

The International Diffusion of Conditional Cash Transfers

By 2009, Fiszbein and Schady (2009), in a comprehensive book on conditional cash transfers (CCT) experiences, counted 20 countries that by then had some sort of program of a CCT nature. A year later, Morais de Sá e Silva (2010) counted a total of 40 countries. Now repeating the same exercise, but considering a timeframe from 1994 to 2016, I have counted a current total of 47 programs in 40 countries, with a historic stock of 75 programs over that time period.¹

The world is currently divided into 193 United Nations member states, including Palestine, Kosovo, Taiwan, Western Sahara, and Greenland. Beyond the country/state definition, the World Bank has identified 218 different economies in the world, among which 139 are considered low or middle income. Hence, a fifth of all countries have adopted some sort of CCT program. And if one excludes the United States from the count, almost a third of all low-income or middle-income economies have adopted the CCT solution. This is far from irrelevant in the policy world. When neoinstitutionalists, for instance, talk about the increasing policy isomorphism in education, they refer to general practices such as mandatory homework or girls' education (Baker and LeTendre 2005). However, how does one explain that when as many as 40 countries have bought into the specifics of a conditional cash transfer program?

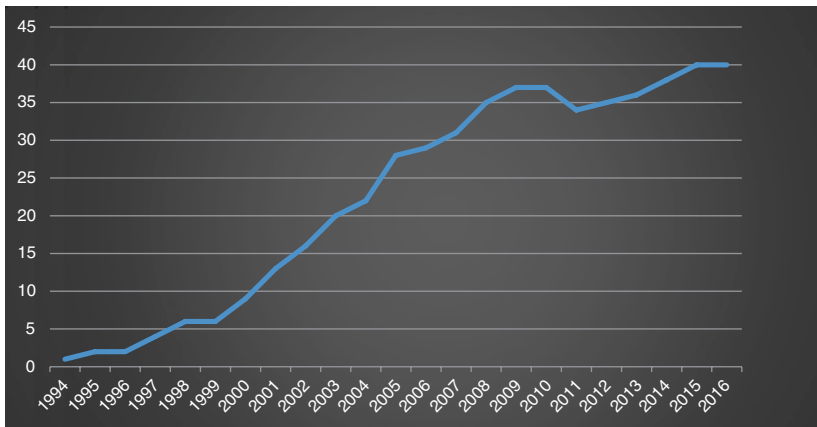
CCT adoption was incremental and, to some extent, regionally oriented. It conformed to the epidemic model pointed out by Steiner-Khamsi (2006), according to whom policy diffusion occurs just like the

spread of an epidemic, forming a lazy-S curve. If one plots the year when the programs were initiated in each country, the resulting curve is as shown in Graph 2.1.

In some countries, more than one program has been adopted, as there were different CCT programs at the national and local levels. Taking that into account, the total number of programs is even greater, as Table 2.1 indicates.

As Fig. 2.1 indicates, the very first programs were almost equally present in all the three continents—the Americas, Africa, and Asia. However, if one looks at Fig. 2.2, it is apparent that the CCT spread caught up faster in Latin America. Interestingly, CCT diffusion appears to have happened more intensively from 2005 to 2010, with the total number of CCT countries going from 9 in the year 2000 to 37 in 2010 (Fig. 2.3). In 2016, the total number of countries with a CCT program was 40, signaling toward a possible stabilization in CCT diffusion (see Fig. 2.4).

Equally interesting is how these programs have had relatively long lives, considering the “policy churn” (Hess 1999) that is so characteristic of developing countries. For instance, as many as eight programs have existed for 12 years, which in most places corresponds to three electoral cycles. And 30 of the 75 programs have existed for 10 years or more. Hence, in this case, the reasons for policy sustainability are as interesting



Graph 2.1 CCT diffusion per country (1994–2016)

Table 2.1 CCTs around the world (1994–2016)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>		<i>Program</i>	<i>Beginning year</i>	<i>Ending year</i>
Americas	1. Argentina	1	<i>Ciudadania Portena</i>	2005	Ongoing
		2	<i>Jefes de Hogar</i>	2002	2005
		3	<i>Familias por la Inclusion Social</i>	2005	2010
		4	<i>Asignacion Universal por Hijo para Proteccion Social</i>	2009	Ongoing
	2. Belize	5	Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation (Boost)	2011	Ongoing
	3. Bolivia	6	<i>Bono Esperanza</i>	2003	2005
		7	<i>Bono Juancito Pinto</i>	2006	Ongoing
	4. Brazil	8	<i>Bolsa Escola</i>	1995	
		9	Guarantee of Minimum Family Income	1995	
		10	Program for the Eradication of Child Labor – PETI	1996	2006
		11	Federal Bolsa Escola	2001	2003
	5. Chile	12	<i>Bolsa Familia</i>	2003	Ongoing
		13	<i>Chile Solidario</i>	2002	2012
		14	<i>Ingreso Etico Familiar</i>	2012	Ongoing
	6. Colombia	15	<i>Más Familias en Accion</i>	2001	Ongoing
		16	<i>Subsidios Condicionados a la Asistencia Escolar</i>	2005	2012
	7. Costa Rica	17	<i>Superemonos</i>	2000	2002
		18	<i>Avancemos</i>	2006	Ongoing
	8. Dominican Republic	19	<i>Tarjeta de Asistencia Escolar</i>	2001	2004
		20	<i>Solidaridad</i>	2005	2012
		21	<i>Progresando con Solidaridad</i>	2012	Ongoing
	9. Ecuador	22	<i>Bono de Desarrollo Humano</i>	2003	Ongoing
	10. El Salvador	23	<i>Programa de Apoyo a Comunidades Solidarias en El Salvador</i> (previously <i>Red Solidaria</i>)	2005	Ongoing

