Article

European Journal of Social Theory
1–17

DOI: 10.1177/1368431015600017
est.sagepub.com

The limits of autonomy in Latin American social policies: Promoting human capital or social control?

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Abstract
Latin American social protection systems show that the fundamental ambivalence of modernity is captured by the twin notion of liberty and discipline in the context of a plurality of modes of socio-political organization. According to this understanding, this article analyses the potential of the so-called Conditional Cash Transfer programmes, which are widespread in the region, to strength or reduce personal autonomy. These programmes are promoted by claiming their virtues to reduce poverty and impose good behaviour on poor people in order to improve the 'human capital' of future generations. However, numerous elements challenge these alleged virtues: arbitrary selection of beneficiaries, interference in people's lives, stigmatization of recipients, inability to achieve universal coverage and act in a preventive manner with regards to urgent needs, the creation of poverty traps and informal working, etc. Taking these elements into account, this article explains how these programmes do not improve people's autonomy and political independence.

Keywords
autonomy, clientelism, conditional assistance programmes, Latin America, social control, social policies

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Modernization is a controversial concept in Latin America, mainly used as a synonym of something like stages of development towards European institutions in the differentiated systems of contemporary complex societies. The region shows that the tension between the concept and the historicity of modernity cannot be resolved by introducing an evolutionary logic into societal transformations. Also, Latin America is an example showing that the fundamental ambivalence of modernity is captured by the twin notion of liberty and discipline in the context of a plurality of modes of socio-political organization (Wagner, 1994, 2012). In this respect, the region's modernization processes illustrate how the formalization of so-called modern institutions has occurred unevenly both in time and space.

Conservative modernization and the crisis of incorporation

Looking at Latin America, and borrowing the concept from Barrington Moore's classical work (Moore, 1966), some scholars have suggested the presence of processes of 'conservative modernization' in the first half of the twentieth century in the region (Germani, 1962; Filgueira et al., 2011). Conservative modernization is a process by which certain spheres of society are based on what are commonly known as 'modern' social relations (capitalist, bureaucratic and sometimes democratic) while others remain dominated by forms of elite enclosure and tradition (and sometimes dictatorships). Thus, while some elements of Latin American socio-political organizations tend to improve autonomy for a minority group, other elements impose discipline and coercion upon the vast majority of the population. Conservative modernization would eventually lead to the 'crises of incorporation' if the pressures from below for economic, political and social demands were not met.[1]

Many explanations have been offered to explain Latin America's performance in conservative modernization, including colonial heritage, dependence on natural resources, structural limitations to developing dynamic industries, etc. Also, extended rule by repressive authoritarian regimes is another important factor since these regimes are associated with a lack of incorporation and greater inequality (Huber et al., 2006). Indeed, in Latin America, social policies often appeared under autocratic regimes and dictatorships, even before – at times even substituting for – political and civil rights. Consistently, to understand the economic arena, the 'dual' models of economic development were widely used in the region, showing how the modern and competitive sector has had serious difficulties in incorporating labour and enterprises from the backward sectors (Barbeito and Lo Vuolo, 1992: Chapter 2). As a result of these processes, the distribution of life chances and social mobility in Latin American societies are highly unequal, explaining the problems of the 'incorporation crisis' and the rise of populism in the middle of the major political and social tensions in the 1940s and 1950s.

The concept of conservative modernization reappears when looking at the Washington Consensus policies that prevailed during the 1980s and 1990s in the region. Under a strongly pro-market rhetoric, this consensus included passive monetary policy and restraints on fiscal policy, openness to international flows of trade and capital, and several deregulatory measures in the markets for goods, finance and labour. Deregulation of labour relations (in fact, 're-regulation') was a key element in these processes. Under the

Washington Consensus guidelines, the majority of the old industrial, labour-based and urban-oriented social protection regimes of the past were dismantled.

