

Path Dependence in public policies: a case study of anti-poverty policies in Mexico, Brazil and Peru

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Resumen

Especialmente después de 1990, se ha constatado una cierta homogeneidad en las políticas de combate a la pobreza en América Latina. Los estudios han mostrado que estas políticas han tenido Buenos resultados. Este escrito estudia la evolución detallada de estos programas de mitigación de la pobreza en México, Brasil y Perú. Estos países representan el esquema de todos los programas de la región. Se estudia especialmente la metodología utilizada en los tres países a través de los condicionantes que se imponen a los beneficiarios para la transferencia de recursos, con el concepto que llamamos “path dependence” como un proceso de aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: path dependence, aprendizaje, homogeneidad, Transferencia de recursos condicionada, Estrategias anti-pobreza, Oportunidades, Bolsa Família, Juntos, Vivir Mejor, Brasil sem Miséria e Crecer.

Resumo

Especialmente após 1990, uma certa homogeneidade vem sendo observada no desenho das políticas de alívio à pobreza na América Latina. Estudos a respeito da formulação das políticas sociais vêm obtendo boas experiências nos países latino americanos, particularmente no que se refere às ações anti-pobreza. Este artigo estudou detalhes evolutivos presentes no desenho dos programas para mitigar a pobreza implementados por México, Brasil e Peru. Estes países foram escolhidos como casos representativos do que vem acontecendo na política de alívio a pobreza na região. A metodologia usou o conceito de path dependence para analisar las medidas anti-pobreza desenhadas por estes países. Este artigo concentrou seu estudo nos Programas de Transferência de Renda com Condicionalidades e nas estratégias anti-pobreza implementados nestes três países. A pesquisa mostrou evidências de aprendizagem e de um processo de path dependence dentre as ações para aliviar a pobreza formuladas por México, Brasil e Peru.

Palavras-chave: path dependence, aprendizagem, homogeneidade, Programas de Transferência de Renda com Condicionalidades, Estratégias de Alívio à pobreza, Oportunidades, Bolsa Família, Juntos, Vivir Mejor, Brasil sem Miséria e Crecer.

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Abstract

Especially after 1990, a kind of homogeneity has been seen in the design of poverty alleviation policies in Latin America. The studies about the formulation of social policies have been given good experiences by Latin America countries, particularly regarding anti-poverty policies. This paper studied the evolution details about the design of mitigation poverty programs implemented in Mexico, Brazil and Peru. These countries were chosen as representative cases concerned with poverty alleviation schemes in the region. The methodology used the path dependence concept to analyze anti-poverty schemes designed by these countries. This paper focused on Conditional Cash Transfer and anti-poverty strategies implemented in these three countries. The research showed evidence of a learning process during the path dependence procedure in the formulation of anti-poverty schemes in Mexico, Brazil and Peru.

Key-words: path dependence, learning, homogeneity, Conditional Cash Transfer, Anti-Poverty strategies, Oportunidades, Bolsa Família, Juntos, Vivir Mejor, Brasil sem Miséria e Crecer.

Path Dependence in public policies: a case study of anti-poverty policies in Mexico, Brazil and Peru

Introduction

The homogeneity in the design of anti-poverty schemes in Latin America, have been notorious since mid of 1990's. We find the likeness among anti-poverty actions when we observed that the programs for implementation, in several region countries, are very much alike. In truth, the study of measures implemented to reduce the poverty levels in region demonstrates the prevalence of incremental or minimal actions. This was one of the themes discussed by this paper, which analyzes: a) the designs of Conditional Cash Transfer (henceforth named by CCT), and, b) the formulation of alleviated poverty strategies who emerged in Mexico, Brazil and Peru.

Thus, this paper analyzes the evidences of *path dependence*¹ concept among the policies guided to alleviate poverty in Latin America. We understand that this concept could clarify the reasons of homogeneity verified among these actions. In this sense, we focused the study on Latin America; on this account, these have been one region rich in anti-poverty experiences. Due to these wealth of

practices, the region offered evidences to we investigated the learning processes and path dependence present on design of these policies.

In the one hand, Latin America was one region crowded of social, economic, politics, geographic and cultural inequalities, which demanded heterogeneity practices for that poor people could reach a minimum life standard. On the other hand, we identified substantial improvement in anti-poverty actions formulation, particularly after mid of 1990's, when the diffusion of these practices used to be a uncontested fact.

The study case of Mexico, Brazil and Peru is represented of we can observed to mitigated poverty in Latin America. We justify the select of these three countries by the historical evolution of these social policies, particularly that focused on poor people. Mexico and Brazil are examples very successful of countries that implemented anti-poverty measures. For these reason, the Peruvian government decided to learn with Mexico and Brazil, improving the design of Mexican and Brazilian programs. The Peruvian government using as model Mexican and Brazilian programs suggests the presence of learning and path dependence in the design of anti-poverty programs.

