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**The impact of Conditional Cash Transfer programmes on social mobility conditions in Argentina and Brazil:**

**A comparative study of the impact of *Bolsa Família* and AUH on household income and school enrolment in Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán.**

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**Abstract**

The impact Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programmes had been having since their implementation at the beginning of the 21st century has transformed the life of many poor households in Latin America, while also improving the opportunities for poor children to move up the social mobility ladder. Through a comparative approach, this research paper looks at how *Bolsa Família* in Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil and AUH (Asignacion Universal por Hijo) in Tucumán, Argentina have impacted household income and school enrolment—both important variables in the study of social mobility— during the first five years of implementing their respective CCT programmes. Our results find positive correlations in both variables in the two states studied, while also suggesting that the differences that arise from this analysis are a consequence of the different way these two programmes were implemented as well as the influence of external factors. We conclude explaining the importance of more comparative regional research and arguing that although CCT programmes like *Bolsa Família* and AUH can have a positive impact in improving the conditions for social mobility among the poorest in Latin America, they cannot achieve this goal alone.

**1. Introduction**

In a region like Latin America, where inequality and economic instability have been persistent over the last Century populations, especially the poorest, have been sceptical about upward social mobility (Gaviria, 2006). The 21st century started with a significant challenge to the neo-liberal discourse that the Washington Consensus imposed in the region in the 80s and 90s. The democratically elected left-leaning parties that were arriving into power, with them a new rhetoric of social inclusion, economic opportunity and poverty eradication, challenged this establishment. As a mechanism in the fight against poverty and extreme poverty, many countries started applying an innovative form of *asistencialismo[[1]](#footnote-1)*: Conditional Cash Transferable (CCT) programmes. With a high popularity both on the Left and the on Right, there was a strong consensus over the core ideas of this type of welfare. As a result, these kind of programmes that started in Brazil, spread in a matter of a decade to a great extent of the region and many other developing—and some developed—countries around the globe (Mourão and Macedo 2012).

Although these types of projects have received praise from the international community and have been reproduced by development agencies in countries around the world, their impact on social mobility has not been entirely assessed. The main reason being that to measure inter-generational social mobility trends and to measure CCT programmes impact is a long-term task. To this, we should add the lack of data in some countries could be a problem even to analyse the current effect of these programmes (Camara, 2010). As a result, what this research project seeks to quantitatively show if these programmes have a significant impact in creating the conditions for upward social mobility to happen in Latin American countries, particularly in income and education. In summary, this research will be focus to look at the impact that CCT programmes such as *Bolsa Família* and AUH, in particular in household income and educational enrolment in the regions where poverty levels are some of the highest in their respective countries.

To do so, this paper will be running a comparative case study between Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, and Tucumán, Argentina. We will start by looking at the scholarly literature on terms of social mobility, CCT programmes, its impact in Brazil and Argentina and lastly in our two studied states. Following that, we will explain the methodology used. Then we will move to the analysis by bringing a brief background about the programmes, to then analyse and compare the results shown in household income and school enrolment between Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán. Finally, the overall results will be discussed to then conclude on the importance of further inter-regional comparative research and how CCT programmes, although significant, cannot solve the problem of upward social mobility by themselves.

**2. Literature review**

There has been a considerable increase in the literature about the impact and nature of CCT programmes in Latin America since its implementation in the region. Mexico and Brazil have been the two biggest programmes regarding coverage of households and budget, gaining the sponsorship and recognition of development organisation such as the World Bank or UNDP. In particular, when observing the cases of CCT programmes in the region, Mexico’s *Oportunidades*, Brazil’s *Bolsa Família* or Peru’s *Juntos* appear to be the most emblematic ones because of its impact, reach and design (Bayley et al, 2007). Although popular both the on the Left and on the Right, the research streams of the topic have taken two different directions. On one hand some academics have focused on the economic and social implications of the programme, quantitatively and qualitatively researching about its impact. On the second stream, we can see academics researching more the political implications with a bigger focus on topics like electoral politics, clientelism and populism in relation with CCT programmes.

