

# Analyzing Public Policies in Latin America



Analyzing Public Policies in Latin America:  
A Cognitive Approach

Edited by

Melina Rocha Lukic and Carla Tomazini

**CAMBRIDGE  
SCHOLARS**

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P U B L I S H I N G

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## PREFACE

MELINA ROCHA LUKIC AND CARLA TOMAZINI

This book gathers together some of the papers presented at the panel “Public Policies in Latin America and the Cognitive Approach: Paradigms, Actors and Coalitions,” which was held at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Public Policy in Grenoble, France, in July 2013. The papers present research on public policies in Latin America, all of which take a cognitive approach. This theoretical framework is based on the analysis of public policy from a cognitive and normative perspective, more specifically through the concepts of paradigm, frame of reference and advocacy coalition. In this sense, the main questions posed here are: what paradigms have Latin American public policies followed lately? How have the paradigms responded to the economic and political changes which have occurred in the region? How have they changed over time?

The panel was also intended for discussion of the actors and coalitions involved in Latin American public policies. While the state used to be the main protagonist of public action, a number of other actors, coalitions and institutions have emerged in recent years, replacing it in several areas. Who are they and who do they represent? How do they influence the setting of agendas in Latin American public policy? What are their strategies and their roles in the formulation and implementation of public policies? In order to answer all these questions, the papers presented in this book combine conceptual discussion and empirical analysis of several fields of public policy such as social, education, land, indigenous and fiscal policy. This work would not have been possible without M. Surel, who has been a source of inspiration and knowledge. As a member of the panel, he kindly commented on all the papers presented. We are also extremely grateful to all the presenters at the panel and the contributors to this book.





## CHAPTER ONE

# THE SOCIAL INVESTMENT PERSPECTIVE, GENDER AND THE CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMS IN PERU AND BOLIVIA

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### **Introduction**

Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programs have spread in Latin America since the late 1990s. The most important ones are the *Progres/Oportunidades* program in Mexico (1997) and the *Bolsa Familia* program in Brazil (2003). Considered some of the most effective poverty alleviation programs, CCT programs aim to reduce the intergenerational cycle of poverty by transferring subsidies to poor families, on the condition that the mothers send their children to school and send them for health check-ups.

This paper examines, in specific, the gender cognitive structures of CCT programs in the Latin American context. It does not deal with the impact of such structures on policies, or with these policies on the social reality, but rather aims to show that the same conceptions of gender underlie the programs as they do maternalism (Jelin 1990, Molyneux 2007, Aguirre 1998) and the broader “social investment perspective” (Jenson and Saint-Martin 2006, Jenson 2010), a new social policy referential (Jobert et Muller 1987) currently in construction.

The central question posed here is: what are the gender representations of CCT programs and what kind of referential do they construct? As tentative answers to these questions, this paper is built on the hypotheses that: a) the adoption of CCT programs by the Latin American states evidences the diffusion of the “social investment perspective” and b) the “social investment perspective” is itself based upon a paradigmatic representation of poor women, tending toward maternalism.

These hypotheses will be tested in the cases of Bolivia and Peru through qualitative methodology. The objective is to understand the genesis of such policies, to tell their story. While scrutinizing specialized literature allows the reconstruction of the “raw facts”, interviews carried out in Peru and Bolivia allow insight into the adoption of CCT processes and gender representations. Between 2008 and 2010, 118 interviews were conducted in Lima and Ayacucho in Peru, and in La Paz and El Alto in Bolivia. The use of discourse analysis in these interviews, through the *Atlas-ti* Software, allows us to see the social gender representations constructed by the Bolivian and Peruvian CCT programs’ stakeholders. It is therefore assumed that analyzing social gender representations allows the evaluation of the social policy referential. In other words, the concept of social representation (Jodelet 1989) can be used as an indicator of public policy referential.

This article is divided into three parts. Firstly, the theoretical cognitive approach to public policy, as well as the social investment perspective, are discussed. Secondly, the process of adopting CCT Programs in Peru and Bolivia are reconstructed, and thirdly, gender representations are extracted from analysis of the discourses on maternalism.<sup>1</sup>

## **1. Public policies and the Social Investment Perspective**

This paper is located at the intersection of two sets of literature: the cognitive approach to public policy and the social investment perspective in terms of gender relations.

### **1.1. The cognitive approach to public policy**

Based on ideas, norms and representations, the cognitive approach to public policy, developed by Jobert and Muller (1987), Hall (1993) and Sabatier (1998), among others, seems the most appropriate for discussing the cognitive structures of CCT programs. Without underestimating interests and institutions, this approach focuses on the ideas, the third “T” (Hall 2000) of the variables or dimensions to be considered in the analysis of public policies (Palier and Surel 2010).<sup>2</sup> Despite their heterogeneity,

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1. This contribution was presented at the panel “Public Policies in Latin America and the Cognitive Approach: Paradigms, Actors and Coalitions” at the 1st International Conference on Public Policy, Grenoble, June 26-28 2013. I thank Yves Surel for his interesting comments.

