



Poverty and education from the Programa Bolsa Família booklets, guides and manuals (2006 – 2014)

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ABSTRACT. The objective of this study was to analyze the education and poverty concepts present in material published from 2006 and 2014 that speak directly to beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família Program (PBF), a Brazilian federal cash transfer program. The assumption of the research was that the wordings are composed of material, cultural, historical and social aspects. The publications understand poverty in multiple dimensions, such as a lack of access to healthy food and denial of rights. Education has been recognized as an important means for overcoming socioeconomic vulnerabilities. The discursive genre of the material includes a prescriptive and disciplinarian character; however, this feature has been losing strength over the years of publications.

Keywords: education, Bolsa Família program, booklets, citizenship, social rights, cash transfer.

Pobreza e educação a partir de cartilhas, guias e manuais do Programa Bolsa Família (2006 – 2014)

RESUMO. O objetivo desse trabalho foi analisar concepções de educação e pobreza presentes em materiais publicados entre 2006 e 2014 que falam diretamente aos beneficiários do Programa Bolsa Família (PBF). A pesquisa foi pautada no pressuposto de que os dizeres são constituídos por aspectos materiais, culturais, históricos e sociais. As publicações trataram a pobreza por múltiplas dimensões, tais como falta de acesso à alimentação saudável e negação de direitos. A educação foi reconhecida como importante instrumento para a superação das vulnerabilidades socioeconômicas. O gênero discursivo dos materiais possui caráter prescritivo e disciplinador, aspecto que foi perdendo força ao longo das publicações.

Palavras-chaves: educação, programa bolsa família, cartilhas, cidadania, direitos sociais, transferência de renda.

Pobreza y educación a partir de cartillas, guías y manuales del Programa Bolsa Família (2006 – 2014)

RESUMEN. El objetivo de este trabajo fue analizar las concepciones de educación y pobreza presentes en materiales publicados entre 2006 y 2014 que hablan directamente a los beneficiarios del Programa Bolsa Família (PBF). La investigación fue basada en el presupuesto de que los contenidos son constituidos por aspectos materiales, culturales, históricos y sociales. Las publicaciones trataron la pobreza por múltiples dimensiones, tales como falta de acceso a la alimentación saludable y negación de derechos. La educación fue reconocida como importante instrumento para la superación de las vulnerabilidades socioeconómicas. El género discursivo de los materiales posee carácter prescriptivo y disciplinario, aspecto que fue perdiendo fuerza a lo largo de las publicaciones.

Palabras clave: educación, programa bolsa familia, cartillas, ciudadanía, derechos sociales, transferencia de renta.

Introduction

The Bolsa Família Program (BFP) is a Cash Transfer Program (CTP), established in 2003, and is linked to the Brazilian Social Protection System (SPS). It consists of a benefit provided to poor or extremely poor families, defined by a cutoff line that takes into account the monthly family income *per capita*, with the objective of ensuring the offer and access to basic social rights, as well as promoting

citizenship and immediately alleviating poverty by transferring income.

In order to participate in the program, it is necessary to meet some requirements, such as: the supervision of vaccination and health cards of children up to 7 years old; supervision of pregnant women between 14 and 44 years old; minimum school attendance of 85% for children and adolescents between six and 15 years old, and

minimum school attendance of 75% for those between 16 and 17 years old. Children up to 15 years old in situations of risk or removed from child labor by the Program for the Eradication of Child Labor must participate in the Services for Family Living and Bond Strengthening with a minimum attendance of 85% of the monthly hourly load (Condicionabilidades, 2015). With respect to the 85% attendance requirement for children and adolescents, the fact that for non-beneficiaries this percentage is 10 points lower, a feature that will be discussed later.

The conditions related to health and school attendance are justified by the intention of the public power to guarantee the offering of basic social rights, but also as a way of promoting the increase of the capacities of the beneficiaries. As such, the requirements are based on the presupposition that access to these rights will promote the acquisition of human capital on the part of the children of poor families and, therefore, achieve greater possibilities of overcoming the conditions of vulnerability in the future (Pires, 2013)¹.