Overall we have to understand that the theoretical beginnings of such programmes are the result of normative policy-making. Indeed, governments that applied these programmes tend to believe, as Kliksberg and Novacovsky (2013: 21) report about the Argentinian case, that they are “a form of social right, that the state must guarantee”. Fried (2011:1049) argues that in Brazil “[*Bolsa Família*] recipients view them as a right of citizenship”. The concept of “social right” is integral to the redistributive Kenynesian politics that gained momentum in the region in the first decade of the 21-century and that is present in the narrative of these programmes. Moreover, this idea has also extended to the narrative of securitisation, meaning the state must guarantee access to education, health and food to those who cannot afford it as a form of securing their Human Rights (Da Silva, Gomes and Vasquez, 2006)

Despite popular conceptions CCT programmes are not free income. As Videro (2010) explains they are distributive programmes with conditions attached which are targeted to i) alleviating poverty in the short term and ii) breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty by ensuring children in poor households have access to education, health and better income.

Because of its success, the studies and analysis of the impact of *Bolsa Família* at the national level have been widespread. Mourão and Macedo (2012) research claims that *Bolsa Família* helps the people in greatest need, focusing 66% of the income in the poorest 10% of the population. Moreover, Videro (2010: 4) argues that since the programme began “more than four million people have left indigence and another three million are no longer poor. Besides, income distribution has improved and the Gini and HDI indexes have ameliorated”. In the case of Argentina’s AUH, the current literature—although not as rich as Brazil’s one— points us to similar results in income and education at the national level. With regards to income, a study by the Catholic University of Argentina argues that at the national level the households benefiting from the programme are 7.6% better of in real terms in comparison with households not benefitting the programme (Tuñón and Salvia, 2013). In educational terms, Britto (in Videro, 2010) argues that *Bolsa Família* has had a positive effect in increasing school enrolment among the poorest youth in the country. On the other side, the Argentinian government claims that a year after AUH began school enrolment at the national level “has increased by 25%.” (Ministerio de Economia y Finanzas, 2010: 5)

Changes in household income and school enrolment are relevant to our study because they are not only fundamental factors to eradicate poverty but, crucially, to ensure social mobility. This is observed by Hout (2015: 29) as he explains: “Mobility occurs when the correlation between origins and destinations is less than perfect”. In other words, social mobility—upwards and downwards—happens when an individual sees a change in his/her socioeconomic status from his/her childhood to adulthood. Thus, the importance of these programmes focusing on children, as a form of breaking the cycle of inter-generational poverty many households has suffered in the region.

Moreover, although several variables affect someone’s prospect of social mobility, we will be focusing only in two that are both significant and empirically measureable: household income and school enrolment. Income is crucial as it is one of the simplest ways of measuring poverty and access to assets and durable goods (although not the only one). Household income, instead of individual income, is important, for example, as Hout (2015: 32) argues that “total household income is a better marker for origin’s than father’s income, as mothers play a greater role in family fortunes over time.”

Furthermore, education is fundamental in social mobility, especially in Latin America. A study on social mobility in the region made by Gaviria (2007: 61) for the Inter-American Bank of Development explains that: “Education opportunities are much more concentrated in Latin American countries than in the U.S. On average, the educational achievement of an individual in Latin American is strongly linked to those of his/her parents. In the United States, this is not the case” Education is a crucial variable that governments take into account to when developing social policy. In particular, it not only improves human capital among poorest households but ultimately it gives them the skills to access better-paid jobs in the labour market.

As such, the impact of CCT programmes in Brazil and Argentina can be significant regarding income and education for the poorest in society. The problematic with the current literature on this topic is the lack of comparative studies of CCT programmes as a whole. In particular, the effects that CCT programmes at the regional level are having on the poorest, most vulnerable, households have not received as much attention in comparison with the study of national level. That is why the focus of this paper is based on Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán, because they are illustrative states where *Bolsa Família* and AUH are expected to benefit poor households the most. Indeed, Marques et al (In Da Silva, Gomes and Vasquez, 2006) show the importance *Bolsa Família* has in particular the North East of Brazil, where Rio Grande do Norte is located, over the rest of the country. A similar expectation should be held for Tucumán the fourth poorest state in the country (La Gaceta, 2014). Moreover, tracking variations in income and school enrolment – which work as proxies for social mobility – in these two regions would also help determine whether *prospects* for social mobility have increased. Thus, this research aim is to not only establish a comparative study of *Bolsa Família*’s and AUH’s impact on Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán but also contribute to the literature on the impact that CCT programmes have in the conditions of social mobility.

This research will give us not only a better understanding of these two states’ implementation of CCT programmes but also an idea of how these are working in the two biggest countries of South America. To do so, the following research questions will be established, accompanied the two hypotheses developed before the research was started.

*Q1*: What would be the change of household income and educational enrolment in Rio Grande do Norte during the first five years of *Bolsa Família*?