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>		<i>Program</i>	<i>Beginning year</i>	<i>Ending year</i>
Asia and the Pacific	11. Guatemala	24	Protección y Desarrollo de la Niñez y Adolescencia Trabajadora	2007	2008
		25	Mi Familia Progresá	2008	2011
		26	Mi Bono Seguro	2012	Ongoing
	12. Haiti	27	Ti Manman Cheri	2012	Ongoing
	13. Honduras	28	Programa de Asignación Familiar	1998	2009
		29	Bono Vida Mejor	2010	Ongoing
	14. Jamaica	30	PATH	2001	Ongoing
	15. Mexico	31	<i>Oportunidades</i> (previously <i>Progresá</i>)	1997	2014
		32	<i>Prospera</i>	2014	Ongoing
	16. Nicaragua	33	<i>Red de Protección Social</i>	2000	2006
	17. Panama	34	<i>Red de Oportunidades</i>	2006	Ongoing
	18. Paraguay	35	<i>Tekopora</i>	2005	Ongoing
		36	<i>Abrazo</i>	2005	Ongoing
	19. Peru	37	<i>Juntos</i>	2005	Ongoing
	20. Uruguay	38	<i>Ingreso Ciudadano</i>	2005	2007
		39	<i>Asignaciones Familiares</i>	2008	Ongoing
	21. United States	40	Opportunity NYC	2007	2010
	22. Bangladesh	41	Female Secondary School Assistance Program	1994	2008
		42	Primary Education Stipend Program	2002	Ongoing
		43	Reaching Out-of- School Children	2004	Ongoing
	23. Cambodia	44	Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction Girls Scholarship Program	2002	2005
		45	Cambodia Education Support Project	2005	Ongoing
	24. India	46	<i>Balika Samridhi Yojana</i>	1997	Ongoing
		47	Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme for Girl Child (<i>Dhanalakshmi</i>)	2008	Ongoing

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>		<i>Program</i>	<i>Beginning year</i>	<i>Ending year</i>
Middle East Africa	25. Indonesia	48	<i>Jaring Pegamanan Social</i>	1998	2002
		49	<i>Keluarga Harapan</i>	2007	Ongoing
	26. Mongolia	50	Child Money Program	2005	2010
		51	Child Money Program	2012	Ongoing
	27. Pakistan	52	Participation in Education through Innovative Scheme for the Excluded Vulnerable	2003	2006
		53	Punjab Female School Stipend Program	2004	Ongoing
		54	Child Support Program	2006	Ongoing
	28. Philippines	55	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (initially AHON)	2007	Ongoing
	29. Turkey	56	Social Risk Mitigation Project	2001	Ongoing
	30. Yemen	57	Basic Education Development Project	2004	2012
	31. Burkina Faso	58	Nahouri Cash Transfers Pilot Project	2008	2010
	32. Congo	59	LISUNGI Safety Nets Project	2014	Ongoing
	33. Egypt	60	Ain el-Sira Project (Cairo)	2009	2011
		61	Takaful	2015	Ongoing
	34. Ghana	62	Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty	2008	Ongoing
	35. Guinea	63	Cash Transfer for Health, Nutrition and Education	2013	Ongoing
	36. Kenya	64	Cash Transfers for Orphans and Vulnerable Children	2004	Ongoing
	37. Madagascar	65	<i>Le Transfert Monétaire Conditionnel</i>	2014	Ongoing