The intention of this article is to present and discuss some results of a Master's research project that analyzed the Bolsa Família program's publications, published by the National Bureau of Income and Citizenship (Senarc) of the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS), between 2006 and 2014. The publications speak directly the beneficiaries of this cash transfer policy about amounts, dates, and payment locations of the benefit, conditions, and other terms. Three years passed between the establishment of the program and the first publication, which is justified, according to information provided by the employees of Senarc, by the time period needed for the creation of the materials.

Considering the importance that the program places on institutionalized formal education as a way of overcoming poverty, recognized in the school attendance requirement, the objectives of this paper were to analyze which concepts of poverty and education are present in the Bolsa Família Program booklets, guides, and manuals written for the beneficiaries of this cash transfer policy and, at the same time, determine the discursive formations related to the socioeconomic vulnerabilities and education present in the referenced materials.

The theoretical and methodological inspirations for this research include some influence of French discourse analysis, such as the understanding that

discourses are composed of the material, cultural, historical, and social aspects of a society, and that beyond what is said, it is necessary to analyze what is not said. These latter concepts can be linked, among other factors, to the discourse genre of the materials, which does not necessarily involve the detailed development of determined subjects or contradictions (Orlandi, 1995).

In this study, all the publications found on the MDS virtual site and those sent in printed form by Senarc were analyzed. As mentioned above, the materials were classified as booklets, guides, and manuals; however, as there is no division between the last two on the Ministry's site, one of the publications seen in Figure 1 below was classified under the category of guides and manuals.

The titles, years of publication, type of materials, and the number of pages are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of booklets, guides and manuals published for beneficiaries.

Title	Year	Type of material	Pages
Bolsa Família: agenda of Family commitments	2006	Booklet	36
Bolsa Família Program: Family Agenda	2009b	Booklet	42
Financial Education for Beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família Program	2009c	Booklet	22
Bolsa Família: Cash transfer and support for families in accessing health and education	2009a	Booklet	17
Healthy Regional Preparations: More health on the tables of BFP families	2010	Guides and Manuals	56
Bolsa Família: Cash transfer and support for families in accessing health, education, and social assistance	2012	Booklet	18
Bolsa Família: Cash transfer and support for families in accessing health, education, and social assistance	2014	Booklet	18

Source: Created by the authors from data provided by C. Colmanetti (2014)² and the virtual site of the Ministry for Social Development and Fight Against Hunger (MDS, 2014b).

In accordance with the Communications Department of the MDS, the printed materials are distributed to the beneficiaries by governments. However, the department confirmed that there is no way to estimate how many recipients actually received the publications, since the distribution is the responsibility of the municipalities. Nonetheless, all the materials were available on the Ministry of Social Development's website, at least during the year of 2015 when the search for these materials was completed.

Different technical areas, as well as departments specialized in the topics of the materials designed for the beneficiaries, participated in the development and validation of the publications, with the support of Senarc's/MDS's training and communications teams. In some cases, there are texts produced by the

¹ For a critical view about the incorporation of human capital in Cash Transfer Programs, see Fonseca (2009).

² Personal communication through e-mail.

Communications Department of the MDS or by contracted consultants, but all the materials were revised and validated by the technical areas related to each theme.

In search of professionals that took part in the creation and/or validation of the materials, we had access to 17 names. By way of the CNPq Lattes platform, we obtained information about the educational background of ten professionals. The rest of the names were not found in this database of *curricula vitae*. Regarding undergraduate education, two are from the area of health, one from exact sciences, two from applied social sciences, one from engineering, one from human sciences, and three from other areas in accordance with CNPq's table of areas of knowledge. Regarding postgraduate education or specializations, six professionals added programs in public policy or governmental management to their education, and five others completed programs in other areas linked to social policies.

The intersectionality of the teams that composed the publications is notable. On one hand, it is important to highlight that in the search for the educational backgrounds, we did not find professionals in the area of education. Such detail is notable mainly due to the fact that one of the pillars of the Bolsa Família program for overcoming intergenerational poverty is the guarantee of access to institutionalized formal education.

