schools in urban areas and 78% in rural areas.

For Buarque, the Renda Mínima and Bolsa Escola programs were linked at their birth; however, they had been developed based on a completely different logic. During the International Conference on Minimum Income: Discussions and Experiences, held in Brasília in 1998, Buarque exemplified the difference between Minimum Income and Bolsa Escola. For him, Minimum Income “[...] starts from the problem that poverty is a lack of income and by guaranteeing a minimum income, people will gradually leave poverty”, and Bolsa Escola preserves “[...] the logic that people are poor because they do not have education and they do not have an education because they do not have income and the children have to work”.

The logic of the program, described by Buarque as something simple, is that children will be paid to study in a way that complements not the family's income but their children's education. For this logic to work, Bolsa Escola was implemented in Brasília with the condition that “[...] all school-age children are enrolled, and none of them miss more than two classes in a month. If only two of three children go to school, the family do not enter the Bolsa-Escola”. For Buarque, this condition would be the differential point between Bolsa Escola and the programs considered by him as welfare. In this way, with this rule, Buarque stated

that the government was “[...] using the logic of the market” (Senado Federal, 1998).

It is noteworthy that the conditionality of education has transformed. If access to school was really a problem in the argument that gave rise to it, when the Bolsa Escola Federal was implemented in 2001, it was no longer an urgent issue. As recorded by Rocha (2013, p. 62), 96% of children in the target age group attended school. This, it is emphasized, despite the quality with which this data was achieved.

In 2001, the objective of Bolsa Escola Federal was declared by the then minister of education, Paulo Renato Souza, as a *financial incentive* project for the family to place and maintain “[...] the child in school. We want everyone to complete elementary school”. According to the minister, “[...] education will make the ‘social revolution’ in the country” (Correio, 2001, p. A-2).

According to Valente (2003, p. 172), one of the coordinators of the Bolsa Escola Federal, the program “[...] reiterated the universalization of fundamental education, defined in the administration of minister Paulo Renato de Souza”. Under the management of the Ministry of Education, this program was based on specific aspects of the condition of poverty by associating access to education with the improvement of living conditions. In this sense, poverty as a political category and access to formal education were articulated as an institutional response delivered by social programs.

When created, the Bolsa Escola Federal was based on an “[...] educational concept that affirms the importance of work for human development”, in order to “[...] consider that it is guaranteed in the context of education school, that everyone has access to knowledge” which, according to Valente (2003, p. 172) “[...] does not imply a mere reaction to the belief in work as salvation for the poor/offender”, as this would represent, from the perspective of the program coordinators, “[...] the denial of the value given to work by disadvantaged sociocultural segments. I would also deny that the *locus* of the educational process takes place in all dimensions of life”.

In other words, the implementation of the Bolsa Escola Federal Program dealt with the management of the life of a portion of the population identified as poor in a way that was disconnected from constitutional principles and isolated from the *Lei Orgânica de Assistência Social* (LOAS) (Justo, 2007; Draibe, 2003), which allowed poverty to remain an open field of dispute and political management. The expressiveness of this program can be noted by the scale of municipal participation when, in 2002: “[...] 5,545 Brazilian municipalities (99% of them), with almost nine million children registered” (Valente, 2003, p. 167).

The administration of the minister Paulo Renato de Souza was in line with the State Reform project carried out by MARE⁶, with tensions surrounding the formulation and approval of the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação* in 1996, one of the greatest expressions of the disputes

that were fought at the time that were decisive for the current configuration of formal education (Cestari, 1997).

With the change in the national political scenario and the launch of the Fome Zero program in 2003, the educational component was given up, universalizing income to the universe of families considered to be poor. This meant a break with the idea of conditionalities, contained in the Bolsa Escola Federal, and, it can be said, was one of the reasons why Fome Zero had a short existence as a central policy for the social area of the PT government (De Sordi, 2019, p. 116).

In replacement of Fome Zero, the PBF⁷ again introduced conditionality under the active surveillance of the social assistance network. The issue, according to Rocha (2013, p. 89, *our emphasis*), was that with the attempt to universalize the distribution of benefits in Fome Zero, the government had:

[...] lost a precious alibi: that paying the benefit in cash was the means of making low-income families send their children to school and respect the primary health care schedule. This alibi had always been used to wield opposition from a broad continent of Brazilian society that was opposed – and still opposes – targeted cash transfers. According to opponents of the transfers, the money transferred to low-income families would be wasted on improper spending, encouraging laziness and discouraging work.