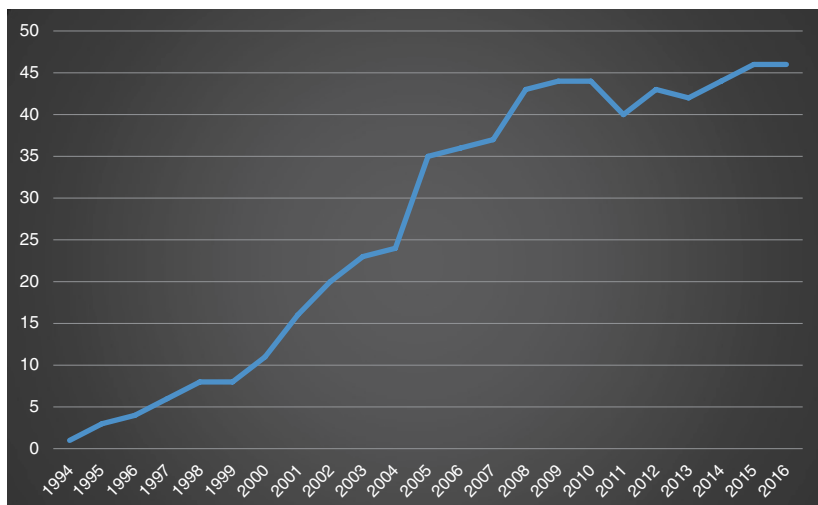
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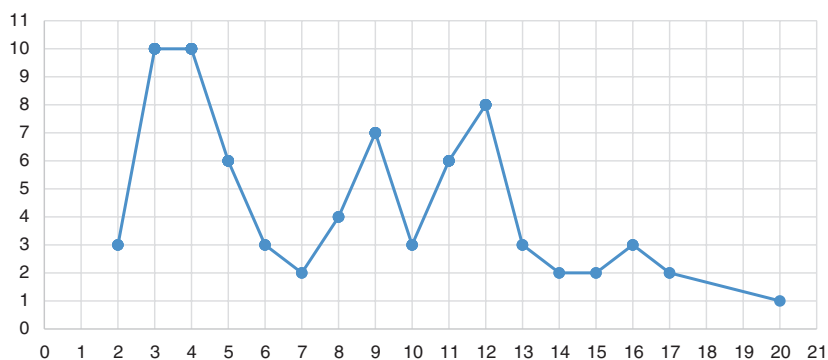
<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>		<i>Program</i>	<i>Beginning year</i>	<i>Ending year</i>
	38. Morocco	66	Morocco's Cash Transfer for Children (Tayssir Program)	2008	2010
		67	Direct Assistance to Widows in a Precarious Situation with Dependent Children	2015	Ongoing
	39. Mozambique	68	<i>Bolsa Escola</i>	2003	2006
	40. Namibia	69	Child Maintenance Grant	2000	Ongoing
	41. Nigeria	70	In Care of the Poor	2007	Ongoing
	42. Senegal	71	Conditional Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children	2008	Ongoing
		72	<i>Programme National de Bourses de Sécurité Familiale</i>	2013	Ongoing
	43. South Africa	73	CCT to Support Vulnerable Children in the Context of HIV/AIDS and Poverty	2005	Ongoing
	44. Tanzania	74	Community-based Conditional Cash Transfer	2009	Ongoing
	45. Tunisia	75	<i>Programme National d'Aide aux Familles Nécessiteuses</i>	2013	Ongoing

as the reasons for policy adoption. Also, as these programs have had relatively long lives and there is some indication of stabilization in their diffusion process (new adoptions are currently less frequent), one is likely to ask about what will happen next.

What else do we know about these 75 programs? As given in Table 2.2, there is an interesting story about actors and policy fields to be told. First, 42 of the 75 programs (56%) received some kind of foreign funding, ranging from bilateral donors to international financial institutions, like the World Bank and regional development banks. The World Bank alone was present in 29 of those partially or entirely



Graph 2.2 CCT diffusion—all programs (1994–2016)



Graph 2.3 Frequency of years of program duration (1994–2016)

foreign-funded programs, which represents almost 40% of all programs. The international presence in the structuring and/or financing of CCT programs suggests that international actors have acted as important policy entrepreneurs for the adoption of the CCT model, and hence were an



Fig. 2.1 Geographical diffusion—year 2000



Fig. 2.2 Geographical diffusion—year 2005

important part of the story behind their global diffusion. If one were to count the number of CCT studies and evaluations financed by bilateral donors, international banks, and other international organizations, the resulting number would be equally impressive.

Also apparent from Table 2.2 is how the majority of programs have limited their built-in conditions in education to school attendance only. In fact, that is the case in 49 of the 75 programs (65.3%). Some



Fig. 2.3 Geographical diffusion—year 2010



Fig. 2.4 Geographical diffusion—year 2015

interesting conclusions can be drawn from these numbers: (1) most programs have remained true to the first CCT experiences, such as those in Mexico (*Progres*a) and Brazil (*Bolsa Escola*), whose only education-related condition was school attendance; (2) there is an embedded perception that poverty goes hand-in-hand with lack of schooling, which therefore means that access to education services should be a priority; and (3) in the past 20-plus years of CCT existence, there has not been a

Table 2.2 Funding source and education-related condition

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Responsible government institution</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Education-related condition</i>
1. Argentina		1 Ciudadania Portena	Government of Buenos Aires	City government	City-wide	School attendance
		2 Jefes de Hogar	Ministry of Labor and Social Security	Central government and World Bank	National	School attendance
		3 Familias por la Inclusión Social	Ministry of Social Development	Central government and Interamerican Development Bank	National	School attendance
		4 Asignacion Universal por Hijo para Protección Social	Administración Nacional de la Seguridad Social	Central government	National	School attendance
2. Belize		5 Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation (Boost)	Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation	Central government	National	School attendance
		6 Bono Esperanza	Government of El Alto	Municipal government	City-wide	School attendance
4. Brazil		7 Bono Juancito Pinto	Ministry of Education	Central government	National	School attendance
		8 Bolsa Escola	Government of the Federal District	State government	State	School attendance
		9 Guarantee of Minimum Family Income	Government of Campinas	City government	City-wide	School attendance
10		Program for the Eradication of Child Labor — PETI	Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger	Central government	National	School attendance

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Responsible government institution</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Education-related condition</i>
		11 Federal <i>Bolsa Escola</i>	Ministry of Education	Central government	National	School attendance
		12 <i>Bolsa Familia</i>	Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger	Central government, supported by past loans from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	National	School attendance
5. Chile		13 Chile Solidario	Ministry of Planning	Central government	National	Tailored conditionalities for each family
		14 Ingreso Etico Familiar	Ministry of Social Development	Central government	National	School attendance, school achievement and secondary school graduation
6. Colombia		15 Más Familias en Acción	Presidency of the Republic	Central government, World Bank and Interamerican Development Bank	National	School attendance
		16 Subsidios Condicionados a la Asistencia Escolar	Bogotá Department of Education	IDB and Department of Education	City-wide	Attendance, grade promotion, and secondary school graduation