*Q2*: What would be the change of household income and educational enrolment in Tucumán during the first five years of AUH?

*H1*: Household income and educational enrolment in Rio Grande do Norte will have a positive variation in the first five years of *Bolsa Família*

*H2*: Household income and educational enrolment in Tucumán will have a positive variation in the first five years of AUH.

**3. Methodology**

For both of the cases studied, primary data has been collected and compared and supported with secondary data and analysis made by of other researchers, academics and government agencies. In the Brazilian case, the data used for the income and education variables come from the yearly ‘National Household Survey’ produced by the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics). In Argentina, the education variable data comes from Tucumán’s Ministry of Education and the income one from the yearly ‘Permanent Household Survey’ made by INDEC (National Institute of Census and Statistics).

The timing of each comparison between Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán will be different from each other as *Bolsa Família* began in 2004 and AUH only in 2009. Therefore, in the case of Rio Grande do Norte, both the income and education variables will be compared and analysed from 2004 to 2009; for Tucumán, it will be from 2010 to 2015. The purpose of this is to observe the impact of the programmes in the first five years of implementation.

In both cases, to measure household income variation, we have calculated the change in the distribution of household income of every percentile of the population across their respective year. This variation will allow us to see how the income of the poorest percentiles changed in the first five years of being benefited from their CCT programmes. When comparing educational enrolment we have calculated school enrolment rates by dividing the number of eligible students against the actual amount of students by the ages targeted by the programmes. We have also elaborated three codes to simplify the data, resulting in: initial, primary and secondary level of education. The reason of this is that educational systems in Brazil and Argentina are different and educational levels by age slightly differs.

Some limitations of the analysis should be clarified before going into it. The conclusions are not absolute and do not empirically take in account other relevant external variables that might affect household income and school enrolment, two important factors in social mobility. For this matter, it is fair to clarify this analysis just points out household income variation and school enrolment variations during the first five years of CCT in Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán. Therefore, there’s not necessarily direct causation between the variables and the effects of CCT programmes, although we would argue that supplementary research made on CCT programmes in Brazil and Argentina at the national level might lead us to believe so. Moreover, although Brazil’s IBGE data is indeed reliable and internationally respected this is not entirely the case for Argentina’s INDEC, which has received criticism for being politically biased and being untrustworthy during the years I will be presenting their data (The Economist, 2012).

As a final note, all the translations made from academic papers, news articles originally written in Spanish and some small translation made from datasets in Portuguese have been done by the author.

**4. Analysis**

**4. 1 Background**

*Bolsa Família* has been praised as one of the biggest social welfare programmes in the world, distributing approximately 7.6 billion of USD in 2010 to poor households, with budgetary increases every year (Videro, 2010). Moreover, what it is crucial is that as a programme envisioned by socialist President Lula da Silva, its receptivity has been positive on both the left and the right. Indeed, the World Bank (2015) has become one of the main sponsors of the programme claiming: “94% of the resources reaches the poorest 40% of the population”. As a result, many countries in the region, with only a few exceptions, have adopted similar programmes. Argentina, in 2009, followed the steps of Brazil by creating a similar CCT called Asignacion Universal por Hijo (AUH). Indeed, in one of the first studies projecting the impact of AUH, Argentina’s Ministry of Finance (2009) praises the influence of *Bolsa Família’s* design and application and other programmes in the implementation of AUH.

Both *Bolsa Família*’s and AUH’s conditionalities for distributing rent are based on education and health. At the same time, the schooling requirements for children are up to the age of 18 when, in average, secondary education finishes. In comparison, *Bolsa Família* is more universal than AUH in the sense that transfer cash to households that do not necessarily have children, e.g. households in extreme poverty or unemployed that received less than the minimum wage (Da Silva, Gomes and Vasquez, 2006). In Argentina, Diaz (2012) explains that this benefit is given only to households that are unemployed or earn less than the minimum wage *and* have children. The reason being when *Bolsa Família* was created in 2004 it unified several already existing CCT programmes that targeted different parts of the population. Argentina’s Ministry of Finance (2009) aims to do subsequently the same by unifying other CCT programmes under AUH, which means all poor households, regardless if they have children or not, will benefit from the programme. Moreover, in Argentina as in the Brazilian case, when transferring the income to the household the mother is seen as the preferred option to manage the benefit rather than the father.