Therefore, the guided questions developed by this paper were: a) Why has the design of CCT in Latin America been homogeneous? Are they limited by the formulation of anti-poverty policies, which have been influenced by the dissemination of policies for the World?, and, b) Why have the general design of actions been to mitigate poverty in region have been extremely similar? The hypothesis, which we establish in this paper, understands that the path dependence process in social policies induce learning process (provided by positive *feedbacks*), which contribute to dissemination of policies and to prevalence of homogeneity among programs guided to mitigate the poverty.

We are looking for answers to the questions raised previously, this paper was divided into three steps, beyond the introduction and final considerations. In the first one, we presented the theoretical bases that evaluated the learning on formulation of programs to mitigate poverty and we discussed the causes which explain the similitude found into these programs. In the second, we outlined the consequences of *path dependence* process on CCT designs. Finally, we showed the anti-poverty schemes implemented in these three countries. The research was guided based on bibliographic review of papers and books about the theme and research in official web sites of Mexico, Brazil and Peru (and multilateral agencies) which implemented anti-poverty measures.

1 Pierson, P. Politics in Time: History, Institutions and Social Analysis. 2004, Princeton University Press.(Introduction: Placing politics in time, pp. 4-17).

1. Some reflections about policies over time

Since the 1950's, scholars of public administration pointed that the public policies shows incremented modifications over time. Lindblom (1959, p.84) affirmed that "in Western democracies the policies are chosen to differ only incrementally". Thus, have been rare to observe formulations and implementations of policies that are radically different from the previous ones.

The theory that studies the *path dependence* process in the social policies have been recurrently adopted to analyze the evolution of a specific public policy over time. This theory is concerned with apprehension of the temporal dimension present in social policy planning and execution, because these theory analyzes the time as an assistant to comprehend the positive or negative feedbacks engendered by public interventions (Pierson, 2004). One of current definitions of path dependence concept "means that current and future states, actions, or decisions depend on the path of previous states, actions, or decisions" (Page, 2006).

There are different definitions for *path dependence*, Swell (1996, p.262-263) for instance, claimed "... that what happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring at a later point in time". The Swell (1996) definition suggests that programs designed in the past affect others that will succeed in the future. In this paper, we argued path dependence process as a situation when positive feedbacks prevail, and reinforce a learning route to formulate social policies. In Pierson's (2000) words, path dependence is justified by "positive feedback processes". Whereas Levi (1997, p.28), discussing the concept of path dependence, notes that:

"Path dependence has to mean, ..., that once a country or region has started down a track, the costs of reversal are very high. There will be other choice points, but the entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements obstruct an easy reversal of the initial choice. Perhaps the better metaphor is a tree, rather than a path".

Finally, Arthur (1994) and David (2000) *apud* Pierson (2000, p.20) highlighted that " *path dependence* refers to dynamic process involving positive feedback which generates multiple possible outcomes depending on the particular sequence in which events unfold". In this paper, we assumed path dependence as a process which engender positive feedbacks over time. We argued that have been prevailing positive feedbacks among the measures guided to alleviate poverty in Latin America. These results corroborate the learning process experienced, which justify the homogeneity or similitude among the anti-poverty actions.

Consequently, *path dependence* and learning are processes that tend to appear together. While, path dependence identifies the positive feedbacks of a determined action implemented, the learning process shows how these feedbacks were adapted on the design of new actions, that will be implemented in other realities. In this sense, we used the *path dependence* concept as a theoretical basis to identify the existence of a learning process (centered on positive feedbacks) on design and execution of anti-poverty practices in Mexico, Brazil and Peru. We adopted the path dependence concept because we understand that a public policy should be analyzed as a long series of incremented changes (Lindblom, 1959).

Regarding the reasons remembered to justify the similitude observed (several times) in the public policies, Smith (1973, p.199) affirmed that "budgets soared, massive new programs were formulated, and foreign assistance money, advisors, and packaged programs penetrated the policymaking systems". Ergo, budget constraints, election uncertainty and theorization offer by "experts" (disseminated by multilateral agencies) have been the most frequent justification for the homogeneity found among anti-poverty programs in Latin America.