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Responsible government institution</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Education-related condition</i>
7.	Costa Rica	17 Supermonos	Mixed Institute for Social Assistance	National Fund for Social Development and Interamerican Development Bank	National	School attendance
		18 Avancemos	Ministry of Housing and Social Development	Central government	National	Attendance and grade promotion
8.	Dominican Republic	19 Tarjeta de Asistencia Escolar	State Secretariat for Education	Central government	National	School attendance and academic achievement
		20 Solidaridad	Social Policies Bureau	Central government and Interamerican Development Bank	National	School attendance
9.	Ecuador	21 Progresando con Solidaridad	Vice-Presidency	Central government	National	School attendance
		22 Bono de Desarrollo Humano	Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion	Central government, World Bank and Interamerican Development Bank	National	School attendance
10.	El Salvador	23 Programa de Apoyo a Comunidades Solidarias en El Salvador (previously <i>Red Solidaria</i>)	Social Area at the President's Office	World Bank, Interamerican Development Bank and other donors	National	School attendance and graduation

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Responsible government institution</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Education-related condition</i>
11.	Guatemala	24	Protección y Desarrollo de la Niñez y Adolescencia Trabajadora	Municipal government and Italian cooperation	City-wide	School attendance and grade promotion
		25	<i>Mi Familia Progresá</i>	Central government and World Bank	National	School attendance
		26	<i>Mi Bono Seguro</i>	Central government	National	School attendance
		27	<i>Ti Manman Cheri</i>	PetroCaribe/Venezuela Fund	National	School attendance
12.	Haiti	28	<i>Programa de Asignación Familiar</i>	Central government and Interamerican Development Bank	National	School attendance
13.	Honduras	29	<i>Bono Vida Mejor</i>	Central government and World Bank	National	School attendance
		30	PATH	Development Bank and Interamerican Development Bank	National	School attendance
14.	Jamaica	31	<i>Oportunidades</i> (previously <i>Progresá</i>)	Central government and World Bank	National	School attendance
15.	Mexico					School attendance and secondary school graduation

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Responsible government institution</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Education-related condition</i>
		32 Prospera	National Coordination for Prospera, Secretariat for Social Development	Central government and World Bank	National	School attendance, secondary school graduation and enrolment in higher education
16.	Nicaragua	33 Red de Proteccion Social	Family Ministry	Central government and Interamerican Development Bank	National	School attendance
17.	Panama	34 Red de Oportunidades	Ministry of Social Development	Central government	National	School attendance
18.	Paraguay	35 Tekopora	Secretary of Social Action	Central government, World Bank, Interamerican Development Bank, and other donors	National	School attendance
		36 Abrazo	National Secretariat for Children and Adolescents	United Nations Childrens Fund	National	School attendance and grade promotion
19.	Peru	37 Juntos	Presidency of the Council of Ministers	Central government and Interamerican Development Bank	National	School attendance
20.	Uruguay	38 Ingreso Ciudadano	Ministry of Social Development	Central government	National	School enrollment
		39 Asignaciones Familiares	Ministry of Social Development	Central government	National	School attendance

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Responsible government institution</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Education-related condition</i>
Asia and the Pacific	21. United States	40 Opportunity NYC	City Department of Education and Center for Economic Opportunity	Various private sponsors	City-wide	School attendance and academic achievement
	22. Bangladesh	41 Female Secondary School Assistance Program	Ministry of Education	Central Government, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and other donors	National	School attendance and performance. Girls should remain unmarried
		42 Primary Education Stipend Program	Ministry of Education	Central government	National	School attendance
		43 Reaching Out-of-School Children	Ministry of Education	Central government and World Bank	National	School attendance and academic achievement
	23. Cambodia	44 Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction Girls Scholarship Program	Ministry of Education	Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction	National	Enrolment, attendance and grade promotion
		45 Cambodia Education Support Project	Ministry of Education	World Bank	National	Enrolment, attendance and grade promotion
24. India		46 Balika Samridhi Yojana	Ministry of Women and Child Development	Central government	National	School attendance and girls should remain unmarried

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Responsible government institution</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Education-related condition</i>
25. Indonesia	47	Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme for Girl Child (<i>Dhanalakshmi</i>)	Ministry of Women and Child Development	Central government	National	School attendance and girls should remain unmarried
	48	Jaring Pegamanan Sosial		Central government and World Bank	National	School enrollment
	49	Keluarga Harapan	Ministry of Social Welfare	Central government	National	School enrollment and attendance
26. Mongolia	50	Child Money Program	Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor	Asian Development Bank	National	School enrollment
	51	Child Money Program	Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor	Asian Development Bank	National	School enrollment
27. Pakistan	52	Participation in Education through Innovative Scheme for the Excluded Vulnerable	National Education Foundation	Japan Social Development Fund	National	School attendance
	53	Punjab Female School Stipend Program	Provincial Education Department	World Bank	State	School attendance
28. Philippines	54	Child Support Program	Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education	Central government	National	School attendance and passing final exam
	55	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (initially AHON)	Department of Social Welfare and Development	Central government and World Bank	National	School attendance