Taking into account the objectives of this study, we now present the results of the research. As such, we have divided this article into two parts. The first deals with the concepts of poverty present in the materials, which were understood as the lack or low quality of nutrition and low access to social rights. These two concepts were utilized here as most relevant in relation to other definitions, as the materials selected characterized socioeconomic vulnerabilities and were described in detail in the Master's thesis which inspired this article.

In the second part, upon consideration of the discourse genre of the analyzed publications itself, and the objectives of the materials, we noted that school attendance and education were represented in a simplified, prescriptive and disciplinary way, through a series of bureaucratic steps intended to educate the families about the actions considered important for overcoming poverty. Regarding this aspect, it is necessary to call attention to the difficulty of elaborating materials that represent all of the cultural differences of a country with the geographical expanse and heterogeneity of social problems such as Brazil.

Some studies, such as those developed by Carin Klein (2007, 2012), have investigated the official documents of state or federal cash transfer programs. In the case of this study, research undertaken in January and February 2015 in the Scielo Capes Journal Portal database did not find studies with the objective of investigating booklets, guides, and manuals of the Bolsa Família program³.

Poverty in Bolsa Família program booklets, guides, and manuals

Establishing the basis of analysis as what is said and not said about socioeconomic vulnerabilities, the repetition of some words, phrases, and expressions present in the materials provided indications of how to understand the way poverty is seen by the entities that wrote and/or produced these publications. Words such as 'nutrition,' 'rights,' 'income,' 'help,' 'honesty,' and 'eligibility' suggest how Senarc/MDS interpret the issue.

In each publication there seemed to be a concern with the specific dimension of poverty. In 2006, the focus of the program was overcoming vulnerabilities by offering food and food security. As such, instead of using the word 'poverty,' the material stated that the main objective was "[...] to guarantee the right to adequate nourishment, with preference for people with difficulties accessing food" (Brasil, 2006, p. 4).

As in the 2006 booklet, the first publication in 2009 also demonstrated the objective of promoting food security and providing knowledge about how to achieve healthy nourishment. The passage below makes use of verbs in the imperative tense in order to advise the beneficiaries about the cited objectives.

Healthy nutrition for all

Make at least three meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and two healthy snacks per day;

eat beans with rice every day;

also include in meals corn, wheat, bread, pasta, potatoes, manioc root, vegetables, greens, milk, cheese, meats, poultry, fish, or eggs;

remove the visible fat from meat and the skin from poultry before preparing;

avoid consuming large quantities of oil;

pay attention to the nutrition labels and expiration dates;

reduce the consumption of processed foods;

³ The searches in the Scielo and Capes databases used the search terms 'Bolsa Família program', 'education', and 'poverty'; a total of 1,155 papers were found in both journal portals. A reading of the titles and the abstracts of these papers did not indicate research focused on the analysis of publications for beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família program. Use of the search terms 'booklets', 'guides', and 'manuals' did not return any results.

drink six to eight cups of water per day;

to make your life healthier, get at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day and avoid alcoholic drinks and smoking (Brasil, 2009a, p. 40).

The passage above displays the intentions of the publication and its prescriptive nature, characteristic of booklet discourse genre itself. In talking about the types of foods, modes of preparation and suggestion to exercise, the publication contributes by encouraging recipients to achieve healthy nutrition. On the other hand, although the explanation about the best foods to consume for a healthy diet favors provisions available to people with low incomes, the patterns of eating and body care described may be in many cases unattainable, considering the lifestyle of the beneficiaries. For example, the number of people in a poor family may decide the quantity of daily meals, making it difficult for all to eat at least five times a day, with three meals and two snacks. The consumption and access to the determined products, considered important for a healthy diet, also depend on innumerable other factors, such as the region in which a person is located, their income, or the quality of food available. Natural products without pesticides in general are more expensive than industrialized products, such that the latter become the more economically accessible option, or sometimes, the only option. In the same way, the inclusion of meat, poultry, and fish in meals could be related to a lack of financial resources for acquiring these goods rather than a lack of knowledge or interest in including them on the monthly menu.