As a result, an increasing number of people dropped out of protected work patterns, while wages and labour costs sharply decreased. Social incorporation through the labour market failed, not only because employment was difficult to find but also because a large section of the available employment continues to be fragile and precarious. New entrants to the labour market were confronted with a more 'flexible' and unequal labour market, with fewer guarantees and more unemployment and underemployment. Most of the new entrants were women who had the least structural power to negotiate the conditions in which they joined the market.[2] Poverty and social division increased.[3]

Conservative modernization and democracy

However, and in contrast to past experiences of conservative modernization, the Washington Consensus momentum accepted and even pushed for electoral democracy in the region. In 1975, only four countries in Latin America[4] had electoral democracies and in only one had it been there for more than 20 years (Costa Rica), while in 2000 almost all countries in the region were electoral democracies (Smith, 2004). Between the 1950s and the 1970s, the average length of time in office of electoral democracies in the region was 11 years; after the 1970s and until 2000, democracies averaged almost 15 years and this average continues to increase.

This new context nurtured a growing debate about the type of democracies that characterizes the Latin American variety of modernity. For instance, Guillermo O'Donnell argues that many Latin American countries are consolidating a 'delegative' type of democracy (O'Donnell, 1994; O'Donnell et al., 2011), meaning a democracy where: (1) whoever wins election to the presidency is entitled to exert power as he or she decides, constrained not by legal rules but by existing (non-institutional) power relations and by a limited term in office (which can be modified once in power); (2) the president is taken to be the embodiment of the nation and the main definer of its interests, even if his or her policies bear little resemblance to the programme and promises of the electoral campaign; (3) the political basis of the government is a 'movement' which overcomes the factionalism and conflicts associated with parties; (4) other political institutions – the courts, the legislatures, the political parties – are mere obstacles to the president, and accountability to such institutions appears a mere impediment to the authority and the will of the president.

Delegative democracy is strongly majoritarian in electoral terms – often using devices such as runoff elections if the first run does not generate a clear-cut majority – and at the same time it is less liberal than representative democracy.[5] Voters are supposed to choose individuals, irrespective of their identities and affiliations and after the election they are expected to become the mere audience to political decisions until the next election. Society is divided between supporters and non-supporters of the government; there is no room for independent actors. In delegative democracies the horizontal accountability that is characteristic of representative democracy is very weak and decision-making is faster than in representative democracies and allows for radical changes. Presidents tend to suffer wild swings in popularity. Delegative democracies are crucial to an

understanding of the particular context of the radical reforms under the Washington Consensus and why most of them were followed by a renewed crisis of incorporation.

Conservative democracy and social policies

Along with democracy, social policies are another distinctive institutional feature of modern states, showing changes and continuities in the region. During the Washington Consensus hegemony, most social policies were reformed, even those which were marked 'difficult to reform' in European case studies, such as the pension systems. The universalistic elements of social institutions were confronted with the argument that they did not serve the best interest of the poor. The alleged 'over-protection' that certain categories enjoyed within the social security system helped to legitimize policies that pushed down benefits and smoothed the way for selective policies, despite the social insurance legacy. Thus, social policy-makers were advised to set aside such universalistic aims and strengthen instead the relationship between benefits and contributions, preferably through private insurance. The poorest groups, selected by social management experts, would receive direct subsidies by means of social assistance programmes. Henceforth, countries in the region started to rely more heavily on market solutions for welfare, and on selective policies as the criterion for policy orientation.

Under this and other Washington Consensus advice, the new phase of conservative modernization in the region finished again in deep crisis at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the current century. In some countries, such a crisis led to policies considered as a 'back to the State' shift (sometimes called a 'shift to the left') when many Latin American governments moved to defend a greater state role in trade, financial regulatory systems, social policies, labour market regimes and state enterprises and services. However, many other Latin American countries continued under right-leaning governments and also some of the left-leaning governments continued to apply policies developed during the Washington Consensus hegemony.

Changes in macro-economic and social policies, as well as in the international economic environment, led to an unusual phase of economic growth in most countries in the region. In the past decade, economic growth and public policies favouring state intervention in the economy have reinforced trust in distributional spill-over effects of accelerated economic growth on employment, wages and social protection. General recent trends in Latin American social expenditure display the characteristics of previous political changes: adjustment and strong fall in the 1980s, growth in the beginning of the 1990s, deceleration in the beginning and decrease in the middle of the decade, and return to growth after 2001–2002. Towards 2007–2008, all countries presented a social expenditure per capita level doubling or even tripling that of 1990–1991.[6]