In a dialogue with Rocha, it is emphasized that the process of intertwining conditionalities with social programs allowed for the meaning of structural processes as individualized social issues linked to the sign of *poverty*. This was a movement that allowed the social legitimation of conditional income distribution programs linked to formal education, in a process that enabled conditional access to the Social Law of education.

The social role of education, aimed at the legitimization functionality of social programs, presupposes practices and values that the subjects must incorporate so that it is possible to consider that “The student, in turn, is directed to certain behavioral standards through institutions such as schools, universities, and work, in order to adapt to the demands of a new underlying order” (Vicente; Gonçalves Neto, 2018, p. 434).

The Conditionality of Education in Combating Poverty

The apparent naturalization of the effectiveness of education in combating poverty is intrinsically related to the concepts mobilized to identify the public to be served. The category of poverty and its definitions implies identifying poor subjects and is also a way of abstracting from living conditions that are entirely relational. The assessment of the material conditions of the families was a practice that continued in

local and national programs, which continued with the instrumentalization of social services in social assistance surveillance as an instrument “[...] of control and intervention in the daily life of the population” (Montaño, 2010, p. 231).

There is here a critical component related to the forms of perception about the customs and consumption habits that characterize a ‘poor person’ living conditions. Despite their technical and ‘efficient’ appeal, the forms of evaluation of social programs are, in general, defined more by impressions linked to consumption than by actual technical criteria. A briefcase about Bolsa Escola, reported by Buarque, can illustrate these forms of perception:

Every year I made an assessment of the families and eliminated those that improved their lives. We realize that the criterion of considering life improvement is not enough to guarantee the child in school. There are cases even anecdotal, if not be dramatic and tragic, like a family that lost the Bolsa Escola because the tax found that she had a phone in the house. Then it was discovered that the phone was an ornament that her mistress had given to the child’s mother and that she put on the table. We solved this by postponing the evaluation at least every two years because I was worried about the children who lost the Bolsa-Escola. (Senado Federal, 2004)

With the creation of the Bolsa Escola Federal and the incorporation of education as one among other conditionalities in the PBF, this type of social assistance surveillance was, to a certain extent, transferred to the institutionalized network by SUAS and CRAS⁸, and the subjects assisted began to deal with the play of these perceptions in these spaces from what Marins (2014, p. 557) calls the *moral and individual strategies repertoires*, that build

[...] social role of ‘candidate’, developing discourses, behaviors and languages specific to an interview situation. This interview is not just any interview; It aims to analyze the client’s profile (suffering, number of children, etc.), to judge whether the person will be legitimized as ‘poor’ deserving of a grant.

The conditionalities are interpreted by the subjects as the rules to be complied with in order to access the benefit. These moral repertoires and individual strategies directly influence the objectives, results, and narratives around the conditionality of education. They are expressed in the organization of the expectations placed on the subjects served and can be evidenced from their formal organization in *the Family Agenda*, distributed to the beneficiaries of the PBF, by the Ministry of Social Development (MDS), from 2010⁹.

Among the topics covered in the Agenda, it is worth noting the topic: *What are the opportunities to improve your family’s living conditions?*, which features a character holding a blue card – which refers to

the Brazilian work card – and a notebook – in clear allusion to education. In the context of using the image, even though the program offers a conditional transfer of money as an immediate benefit, there is a direct association between improving the living conditions of families with employment and formal education.

In the topic of the agenda on *opportunities to improve the conditions of life*, and informed that “[...] Bolsa Familia seeks to promote other actions in order to improve the quality of life of families beneficiaries”:

Many entities in your community and your municipality and state governments offer actions to increase education, professional qualification, job and income generation, and improve housing conditions. Find out about programs and actions developed in your city and participate whenever you can (Brasil, 2010, p. 28).