In another passage, utilizing what the field of medicine, through scientific studies, has conventionalized said about the best way to feed children up to two years of age, the booklet's text reads:

Nursing

A mother's milk is the best food for an infant. The more an infant nurses, the more a mother produces milk [...] The infant should drink only the mother's milk up to six months. After six months, the infant should begin to consume other foods, but should also continue to nurse up to two year of age or more (Brasil, 2006, p. 24).

The text was extracted from the Health Commitments found in the 2006 material. We recognize the importance of advising and educating about the ideal nursing period; however, the use of the word 'should' leaves little space for considering situations in which nursing is not possible, such as women who can't produce

milk, a lack of access to milk banks, and a lack of access to maternal leave of four to six months, considering that a large part of beneficiaries may not have any formal employment. In addition, the emphasis on 'the mother's milk' establishes nursing as a maternal function, failing to recognize other possibilities of family arrangements present in recipient families in the Bolsa Família program.

In the booklets with the title *Bolsa Família: cash transfer and support for families in accessing health, education, and social assistance*, published in 2012 and 2014, each time that health is mentioned in the publications, it refers to diet. Figure 1 illustrates the concern with this aspect. A boy is eating at the table, with a woman in front of him, who could be his mother, holding a box with different types of food *in natura*. Such an illustration denotes a preoccupation with a healthy diet and with teaching what that means, even though the purchase of the quantity of food portrayed in the picture of the box could be worth the entire monthly payment of the program.



Figure 1. Mother and children in the 2006 Agenda.

Source: (Brasil, 2006, p. 4-5).

In this first part of the article, we addressed the way in which the first materials created for the recipients understand poverty mainly in terms of the lack of nutritionally adequate food. In the next section, we will observe that socioeconomic vulnerability is involved with other factors, such as a deficiency in the availability of education and health as human rights.

Poverty as negation of access to social rights

In the 2006 booklet, the introduction in the material explained that the reader- beneficiary of the Bolsa Família program- "[...] will see the rights and

duties of families attended by the program” (Brasil, 2006, p. 4). Instead of ‘to exercise’, the verb ‘to see’ is used for referring to ‘rights’, suggesting that, in accordance with the meaning of the words used, that poor people are subjects who need to see that they have rights, since many times those rights are hidden.

The discourses promote forgetfulness while encouraging the sensation that the rights of the individuals were always somewhere waiting for them, without considering the fact that these rights are results of collective struggles, something that will be seen in relation to the actions of social movements in the 1990s, for example.

Among the objectives of the Bolsa Família program is the removal of beneficiaries from poverty by offering basic services and citizenship. The title of the Agenda that emphasizes Family Commitments and the use of *should* implies a political and moral discussion, in that nothing can be given to the poor without receiving something in exchange. On the other hand, the establishment of obligations between government and beneficiaries is not always seen as something pejorative by those who take part in the program.

According to Pires (2013), interviews with beneficiaries in the city of Campinas (SP) revealed the money that the Bolsa Família payment represents a ‘small part’ of the taxes that are responsibilities of the recipients in the program. As such, the income from the benefit is not something one has, but ‘gets’ in exchange for paying taxes.

The author demonstrated the establishment of exchange cycle of gifts in terms of four characteristics, and we highlight two of them:

[...] the establishment of a cycle of exchange and reciprocity in a temporal dimension, in which the moments of giving, receiving, and retribution are clearly configured [...] the cycle of benefits and counterbenefits produces a commitment, an alliance between partners, involving the creation of a feeling of belonging on the part of the recipients and the production of social bonds between them and the State (Pires, 2013, p. 174).

In terms of the establishment of these obligations, it is necessary to highlight the existence of not only the negative aspect of the exchange-gift relationship, but also the importance of the relationship between exchange and reciprocity for the establishment of social ties and a sense of belonging.

In some passages of the booklets, guides, and manuals, we note that the Bolsa Família program promotes the access to rights which, many times, the poor did not have before enrolling in the program, such as “The Federal Government also promotes the access for Bolsa Família families to education and health” (Brasil, 2006, p. 6).