However, the general growth in per capita social expenditure did not eliminate the vast discrepancy between the countries: countries with higher GDP per capita also devoted a higher share of total public spending to social expenditure. In 1980, those proportionally spending most were Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil; the same countries remain at the top of the spending lists around 2008–2009, with the proportions of social over total public spending rounding up to 65%. Meanwhile, Central American countries reached average levels of 50–55%. Most remarkable is the rise in the

proportion of social spending in Brazil (74%) and Colombia (70%). Spending on pension systems remains the largest component of social expenditure, even in countries which have privatized their public pension systems due to the deficit created by redirecting pension contributions to individual accounts (the so-called 'transition costs'). Also, in general, the attention of social policies continues to focus on a short- and medium-term distributive conflict rather than on broad-based capacity-building and institutional change.

In general, countries showing high levels of social expenditure are also the ones displaying, *inter alia*, higher levels of formalization of employment, a social policy administration that covers their entire territory, and higher primary schooling levels. Yet we see an increase in both the working age population and participation rates, but this increase is not matched by the evolution of occupation rates; occupation increases but at lower rates than the joint evolution of age and participation rates.

One striking feature of the last decade is the following: the diversity of national protection systems in Latin America contrasts with the generalized acceptance and spread of the so-called Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programmes. In 2010, the ECLAC databases recognized CCT programmes in 18 countries in the region, covering over 25 million households (roughly 113 million people), with an average cost of 0.4% of GDP (Cechini and Madariaga, 2011). These programmes have been implemented by most governments, whether they are right-leaning, left-leaning, pro-market or pro-State.

CCT programmes do not imply a change in the expenditure scenario, insofar as their extent has been correlated to country size, and they represent a minor proportion of social expenditure. Even when every country accounts for its own antecedents and trajectories in CCT policies, making the experience particular to the specific context in each case, the operating rules of these programmes tend to share general features which are consistent with the ambivalence of conservative modernization in the region: targeting and conditions. These common features are crucial to an understanding of the place of these programmes in social protection systems and modern Latin American societies.

Social policies define the social space in which assessment of risks is undertaken and over which relative certainties could be spread. Policies of social support considerably reduce material uncertainties but at the same time they extend 'disciplining and homogenizing practices of domination into the realm of family lives' (Wagner, 1994: 17). In this respect, CCT programmes are a good research field to analyse the potential of social policies to strengthen or reduce personal autonomy as part of a process of social recognition and of economic and political promotion of the independence of individuals and groups that have always been embedded in unequal social relations.

Diversity and common features of social protection systems

The defining characteristics of the region continue to be its high levels of inequality, insecurity and the resultant problems in the distribution of increases in productivity among the majority of the population. In comparison to other countries of the world with similar development levels, Latin America continues to set itself apart in three main socio-structural dimensions (Filgueira, 2007): (1) high levels of inequality; (2) the coexistence of demographic transitions both in terms of child and elderly dependency ratios;

and (3) a high degree of urbanization. As an example, those Latin American countries with a 'high' Human Development Index display comparatively high demographic dependency, high fertility rates and high levels of inequality and urbanization. However, these common features should not create the image that Latin America is a homogeneous region. Disparities in the Human Development Index are a clear indicator this is not the case.

Accordingly, social protection systems in the region differ in levels of expenditure, institutional architecture, instruments, risks covered, funding, etc. Also, social protection systems in Latin America are characterized by a *sui generis* institutional configuration in the four dimensions commonly used to compare them in macro-institutional terms: (1) the rules of access (eligibility); (2) benefit formulae; (3) financing regulations; and (4) organizational-managerial arrangements. In general terms, coverage and benefits in the region are highly fragmented along occupational lines, mainly in income guarantee policies (pension, family allowances) and in healthcare services. A high degree of particularism characterizes both the payment of cash benefits and financing (regressive tax systems, widespread tax evasion). As a result, social policies offer at the same time generous benefits for some groups and low degrees of coverage for the vast majority, showing high territorial disparities.

Thus, it is very difficult to create typologies in Latin America that would replicate the different configurations of the welfare state regimes that are generally used in developed countries.[7] Indeed, several of the criticisms of the analysis of typologies of the European welfare state are applicable to the Latin American countries as well.[8] One particular criticism states that, by grouping together the experiences of countries with very different histories and involving various actors and policies, their specificities are overlooked. This makes it difficult to capture the specific configuration between the State, the market and the family (including the social stratification deriving from the institutional system).