In this topic, there is an understanding from which the PBF instructs the actions and paths that subjects must follow to achieve the status of qualified workers with *increased education and professional qualification* (Brasil, 2010, p. 28). These are the (counterparts) responsibilities that are implicitly placed as expected attitudes of beneficiaries. Two interrelated questions are posed. The first refers to the assumption that employees would be an instantaneous factor in improving life, disregarding low wages, temporary or precarious contracts, among many other possible working conditions. This also implies that formal education, carried out through school attendance, or qualification for other functions, carried out through courses offered, would add *human capital* that would translate into professional qualification and increase opportunities.

The second question refers to the fact that, according to quantitative research carried out from the CadÚnico¹⁰ analyses, most of the beneficiaries of the PBF are workers inserted in jobs with high turnover, low pay, and often, but not as a rule, informal (Barbosa; Corseuil, 2013).

Arroyo (2010, p. 1398) argues that social policies are regulated by the concept of reducing social inequalities, which, in turn, ignores the relationships established between the axes of policies and their social movement, building values around education and employment:

[...] ‘study and you will have a job,’ ‘get your elementary and high school diploma, and you will have a job’—access to work as a reducer of inequalities. Social insertion through education is mediated by insertion into work. When this mediation of work enters into crisis, inequalities deepen, and educational policies lose their meaning [...]. Such mechanical articulation in access and permanence policies, or competency-based curricula, mediating access to work, exposes these policies and their relationship with the reduction of inequalities to weakening to failure, whenever work enters into crisis”.

In line with what was pointed out by Arroyo, and underlying the attempt to link the PBF with opportunities, is the relationship with the understanding that they would be incorporated into the labor market as soon as everyone was qualified. Economist Paul Singer (2001, p. 119-120) emphasizes, for example, that this would not be enough to promote the absorption of workers: “[...] if all unemployed workers increased their level of qualification, the only result there would be more intense competition between them, with a likely drop in salaries paid”¹¹.

According to Teles and Stein (2016 p. 197), this is a view that legitimizes

The education as redemption - and as a conditionality - follows the logic of the design of the Organization of Nations United for the Education, the Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which is seen as a way to achieve human development with less poverty, exclusion from rights, discrimination, oppression. Based on the full development of the human being, the concept of education does not go beyond the attempt at social cohesion, adaptation to the system marked by competitiveness in the world of work, and learning about school content.

The approximation between the fight against poverty and the social role of schools redraws the contours that work mean for the portion of the population considered poor, transferring an essential part of the responsibility for issues that are social, that is, collective and in the sphere of production, in the space of reproduction relations.

With the PBF, education was crystallized as an instrument to fight poverty in the long term, consolidating the assumption of its role as an equalizer of social inequalities. These changes delegitimized the conception that the role of education “[...] is about providing the subjective conditions of the transformation process which, however, can only be effective in conjunction with objective conditions” (Bassani, 2009, p. 111).

As signifiers of dismantling the possibilities of universalizing social policies and the right to education as emancipation, immediate relief conditions were socially accepted and legitimized as an instrument for promoting social development.

The historical context that promoted the cash transfer policies as the best of possibilities composed, in a macro scenario, the distinction of the neoliberal program that, in Brazil “[...] marks a unique period in modern Brazilian history”, because it is “[...] the anti-social reform, anti-regulation, anti-labour and social rights policy in general that marks neoliberalism” (Oliveira, 2018, p. 66), and through this process, the need for universalization of formal education was combined with deepening of neoliberal policies.

The linking of access to formal education as a conditionality of social programs expands and alters the social role of education and the performance repertoire of schools (Kawauchi, 2019). To a certain extent,

there is a shift from creative and liberating pedagogical practices inherent in the citizenship education process to the functions of inspection and management of parts of the impoverished population who start to access formal education through conditionalities.

It should be noted that the image and narrative of social programs make up a field of open conflicts, in which there is an attempt to persist views on specific roles of economic and social development that should be assigned to the subjects served by social programs. Buarque's (2012, p. 42-43, emphasis added) interpretation of the PBF, despite the political dispute, fought in favor of Bolsa Escola¹², allows us to understand the type of interpretation that is sought to impart to the subjects served:

The change in Brazil from the name 'Bolsa-Escola' to 'Bolsa Família' therefore brought a setback in the level of awareness of mothers, who previously thought 'I receive this scholarship because my children go to school and through school they will get out of poverty' and now they think 'I receive this income because my family is poor and if we get out of poverty we will lose the scholarship.' [...]. The fact of starting to pay per child and not per mother was also a setback.