Therefore, the study of policy-making in the Western countries showed the prevalence of a minimal consensus, in which most of the political parties are based. Confirming the assert below, Lindblom (1959, p.84) highlighted:

"Party behavior is in turn rooted in public attitudes and political theorists cannot conceive of democracy's surviving (in the United States) in the absence of fundamental agreement on potentially disruptive issues, with consequent limitation of policy debates to relatively small differences in policy"

Considering the previous assert, we understand that there is a fundamental basis of actions (politics, economics or social) that generally created a political consensus. This base of actions tends to spread around the World from the moment in which, implemented, it produces positive feedbacks. Choosing a political innovation (able to break with the previous policy-making) is, for the policy maker or public manager, a very a risky decision with uncertain consequences (Lindblom, 1959, p.84). In other words, a radically different policy from those that were planned and executed earlier brings uncertainty and risk with it. The risk and uncertainty contribute to the similarity in the choice of actions in social and economic areas. In this circumstance, public managers' behavior is limited to the perception that "incremental changes avoid serious lasting mistakes in several ways" (Lindblom, 1959, p. 85).

Thereby, we interpreted the CCTs programs as a kind of “consensus” among the measures to reduce poverty, practiced by various political parties which have been alternating in power in Latin America. At the same time, we considered that anti-poverty schemes have gradually been creating a political consensus in the region. The case study of three countries contributed to reinforce the perspective that political consensus have been established with regard to the formulation of actions to alleviate poverty.

Highlighting that, “countries may copy neighbors, whom they see at close range. Sikkink (1993) finds that issue networks shape public policy in Latin America.” (Dobbin et al, 2007). Hereupon, the extent to which a public policy is implemented (in one country) and generates positive results, there is a strong tendency for it to be imitated by other countries. On the next topic, we continued with this discussion when we investigated the CCT programs on the countries mentioned.

2. Path dependence, learning process and homogeneity: an analysis of CCTs in Mexico, Brazil and Peru

The measures to mitigate the poverty executed by Mexico, Brazil and Peru have a CCT programs as common and central point. The CCTs reached privileged among the measures guided to reduce the poverty tax in Latin America. In Mexico, there is a greater tradition in CCTs since there, such programs were adopted nationally since 1995² (Levy, 2006). In Brazil, the experience accumulated with CCTs since 1995, only in local or municipal places. Only after 2001, did the country adopt the CCT with a national coverage³. While, the Peruvian government created its first CCT in 2005 (Perova e Vakis, 2009), inspired by Mexican and Brazilian programs. Hence, Peruvian government appropriated all of the evaluations executed in Mexican and Brazilian CCT; consequently, Peruvian government tried to create a CCT with less failures.

The literature which discusses the evaluation of CCT in Latin America have an important reference in the works of Rawlings & Rubio (2003a e 2003b). The authors asserted that CCT evaluations in Latin America suggest the existence of three generations. The first one was

implemented by Mexico⁴, Brazil⁵, Honduras, Jamaica and Nicaragua. These programs had in essence: a) expansion of coverage, ie, expansion into poor areas; b) programs were adequate to administrative actions; c) evaluated the expected impacts; d) analysis of unintended effects; e) study of the perceptions of beneficiaries and partners on the program; and, f) the cost-effectiveness transmission mechanisms of program (Rawlings e Rubio, 2003a, p.7).

Whereas, the second generation of CCT were composed by Colombian, Jamaican and Mexican urban areas⁶ (Rawlings e Rubio, 2003a), the second generation was benefited with the experience engendered by the programs of first generation, which reduced the uncertainty after results and evaluations had demonstrated results. At the same time, the countries included in the second generation had a social, economic and politic context that pressure to implement this kind of program. Moreover, the planning of execution considered the expansion of CCT in short term (Rawlings e Rubio, 2003a, p.14).

A third generation of programs would have its focus on impact evaluations of medium term, centered on: a) sustainability issues of program over time; b) behavioral changes on beneficiaries over time and c) impacts on household welfare (Rawlings e Rubio, 2003a, p.16). Finally, the authors recommend that should exist one third generation of CCT, which had your effectiveness evaluated considering different measures to generate income and to empower economically beneficiaries. Regarding on Rawlings & Rubio (2003b, p.24) ideally would “the creation, or enforcement of programs oriented exclusively to generate income, ensuring, the appropriated coordination of these initiatives with Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) and with other strategies for reducing poverty”.

We argue that *Juntos* has characteristics which allow us to include in the third generation, focused on sustainability of program over time, behavioral changes, beneficiaries and it has impacts on household welfare, while *Oportunidades* is a second generation component, whose goal was the expansion to urban areas of Mexico. Bolsa Familia program, initially focused on the provision of quality public services and took the emphasis on job creation and income after 2011⁷ through Brasil sem

2 Levy affirmed that the pilot of Mexican CCT was planed in 1995 and was executed in part in 1996. After the evaluation of this pilot, the program was implemented in all the country.

3 The Brazilian municipalities programs could be considered pilots of Bolsa Escola, which was implemented in national coverage in 2001.