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Responsible government institution</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Education-related condition</i>
Middle East	29. Turkey	56 Social Risk Mitigation Project	General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity	World Bank	National	School attendance
	30. Yemen	57 Basic Education Development Project	Ministry of Education	Central government and World Bank	National	School attendance and grade promotion
	31. Burkina Faso	58 Nahouri Cash Transfers Pilot Project	National Council against HIV/AIDS and STDs	Central government and World Bank	Regional	School attendance
Africa	32. Congo	59 LISUNGI Safety Nets Project	Ministry of Social Affairs	Central Government, World Bank, Unicef, and French Cooperation Agency	National	School attendance
	33. Egypt	60 Ain el-Sira Project (Cairo)	Ministry of Social Solidarity	Central government	Municipal	School attendance
	61 Takaful		Ministry of Social Solidarity	Central government and World Bank	Regional	School attendance
34. Ghana	62 Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty		Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment	Central Government, World Bank, Unicef, DFID	National	School attendance
	63 Cash Transfer for Health, Nutrition and Education		Central Government	Central government and World Bank	National	School attendance

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Responsible government institution</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Education-related condition</i>
36.	Kenya	64 Cash Transfers for Orphans and Vulnerable Children	Ministry of Home Affairs	Central Government, World Bank, Unicef, DFID, and SIDA	National	School attendance
37.	Madagascar	65 Le Transfert Monétaire Conditionnel	Ministry of Education	Central government	Regional	School attendance
38.	Morocco	66 Morocco's Cash Transfer for Children (Tayssir Program)	Ministry of Education	Central government and World Bank	National	School attendance
39.	Mozambique	67 Direct Assistance to Widows in a Precarious Situation with Dependent Children	Ministry of Solidarity, Family, Women and Social Development; Ministry of Interior	Central government	National	School attendance
40.	Namibia	68 Bolsa Escola	Ministry of Education	Brazil/Missao Crianca	District (Maputo)	School attendance
		69 Child Maintenance Grant	Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare	Central government	National	School attendance
41.	Nigeria	70 In Care of the Poor	National Agency for the Poverty Eradication Program, Office of the Senior Assistant to the President	Central government	National	School attendance

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Program</i>	<i>Responsible government institution</i>	<i>Funding sources</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Education-related condition</i>
42.	Senegal	71 Conditional Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children	National HIV/AIDS Council	Central government	National	School attendance
		72 <i>Programme National de Bourses de Sécurité Familiale</i>	General Delegation for Social Protection and National Solidarity	Central government	National	School enrollment
43.	South Africa	73 CCT to Support Vulnerable Children in the Context of HIV/AIDS and Poverty	Ministry of Social Development	South African Government	National	School attendance
44.	Tanzania	74 Community-based Conditional Cash Transfer	Central Government	Central Government, World Bank, Unicef, DFID, USAID and WFP	National	School attendance
45.	Tunisia	75 Programme National d'Aide aux Familles Nécessiteuses	Ministry of Social Affairs	Central government, World Bank and Japan Social Development Fund	National	School enrollment

bold move beyond the attempt to improve the access to education, with only a few cases where graduation and performance have been addressed.

In fact, the three cases explored in this book are good examples of different arrangements of education-related conditions and how the educational sector got involved and worked with these programs. A typical case will be presented—*Bolsa Família*—as well as two other cases in which there was real experimentation with educational conditions. One important aspect for analysis here is the role education institutions and actors have played in these programs and what impact has been produced on the education policy.

But before we move to exploring the programs in detail, we should try to understand better how CCTs became global in the first place. The following section presents an exploration of the various possibilities of scholarly approaches to policy diffusion, especially those that may help us make sense of the global trajectory of the CCT policy model.

2.1 ALTERNATIVE THEORIES TO EXPLAIN CCT'S WORLDWIDE DIFFUSION

Following a growing political and academic interest in the issues posed by globalization, scholars across several disciplines have addressed examples of policy transfer or the international diffusion of norms and policies (Jules and Morais de Sa e Silva 2008). The identification that local experiences have been used as models—or at least as inspiration—for the design of similar policies in other geopolitical contexts has sparked the interest of sociologists, political scientists, and education scholars. In those different fields, scholars have used their disciplinary backgrounds to devise explanations and descriptions of why and how policy diffusion occurs. In the following sections, I present a snapshot of those alternative explanations and later seek to present my own take on what may be the story behind the vast international diffusion of CCTs.

2.1.1 *Policy Transfer and Diffusion*

Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, 3) define policy transfer as “a process in which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and

ideas in another political setting.” Since that seminal article, numerous other publications have tried to describe, characterize, classify, and explain the policy transfer phenomenon.

Stone (2012) makes an extensive review of over 800 journal articles dedicated to the topic, revealing that several terms are used to name processes of these kinds, with slight conceptual differences: “diffusion,” “transfer,” “convergence,” and “translation.” According to Stone, the policy transfer literature is especially interested in the motivations and decision-making rationale of agents involved in policy transfer. The convergence literature, in turn, rather emphasizes the role of structures, institutions, and other globalization processes as the drivers of global policy isomorphism. Finally, scholars who have worked with the idea of translation are focused on studying the modifications, mutations, and adaptations that these policies undergo when exported/imported.

A part of the policy transfer literature was dedicated to explaining the underlying reasons for diffusion/transfer. According to Weyland (2006), for instance, a policy model diffuses because decision-makers operate under conditions of limited rationality. Since they do not have access to information about every existing policy, it is more immediate and “rational” to adopt “cognitive shortcuts” and emulate foreign models that have been successful in their places of origin, even if they are not the most appropriate for their contexts.