Filgueira (2005) considers that, taking into account different indicators around the 1980s, the region's social protection systems could be classified into three groups. The first group of countries, including Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Costa Rica, had a social protection system of 'stratified universalism', characterized by universal or quasi-universal coverage in the pension and retirement schemes, primary education and basic healthcare. Except for education, these cases follow a marked pattern of stratification. In a second group of countries including Brazil and Mexico (together with Venezuela, Panama and, to a lesser degree, Colombia), a 'dual regime' can be identified insofar as a large proportion of the population (especially of the urban section) is covered by social services and income maintenance schemes (also stratified), while the other important section is excluded from the public protection system. Finally, a third group comprising such countries as El Salvador, Honduras, Bolivia, Ecuador and, to a lesser degree, Guatemala, can be classified as 'exclusionary', since only a small privileged part of the population has access to social protection. Even if there were changes in the last few years, the attempts to refine this classification encounter serious methodological difficulties.

The development of Latin American social protection systems has taken place in a context of labour and social heterogeneity, territorial disparities, and high levels of poverty and inadequately institutionalized state structures. Nevertheless, in building social

policy institutions, most countries in Latin America share the social insurance ethos, the dilemmas of horizontal solidarity, and the hostility of unions to universal policies.[9] Historically, a significant trust has been placed on both the economic and political aspects of a 'virtuous circle' in which growth increases productivity, productivity increases wages, wages increase social protection through social insurances, and social protection increases growth. In this imaginary virtuous circle, poverty (in spite of its high levels and its structural character) is conceived as a temporary problem resulting from lack of employment.

The huge and growing size of the informal labour market is a clear indicator that the real functioning of labour markets is far from the imaginary virtuous circle. The informal economy provides labour, goods and services to the formal economy, lowering its costs. Informal working acts as a permanent buffer for labour market flexibility and works as low-cost manpower for employers trying to reduce labour costs. The problem is not limited to one 'sector', for informal work is spread throughout the economy. Workers in the informal sectors tend to be over-represented among youth, women and the less educated.

As a result of this social protection conception and institutional structure, State institutions are weaker actors for some population groups than for others, lacking the capacity to defend and enforce the social rights of the most vulnerable groups, which might be legally established (and also lacking any interest in doing so). This situation determines that the welfare of large sections of the population is more dependent on the domestic and communitarian spheres, as well as on targeted assistance programmes that are not 'residual' but an important component of the system. These issues are not very well captured by the concept of commodification/decommodification, rendering other criteria, such as 'clientelization' and 'de-clientelization' or universalization and focalization, more relevant (Gough, 2004).

Informal labour relations constrain the possibilities for 'decommodification' and limit the coverage for large proportions of the population, who remain outside the reach of social insurance systems. In this context, social insurance suffers from severe limitations in the attempt to offer universal coverage, while it replicates labour market inequalities (and income distribution inequalities more generally). In spite of being working, many people remain excluded from social insurance coverage since they cannot comply with the contribution requirements established. They will also are ineligible for unemployment and labour-hazard health-related insurance and employment protection, and will access low quality retirement benefits –if at all– and low quality health care.

Paradoxically, in this context, social rights are confused with the rights of those gainfully employed and full citizenship is confused with 'waged citizenship'. Preferences for a meritocracy that allegedly expresses itself in terms of success in the labour market, the punitive conditions that the authorities demand beneficiaries to comply with, and the institutional separation between contributory and non-contributory policies, are some elements that characterize the institutional configurations of welfare regimes in the region.

Social policies in the region are an example of how modern institutions need to set boundaries in the name of reason (Wagner, 1994: 38). In this way, the universal ideal of modernity finds many obstacles in real life. Instead of expanding 'autonomy', social policies can expand 'mastery' over a great section of the population. The ability of

individuals and groups is highly stratified in terms of the use they can make of institutional rules and resources.