2. These three variables belong to the three most widely known concepts of neo-institutionalism, identified by Hall and Taylor (1997): the rational choice of neo-

these authors share questions about the influence of global social norms on public policy. The cognitive and normative structures refer to the notions of paradigm (Hall 1993), advocacy coalition (Sabatier 1998) and referential (Jobert and Muller 1987). They indicate the coherent normative and cognitive systems that define the worldviews underlying the mechanisms of identity formation and the principles of action.

Public policies are defined as processes by which a society “constructs its relation to the world and therefore gives it representation to understand and to act on the reality as it is perceived” (Muller 2006, 372). Jobert and Muller define “referential” as “a picture of social reality constructed through the prism of hegemony”<sup>3</sup> (Jobert and Muller 1987, 70). According to Hall (1993, 279), a policy paradigm is

a framework of ideas and standards that specifies not only the goals of the policy and the kind of instruments that can be used to attain them, but also the very nature of the problems they are meant to be addressing. (...) This framework is embedded in the very terminology through which the policy-makers communicate their work, and it is influential precisely because so much of it is taken for granted and unamenable to scrutiny as a whole.

Far from being an idea in and of itself, a referential or paradigm is at the same time the product and the determinant of the relationship between individuals, social groups and states.

A referential is a set of values, norms, algorithms and images that form a general framework for interpreting the world and its rules for action (Muller 1995). Values are fundamental to this. They define the general framework of public action and allow us to enact what is perceived as good or bad, desirable or disposable (e.g. equity versus equality debate). Norms define the differences between what is perceived and what is desired, orienting actions (e.g. “it must meet the needs of the market”). Algorithms express a theory relating to an action in terms of causal relationships, and can be expressed by “if ... then.” Finally, images are very important, because they allow individuals to immediately make sense of their surroundings without a long discursive argument. These are implicit vectors of values, norms and algorithms (e.g. “the bearded terrorist” or the “poor Indian”). A referential (composed of several levels), therefore, is not a perfectly unified normative and cognitive structure.

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institutionalism, sociological neo-institutionalism and historical neo-institutionalism.

3. All translations by the author.

Instead, the conflicts and clashes between values, norms, algorithms and images are organized within it (Muller 2005, 177).

The public policies referential consists of three dimensions: the cognitive one, which uses the elements of causal interpretation for solving problems; the normative one, which defines the values and what “should be”, and the instrumental one, which defines the principles of action based on knowledge and values (Jobert 1992, 220-221).

Some stakeholders are privileged in public policy construction, and in the processes of diffusion of their normative and cognitive structures. At the heart of the public policy referential or paradigm, they are the ones who decode the real and recode it into the norms and criteria for public action. They “occupy a strategic position in the decision-making to the extent that they are the ones who construct the intellectual framework within which negotiations, conflicts or alliances take place that lead to the decision” (Muller 1990, 50). They are scholars, specialists and experts from international organizations or lobbyists. They are positioned at global, international, national and sectorial levels and act and think according to a certain political discourse (Hall 1993, Muller 1990). These actors provide the cognitive and normative recoding of knowledge about the identity of the groups concerned: their status as dominant or dominated is at stake (Muller 2005). This group of actors is not uniform; the construction of a public policy is made up of multiple influences. The whole point of this research is to reconstruct the confluences of these actors, with their divergent and even contradictory interests and ideas, in order to understand how an ambiguous consensus is created (Palier and Surel 2005, 18-19). The relationship between the capability to carry out this decoding of social reality and power is essential. In fact, all of these actors with their differing worldviews are trying to secure positions of power from which they can transfer their ideas into policy (Hall 1993, 290).

Let us remember that, behind this approach, each public policy sets goals defined using a representation of the problem, its consequences and its possible solutions. When considering the formulation of a public policy, it is important to observe the mechanisms of “fabrication” of the ideas and values shaping a worldview (Muller 1995). As previously explained, this research analyzes the referential through the social representation of poor women as conveyed by CCT programs.

## 1.2. The social investment perspective

In the late 90s, the solutions to various social problems began to be questioned and new interpretations of social and political realities emerged. These gave rise to the notion of the “social investment perspective” without an explicit agreement on its meaning. It seems that the polysemic character of the notion allowed its dissemination and sharing by a large number of actors and its utilization by different forums of public policies. In fact, the most ambiguous ideas are often the most shared; their ambiguity is their strength. According to Jenson (2010, 71), social investment is a quasi-concept. On the one hand, its birth in academia gives it scientific legitimacy, while on the other hand, it concentrates on multiple interpretations of common sense. Thus, spendthrift social policy and others based on fiscal discipline can all be legitimized by this perspective.