Reaching out to theoretical frameworks and concepts of cognitive psychology, Weyland (2006) explains that the adoption of foreign models takes place due to the “heuristics of availability,” the “heuristics of representativeness,” and the “heuristics of anchoring.” In the first case, decision-makers adopt bold and accessible models, such as those that are world renowned and promoted by international organizations. Besides, decision-makers project themselves in the foreign experience and envision that it is possible and desirable to reach the same results that have been achieved elsewhere. Finally, the heuristics of anchoring limits some later adaptations of foreign models, as those who adopted them tend to get attached to the original version.

In fact, Sugiyama (2008) identifies that Weyland’s view belongs to one among three streams of interpretations of the motivations behind policy transfer. According to her, there is the rational-choice political perspective, which looks into the expected political gains that could arise from emulating someone’s policy model. Weyland does not directly

follow that perspective, but is in fact trying to dialogue with it by proposing a bounded-rationality alternative. Second, there is the ideology-inspired perspective, according to which decisions follow principled ideas, even though this may come at a political cost. Finally, there is the community perspective, for which relations, networks, and socialization processes matter the most in decision-making processes. For Sugiyama, these different perspectives are directly linked to the disciplinary field in which they emerged and to the methods that have been used in research.

Evans (2004) identifies a set of variables that are likely to be barriers to policy transfer: cognitive barriers, environmental barriers, and the domestic and international public opinion. However, among these factors there are no variables related to the characteristics of the public policy being transferred. In fact, most of the policy transfer literature does not address the content of the policy models that are subject to transfer. Howlett and Rayner (2008, 386, cited by Stone 2012, 487) present their critique to that, stating that “what is being transferred sometimes gets lost in the midst of the concern about how transfer happens.”

Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) point out that one of the exceptions in this regard is the work of Richard Rose (1993) on lesson learning. According to Rose, the more complex is a program, the smaller is its chance to get transferred to another jurisdiction. He presents seven hypotheses, one of which is as follows: “the simpler is the structure of cause and effect of a program, the more fungible it will be” (1993, 132).

In fact, the CCT model is of relative simplicity. It directly connects government funds with poor families and demands that they access education and health services without having to deal with education and health providers. As the later chapters will discuss, CCTs have impacted education without producing any real education reforms. In order to operate, the program model only demands some targeting strategy in order to define the beneficiary population, some method of cash delivery (i.e., through bank cards or in-person delivery), and some method of conditionality verification. Anything other than that would be a plus derived from some other policy goal, such as allowing for experimentation, for instance.

2.1.2 *Theories of Comparative and International Education*

In education, the concept of “educational transfer” (Beech 2012) or “policy borrowing and lending” (Steiner-Khamsi 2004; Steiner-Khamsi

and Stolpe 2006) has been a common object of study. The concept encompasses processes of transposition of educational models created in one country to another country, where it is hoped it will lead to similar results. According to Beech (2012), the practice of educational transfer is almost as old as the research efforts of the first comparativists in education, who dedicated themselves to not only analyzing the similarities and differences between national educational systems, but were fundamentally involved in identifying positive experiences that could be used to generate successful reforms in other national contexts.

In the framework of the debate between different theories of globalization in education, the borrowing and lending literature has contributed by telling the stories underlying the idea behind the lessons learned from abroad, for the purpose of improving educational policies at home. Its arguments are different and in dialogue with the World Culture Theory in education and with the anthropological perspective on globalization in education (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe 2006).

Some of the works within the borrowing and lending literature are based on the idea of externalization (Schriewer and Martinez 2004), according to which policymakers reach out to foreign models in order to justify reform processes that have been domestically developed. Hence, foreign reform models are a certification strategy for reform proposals that meet great opposition at home and are therefore in need of greater legitimacy. Such a certification “label” is achieved when reference is made to an international best practice. Hence, for borrowing and lending scholars, globalization in education is only imagined and borrowing happens only at the discursive level, and not actually at the policy implementation level.

Besides what the authors call the “politics of borrowing and lending” (Steiner-Khamsi 2004), which consists of borrowing as a political certification strategy, there is also the economics of borrowing and lending. In this case, the import of foreign policy models is also related to the possibility of accessing aid and loans from traditional donors and international development banks.

By pointing out the political and economic factors that may motivate policy transfer, borrowing and lending scholars deconstruct some of the arguments presented by neoinstitutionalists in education, according to whom globalization has been naturally turning all education policies alike. Borrowing and lending scholars rather emphasize the agency and motives behind such processes of apparent “policy isomorphism.”

In a more recent work, Steiner-Khamisi (2014) differentiates between normative and analytical studies of education policy diffusion, indicating that one of the questions raised in analytical studies is “in what conditions the dissemination of a practice is more likely to happen” (p. 154).

2.1.3 *Theories of Norm Diffusion*

In the field of international relations, an important group of scholars has analyzed the emergence and implementation of international human rights norms (Risse et al. 1999, 2013; Simons 2009). The literature on the norm life cycle particularly presents a theoretical framework that attempts to explain the impact of human rights norms in influencing the behavior of states. Such literature connects, for instance, with political science studies interested in the international diffusion process of principled ideas.

This is where the intersection lies between policy transfer studies and theories of the norm life cycle. Human rights norms and foreign policy models can influence the decisions and policies adopted by domestic agents. They are both external factors, of voluntary adoption, and are not self-applicable. Hence, they depend on the interest and decision of local mandataries to be internalized. Moreover, human rights policies, just like human rights norms, carry moral principles and meaning.