4 PROGRESA was considered as the first generation in Mexico.

5 In Brazil, PETI (Eradicated of Child Work Program) and Bolsa Escola (School Grant) programs are considered as first generation of CCT.

6 Oportunidades Program was integrated of second generation of CCT programs in Mexico.

7 In 2009, the complementaries programs were presented by the Brazilian government, these aims to hinge actions to incentive job opportunities and income to overcome poverty. In this sense, the concern with the with the productive insertion of the Bolsa Familia beneficiaries already appeared in 2009. Available in: <http://www.mds.gov.br/bolsafamilia/programascomplementares>, access on: 03/03/2010.

Miséria. We argue that the differences among the CCTs in Mexico, Brazil and Peru are incremental and show the presence of a learning process according to suggestion of Rawlings and Rubio (2003a e 2003b).

The Mexican program (named *Oportunidades*) aims overcoming intergeneration poverty, thereby, the benefits are directed to children and young people, whereas *Juntos*, offers wherewithal to the beneficiaries in order to reach economic insertion to reduce poverty in actual generation, on short and medium terms. In this case, the income transferred was circumstantial. At the same time, Brazilian CCT, known internationally for its Bolsa Família, have been used to encourage the demand for social protection by way of universal policies, yet, the program has no deadline for termination of the benefits (IPEA, 2010 and Bastagli, 2009). Highlighting, after 2011, the Brazilian government, by the *Brasil sem Miséria* strategy⁸, has been searching to insert the Bolsa Família beneficiaries on the labor market.

The CCT programs analyses - *Oportunidades*, Bolsa Família e *Juntos* – show us that the choice of one country, oriented by public policies, could be strongly affect by the choice did for other countries, particularly, if these countries are neighbors (Dobbin et al, 2007, p.450). Starting with this information, the authors (Dobbin et al, 2007) declared that social acceptance of one policy strategy follow three rules:

“Social acceptance of a policy approach can happen in three different ways: (a) leading countries serve as exemplars (follow-the-leader); (b) expert groups theorize the effects of a new policy, and thereby give policy makers rationales for adopting it; or (c) specialists make contingent arguments about a policy’s appropriateness, defining it as right under certain circumstances.” (Dobbin et al, 2007, p. 452)

In the 1990’s, Mexico⁹ was the leader; in other words, it was the first country to implement successfully a CCT program as a anti-poverty action. At that time, the ‘gurus’ of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (supported by the US, which had a direct interest in reducing poverty rates in Mexico) endorsed politically and socially the *Progresas*¹⁰ as a good practice to reduce the poverty numbers in Mexico.

8 The official speech of Brazilian government affirm that *Brasil sem Miséria* is a program. But, in this paper we argue it as a strategy, because, it aims to hinge different programs implemented by various Ministries, in order to enter the social and economic Bolsa Família beneficiaries.

9 *Progesa* – Programa de Educación, Salud y Alimentación –was the first program adopted in national level as measure to reduce poverty by CCT.

This was the first anti-poverty program that was evaluated and discussed internationally.

At the same time, Brazilian mayors started to implement measures, which mitigated poverty by CCT, such, these measures occurred on micro level, since they were executed by municipal government. We consider that, in this case, the Brazilian mayors were following the leader of the moment: Mexico. Lavinás e Varzano (1997) inform that, in 1995, in Brazil there are three cities¹¹ executing the CCT program. Moreover, between 1997 and 1998, the author pointed out the existence of 25 cities where CCT programs were implemented. In this case, national experts offered arguments (inspired by international movement) to socially and politically legitimize the CCT programs.

We advocate that after 2003, the Brazilian program, Bolsa Família, became the world leader among CCTs. After this year, multilateral organizations began to consider the PBF as an example to be followed. Because this program was gradually expanding its coverage, leading 3.6 million households in 2003 to 13.8 million households in 2013, when it reached the highest coverage among programs of its kind in the World. Beyond the coverage expansion, the multilateral organizations understand the relevance of its goals that were linked more directly to access to food and provisions of public services at the expense of socio-economic integration of beneficiaries (goal choice for *Oportunidades* and *Juntos*). After 2003, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through its headquarters in Brazil began to support the spread of CCTs based on the Brazilian experience.

It should be highlighted, that when *Oportunidades* planning reduce poverty statistics between generations, its design oriented the inclusion of future generations in the production and consumption markets. This fact is proven by means of program design, which transfers scholarships, which are accumulated and form a savings for children and young people participating in the program. Differently of *Oportunidades*, *Juntos* program had in its design, in order to overcome poverty in the current generation, as well as, the program determines the benefit to participation in skills training and entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, Bolsa Família¹², until 2011,

10 Until 2000, the Mexican CCT were named as *Progesa* – Programa de Educación, Salud y Alimentación – it was implemented on poor countryside of country. After 2000, the name of program was changed for *Oportunidades*.