The ambiguous consensus about social investment raises the question of the emergence of a new paradigm, or a referential shift away from the neoliberal. Has the turning point of the late 1990’s, a new understanding of social policy as a productive factor, meant the emergence of a new paradigm (Hall 1993) or referential (Jobert and Muller 1987)? The social investment perspective seems to be distanced from neoliberalism, but without returning to the Keynesian paradigm (Vielle, Pochet et al. 2005, Morel, Palier et al. 2011, Jenson and Saint Martin 2006, Molyneux 2008).

It seems that the construction of a consensus on the social investment perspective is possible because it is so similar to the neoliberal agenda, promoting as it does the reintegration of social policies to reduce poverty (Noël 2006, 318). The social investment perspective differs from neoliberalism but shares some of its assumptions. On the one hand, it breaks with neoliberalism by restoring the state’s role in social regulation. Social policies are now seen as essential to economic growth and to increasing employment rates. The centrality of social policy as a development agent opposes the neoliberal idea that social policy has costs and hinders economic growth and employment (Morel and Palier et al. 2011). The state’s social actions regain some legitimacy by compensating for the market failures that induce the unequal distribution of opportunities and capacities (Jenson 2010, 63). However, the objective of the state is no longer to protect citizens from the market (as in the time of Keynesianism) but to facilitate their integration into it through investment in human capital (Jenson and Saint Martin 2003, 83). From this perspective, the welfare state is proactive: unlike the “traditional” welfare state, it does not wait for the materialization of risk to intervene. It aims to “facilitate”

integration, and not to “compensate” for social risks preventable by the people’s proper behaviour (Arnsperger 2000, 2).

On the other hand, the social investment perspective shares with neoliberalism some of its criticisms on the welfare state. This is the reason, for example, for its active nature, rather than the passive one that has to be endorsed by social policies in order not to fall into assistencialism. Social policies should motivate individuals, who are solely responsible for their own well-being through income from the labour market and not from the passive benefits granted by the state (Morel, Palier et al 2011a, 9-10). The neoliberalism enthusiasm for the market as a mechanism of social regulation is therefore within the social investment perspective. The substitution of the term “social expenditure” for “social investment” evidences this (Jenson 2011). If the return of the state as an investor in human capital opposes the neoliberal principle of the market at all, it is over the matter of the individual as a “self-entrepreneur” (Boyer 2005: 36) or as an “entrepreneurial subject” (Périlleux 2005, 308) – an idea more compatible with neoliberalism.

Because of its hazy position in relation to neoliberalism, the social investment perspective is seen as an emerging paradigm or referential, not yet as a new global paradigm or referential.

In the social policy field, this perspective promotes a new approach to fighting poverty in both the South and the North. It comes from the theories of the active welfare state developed in Western Europe, particularly by Giddens (1998) and Esping-Andersen (2002), as a third way somewhere between the neoliberalist minimum state and the Keynesian welfare state (Matagne 2001, 11). These theories and those at the core of the “new poverty agenda”, promoted by the international institutions and developed by Sen (1999), have capacity to influence each other. Social policies, in both the North and the South, are pervaded by the social investment perspective.

Despite such heterogeneous currents of thought and policy outcomes, the social investment perspective is based on three general principles (Jenson and Saint-Martin 2006). First, some knowledge of economics is essential. The state, through its social policies, must invest in the individual’s human capital, and from an early age. Public policies focus on promoting access to employment through education, understood as skills training (Matagne 2001, 21). Second, in the fight against the intergenerational cycle of poverty, the emphasis is more on future generations than on the current one. Today’s investments in human capital of children are expected to produce benefits in the future (Morel, Palier et al. 2011). And third, at the root of the social investment perspective, there

is the idea that successful individuals and their actions enrich society as a whole, now and in the future (Jenson 2010, 61). Arnspenger (2005, 279) speaks of “responsible solidarism,” which means that the individual is responsible for the community and no longer the other way round.

### **1.3. The adoption of CCT programs in Peru and Bolivia**

This paper focuses on Latin America because there are “clear signs that the era of the Washington Consensus and neoliberal economics in Latin America is drawing to a close” (Margheritis and Pereira 2007, 25). There is a widespread realization in Latin America that the neoliberal model has failed to generate economic growth or reduce poverty. Following the second-stage economic reform of the safety-net programs, which aimed to compensate for the negative effects of market reforms, the policy-makers sought a more global approach to social policy. Consequently, it is possible to distinguish a shift from the neoliberalist paradigm to the “post-neoliberal” social investment perspective that drives social policy innovation.