The norm life cycle literature belongs to the field of constructivist theories in international relations, according to which the interests of actors are not given and can be altered through time. If there is persuasion, the decision-makers may be convinced of the importance of adhering to and complying with human rights treaties.

Naturally, case studies analyzed herein are not about the signature and ratification of treaties. Nonetheless, one could argue that, when involved in policy transfer processes, decision-makers adhere to foreign models. As in the case of human rights norms, this kind of adoption is not mandatory. One could think of persuasion processes though, where local and foreign actors—such as international organizations—convince authorities and managers that there are advantages and value in the external model, to the point that they consider it to be in their interest to engage in policy transfer.

Finally, just as it is expected that human rights norms will produce domestic change, leading states to cease violations, it is expected that the adoption of a new and supposedly positive policy model will produce a positive change in adopting countries, especially developing ones.

Theories of international relations are more than often attempts to explain the decisions made by states in the international arena and, as in other theories, the idea of rationality is used to explain decision patterns. In this framework, the idea of interests is a central construct, based upon which one could explain options and choices. However, depending on the adopted theoretical stance, one could understand interests as something fixed and given, or as a flexible variable that could be redefined on the basis of social interaction processes. “Social constructivists emphasize that ideas and communicative processes define in the first place which material factors are perceived as relevant and how they influence understandings of interest, preference, and political decisions” (Risse et al. 1999, p. 7). Along these lines, Finnemore (1996, p. 2) argues that “interests are not just ‘out there’ waiting to be discovered; they are constructed through social interaction.” This debate is central for those dedicated to researching development cooperation, where material factors tend to receive greater attention, whereas the role of ideas and values remains understudied. The constructivist perspective, beyond recognizing the role of interests, does so in a sophisticated way, recognizing the dynamism that undercuts interests through socialization processes.

The spiral model proposed by Risse et al. (1999, 2013) involves the idea that the impact of international human rights norms on the behavior of states is linked to the socialization processes in which those states participate. These processes are: “processes of instrumental adaptation and strategic bargaining; processes of moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, dialogue, and persuasion; processes of institutionalization and habitualization” (Risse and Sikkink 1999, p. 5).

In an attempt to extend that model to policy transfer processes, one could similarly think of the adoption of foreign models as part of socialization processes in which states want to participate in the club of nations that have adopted a certain kind of policy model, especially if it has been cheered as a “best practice.” Decision-makers, besides their material and instrumental motives, can be convinced that such a model is one that best responds to their interests. Here, the role of international organizations, as it has been pointed out earlier in this chapter, may be particularly important for the creation of this socialization effect. As they promote conferences, workshops, and other experience-sharing events among government representatives, they become increasingly familiar with the “best practice” of the day.

In this framework, the role of persuasion is of great importance. Risse and Sikkink (1999, p. 14) “claim that the logic of persuasion and of discourse is conceptually different from a logic of information exchange based on fixed preferences, definitions of the situations, and collective identities. Discursive processes are precisely the types of human interaction in which at least one of these properties of actors is being challenged.” Hence, although numerous international cooperation initiatives are geared toward the exchange of information about policy experiences, one could argue that these experiences will only be truly incorporated by countries if decision-makers are persuaded that the experiences fulfill their interests.

Last but not least, Simons (2009) theorizes about the internalization of human rights treaties and, in so doing, also identifies that the most important variables are not so much related to external factors, such as the pressure by other states, but rather, they are linked to local agents themselves. In her words, “treaties are causally meaningful to the extent that they empower individuals, groups, or parts of the state with different rights preferences that were not empowered to the same extent in the absence of the treaties” (p. 125). Likewise, one could argue that foreign models will only be internalized if they are thought to be in the interest of local actors.

2.1.4 *An Alternative Explanation*

I have been arguing elsewhere that policy content or policy features matter for policy diffusion. Irrespective of decision-makers’ motivations, the nature and characteristics of a policy are relevant variables in the policy diffusion process. Contrary to what a functionalist approach might pose, this does not have to do with a policy being successful or a “best practice.” As Kingdon (1995) suggests, many policy solutions may exist in the “garbage can,” but only a few will find a policy window and will be eventually implemented.

In Moraes de Sá e Silva (2016), I examine various cases where Brazil deliberately attempted to transfer its human rights policies by means of cooperation projects established with other countries from the South. By contrasting these cases, it became clear that policies that involved social participation and, therefore, some kind of power-sharing, did not get successfully transferred as much as policies that involved mechanisms for policy coordination leading to power-gaining. Beyond questions of

whether these findings conform to a more rational-choice perspective in terms of motivations, the fact is that policy features did matter.

Similarly, it could be argued that CCT's characteristics have had a bearing on their exponential and systematic diffusion worldwide. Again, one could point out their positive evaluation results in some countries. That could certainly be an "attraction factor," but I would argue that this is only part of the story. Positive results may spark interest, but may not be enough to sustain the interest. Also, there is a long way for the actual adoption and implementation of a new policy, even if the model has been "copied" from elsewhere and the package seems ready for use.

Steiner-Khamisi (2004) argues that there is no real policy adoption and that there is only "phony borrowing" (Phillips 2004, p. 57). According to her, policymakers pretend they are importing foreign models, when they are actually just making reference to the model in order to build legitimacy around ideas that have been grown nationally. According to her, what happens in fact is "brand name piracy" rather than real policy borrowing.