11 The cities were Campinas, Ribeirão Preto e Brasília.

12 In 2009, the complementary programs to the Bolsa Família emerged. The purpose of these programs was to articulate actions to promote employment and income to the beneficiaries. However, we consider such programs were poorly developed or encouraged by the government of that time. Therefore, we chose to consider 2011, as the base year for actions to generate employment and income involving Bolsa Família, when *Brasil sem Miséria* was created.

did not contain any of the two ambitions in its design. Bolsa Família program aims to include the beneficiaries on public services of health, education and social assistance. However, after 2011, Brasil sem Miséria strategy was created which was discussed in the next section.

Finally, the Peruvian program was an example of a country who follows the leaders on design and implementing actions to poverty tax reduce, because, *Juntos* was a program totally inspired on Mexican and Brazilian programs. Emphasizing that: a) the Peruvian program, since its first release, put the elimination of poverty (the current generation) as the main theme, something not found in Mexico and Brazil programs; and, b) the actual Brazilian program went looking for the productive integration of beneficiaries via incentive to professional qualification. In other words, we made a modification in the design of programs, so that a change experienced influenced the other. This fact brought signs of learning and *path dependence* in the formulation of these programs.

The learning process present on mitigation of poverty programs ensured that the legitimacy of these was changed with the passage of time. The programs migrated from an emergency and contingency action - income transfer - to a more structural and stable measure - social and economic integration of the beneficiary families¹³. This process can be seen both in the Brazilian case as well as in Mexico, after the implementation of the Peruvian program, which helped in the design of improved pioneering programs. In this circumstance, Lindblom's (1959, p.85) assert makes sense, "policy is not made once and for all; it is made and re-made endlessly".

The Brazilian program, in the first moment, focused on access to public services and feeding actions, and it was influenced by learning process offered by Mexican and Peruvian programs. At the same time, *Oportunidades* and *Juntos* since its first formulation, defined actions that should be promoted by the States, to encourage the social and economic inclusion of actual beneficiaries (*Juntos*) or future generations (*Oportunidades*) in the medium term. Thus, we consider that Brasil sem Miséria Strategy to pursuing the productive insertion of Bolsa Família beneficiaries, approaches the goal of overcoming poverty, created by Mexican and Peruvian programs. On the next topic, we discussed the anti-poverty strategies designed by Mexico, Brazil and Peru.

3. Path dependence and the mitigate poverty strategies: the cases of Mexico, Brazil and Peru

Corroborating the ideas set out above, we examine the strategies used to alleviate poverty. These strategies aim to enrich the CCTs in Mexico, Brazil and Peru offering them additional shares. We argued that, in part, the creation of these "strategies" sought to reduce the problems caused by the spraying of these actions, which in practice meant to attack the existing fragmentation in the structure of social protection policy in these countries.

On the other hand, we remembered the paper of Rawlings & Rubio (2003b, p.24) when these authors asserted that ideally will be "la creación, o fortalecimiento de programas exclusivamente dedicados a la generación de ingreso, asegurando, la vez, la adecuada coordinación de estas iniciativas tanto con los programas Transferencias Condicionadas de Egresos (TCE) como con otras estrategias de disminución de la pobreza". At the suggestion of the authors, the importance of coordinating the CCTs is underlined with practices that promote income generation, which appeared in the formulation of anti-poverty strategies in the three countries.

Theoretically, what was implied in the implementation of "strategies" is the notion that poverty is a multidimensional and multifaceted phenomenon, which requires coordinated actions in order to overcome it in the long run. We understood such as "anti-poverty strategies or schemes", in Mexico: *Contigo* Strategy (2002) and *Vivir Mejor* Strategy (2007). In Brazil: Fome Zero¹⁴ Strategy (2005) and Programa Brasil Sem Miséria (2011), and, in Peru: *Crecer* Strategy, in the 2007 and 2010 versions.

In this paper, the studies were focused on more of the latest strategies and best expressions the current learning among the measures to reduce poverty rates, which are: *Vivir Mejor* (México: 2007), Brasil sem Miséria (Brasil: 2011) e *Crecer* (Peru: versão 2010).

In the Mexican case, the strategy named *Vivir Mejor* seek for professionally capacitate poor and miserable populations in the country. Regarding an official document, this strategy focused all government measures, guided it to promote the Sustainable Human Development, and avoided the dispersion of actions, providing the better use of resources invested (SEDESOL, 2007 p. 7).

13 In this paper, we limit ourselves to discussing the causes of this migration solely through the lens of political learning. Disregard, so the budget constraints that certainly are related to this migration.

14 Regarding on Belik and Takagi (2007) after 2005 the Fome Zero Program became part of the Fome Zero Strategy which lasted until 2011, when the Brasil sem Miséria Strategy was created.