Even if at their origin, the *Oportunidades* and the *Bolsa Familia* programs were largely “home grown” solutions to domestic political problems, aid donors and multilateral institutions supported the diffusion of CCT programs (Noël 2006, 317). They fit in with the new “consensual poverty agenda,” built on international and transnational levels, “to reduce poverty and improve equity without sacrificing growth” (Margheritis and Pereira 2007, 38). Shortly after their domestic elaboration and adoption, the *Oportunidades* and the *Bolsa Familia* programs benefitted from very positive evaluations produced by international and transnational organizations, researchers and think tanks (e.g. Rawling 2004).

This led to the general consensus that CCT programs were “best practice” for reducing poverty, not only amongst financial institutions, but also United Nations’ organizations such as UNDP, ILO, ECLAC, UNESCO, UNICEF and FAO, and think tanks such as the IFRI or the Wilson Center (e.g. Rawling 2004, Fiszbein et al. 2009). The production of hundreds of papers containing thousands of references increased their visibility, legitimacy and credibility, leading to a huge number of conferences and reunions organized, financed and hosted by such organizations. As Sugiyama (2011, 262) argues, the national social policy technocrats could easily identify CCT programs as the “new professional norm within the development community.” This is confirmed by our case studies.

### 1.4. The national context of the adoption of CCT programs in Peru

Peru is one of the last “good student” arrivals at the World Bank, which implemented structural adjustment in the 1990s and turned to the social investment perspective in the 2000s by adopting a CCT program: *Juntos*.

Just like other incarnations of the CCT program, *Juntos* first addressed domestic problems. It was elaborated upon and implemented in 2005 under the presidency of Alejandro Toledo (2001–2006) to address two issues. The first concerned the intensification and multiplication of social conflicts throughout the territory (Tanaka 2006, Grompone 2009). These originated from the non-redistribution of the fruits of the economic growth experienced by the country since the return to democracy in 2000<sup>4</sup> after 10 years of Alberto Fujimori’s authoritarian regime<sup>5</sup> (Francke and Mendoza 2006). The second issue was that of the implementation, as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR), of policies for compensating the victims of political violence carried out by both the subversive forces (Shining Path and MRTA<sup>6</sup>) and the state. Unable to recognize all the victims of the internal conflict, including those of human rights abuse committed by the legitimate forces of the state, Alejandro Toledo’s government decided to implement a CCT program primarily targeted at the victims of violence.<sup>7</sup>

These two elements led Toledo’s government to adopt, in April 2005, the national plan of direct support to the poorest population – *Juntos*<sup>8</sup> – in a record time of seven months. The celerity of adopting the program only a few months before the April 2006 presidential elections raised criticisms regarding patrons’ intentions. The government contested these in two ways; firstly, by having the state agency of *Juntos* led by civil society representatives (Jones and Vargas 2007), and secondly, by the President’s emphasis on the international aspects of the CCT program’s effectiveness.

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4. Between 2001 and 2007, the GDP increased 6.3%

(www.bcrp.gob.pe/estadisticas), between 2003 and 2010, the increase was of 6.5% (CEPAL 2011) and 2010 of 6.5% (CEPAL 2011).

5. In 2005, 50% of the population were still in poverty, and 20% in extreme poverty (Herrera 2004).

6. *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru* (Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement).

7. Interview with the president of the MCLCP (Round table to fight against poverty) 29.01.2010.

8. Decreto Supremo 032-2005-PCM.



*Juntos* was, in fact, built on the models of the *Oportunidades* and *Bolsa Familia* programs, by an inter-ministry team advised by Mexican, Brazilian and other international civil servants. Institutional collaboration agreements were signed between the management committees of the *Oportunidades*, *Bolsa Familia* and *Juntos* CCT programs (Francke and Mendoza 2006). Finally, the World Bank and the IDB offered technical support, assessed *Juntos* at regular intervals and organized follow-up committees (Perova and Vakis 2009, 3).<sup>9</sup> Therefore, as one of the most important national scholars and *Juntos* supporters argued, “it was literally imported from Washington and adapted from a mixture of the Mexican-Brazilian models.”<sup>10</sup>

The implementation of *Juntos* fully integrated Peru into the international anti-poverty agenda and the social investment perspective. As the 2007 Peruvian anti-poverty law puts it, “we have to move from a vision based on social spending to one based on social investment.”<sup>11</sup> To be effective, this investment – through *Juntos* – had to adopt the principles of targeting the poorest among the population and co-responsibility through conditionality. The targeting principle was based on CVR recommendations and the poverty maps established during Fujimori’s authoritarian administration with the support of the World Bank (Alcázar 2009). The transfer of US\$ 30 per month to the mothers of children under 14 years of age depended upon a set of three conditions: the children had to attend school, the mothers had to attend nutrition workshops and they had to take their children to regular health checks (Arroyo 2010). In 2012, *Juntos* reached almost 1.5 million people, living in 649 municipalities.<sup>12</sup> It helped more than 8% of the total population, 21.2% of the poor and 60% of the extreme poor. In 2009, it represented 0.14% of the GDP and 1.68 % of social spending (Cecchini and Madariaga 2011).