Ask your doctor, nurse, or community health agent about vaccines and the neonatal heel prick test. They are free and can prevent illnesses [...]. Your child, a new citizen. Soon after birth, the child should be registered. It is free, it is a right of the child and it is the duty of the parents (Brasil, 2006, p. 24).

The examples cited are passages from the 2006 publication. In the referenced material, rights related to health, education, and citizenship seem to be linked to the Bolsa Família program. This cash transfer policy meant a greater possibility for ensuring basic social rights for the beneficiaries, either by means of conditions, or through the requirement that governments promote greater accessibility and quality of services. However, in the publication there is a greater emphasis on the obligations of the recipients than on the fact that the guaranteed rights are, in fact, constitutional and universal.

Access to documentation can also be seen as a right that should be a guarantee for all citizens. In the materials, this factor is illustrated mainly with a worker’s card. In the 2009 Agenda, there is a figure of a man holding this kind of document (Figure 2). This representation exemplifies the concern of the program in promoting opportunities for the beneficiaries to be included in the formal job market, but also in instilling the idea that the Bolsa Família program does not represent a decrease in jobs. On the other hand, this image gives us the idea of the so-called ‘regulated citizenship,’ as described by Santos (1979), in which the term ‘citizen’ in Brazil for a long time applied only to workers with a signed document.

Upon making explicit the responsibilities of the governments in relation to the poor population, the publications after the 2006 booklet suggest a step forward in recognizing that the three spheres of government should act on guaranteeing rights instead of demanding compensation. It represents a positive aspect, as the weight of the requirements for the beneficiaries is reduced.



Figure 2. Citizenship and work.

Source: (Brasil, 2009a, p. 29).

It is important to remember that all Brazilians have rights to the services of health and education. This is guaranteed in the Federal Constitution. For this reason, the conditions are also responsibilities of the public power. This means that the governments, in meeting their responsibilities, should offer quality services to all citizens. In addition to this, they should track that all conditions are met in order to identify difficulties in access to these rights, and to seek, in an active way, the most socially vulnerable families. Tracking the families that do not meet the conditions is an important agenda for the integration of the Bolsa Família program and the Program for Integral Attention to Families (PAIF) (Brasil, 2009b, p. 9).

Food and nutrition are fundamental human rights registered in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and incorporated, recently, in the sixth article of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Brazil (Brasil, 2010, p. 5).

In terms of the access to the constitutional rights of health and education, we emphasize the connection between those rights and exercising citizenship. All the publications relate the program with the guarantee of citizenship through accessing social services and improving income. An example of this statement is in the following passage from the 2014 booklet: "Learn a little more about the Bolsa Família program and see how it can contribute to improving the income of Brazilian families, reinforcing the exercise of citizenship" (Brasil, 2014a, p. 3).

Parts of the discourse in the publications connect the concept of citizenship to the existence of income, and, therefore, circumscribe it in an understanding of citizenship different from that conceived in the social movements of the 1990s. For Dagnino (2004), for example, in the 1990s the fight

for redemocratizing Brazil sought more active participation in the ways in which the political system was structured, in terms of power relations. In this period diverse social movements emerged and the concept of a 'new citizenship' was conceived (Dagnino, 2004), which sought the recognition of the right to have rights and to participate in their creation.

Paoli (1989) also analyzed the question of citizenship in Brazil, in addition to looking at democracy in terms of social movements. The author stated that such movements managed to create a cultural horizon for reestablishing the inventiveness of the notions of 'right' and 'citizenship,' in that these serve as an instrument for accessing the political dimension of social life. According to Paoli (1989), the social movements could be seen as becoming endowed with the revindications for greater visibility and the externalization of conflicts, possessing autonomy in the search for social justice and greater participation in the mechanisms for the information, decision, and creation of rights.

In this way, the classic vision of the concepts of rights and citizenship, which was to have the right to representation by voting and the guarantee of civil liberty with the individual as a unit, were reformulated through a new frame of reference, in which citizenship was to be grounded in collectiveness (Paoli, 1989).