**4.2 Household Income**

Since *Bolsa Família* started in Brazil in 2004 the results have been highly positive in reducing poverty, extreme poverty and inequality (Lindert et al, 2011) When analysing the changes of household income in Rio Grande do Norte between 2004 and 2009 we can see that the poorest three percentiles in society have had a positive increase (See Graph 1). The same happens when we analyse this variation in Tucumán between 2010 and 2015, although with different results (See Graph 2). In this section I will analyse theses changes, its impact in poverty and inequality and why is it significant for the economy and the households in terms of social mobility.

In Rio Grande do Norte the poorest 20% in society (first two percentiles) have had an average increase of their household income by 10% each. The third percentile grew by 7%, less in comparison with the last two. This could be explained by the fact that, as Lindert et al (2007) in a report for the World Banks notes, *Bolsa Família* has distributed around 80% of income to poorest 25% in society. Therefore, naturally, percentiles one and two would benefit the most while only half of percentile three would receive as much as the first two. If we compare the variation of household income in Tucumán in the first three percentiles, the results are more volatile and unequal. The first percentile had a dramatic increase of 14% of its household income while the second percentile only 5%. The third percentile, on the other hand, increased its income by 10%.

Graph 1. Elaborated by the author with data provided by IBGE (2004-2009)

Graph 2. Elaborated by the author with data provided by INDEC (2010-2015)

The reasons of this volatility can be explained by the fact that in order to receive a benefit from AUH the household has to have children. Therefore, AUH’s universality has not been as effective as *Bolsa Família* one. Thus, not everyone in the poorest three percentiles receives support from AUH. This difference can have significant impacts, for example, as a study by Tuñón and Salvia (2013) proves that households in the poorest 10% that receive benefits from AUH, i.e. because they have children, had a household income of up to 24% higher that does who do not profit from the same percentile. This could help to explain why household income variation is so different among the poorest percentiles, as AUH, in comparison with *Bolsa Família* is more exclusive in their population target. Overall, though, in both cases we see a rise in household income where the poorest three percentiles did better than the richest three percentiles in relative and absolute terms.

When we look at household income variation, we should not only focus on the effects that the extra income the CCT programme gives to these households. The effect it has in the local economy is also relevant as such injection of income ends up having positive multiplying effects. A study made by Da Silva, Gomes and Vasquez (2006: 7) explains that the effect of this income transfer in Rio Grande do Norte is very positive: “Households that receive these transfer will spend more the resources received in buying first-need products, producing more rent in the local economy, jobs and more collection of tax”. This multiplying effect was also backed by Mourão and Macedo (2012: 4-5) paper on the Brazilian experience, claiming “A survey conducted by IPEA (2011) found that 56% of costs of the government’s social programmes returned to public coffers[…] Family income increases by 2.25% for each R$1.00 spent on the scheme, after taking into account the entire income multiplication circuit in the economy”

The result of the CCT programmes in both Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán thus has a seemingly positive impact in household incomes. They both appear to be well focused regarding targeting those who need the programme the most. In Rio Grande do Norte, *Bolsa Família* covered until 2009 34.6% (Nunes et al, 2010) of total households while in Tucumán AUH covered 33.7% (ANSES, 2011). Moreover, if we consider the positive multiplying effect these policies can have in the local economy, the impact can be seen highly beneficial not only for poor but also middle-class households. In both Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán we can see how not only household income has positive changed in the first five years of the policy implementation, but it has also resulted in a decrease of poverty and inequality although at different rates. In Rio Grande do Norte poverty fell by 33.7%(PAHO, 2010)[[2]](#footnote-2). On the contrary, in Tucumán poverty has not decreased as much as expected. Between 2010 and 2014 households in poverty went down from 14.7% to 14.2% although extreme poverty did fall from 3.7% to 2% in the same period of time (Direccion de Estadisticas de Tucumán, 2016). Inequality, on the other hand, has decreased for both states, the Gini coefficient going down from 0.562 to 0.542 in Rio Grande do Norte and from 0.45 to 0.39 in Tucumán (Direccion de Estadisticas de Tucumán, 2016).

**4.3 Education**

When we look at the impact of CCT programmes in education, analysing school enrolment is an effective way of measuring the success of these programmes and its impact among the poorest youth. Acceding education not only equips poor children with skills but ultimately gives them the opportunity to pursue higher-paid jobs, as well as a university degree and being able to be more critical of themselves and their communities. In this section, I will analyse the changes in school enrolment in the Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán between 2004-2009 and 2010-2015 respectively. We will see that the changes in Rio Grande do Norte are all positive and steady. In comparison, Tucumán shows more volatility in its results, with an unexpected decrease on primary education enrolment.