The official document concern with Sustainable Human Development, understood as “un proceso permanente de ampliación de capacidades que les permita a todos los mexicanos vivir una vida digna sin comprometer el patrimonio de las generaciones futuras” (SEDESOL, 2007, p. 7). On the other hand, *Vivir Mejor* Strategy and *Oportunidades para Vivir Mejor* were designed by such an innovation in *Oportunidades* program, guided its eligibility to young people (not previously included in the program).

Vivir Mejor, after 2008, was organized in four elements¹⁵. The first one oriented development of the basic capabilities, in order to ensure equal opportunities and conditions for the social progress of the poorest families in the country, via the provision of health services, food and housing. The second element looking to create a social protection net enables the poorest people to confront the contingencies and risks that may arise throughout their lives (such as natural disasters or loss of employment). The third, focused on improvement of physical and social environment, with the intention of offering social cohesion and to development the infrastructure in poor areas. Finally, the fourth element, focused on expansion of access to formal and well paid work. Therefore, most recent information pointed that *Vivir Mejor* strategy became essential to reduce the perverse impacts of 2008 crises on Mexican society.

In Brazil, the *Brasil sem Miséria* was a strategy which appear in 2011, had as goal to remove of extremely poverty 16,2 million¹⁶ of people in all country. Regarding the official view, *Brasil sem Miséria*, considers the multidimensionality of poverty when the program design affirmed that “insufficient income is a relevant indicator of deprivation, but not the only one.

Social, geographical and biological factors multiply or reduce the impact exerted by the income on each individual¹⁷.

The *Brasil sem Miséria* strategy acts on three fronts: the first one aims at ensuring income, through Bolsa Família Program, to attend to 13,1 million people¹⁸, and the use of Cadastro Único das Políticas Sociais – CADÚnico – Single Register of Social policies. The second front aims

at facilitating the access of public services, increasing your coverage in health, education, housing, welfare, access to documentation, support for the people on the streets, food security and electricity. Meanwhile, the third front covers productive inclusion, with shares in rural areas and in urban areas.

Regarding the aspect of productive insertion (third front), the goal is to “increase production in the field and generate jobs and income in the city”, in other words, there is a focused intervention to meet the needs of extreme poverty in cities and another oriented to living in the countryside. In the countryside, the actions focused on increasing the agricultural production of family farmers through access to clean water, electricity and technical assistance. At the same time, the measure aims at extending the market, supporting commercialization of family farming. On the cities, the goals of program are to foster micro entrepreneurship and to supply the labor market with people well qualified. In recent years, Brazil has experienced a repressed demand for well qualified labor.

Regarding to the Peruvian case, the *Creceer*¹⁹ strategy was created to coordinate, inter-institutionally, diverse programs, aiming to reduce chronic child malnutrition (Riviera, 2009)²⁰. On the other hand, this author, who showed a presentation as representative of the Peruvian government, asserted that “*Juntos* is at the core of the *Creceer* strategy”. This assert corroborates the idea that changes in the CCT design were important stimuli to the creation of strategies.

Creceer emerges after one analysis which highlighted the difficulty of programs to alleviate poverty, implemented over the past 11 years in Peru, in order to reduce chronic child malnutrition. Thus, the challenge elected by *Creceer* strategy was overcome in coordination “articulada y multisectorial la desnutrición crónica generada por múltiples causas” (ST/CIAS, 2010a, p. 12). Hence, the *Creceer* strategy could be analyzed as a set of actions involving various sectors, based on the principles of democratization, decentralization, transparency and civil society participation.

The *Creceer* strategy brought a design²¹ of policy whose purpose was “asegurar el capital humano y social de

15 Available at: <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowTheme.do?tid=2670>, access in: 02/03/2014.

16 Available at: <http://www.brasilsemiserialia.gov.br/conheca-o-plano/>, access in: 22/09/2011

17 Available at: <http://www.brasilsemiserialia.gov.br/conheca-o-plano/>, access in: 22/09/2011

18 In 2013 13,8 million of people were benefited by Bolsa Família Program...

19 Available in: http://www.mds.gov.br/saladeimprensa/noticias/2009/janeiro/copy_of_peru-seguira-modelo-de-integracao-de-politicas-sociais-do-governo-brasileiro, [access in: 01/03/2014].

20 The document: *Improving the impact of the Perú CCT on nutrition*, of Milagro Núñez Riviera, 2009, whose presentation was made in Cairo.