*Juntos* first addressed domestic problems through social learning about neighbourhood experiences, a basis for the solutions that was considered “best practice” in the era of poverty reduction by the international development community. Although the Bolivian government of Evo

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9. In 2009, for example, a follow-up committee and of institutional assistance was set up for a two year period. Its objective was to improve the results of the program. It was composed of the national ministries of Health and Finance as well as international institutions: the World Bank and UNICEF (United Nations for Child’s Fund).

10. Interview, July 22, 2010.

11. Decreto Supremo 029–2007-PCM, 30 March 2007.

12. [www.juntos.gob.pe](http://www.juntos.gob.pe)

Morales was in opposition to the Peruvian political regime, the same trends characterized the CCT programs adopted in Bolivia.

### **1.5. The national context of the adoption of CCT programs in Bolivia**

After being one of the first testing-grounds on which the international financial institutions implemented structural adjustment policy in 1985, experimenting with safety-net policies in the 1990s and undergoing ten years of anti-neoliberal social mobilizations, Bolivia turned to the social investment perspective in the 2000s by adopting the CCT programs called “*bonos*.” They were presented by the Bolivian President Evo Morales (2005-2009) and his government as the pillars of a new social policy, replacements for the typical neoliberal anti-poverty programs.

During the social movement of the 2000s, the *Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS)*, led by Evo Morales, stood up as the defender of those “left behind” by neoliberalism: the “indigenous and poor peasants.” Once in power, the *MAS*, following the main aims of the social movement, implemented the nationalization of hydrocarbons and established the Constituent Assembly. In brief, the former enabled the recovery of national sovereignty over oil and related public policies on finance (Lacroix 2007) and the latter led to a new constitution (2009) that recognized and appreciated the indigenous people.

This Constitution resulted in a new model of development, put forth in the *Plano Nacional de Desarrollo Bolivia Digna, Soberana Productiva Democrática y para Vivir Bien*<sup>13</sup> (*PND*). According to this model, the transition initiated by the *MAS* government aimed at “the dismantling of colonialism and neoliberalism to build a multicultural and communitarian state” (*Ministerio de Planificación Desarrollo* 2006, xv-2). Following this trend, the *PND* elaborated a “policy of social protection and community integral development” to eradicate extreme poverty (Canavire-Bacarreza 2010, 36). While this new policy included a long-term draft of the social policies, only short-term programs such as the *bonos* materialized. The theoretical debates were an issue, particularly concerning the indigenous and peasant communities’ roles in the social policies, and the institutional instability of the Ministry of Development Planning.

The *bonos* were hastily constructed in order to render the redistribution of the “nationalization of the hydrocarbons” effective and to respond to the

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13. National Development Plan “Worthy, Sovereign, Productive, Democratic Bolivia to live well.”

population's more and more pressing demands for "real" changes in their daily lives.

The first one, the *Bono Juancito Pinto (BJP)*, was established in October 2006 under President Evo Morales's explicit orders as follows: it had to be ready for his birthday, its administrative cost could not exceed 6% of the budget and it had to include all children enrolled in the first eight years of public education throughout the country. This last measure was contrary to the recommendation given by the World Bank based on international studies, according to which the program should target the poorest regions. Only twenty days before the President's birthday, the *BJP* was built on an already existing education allowance, the "hope *Bono*,"<sup>14</sup> implemented between 2003 and 2005 in the city of El Alto. The *BJP* was an extension of this program to all children enrolled in public education. Only after that was the institutional and normative arrangement developed.<sup>15</sup>

The *BJP* transferred about US\$ 30 per year for children in the first eight years of public primary school and who had attended at least 80% of classes during the year (Unidad Ejecutora 2008, 1). The army, the only institution present in all parts of the country, was responsible for its distribution in the most remote areas. It reached 17.5% of the total population, 32.4% of the poor and 59.7% of the extreme poor (Cechini and Madariaga 2011). Its annual budget for 2010 was US\$ 54.5 million (Weisbrot et al. 2009, 16) and it represented 2.05% of social expenditure and 0.33% of the GDP (Cechini and Madariaga 2011).