One of the most relevant conditions that *Bolsa Família* and AUH required to households to receive income from the government is ensuring their children are enrolled into the educational system up to secondary school. In the case of Rio Grande do Norte we can see the during the first five years of *Bolsa Família* school enrolment has increased in all three stages of the pre-University education (see Graph 3). Enrolment in initial education has raised 3%, primary education 1% and secondary education 4%. Additionally, current literature points us out that this trend has continued improving across the years (Camara, 2010). The case of Rio Grande do Norte is positive, as we see a steady increase in all three stages. In particular, the case of primary education is significant as by 2004 was on 97% enrolment level—a high amount considering the conditions of poverty this state has historically suffered.

Graph 3. Table elaborated by the author with data provided by IBGE (2004-2009)

In Tucumán, variation in school enrolment has been more volatile than in the case of Rio Grande do Norte. In overall terms, school enrolment has had an increase but not in all the three stages of the educational system studied (see Graph 4). In initial education, we can see a surprising increase of 14%, which represents a considerable improvement in absolute and relative terms in comparison with the case of Rio Grande do Norte. Primary education enrolment suffered a big decline of 11% between the studied period, a big downturn in comparison with an increase in enrolment in Rio Grande do Norte, which was already on almost and an all-time high. The reasons for this decline are unexplainable for our study. Yet there might have two explanations that can help us understand this decline. Firstly, it could be a failure of the AUH programme, as it is not ensuring that 13% of young people eligible to attend primary education do, even when offering income assistance to their households. Yet, this can be contradictory when reading a 2011 study of the impact of AUH in Argentinian states by ANSES (2011: 23) claiming in Tucumán the programme has reduced “yearly primary and secondary education rates of drop-out”. Another reason for this downturn is, perhaps, the influence of other external factors that are affecting school enrolment at this particular stage, not being taken into account in this research. Nevertheless, in the case of secondary education, the decline seen in primary education has not replicated. Secondary enrolment has increased by 6% reaching a solid number of 95%, which in comparison with Rio Grande do Norte is higher rate of enrolment. With the exception of primary education, we can see that by 2015 Tucumán achieved important levels of school enrolment.

Graph 4. Table elaborated by the author with data provided by Tucuman’s Ministry of Education (2010-2015)

\*Note: The calculus of 2015 results was made on base of the total of students attending school over the *predicted* population by 2015 made by INDEC.

Overall we can note when comparing the school enrolment between Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán during the first five years the results can be different. In initial and secondary education we can see both states increasing the levels of school enrolment, Tucumán doing significantly better than Rio Grande do Norte. Yet Tucumán fails to increase its school enrolment in Primary education, significantly downgrading its average, while Rio Grande do Norte had a low level of growth to an impressive 98% rate of eligible children attending school. The changes in Tucumán primary education enrolment can be problematic, especially if we are seeing education as a tool to ensure upward social mobility and increasing opportunities for the poorest youth. Moreover, although Videro (2010) argues that the impact of CCT programmes in child labour are inconclusive, she also claims that in the long-term this would be an expected outcome of increasing school enrolment and improving skills of the poorest youth. As we have mentioned, the importance of education is crucial in ensuring future social mobility. The results of Rio Grande do Norte could lead us to believe that the impact of *Bolsa Família* has been positive, as in the first five years of its application school enrolment in the region has increased. Tucumán’s results are more mixed. Although it is true that there has been an overall increase in enrolment (particularly in initial education) the decline in enrolment in primary education can be worrying. Nevertheless, it is also true that secondary education enrolment has increased and this makes the problem less extreme.

**5. Discussion**

When we set out our research questions and hypothesis at the beginning of this research project we expected to find out an increase of both household income in the poorest percentiles in society and an overall increase in the school enrolment for both states. The reason behind this argument is that both of these variables, income and education, are directly affected by both *Bolsa Família* and AUH. Moreover, the ultimate aim by answering these questions is having a comparative perspective of the changes in household income and school enrolment between Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán both of the states that have benefited the most from CCT programmes in their respective countries. The results are not as homogenous as expected but they do point out interesting similarities and differences between the states studied and the *Bolsa Família* and AUH programmes.