The forms of organization of the significant dimensions of reproduction (Bhattacharya, 2019) of processes of exploitation and expropriation were colored by assistance programs that introduced conditionalities for the management of social life, separating, by uniting these two spheres. As Mauriel (2008, p. 332) points out:

By delinking poverty from its structural determinants, the diagnosis of poverty delinks poor individuals from their places in the productive system. The essence, then, becomes an individual attribute guided by ethical and moral criteria.

For Petitat (1994, p. 7), "[...] the school contributes to social production". According to the author, it is not about addressing "[...] uniquely and [or] fatally [the] social reproduction"; in this sense, it is necessary to "[...] try to unite the production of the school and the production of the society of tomorrow". Suppose it is considered that the school has the function of producing a certain feeling of social cohesion (Petitat, 1994). In that case, *formal education plays changing roles* that highlight the disputes around its role within the educational context and the possibilities of democratic expansion. As Vicente and Gonçalves Neto (2018, p. 467-438) point out:

In the role of transmitting culture from one generation to another, education works to allow the symbolic heritage that gives meaning to ways of life to perpetuate itself over time, subject to adaptations arising from the circumstances of each era. Education also produces culture, as it reframes existing cultures. Precisely because it is a means and not an end in itself, it acquires a polysemic character,

changing according to the point of view of the agent who considers it.

The project of alleviating, rather than transforming structural conditions, can be located in the field of education as a conditionality of social programs. As political practices, therefore, their analysis must consider:

[...] not only the dynamics of the movement of capital, its intricacies, and joints but also the antagonistic and complex social processes with which it 's faced [...] the political education, even in the face often humanitarian and benefactor always express the contradictions mentioned above (Shiroma , 2004, p. 9).

The Role of Education in Social Programs

According to Hillesheim and Garcia (2019, p. 480), the relationship between education and work is a “[...] binomial that is always present in propositions that envision education policy as an essential mediation for fighting poverty and inequality in Brazil”. Based on the analysis of national education plans and other normative documents, the authors consider that “[...] the right to public education is always conditioned to the interests of the labor market, characterized by increasingly flexible and precarious relationships”. For Teles and Stein (2016 p. 206), “[...] the moral debate, triggered by the neoliberal discourse, placed on individuals the exclusive responsibility for the results of their lives”.

Arroyo (2010, p. 1398) argues that social policies are regulated by the concept of reducing social inequalities in such a way that they guide a certain “[...] conservative repoliticization of society”, which in turn ignores the relations between the axes of policies and their social movement, building values around education and employment, so that “[...] social insertion through education mediates insertion into work”, generating an emptying effect on the policy, through which “[...] educational policies lose meaning”.

As a conditionality, the goals set for education are aligned with correcting a social *vulnerability*¹³, which is dealt with at the level of the individual, and which must be met by compensatory actions by the State (De Sordi, 2019).

As Cidamamore (2007, p. 21-22) points out, the State that is responsible for “[...] conditions that lead to both the production of poverty and its elimination”, by not explaining the reasons that lead to a significant portion of the population to poverty, allows its various segments “[...] to blame the poor for their poverty”. This process of blaming, recurrently, is expressed in the argument that it is necessary to instill values in the subjects served *through education* (Gentili, 2011, p. 228).

Considering that education is a “[...] conditioned phenomenon, determined by the structure of society and submitted to the political control of the dominant forces” (Bassani, 2009, p. 110), the link between

access to education and income occurs by the bias of conceptions about education that are subordinated to economic development, conditioned to the argument of social mobility through the acquisition of greater qualifications by workers.

In this way, education becomes instrumentalized “[...] in the form of workforce training without any burden to the capital” (Montaño, 2010, p. 231). In the same sense, argue Hillesheim and Garcia (2019, p. 480), when they point out that:

[...] the right to public education is always conditioned to the interests of the labor market, characterized by increasingly flexible and precarious relationships. [...] the direction of public education policy [...] responds to objective and subjective needs of the reproduction of the workforce following the requirements of the development of the mode of production governed by capital.