The second Bolivian CCT program was the *Bono Juana Azurduy (BJA)*. It was the lowest common denominator of the social policies imagined but not accomplished by Evo Morales's government. Most of the social policy projects operationalizing the new Constitution and the *PND* included among their instruments a "mother-child" stipend, the objective of which was to reduce maternal and child mortality and malnutrition. For example, the *Plan de Eradicación de la Extrema Pobreza* (Extreme Poverty Eradication Plan), with the technical support of the World Bank, detailed a mother-child stipend which targeted the 52 poorest municipalities in the country. It was the foundation of the *BJA*: the President, to everybody's surprise, decided unilaterally to extend it to the whole country, and the *BJA* was born in May 2009. All women who were pregnant or breast-feeding, and mothers of children under two years of age who did not have healthcare insurance could benefit from it. The mothers had to be in possession of an identity card and the children's birth

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14. It was named after *bono Wawanakasataki*.

15. Interview with the first *BJP* director.

certificates. They received the equivalent to US\$ 260 over a period of 33 months, on the conditions of attending pre- and postnatal health checks and institutional delivery. In 2010, the *BJA* reached 3.5% of the total population, 6.4% of the poor and 10% of the extreme poor. It accounted for 1.41% of social spending, which represented 0.22% of the GDP (Cecchini and Madariaga 2011). This program was managed by the Ministry of Health and Sports, and 600 doctors were hired to work exclusively on the *BJA*, implementing and monitoring it in the field.

Although their differences in terms of selection principles (the targeting in Peru versus the universal tendency in Bolivia), both *Juntos* and *Bonos* were conditional, and these conditions assumed the same gender norms and representations. It is their similarities that will be explored next.

## **2. Maternalism at the core of the social investment perspective of CCT programs**

A general consensus prevailed regarding CCT programs: they were successful at meeting their main purpose in terms of human development by improving school attendance, children's nutrition and health, and empowering women. This consensus asserted to be "gender sensitive," but without adopting a gender equality discourse. Indeed, the same social representation of gender relations dominated all the stakeholder discourses: women are mothers. This consensus was at the core of the maternalism underlying the social investment perspective in Peru and Bolivia.

Built in the late 1990s in a post-Beijing and gender-sensitive world, which was becoming consciously concerned about the specific problem of "women in poverty", CCT programs claimed to be gender aware. The cognitive and instrumental dimensions of the emerging social investment referential were expressed by an algorithm that assumed that giving money to women empowered them and promoted gender equality (Molyneux 2008, 22). This argument was shared by both the Bolivian and the Peruvian program developers.

For one civil servant of *Juntos*, this program "has a strong gender perspective because it is directly transferred to women, as the head of the household."<sup>16</sup> The same idea was repeated by a *BJA* officer in Bolivia:

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16. Interview January 12, 2010.

There is also a form of empowerment of the mothers who receive the money. Let's say the mother can spend for the home benefit. We especially recommend the Mom to buy food for the infant and herself when she expects family [when she is pregnant] (...). It is also a way to empower the mother.<sup>17</sup>

International evidence was used to support and legitimize this argument, that women were empowered by being the ones to receive the stipend, as explained by one of the *Juntos* targeting technocrats:

*Juntos* was targeted at those regions where woman are subjected to serious violence [gender violence and violence from internal conflict]. Then, by giving them 100 soles permits us to empower them, as international institutions, such as the World Bank or the IDD, say.<sup>18</sup>

Even if CCT programs, by transferring the stipend to the women, could have some positive effects on them – as stressed also by CCT feminist literature (Molyneux 2008, Aparecido 2009, Feijoo 2007, Klein 2005, Paz 2010, Adato et al. 2000, Escobar Latapí and Gonzalez de la Rocha 2004, Luccisano 2000, Nagels 2013) – these positive effects remained largely at individual and subjective levels. Moreover, these programs were closely guided by maternalism, which reinforced the gender labour division as the main normative dimension of the emerging referential.

This normative dimension was first expressed by the rejection of the men of the household and the decision to transfer the money to the women. A clear dichotomy was seen between men and women, fathers and mothers, and in this case, vice was associated with the former and virtues with the latter. The women were represented as better household managers, whereas the men would surely spend the subsidy for personal ends or on vices such as alcohol. Again, this gender representation took place in both countries. For example, in Peru, someone responsible for the decentralization of social programs estimated that

the stipend should be transferred to the women because they are more responsible and because in those areas where this stipend is located [the Andes], men dedicate it to other activity, such as alcohol or others vices.<sup>19</sup>

In Bolivia, the *BJA* coordinator for La Paz shared this negative representation of men as irresponsible:

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17. Interview August 13, 2010.