However, by looking at the dozens of CCTs that have been implemented in the developing world, it is hard to deny that there is actual diffusion and transfer. What can be questioned, though, is that it seems that what has been traveling internationally is not so much a complete policy model. What has been traveling is actually the idea of the direct transfers of cash from the government to citizens, in a way that their families can be less poor, today and tomorrow. Any definition or specification beyond that basic idea has been amenable to adjustment and change by national and local governments, as the three cases to be presented in this book will later show. And I would argue that it is exactly because this basic idea may fit into different ideologies and may be put in practice in a multitude of ways, that it has been so easily and quickly incorporated. Governments have had the liberty to design and implement CCTs as they wish and by deploying the most diverse kinds of discourses around them. Like clay, the CCT idea is moldable and foldable to any ideological, political, cultural, and social background. Like LEGO pieces, it can be assembled small or tall, thin or fat, cheap or expensive, very simple, or really complex. Its openness attracted the attention not only of policymakers, but also of researchers, who were eager to experiment with them.

So what does it mean to say that policy content matters for policy diffusion in the case of CCTs? First, it means that the CCT model, even if it is

more of an idea, is not prescriptive or dependent in terms of program size, mode of implementation, selection of beneficiaries, and so on. Governments can design CCTs in a variety of ways and they will still be considered CCTs, drawing the same interest from the international and academic communities. Second, it is that openness in terms of design that makes them travel easily, because they travel light. To some extent, this is a real lesson on initiatives around policy innovation and their diffusion across different contexts.

Using the argument that was put forward in Morais de Sá e Silva (2016), certain program features speak better about the interests of local policymakers than others. Some features may be actually contrary to those interests, making it less likely that a certain policy model will be transferred. In the case of CCTs, they were simultaneously popular worldwide, brought the possibility of foreign funding, and could be molded into a multitude of different discourses and modes of implementation, provided that some fundamental ideas were kept.

In fact, the CCT brand came in only after years of existence of some programs that had already carried those basic features, but were not explicitly linked to poverty reduction. For instance, Bangladesh and India have had, since the 1990s, a number of cash transfer schemes targeted at girls, with the aim of reducing the “missing women” phenomenon and increasing girls’ education. Very little has been said about those South Asian experiences though, which were deeply related to education.

Anyhow, although policy content matters, one cannot leave aside the important role of policy actors. In this case, it is unquestionable that international organizations, especially the World Bank, have been important policy entrepreneurs in making the CCT model cross national borders. Just as norm entrepreneurs are important in the theory of the norm life cycle, policy entrepreneurs with a global reach are very important for a policy model—or policy idea, if you wish—to become truly global. In this case, international organizations, banks, and bilateral donors were important not only for the funding and loans they provided, but also for the community of practice they stimulated. Three international conferences were organized by the World Bank and its national partners: the first in Mexico in 2002, the second in Brazil in 2004, and the third in Mexico in 2006. The conferences gathered specialists and program managers from across the globe with the aim to:

(...) share experience and knowledge among and between countries with extensive experience in CCT and newcomers on what works and what does

not work both from a policy and operational perspectives. About 350 people from around the world representing countries implementing or interested in CCT and their counterparts from the World Bank, donor agencies and relevant NGO are attending the conference. (World Bank 2006)

In addition to the conferences, the bank was also responsible for commissioning a number of studies and evaluations of CCTs, of which the Fiszbein and Schady 2009 book—Conditional Cash Transfers: Reducing present and future poverty—is the best example. The book represents a major effort toward mapping out various CCT programs and the corresponding studies that have been developed around them.

Other smaller, but relevant, organizations have also played the role of connecting CCT experiences to policymakers. That is the case of the International Policy Center for Economic Growth (IPC-IG), originally created as the International Poverty Center and linked to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Since its creation, the IPC-IG has directed part of its resources toward studying poverty reduction programs, especially CCTs, and sharing the “lessons learned” among practitioners. Its mission is “to promote policy dialogue and facilitate learning between developing countries around innovative social policies for inclusive growth” (IPC-IG 2016).

Finally, although CCTs may be more of an idea, rather than a clearly specified policy model, they are fundamentally attached to the agenda that brought them to life: poverty reduction. They are not fundamentally educational programs, as it will be later discussed. They are not married to political thought on the Right or Left, as we will also discuss. However, they can only survive if the reduction of poverty is on the agenda and if governments and international organizations are willing to spend resources on them. As the following chapters will show, CCTs have survived as long as there was money to maintain them. However, if the priority is no longer fighting poverty and becomes something else (fiscal adjustment, sustainable development, and employment generation), then they might be doomed and the CCT slope may turn downward.

The following chapter will present a selection of theoretical frameworks that can help us better understand the political sustainability of CCT programs, as well as whether and how they have impacted education policies and reforms. Mostly coming from the policy sciences, these frameworks will help us to explore and analyze real CCT cases to be presented in Part II of this book.

NOTE

1. The appraisal of programs has been done according to the following criteria: (i) only cash-based programs were considered, therefore excluding school-feeding programs or those based on school fee waivers; (ii) unconditional programs were not considered; (iii) education-related conditions should be among the pre-established conditionalities; consequently, programs with health-related conditions only or conditions of other sorts were not included.

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