Through the analyses performed in this study we noted that the Bolsa Família program has not developed the expansion of citizenship by constructing a collective subject, but almost in an individual/family way, through the feeling that the beneficiary is linked to the State by way of the conditions and the receipt of income. Although this characteristic should be considered an important step towards recognizing the citizenship of the socioeconomically vulnerable part of the population, it is necessary to consider that such a definition atomizes the conception and struggle for rights.

We recognize that the publications characterized poverty in terms of the aspects beyond a low-income level, also including inadequate nutrition and the access to the rights to health and education. In this sense, we mention the points made by Amartya Sen (2010) about this issue. For the author, to characterize poverty and inequality only in terms of income inequality restricts and neglects other kinds of disparities that exist, making it necessary to measure and consider such aspects in terms of other hardships, such as those related to unemployment, illness, low levels of instruction and social exclusion.

Taking into account the fact that education is a

right that the program seeks to guarantee, the following section addresses the concepts of education that can be taken from the studied materials.

How education is described in the booklets, guides, and manuals of the Bolsa Família program

The requirement for school attendance suggests that in order to achieve the objectives of the program (removing families from poverty through income transfer and guaranteeing rights); it is necessary to ensure access to formalized institutional education. As such, the discussions to follow demonstrate that the publications were composed of discourses that seek to educate the beneficiaries about their obligations in relation to this income transfer policy, along with the most adequate ways to take care of the health and education of those who take part in the policy.

We do not deny the importance of school education as one of the primary means of overcoming intergenerational poverty, but it is necessary to reflect on the role performed by educational institutions. According to Reimers (2000), the school has been an important instrument for the continuity of exclusionary logic, which perpetuates inequality through five educational processes: (1) differentiated access to levels of education; (2) students with better financial conditions tend to be concentrated in schools better prepared to take on the education of the students and support the work of the educators; (3) the school is configured as an instrument of social segregation; (4) the more cultural and material capital provided by the parents, the more cultural and material resources will be available for the children's opportunities; and (5) the inexistence of a project which seeks to promote social justice in the school. Therefore, it is necessary to recall the importance of the studies by Bourdieu e Passeron (2011) about the French school system in the 1960s and 1970s in relation to the essentially conservative role performed by the schools with respect to the reproduction of social inequalities.

In the excerpts below, we see the connection between education and a series of bureaucratic steps that should be followed by the beneficiaries.

Education Commitments

[...] Enroll children and adolescents 6 to 15 years old in school.

Ensure attendance of at least 85% of classes each month. If classes are missed, it is necessary to inform the school and explain the reason [...] (Brasil, 2006, p. 18).

Education commitments:

[...] Enroll children and adolescents 6 to 17 years old in school;

Ensure school attendance of at least 85% of classes for children and adolescents and at least 75% for youth from 16 to 17 years old [...] (Brasil, 2009a, p. 19).

Between the 2006 Agenda and the 2009 publication, there was an extension of benefits to adolescents older than 15 years of age, an aspect that denoted an improvement in the program in terms of seeking to assist a greater number of people in situations of socioeconomic vulnerability and guaranteeing the access and permanence of youth in the last years of basic and high school education. Another alteration in 2009 was a lessening of the authoritative tone when referring to the need to inform the reason for children and adolescents that miss class. This indicates an important advancement, as many mothers have shown difficulties in ensuring the minimum school attendance of their children, especially older ones (Feijó & Pires, 2015; Silva & Pires, 2015).

In spite of the highlighted improvements, some issues were not mentioned due to the complexity that their detailed discussion would demand, such as the difficulty in accessing schools, either due to distance or the precariousness of the transport offered to students, which can make reaching the minimum attendance requirement difficult.

As observed in the first part of this study, the beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família program must reach ten percentage points for school attendance more than a non-recipient student between six and 15 years old. As such, even though the publications fulfill their purpose of informing the conditions of the program, we interpret that this requirement could be seen as a kind 'toll' in order to deserve the funds paid by the income transfer policy.