In the Brazilian context, the development of social assistance programs and the successive reforms to which they were submitted took place in a scenario in which it was necessary to alleviate criticisms of the economic adjustment program. To this end, the World Bank opened a line of “[...] financing of compensatory social programs aimed at the poorest strata of the population, aimed at alleviating the social tensions generated by the adjustment” (Soares, 1996, p. 27).

Thus, Brazilian social programs, amalgamated in the PBF, expressed the ingenious economic trend that promoted the encounter between economic development and individualism, directing the focus of social policies towards the development of human capital. Such focus, which has become characteristic of social programs, occurred, as recorded by Mauriel (2008, p. 28), when:

[...] the meaning of social policies was redirected towards poverty alleviation, in an attempt to respond to the processes of generalized precariousness of life of the majority of the world population that depends on the sale of its workforce, without, however, change the contemporary dynamics of wealth accumulation.

The alleviation of poverty gradually became admissible in the actions of multilateral organizations from the 1960s onwards, as it was configured not by the existence of poverty itself, but “[...] as an instrument of economic growth”, this precept undermined the “[...] economic paradigm that prioritized economic growth and directed increasing attention to direct poverty reduction” (Mauriel, 2008, p. 139-140). So, social programs were tensioned between compensatory/targeted and universalization systems through the macroeconomic reforms that took place throughout the 1990s.

The format chosen for the social programs boosted the contradictory conditions placed on formal education as a space for emancipation and, at the same time, for training for employment and/or meeting basic needs. The PBF’s educational conditionality marker – which

is the requirement of school attendance – indicates the displacement of possibilities for social development and control (Behring; Boschetti, 2006) from conceptions of instruments for structural transformation, for the application of the instruments of inspection that prioritizes “[...] the theory of investment in human capital” which, in turn, “[...] gains importance as a means [...], stating that this is not a structural phenomenon, resulting from the of capitalist production, but as something conjectural of individual responsibility” (Teles; Stein, 2016 p. 198).

As it is configured as a conditionality, the role given to education and access to formal education was colored by the surveillance and technical rationality that generate the conditional cash transfer programs that aim to “[...] model social behavior and social relations” (Mauriel, 2008, p. 23). In fact, only the registration of school attendance for the formation of information bases (Sen, 2010) of the PBF has been indicated by researchers as inefficient to measure factors such as quality of access to education and the integration between agents who participate in the educational process (Teles; Stein, 2016 Silva, 2014).

Kawauchi (2019) observes that one of the effects of attendance registration is the way in which the social program is perceived in schools generates the lack of perception of educators in relation to the complete functioning of the program, reinforcing stereotypes that make up the social construct based on perceptions about the figure of the *poor* and poverty (Telles, 2013; Marins, 2014; De Sordi, 2019).

Both the Bolsa Escola (1995) and the Bolsa Escola Federal (2001), and the PBF (2003) presented education as a natural way of social mobility based on individual attitudes. However, it is noted that the educational conditionality fulfilled, in the period of development and execution of these programs, the requirements for them to become socially acceptable, insofar as it overshadowed present antagonisms around issues such as maintenance of low salaries, maintenance of privileges as well as the maintenance of social places for the share of impoverished workers.

Silva, Yazbek, and Giovani (2014, p. 220) register as an evaluation of the educational system that, seen from the perspective of conditional minimum income transfer programs, in addition to considering that the breaking of the intergenerational cycle of poverty must be centered on better conditions of access to education, it is necessary “[...] to consider that the structural cause of poverty in Brazil is the inequality in the distribution of income and socially produced wealth, more than the incapacity to generate income”.

According to Petitat (1994), the interest in economic growth in close relation to the planning of educational funds is not new. However, it takes shape from the 1960s onwards, based on economic-social theories, this debate carried out by economists at the Faculty of Economic Sciences at the University of Chicago, with the argument, summarized by Petitat (1994, p. 217), that:

[...] education is not consumption but an investment that brings dividends to individuals (more options, higher wages) and communities (economic growth factor). Insufficient investment in this sector can hinder growth.