Both Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán have had an overall increase in household income among the poorest percentiles in society. Moreover, we have found that Rio Grande do Norte have a had a positive and steady increase in school enrolment in the first five years of *Bolsa Família*, meeting the expectations set up by the first hypothesis. In the case of Tucumán school enrolment has also increased in overall terms, yet not in the uniform way it was expected. In this sense our hypothesis for our second research question have only been partially met; although household income variation was positive and school enrolment in initial and secondary education increased, the decline in school enrolment in primary education do not allow us to fully meet our initial expectations.

When comparing the effectiveness of both CCT programmes in impacting two key areas necessary for upward social mobility, the results are not the same. Rio Grande do Norte has shown a more unvarying improvement in both of the variables studied. Household income has considerably improved in the poorest three percentiles and school enrolment in the state has also increased. Tucumán, on the other hand, show progress overall both regarding household income and school enrolment but not as homogenous as the case of Rio Grande do Norte. Even though AUH can count on with a larger budget in terms of how much is spent as a percentage of the GDP than *Bolsa Família*, the population target is different and will thus have a different effect in the variables studied, particularly in the income one. For example, in Argentina a leftist deputy criticised the government for not making AUH a truly universal project as it still does not include 3 million of poor children (La Izquierda Diario, 2015). On the other hand, right-wing politician Esteban Bullrich criticised AUH’s effectiveness and execution by calling it a ‘failure’ (El Tiempo, 2012) Yet, these differences can lead us to believe that the implementation process in Tucumán has not been equally effective. AUH has not yet been available to unify in one other existing social programmes, as *Bolsa Família* effectively did in 2004, and our results might lead us to believe is not delivering the expected results in a state like Tucumán where the programme is more needed.

**6. Conclusion**

The results found in our analysis seem to give a positive impression of the impact of CCT programmes in both Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán. When comparing both cases, it appears to us to that the growth of the social mobility indicators we studied tend to be more positive and constant in the case of Rio Grande do Norte than Tucumán. This research does not study other external factors that might have had an influence in these changes. So, for example, a rise in inflation and economic instability during the period of time we studied in Argentina (Financial Times, 2012) might have caused an important impact on the variables of the Tucumán case.

One of the main conclusions we can arrive to from this research is the reaffirmation of a criticism recurrent in the current literature on CCT programmes. As Videro (2010: 9) argues: “CCTs are only assistentialists. They do not provide a definite way out of poverty, which is only allowed by a generation of employment in consequence of economic growth”. Indeed, programmes like *Bolsa Família* or AUH are not definite ways out of poverty or the only component that will ensure upward social mobility in a society. Nevertheless, I would argue, its impact is significant. For households that earn less than the minimum wage, an extra amount of income is a considerable improvement in their quality of life. Moreover, having an incentive to send their children to school generates a positive impact on the prospects of social mobility the poorest youth have of succeeding their parents and breaking the cycle of inter-generational policy. Yet, of course, we would not argue that other measures are not necessary to complement them. CCT programmes like *Bolsa Família* or AUH create important incentives that shift demands in the educational and health service. If the respective governments do not rightly cover these demands—for example, not supplying enough schools or hospital—then the programmes themselves would not have the desirable income.

A second point is the fact that regional approaches to the study of these programmes are necessary, as they do not sometimes match with the national image other studies point at. Perhaps the clearer example of this are the school enrolment results of Tucumán; while at the national level enrolment was going up at all stages, Tucumán primary education enrolment decreased. In this sense, regional research and comparative regional analyses are important, especially if we want to see the impact of these programmes in the states where they are most needed, such is the case of Rio Grande do Norte and Tucumán.

Although CCT programmes seem to be having a positive effect in changing the prospects for social mobility, it cannot alone be the solution to the high levels of structural poverty and inequality that affect many of these countries, like Argentina and Brazil. However, as I have explained earlier before in the methodology section income and education are not the only important variables. Moreover, Brazil and Argentina are not entirely representative of Latin America and further studies of the region’s social mobility should include other significant countries. In the future we believe it is important to approach social mobility in a more holistic way, including other variables such as occupation, employment and economic growth. At the same time, qualitative analysis from practitioners, recipients and other stakeholders would certainly enrich more the analysis of a paper such as this. This, of course, is beyond the reach and purpose of this project. Yet, it is a task we would like to take on in the future while continuing the study and research on social mobility in Latin America.

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1. The translation from Spanish to English would be ‘Welfarism' [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This calculation is made with the latest statistics available for the state from the census of 2000 to the one in 2010. The decrease of poverty goes from 60.7% to 33.7%. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)