21 Available in: <http://www.cias.gob.pe/crecer.php?var=2>, access in: 22/09/2009.

**1. Chart summarizing the essential characteristics of:
Vivir Mejor, Brasil sem Miséria and Crecer Strategies**

Strategy/Characteristic	Vivir Mejor	Brasil sem Miséria	Crecer
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Impulsar²² el desarrollo de las capacidades de los mexicanos, en especial de las niñas y los niños, garantizándoles acceso a la educación, salud y una vivienda digna. - Proporcionar una Red de Protección Social, que evite la pérdida catastrófica en las familias más pobres, ante la presencia de enfermedades o la pérdida del empleo. - Facilitar el acceso al empleo formal a todas las mexicanas y mexicanos, fortaleciendo la coordinación entre la política social y la política económica.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overcome the extreme poverty until²³. - Active search for people living in extreme poverty who are not beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família; - Improve even more productive inclusion strategies targeted at the Bolsa Família beneficiaries; - To offer more quality social services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Tiene²⁴ como principal objetivo articular las acciones de las instituciones públicas y privadas a nivel local, regional y nacional con un enfoque territorial participativo orientado a lograr mayores y mejores impactos en la reducción de la pobreza y la desnutrición crónica infantil”
Year of opening	2007	2011 ²⁵	2007
Strategy components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “El desarrollo²⁶ de capacidades básicas: Oportunidades y Apoyo Alimentario través de Diconsa; - Red de programas de protección social: 70 y más y Empleo Temporario (PET/PETA); - El desarrollo y mejoramiento del entorno físico y social: Hábitat y rescate de espacios públicos; - El desarrollo de los vínculos sociales y económicos: Estancias infantiles para Apoyar a Madres Trabajadoras y Opciones productivas”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Productive Urban Inclusion: National Program for Access to Technical Education and Employment - PRONATEC-Bolsa Família and Thousand Women (average offer technical training to 100,000 women); - Productive Rural Inclusion: Technical Assistance; Credit Development; seeds; Food Acquisition Program (PAA) and the National School Feeding Programme (PNAE); - Income Guarantee: Bolsa Família; Agreements between the Federal Government and States to extend the value of Família benefit in each region; - Access to services: documentation of supply; access: electricity, education, health, social care and housing; Growth Acceleration Program (PAC); Food Security and Nutrition security and reduction of child labor. - Active Search for: i) Inclusion in the Cadastro Único²⁷; ii) Access Benefits; iii) Access Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Tres²⁸ ejes de CRECER: a) Desarrollo de capacidades humanas y respeto de los derechos fundamentales, b) Promoción de oportunidades y capacidades económicas y c) Establecimiento de una Red de Protección Social”
Ministries involved in the Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -“Las secretarías²⁹ y dependencias de Educación, Salud, Hacienda y Seguridad Social; -Gabinete Social (encabezado por el Presidente de la Nación); -Comisión Intersecretarial de Desarrollo Social (compuesta por 14 dependencias federales e encabezada pela SEDESOL); - Comisión Nacional de Desarrollo Social (representantes del gobierno, de estados y municipios); - El Consejo Consultivo de Desarrollo Social, encabezado por SEDESOL, integrado por investigadores académicos, empresarios y miembros de la sociedad civil; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS), Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA), Ministry of National Integration (MIN), Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE), Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), National Secretariat for Solidarity Economy (SNAES). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - Sprayed programs in seven ministries: Ministério da Agricultura;Ministerio da Vivienda, Construcción y Saneamiento; Ministerio de Trabajo y promoción del Empleo; Ministerio de Transportes y Comunicaciones; Ministerio de la Mujer y Desarrollo Social; Presidencia del Consejo de Ministros; Ministerio de Educación e Ministerio de Salud.

grupos sociales en situación de riesgo y vulnerabilidad y contribuir a lograr una inserción efectiva de las familias y productores en los mercados, contribuyendo a la reducción de la pobreza y al empleo sostenible” (ST-CIAS, 2007). To reach its goal *Crececer* unified actions of seven ministries and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, linking 15 programs aimed at poverty reduction.

After this brief description of anti-poverty strategies in these three countries, we affirmed that the measures designed and implemented by Mexico, Brazil and Peru corroborate with the hypothesis of this paper; consequently, there is a *path dependence* process among these measures, which guarantee the reproduction of the learning process in the formulation of social policies. Therefore, we recapture the World Bank evaluation, published by (2003a e 2003b), which suggests a third step of CCT should focused on income generation. Coincidentally, this idea was identified in the three strategies described. In this case, we argued the World Bank as a diffuser learning process verified by evaluating the CCTs. The next topic showed a chart summarizing the essential characteristics of *Vivir Mejor Brasil sem Miséria* and *Crececer*. After the chart, the final thought of this paper is presented.