In terms of the results of the program, the 2014 booklet said:

In education, the Bolsa Família program helps to keep students in school and corrects the trajectory of these students. The abandonment rates, both in basic and high school education, are lower among students that are beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família program than among the rest of the students in the public school system. In addition, the passing rates, that in the beginning of basic education are a little lower for Bolsa Família students, are inverted in high school. In other words, more young people in the Bolsa Família program pass, which gives them the opportunity for a better future (Brasil, 2014a, p. 17).

The term 'low rates of passing' substitutes the term 'failure' which has a stronger negative connotation. This example demonstrates the use of determined words or expressions over others, which can promote specific and desirable interpretations. With 'correct' and 'invert', the sense is given, that in spite of low passing rates among students in the first years of basic education, high school students are rescued.

The process of educating by meeting requirements is not only for children and adolescents by way of school attendance, but also for the families that are 'educated' about how to deal with factors that involve the program, the search for better conditions of life and overcoming the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

Education of families as a means of promoting overcoming poverty.

The publications analyzed imply that the families, children and adolescents of school age should be educated in order to look for better ways to face vulnerabilities. We observe the following examples of instructions regarding the best way to organize the family budget.

"It is important that everyone learn to save and avoid getting into debt. When a member of the family spends more than what is earned, this hurts the whole family [...]" (Brasil, 2009c, p. 5).

Mrs. Joana intended to buy 2 kilograms of sugar costing R\$ 1, 50. However, she also found a 1-kilogram package costing R\$ 1, 00.

- Which will be better? - she thought: [...] (Brasil, 2009c, p. 9).

The transcribed examples show that the poor need to be taught how to save, compare prices, and avoid debt, as well as which are the best ways of consuming, which products to buy, and perhaps most importantly, instills in the reader the commitment that should be made in relation to the well-being of the family.

The second example shows a naturalization of the role of the woman as caretaker of the household, and also as responsible for organizing the family expenses. As such, the Bolsa Família program promotes a tension between two opposing poles- on side there is the naturalization of traditional gender roles, and on the other, the establishment of the woman in positions that previously were dominated by men, such as in the relationship with instruments of the State (Pires, 2013).

We observe the following excerpt: "Find out about the Bolsa Família program. Call the number:

0800 7072003. The call is free and you pay nothing. At this number you can speak with employees of the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger- MDS" (Brasil, 2006, p. 7).

In the material published in 2006, there are various excerpts such as the one above. The incentive for contacting people specialized in determined areas of the program makes it possible for families to have contact with information about education, health, and social assistance, which they did not have access to before.

Pregnant women, nursing women, and children are also a section of the public to whom the materials speak directly. The publications aim to teach the beneficiaries about the correct way to care for the health of this group of people.

A healthy pregnancy

Have a calm pregnancy and a healthy baby. Get prenatal checkups starting in the first three months of pregnancy.

After birth

Ask your doctor, nurse, or community health agent about vaccines and the neonatal heel prick test [...].

Nursing

The mother's milk is the best food for the infant [...]. The infant should drink only the mother's milk up to six months. After six months, the infant should begin to consume other foods, but should continue nursing up to two years of age or more (Brasil, 2006, p. 24-25).

The text above can be connected to what Chauí (2001) calls the 'ideology of competence', in which, upon promoting privatized competence, deposits in the hands of specialists the task of teaching non-specialized people, dictating determined forms of conduct. Upon making this connection we do not intend to say that the authors of the materials had the intention of making their knowledge superior to that of the recipients, but to indicate that the discourse genre itself of booklets, guides, and manuals favors this prescriptive nature, which in this case is based on specialized knowledge.

In another moment, we note the intention of simplifying the instructions so that they take on specific meanings.

See how simple it is:

First, we make a list of the main expected family expenses and we separate them into groups [...]. After, we place them in order from the most necessary to the least necessary [...].

Then, we list all the income we receive during the month.

Finally, we add up all the expenses and all the income and compare the results. It is clear that the expenses should be equal or less than the income. If the expenses are more, our budget is 'negative.' What to do, then? The solution is to cut or decrease the expenses, or increase the income (Brasil, 2009c, p. 5).