Petit (1994, p. 217) observes that “[...] the salaried worker does not have in his knowledge a capital that can bear fruit by himself and for himself”, therefore, the theory of human capital development, broadly used in compensatory programs involving education, it disregards that “[...] professional knowledge only becomes a capital through the employer, for whom the employee is a factor of production among others”. In this sense,

[...] the language used by the holders of ‘human capital’ gives the illusion that the wage earner is a self-investing capitalist. However, their position is instead that of a consumer who can make a specific economic calculation: in their decision to continue or abandon their studies, the student can intervene, among other elements, an estimate of salary advantages for one or several years of studies extras. The student does not invest: he acquires goods (technologies and knowledge) that he expects to resell later to those who need them as capital (Petit, 1994, p. 217).

These social readings and their counterpoints, firmly based on neoliberal postulates (Mauriel, 2008), were applied in the Brazilian context through social programs. The effect was to lower the possibilities of expanding citizenship, which is now promoted as the individual quality of action, in the process of apparent emptying of the political territory of social conflicts that shape Social Policies (Gohn, 2014; Telles, 2013; Behring, Boschetti, 2006).

The conditionality of education fulfills the role of remodeling the repertoire that informs the possibilities of social development that different educational experiences could boost. It also plays a vital role in focusing the distribution of money to impoverished individuals. According to Teles and Stein (2016, p. 196), targeting is a strategy: “[...] it aims to reduce social spending [...] in line with the structural adjustment of international organizations, which contributes to the interruption the struggle for the universalization of social rights and the disruption of universal policies in Brazil”.

According to Lima, Aranda, and Lima (2012, p. 55), the “[...] naturalization of the external measures of multilateral organizations has been used as a recipe for the local needs of the Brazilian State, since education and social welfare policies are placed on the same level of equivalence”, with the explicit meaning of *corrective measures* for which there is no responsibility of the State or the market.

This debate points to “[...] consequences that cannot be neglected about school policies” (Petit, 1994, p. 217). Theories that seemed in the late 1970s were resumed in directing the development of educational policies in the Brazilian 1990s context. In this sense, it follows the naturalized association between education and fighting poverty as a solu-

tion for developing economic and social development in the context of Brazilian conditional cash transfer programs.

Final considerations

In the scenario of social programs of conditional income transfer, work and education are transmuted from their possibilities of human emancipation - and a significant value of dignity for the subjects - to the control of social possibilities in favor of objectives located in the dimension of economic development.

Qualitative researches have pointed out that unemployment is one of the most significant factors of instability for the beneficiaries of the PBF as recorded by Serapião (2018, p. 99) from interviews: “[...] all families had at least one member looking for actively work”, one of the frequent criticisms of the public served is that the program “[...] does not help to access work”. One of the people interviewed even stated: “[...] it should be more work, instead of giving 100 reais; because work gives self-esteem and knowledge” (Serapião, 2018, p. 125). A letter sent to President Lula and transcribed by Cohn (Cohn, 2012, p. 61) recorded:

Mr. President, help it is over; what I need is a job that guarantees my life without reaching out and asking for alms. Help me; I speak with the feeling of my soul. Please give me a job to wash floors, but that I work with dignity.

A PBF beneficiary, interviewed by Pinzani and Rego (2014, p. 141), stated: “Look, what we want, change, is a better life, I really wanted to earn my hard-earned salary, if I had to work, every mother wants that for her children, her family, her home”. Finally, it is noted that education as a condition of Brazilian social programs, in practice, tends to morally organize the life management of impoverished parts of the population. When abstracted from the material conditions experienced, it disregards the complexity of structural factors that mediate the assisted families’ relationships and how they access the totality of Social Rights.

In terms of managing the programs themselves, the conditionality of education shapes the forms of control and evaluation of the objectives to be met within the scope of economic adjustment policies that organize the parameters and limits for social development. Education and formal education take on instruments for measuring management efficiency and projecting expectations for given social mobility. The low material conditions that are interconnected to capitalist productive relations are overshadowed by concepts that align poverty, education, and work.