18. Interview January 27, 2010.

19. Interview December 11, 2008.

If they [men] receive money for their children, they say “celebrate first”: two small beers, then 4, 8, 10, 12... and at 6:00 the next morning, there is no more money for the baby. (...) Because the idiosyncrasies of our people are that the man who receives the money will ever squander it on alcoholic beverages.<sup>20</sup>

Even if these representations are negative about men, they still reinforce the norms that confine women to the household, and the traditional gender hierarchies in which men are related to the public sphere and are seen as the only breadwinner in the household. Indeed, the cognitive dimension present in the normative sexual labour division is based on a differentialist rhetoric.

A second discourse portrays women only as mothers. The mothers are seen as the key to securing improvements in their life opportunities of their children, both born and unborn. This is the central instrumental dimension of the emerging social investment referential. The principles of the action of the state are expressed by the following algorithm: if the public action is invested in women, then the children’s well-being improves. Both *BJA* and *Juntos* used women as intermediaries to reach children. International “proof” was at the root of the legitimacy of the argument for “cost-effective” investment in the women. One of the most prominent scholar supporters of *Juntos* in Peru explained:

This kind of program exists in 120 countries and there are studies which demonstrate the cost-effective result when resources pass through the women, if the money is transferred to a mother with children at school age. For example, in Bangladesh, Pakistan and elsewhere, it is an accepted truth and [thus] here too it is applied.<sup>21</sup>

The same argument was used by an UDAPE<sup>22</sup> researcher working on the details of *bonos*:

Not only here but in different countries, [it is proved] that the person who handles better the household money is the woman (...) the woman knows best the child, if he is being healed or not, when he is ill (...).<sup>23</sup>

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20. Interview August 13, 2010.

21. Interview January 22, 2010.

22. *Unidad de Análisis de Políticas Sociales y Económicas* (Social and Economic Policy Analysis Unit), Research Center of the Development Planification Minister.

23. Interview August 23, 2010.

The international evidence that gave CCT programs legitimacy became the real norm: it expressed what was “desirable”, what had to be. Then, in the name of the effectiveness of the public investment, the use of the women’s reproductive role was justified as it would improve the children’s well-being. For example, using the women as intermediaries to reach their children as part of the program was an explicit diminishment of pregnant women to the children they carried, as expressed by a *Juntos* worker:

If [the mother] is well fed, then that will be a healthy baby (...) it is necessary to control the respect of health conditionality in general but even more so with pregnant women because the lives of two people are concerned!<sup>24</sup>

In Bolivia, the operative chief of the *BJA* explained this instrumentalization of female reproductive roles and their subsequent reinforcement:

Generally in Bolivia (...) the important person for health, it is the mother more than the father. The mother has more relationship with the child to go to health check-ups; this is not the case with dad. And the aim is to strengthen this aspect, that is to say, the power that the mother has in [children] health.<sup>25</sup>

These discourses were consensual, revealing the hegemonic character of the instrumental, normative and cognitive dimensions of the gender aspect of the social investment perspective as expressed in CCT programs. For the construction of this referential, women, and not men, are seen as individually responsible for social well-being. Or more precisely, it is the women’s contribution as mothers that is valued by the CCT program as a contribution to general well-being (Jenson 2011, 31). Through these programs, the state’s authority rewards the status of mother and strengthens maternalism (Molyneux 2008, 11). As Molyneux argues in the case of the *Oportunidades*, women are the “*conduit of policy* in the sense that resources channelled through them are expected to translate into greater improvements in the well-being of children and the family as a whole” (Molyneux 2007, 37). Here is the core instrumental dimension of maternalism: the CCT programs make use of the reproductive and domestic female role, based on the assumption that the women are naturally predisposed to serve their family and others. Barrig’s (1992, 11)

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24. Interview in San Miguel, July 22, 2010.

25. Interview August 13, 2010.

affirmation remains valid: the “woman, her time, her energy and her labour are converted into the most effective instrument to execute social programs.” Consciously or not, these CCT programs exploit the image (Jobert and Muller 1987) according to which the woman as a mother is “at the service of the others.” The free contribution of women “in the fight against poverty is then, deliberately or not, ‘at the service’ of the reduction of social public expenditure” (Daeren 2004, 6).

One consequence of this referential instrumental dimension is the men’s absence from the CCT programs, reinforcing the normative dimension of the sexual labour division. As long as the men remain excluded from reproductive tasks and the private sphere, the position of women within societies cannot change. Since the women are only represented as mothers and wives, these programs involve the propagation of their traditional roles: the gender labour divisions are ratified and the inequalities between the sexes reinforced (Marques-Pereira 1996, 19-20). So, Jobert and Muller’s (1987) statement that the public policy referential reveals and reproduces social inequalities is confirmed. Indeed, the gender labour division, consolidated by the normative dimension of CCT programs, serves men’s interests, both practically and strategically (Molyneux 1985). In everyday life, men have more time to carry out income generating activity, but also to rest, socialize or be entertained. Avoiding domestic work and reproductive tasks is in their practical interest and consolidates their strategic interest, enabling them to be maintained in a dominant position in relation to women (Anderson 1991, 299-300).