In spite of the overly simplified tone in which the family budget is described, highlighting the word 'negative' indicates that even though it appears to be easy to organize expenses, there is a risk that the bills will exceed the income. Nevertheless, the use of 'we' reduces the tension that can be created by the threat of having a negative budget, implying that this could happen to anybody. The solution for the problem, therefore, is cutting or reducing expenses, or increasing income, but the question is: which expenses to cut for those who have so little?

Regarding the family budget, the guide does not mention other possibilities for managing the family expenses outside of financial calculations. It cannot be ensured that all the beneficiaries of the program know how to do mathematical calculations, but this does not make it impossible for them to organize their budget adequately.

In accordance with what has been stated in other parts of this study, the analyses demonstrate the connection between poverty and education, in which there is an exit from the social and economic vulnerabilities and a entrance to accessing better living conditions. As such, even though the school attendance requirement is permeated by the naturalization of the discursive position that the poor might not value formal institutionalized education, we recognize the intent that this obligation is a means of promoting the guarantee of this important universal right for the reduction of inequalities.

Final considerations

The objectives of this study were to analyze the nature of the concepts of poverty and education present in the booklets, guides and manuals of the Bolsa Família program intended for the recipients of this income transfer policy. We sought to determine what can or cannot be said about socioeconomic vulnerabilities and education.

The analyses indicated that the creators and/or validators of the booklets, guides, and manuals intended to achieve the objectives of the program, by way of providing information about the requirements of the program through the publications. As such, the process of removing families from poverty or extreme poverty is a job to

be achieved in stages, a fact that can be observed in the materials released between 2006 and 2014.

In principle, the actions for removing families from situations of socioeconomic vulnerability are related to ensuring income and food security. Thus, the first publication featured poverty in terms of low income and low nutritional quality. The second phase focused on the intuition of offering basic social services as a way of providing access to citizenship. As such, there were moments in which poverty was described as a lack of access to rights. The third phase focused on overcoming intergenerational conditions of vulnerability, by way of incentivizing the formal institutionalized education of children and adolescents; educating the parents about how to track the scholastic development of their children; and encouraging adults to complete courses for obtaining employment, among others.

The teams responsible for creating and/or validating the publications were composed of professionals from diverse areas of knowledge. However, we noted some difficulties in recognizing the specific characteristics of the beneficiaries of the income transfer policy, providing for the perpetuation of discursive formations that naturalize a determined view of what it means to be poor, such as the need to be educated and which is the best way to take care of health and money. We call attention to the fact that the extensive side of the Brazilian territory, the cultural diversity of the country, the heterogeneity of the social problems of each region, the specific characteristics that poverty may have in each family context, and the large number of beneficiaries hinder the development of materials which correspond to the expectations of all who take part in the Bolsa Família program.

Between the first publication, in 2006, and the last, in 2014, there were shifts, although timid, in the ways in which these materials addressed the reader. The prescriptive and disciplinary tone was minimized; the images used were changed to real people instead of illustrations; the concept of the traditional nuclear family, represented by figures in the first booklets, became weaker throughout the years, making way for models that more closely represented the beneficiaries of the program (families headed by women, for example); the publications began to provide information about the results of the Bolsa Família program; and the texts and images became less childish. Over the years, education began to be described, not as a right that must be sought by the recipients, but as something guaranteed by the public powers, or in other words, as the responsibility of the federal, state, and municipal governments to promote access to formal institutionalized education.

The original nature of this study opens horizons for thinking about the importance of studying materials produced for the beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família program. It also promotes reflections on the limits and possibilities of how publications can be instruments for promoting the objectives of other public policies. The analyses also indicated the importance of the creation and development of materials that consider the cultural, historical, political, and economic differences of each region in the country. To this end, the contribution of the study resides in the possibility of forming groups made up of beneficiaries and managers with an interest in thinking about the real necessities of those who participate in the program, and how the promotional materials and information about this income transfer policy might be created in accordance with these regions.

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