Conclusions

The hypothesis which we seek to prove is there is a *path dependence* process in the social policies in Latin America, which guarantee the learning process in the formulation of measures to alleviate poverty among countries. The learning process stems from the identification of positive feedback, proven by evaluations. Thus, as a country implements a successful program, there is a movement that tends to spread this program design to other countries, which in turn engenders the similarity in the drawings among anti-poverty actions.

Seeking the hypothesis’ we use the case studies of relief poverty policy implemented by Mexico, Brazil and Peru. The evolution of interventions in this area showed that there was and there is a process of *path dependence* process among actions performed in the three countries. The case study of the designs of the CCT programs showed that Peru learned from Mexico and Brazil, while Mexico and Brazil (especially Brazil) improved the design of its program after the Peruvian experience. That is, positive results were evaluated in the three programs which have helped improve the CCT designing them all.

While the case study of strategies for anti-poverty in the three countries showed the influence that the assessment of the World Bank (which suggested a third generation of CCTs focused on generating jobs and income to the beneficiaries) had on the drawing of global poverty relief programs. In this case, there was a learning process and path dependence driven by the assessment offered by the World Bank. Soon, the three countries used the assessment of the World Bank to improve their poverty alleviation policies, guiding them to generate employment and income.

We argue that the positive results (increasing returns) are achieved by both reviews sponsored by multilateral organizations (or by the government) as thanks to the electoral appeal or popularity of programs among the voters of a particular country. In all three countries, there is a very large popular support to both CCTs with strategies. We believe that both forms of achieving the positive results contribute to a political consensus that CCTs and strategies shape a correct way to alleviate poverty. This political consensus reinforces the path dependence and learning of these actions.

We offer two considerations to answer the first question posed by the article, which is: Why CCTs in Latin America have been so homogeneous? Have they limited the formulation of poverty alleviation policies, which has been influenced by the diffusion of policies for the whole world? Firstly, we say that there is a clear and obvious similarity of the designs of CCTs implemented in Mexico, Brazil and Peru (perhaps Latin America as a whole). This similarity can be explained by the learning process identified from these experiences. There is strong evidence that the process of learning and path dependence promoted the dissemination of policies to alleviate poverty around the world.

The second consideration was pointed out that there are signs of an ongoing learning process in the design of CCTs of the three countries, since: a) the Peruvian experience helped to improve the design of Mexican and

22 Available on: 189.254.115.246/RevistaRED/.../vivir_mejor.doc; access in: 01/03/2014.

23 Available on: <http://www.brasilsemiserialia.gov.br/apresentacao>, access in: 01/03/2014.

24 Available on: <http://www.mecreecer.gob.pe/>, access in: 02/03/2014.

25 *The Fome Zero strategy prevailed since 2005 until 2011. The complementary programs existed since 2009.*

26 Available on: <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowThe-me.do?tid=2670>, acesso em 02/03/2014.

27 *The term made reference to Cadastro Único de Programas Sociais, which was created to unify the database of government social programs.*

28 Available on: <http://www.mecreecer.gob.pe/>, access in: 02/03/2014.

29 Available on: <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowThe-me.do?tid=2670>, access in: 02/03/2014.

Brazilian programs; b) Brazil to watch the Together design and Opportunities went looking for the socioeconomic empowerment of Bolsa Família family members, a fact that had its peak with the formulation of Brazil without Poverty strategy; c) although Mexico still focuses its program on poverty reduction between generations, after *Vivir Mejor* was established with the goal of generating employment and income in the short term, it appeared as anti-cyclical measure to deal with the crisis of 2008.

To answer the second question proposed, on the other hand, why has the overall design of anti-poverty policy in the region been smooth? We entertain three observations. The first observation suggests that the process of learning and path dependence among existing CCTs in Mexico, Brazil and Peru justified the creation of the Anti-poverty strategies in order to generate employment and income, and minimize spray / fragmentation of these programs.

The second observation affirms that the assessment offered by the World Bank, which suggests a third generation of CCTs influenced the creation of strategies. In the third generation, CCTs should be linked to other measures in order to promote the inclusion of beneficiaries in production and consumption markets. We argue that this assessment by the World Bank consultants (Rawlings and Rubio, 2003a and 2003b) brought a demand that was contemplated by the strategies drawn in Mexico, Brazil and Peru.

Finally, the last observation points out that the learning process evidenced in policies to reduce poverty studied in this article showed that, to the extent that poverty is now seen as a multidimensional issue, actions to encourage its reduction were conditioned to broader spectrum practices - beyond merely income. This spectrum ranges from access to public services to the generation of employment and income.

We believe that the experiences of the three countries have brought evidence to corroborate the initial hypothesis of this article. Path dependence and learning processes present in the actions to mitigate poverty have contributed to its development, so that gradually the actions are becoming income assurance measures (emergency) to offer quality public services and promote the generation employment and income (structuring).

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