The cognitive and normative dimensions, based on differentialist rhetoric, naturalize the sexual social roles and invisibilizes the women’s “natural” reproductive and domestic work. The participation of women in CCT programs therefore entails additional work for them. This extra work reinforces gender inequalities (Nagels 2011, 126), and can in addition impoverish the women, and thus renders the programs counter-productive in the fight against poverty. Indeed, the time devoted to the program – not taken into account since it is invisibilized – is time potentially “stolen” from income-generating activities (Molyneux 2007, 37). Moreover, the CCT programs’ blindness towards women’s needs, as a gender and as individuals, in the name of prioritizing their children, can be counterproductive for the well-being of those same children in later life. In fact, an emancipated woman with access to education, health and the labour market has a better chance of improving her children’s quality of life.



In light of these observations, the notion of the “maternalization of social policies” developed by Aguirre (1998, 164) remains valid. Women-mothers play an intermediary role in social policies and traditional gender roles are reinforced. According to the analysis of Molyneux (200, 42), these social programs “retraditionalize the family, marginalize men from domestic and childcare responsibilities and, as Chant suggests in a particularly apposite phrase, ‘feminize the responsibility for poverty.’” In fact, Chant (2008) proposes replacing the notion of the “feminization of poverty” with the “feminization of responsibility and obligation” linked to poverty. The “feminization of responsibility” is intended to convey the idea that women are assuming greater liability for dealing with poverty, while the “feminisation of obligation” conveys the idea that they have no choice other than to do so” (Chant 2008, 191).

### **Concluding remarks**

In conclusion, the main argument of this work is that CCT programs are based on the social investment perspective, which contains the gender cognitive structures belonging to maternalism. This argument is constructed through the analysis of the implementation of the Peruvian and Bolivian CCT programs. Although Peru pretended to be at the peak of liberal democracy and Bolivia wanted to be revolutionary, they adopted the same social policies, ones that reproduce and reinforce the old Latin American gender representation at the core of the social policy referential: maternalism. According to Jobert and Muller (1987), central to this referential are: the value of equity at the beginning (for the children and not for the adults, which is the difference between that and equality); the sexual norms of the labour division; the algorithm “if the state invests in the women, the children’s well-being will improve”, and the image of “good mothers at the service of others”.

Three remarks will conclude this work. After reviewing the processes of adoption of CCT programs in Peru and Bolivia, and the analysis of the gender representation of their referential, we can affirm that they are no longer the product of a top-down imposition from international organizations to national states, but rather a new form of cooperation between actors at diverse levels (national, international and transnational) with more or less the same weight. Although international performance is not central to this process, it configures the norms and decides what the “good practices” are. The absence of a real gender perspective in these processes is surprising. Further research will attempt to explain why there is such a gap between the international “gender and development” community and the CCT

program community. How can we explain the absence of national and transnational “femocrats” from the epistemic communities of CCT programs, or weakness of the voices of those present?

Moreover, as we have seen, the child centrality of the CCT programs leaves in the shadows the women who provide care work for free, essential to the viability of these programs. As Molyneux (2006, 439) argued, “the social relations of the reproduction remain unproblematized, and the work performed easily naturalized.” A shift in the social policies focused on women and children has occurred, moving from the feminist vision of childcare as a cornerstone of women’s citizenship that was dominant in the 1960s and 70s to the social investment perspective. “Investing” in the children means excluding the women from claims of autonomy and renders invisible problems of “class, gender, and other structures of inequality among adults” (Dobrowolsky and Jenson 2004, 155).

Finally, it is assumed that the maternalist consensus at international, transnational and national levels reveals the cognitive, normative and instrumental dimensions of the gender side of the social investment perspective, restricting the women’s citizenship and the process of individuation. Based on a differentialist rhetoric, the maternalist referential means that women are subject to law mostly as mothers, and their citizenship rights are granted as dependents on others and not as full citizens. Therefore, these programs do not promote the emancipation of the women from marital, nor from patriarchal, domination (Jelin 1998). Far from being recognized as individual citizens, equal in rights and in duties, they seem more than ever to be seen only as their family role. They are excluded from being subjects with rights, and as long as there is no consideration of their needs they will continue to be included merely as the object-intermediaries of social policies in their reproductive roles.

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