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Notes

- 1 This article presents the results of the research *Work and Formal Education: The role of education in the dimension of conditional income distribution programs*, developed within the scope of the PPGE/UNIUBE in a post-doctoral stage, under the supervision of Professor Wenceslau Gonçalves Neto.
- 2 It considers the period between 1990 and 2014, as during these years, the Social Rights provided for in the Federal Constitution of 1988 are implemented through the development of a network of Social Policies. In the 2000s, social programs became robust as an exemplary way of implementing and accessing Social Policies and consolidated as they were expanded, at least until 2014. From this year on, the national political scenario begins to change, including the management, implementation, and social control bases of social programs.
- 3 Betinho stood out throughout the 1990s as the articulator of the *Campanha da Ação da Cidadania contra a Fome, a Miséria e pela Vida* [Citizenship Action Campaign against Hunger, Misery and for Life] from which emerged one of the first actions of the State, in the period after the country's re-democratization, centered the idea of fighting the hunger and the poverty. The Campaign brought together different proposals for the country and promoted the creation of the *Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional* (CONSEA) [National Council for Food and Nutritional Security] by Itamar Franco in 1993. With a short existence in its original molds, CONSEA was deactivated in 1995 by Cardoso, and replaced by the *Programa Comunidade Solidária* (PCS) [Solidarity Community Program], which had as one of its most outstanding characteristics volunteer work directed to educational actions in regions considered poor.
- 4 The project was the result of the accumulation of debates within the Workers' Party (PT), since the 1980s (Suplicy, 2002, p. 122). It should be noted that the proposal of a minimum income was already being pioneered in Brazil in the 1970s by the economist Antônio Maria da Silveira, who helped Suplicy to politically articulate the project in 1990.
- 5 According to Suplicy (2002, p. 93-94), without the conditionalities there would not be "[...] any stigma, feeling of shame or humiliation in receiving a benefit that is granted to everyone as a matter of citizenship", would be constituted in this way, "[...] to the worker a bargaining power and a freedom of choice".
- 6 The State Reform under Fernando Henrique Cardoso was carried out in accordance with the Washington Consensus and guided by Bresser Pereira at the Ministry of Federal Administration and State Reform (MARE). According to Montañó (2010, p. 45), Bresser Pereira, governed by managerial criteria, preferred the *citizen-client* of services to the *citizen-user* of rights, as the criterion of the former would be the best service to the *citizen-client* at a *cost smaller*.
- 7 The PBF was created in 2003 by MP nº 132, converted into Law nº 10,836, of January 9, 2004 and regulated by Decree nº 5,209 of September 17, 2004.
- 8 The creation of the Single Social Assistance System – SUAS, institutionalized in 2005, is related to the structuring of the Social Assistance policy based on the Organic Law of Social Assistance – LOAS, with the construction of a decentralized assistance system which is characterized by a non-contributory, decentralized and participatory public system with the integration of actions between federal, state and municipal governments and private entities. It proposes a focus on social protection, based on the configuration of a Basic

Social Protection assistance system (through the Social Assistance Reference Centers – CRAS) – it is at this level that the monitoring of beneficiary families of transfer programs is located. income, Special Social Protection of Medium Complexity (CREAS) and Special Social Protection of High Complexity.

- 9 The Agenda deals with matters related to the commitments that the beneficiaries assume through the conditionalities and informs about the functioning of the program and the obligation of the municipalities to offer basic services.
- 10 Cadastro Único para Programas Sociais do Governo Federal - CadÚnico (Single Registry for Federal Government Social Programs), 2001.
- 11 In the meantime, it should be noted that between 2011 and 2014 (government of Dilma V. Rousseff, PT) Brazil had unemployment rates close to 4.5%, considered as a scenario of full employment. However, the number of families served by the PBF in this period was, on average, 13.8 million. (De Sordi, 2019, p.165).
- 12 Dispute that can be noted in the Bill 286/2009 of Buarque, which proposes to change the name of the PBF to Bolsa Escola Program. The justification follows the argument cited in the excerpt.
- 13 *Vulnerability* is a term that begins to be widely used in the 1990s, as Mariel Deak Serapião (2018, p. 36) notes: “This approach came into play in the 1990s based on studies on risk, disasters and natural threats, later being used in studies on poverty and deprivation. It entered the agenda of several international institutions – such as the Department for International Development (DFID), the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Oxfam and UNDP, among others – which were responsible for disseminating this agenda through the production of studies, on vulnerability and a series of manuals (guidance sheets) that aimed to propagate the use of this theoretical framework”.

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