This remains true though a tendency to blur the relations between payroll taxes and benefits can be observed in the region. While some social insurance benefits are partially financed through general taxes, which in Latin America derive primarily from regressive taxes, non-contributory benefits are partially or totally funded by resources from payroll taxes. Even when the distinction between the contributory and the non-contributory spheres is becoming increasingly vague, it continues, however, to define the social division in public policies in countries that share the problems of deficiencies in the tax systems and a weakness with regard to controlling tax avoidance and income verification.

Indeed, the dual approach that distinguishes a few structurally poor (who are the targets for social assistance) and the many with normal, secure employment (covered by social insurance) does not apply in Latin America (Lo Vuolo, 2009). The difficulties of accessing social protection coverage are experienced not only by the unemployed and unregistered workers, but also by 'semi-formal' workers, namely, unregistered employees working at formal companies and employees only partly registered (for instance, for fewer hours or lower wages than they actually receive). Few people have stable long-lasting employment, and insecurity of income is chronic: income loss is not only frequent but can happen unexpectedly. Historically, in the region there is a huge field of the working poor receiving low and unstable income, who are excluded from both corporate 'mutualisms' of social insurance and targeted assistance policies for the unemployed.

In this particular context, in the last few years, Latin American social protection systems have incorporated CCT programmes. The origin of these programmes is usually traced back to the Programme for Education, Health and Nutrition (*Programa de Educación, Salud y Alimentación, Progresa*) launched by the Mexican Federal Government in 1997, and then transformed in *Oportunidades* (Yanes, 2012). Other major programmes of this type, but with different operational rules, are the renowned Brazilian *Programa Bolsa Família* (Lavinas, 2012) and the Argentinean *Asignación Universal por Hijo para Protección Social* (Lo Vuolo, 2012).

CCT programmes: the ambivalence of social policies (and modernity) in practice

Among the common operating rules of CCT programmes, the following should be highlighted: (1) monetary transfers (in some cases complemented with in-kind transfers); (2) targeting of poor or extremely poor households with children and adolescents (some programmes do permit household categories without children); (3) punitive conditions linked to school assistance and health checks of children, adolescents, and pregnant women; (4) a preference for transferring the benefit to mothers; (5) the selection of beneficiaries according to geographic priority zones, self-identification, means or needs tests, etc.

By means of these basic operating rules, these programmes attempt to comply with two formally declared objectives. In the short term, they aim at decreasing families' income poverty; in the long run, they aspire to increase 'human capital' in the younger

generations and improve their future employability, which would break the cycle of inherited income poverty.

In practice, CCT programmes search to mend the incomplete coverage of the traditional social insurance schemes with their long history in the region: Family Allowance programmes (*Programas de Asignaciones o Subsidios Familiares*) for formal employees.[10] In fact, parallel to the CCT programmes, non-contributory family allowance schemes (*Asignaciones Familiares no Contributivas*) have also spread in the region. These programmes, in general, also targeted and conditional on means tests, pay benefits to the dependent family members of those people who are not covered by traditional, contributory family allowance schemes.

CCT programmes follow orthodox recommendations, such as those asserted in the *World Development Report 2006* (World Bank, 2005) and the 'social risk management' approach to social policies (Lo Vuolo, 2005; 2009). The central assumption behind CCT policies is that the 'rate of return' of fiscal expenditures on income transfer programmes would be higher with the transfer directed to children and compliance with conditions vouched for by their parents (World Bank, 2009). The World Bank states that these programmes not only act as effective instruments to reduce income poverty in the short run, but they also increase 'human capital' in the long run, thus dealing with chronic poverty. The aim is to improve future employability, thus breaking the vicious cycle of inherited income poverty.

However, critical evaluations have pointed to numerous problems with this 'successful social technology': arbitrary selection of beneficiaries, interference in people's lives, political clientelism, stigmatization of recipients, inability to achieve universal coverage and to act preventatively with regards to income poverty, establishment of poverty traps and informal working, etc. Moreover, the programmes have been criticized since both the means tests applied and the benefit levels consider the whole family, while compliance with conditions in practice is the responsibility of women only.

These criticisms are central elements in an understanding that the formalization of the so-called modern institutions has occurred unevenly and is embedded in a constant tension between freedom and discipline. The imposition of punitive conditions on vulnerable groups in order to gain access to social benefits is a good example of these modern features.

Conditions and 'positive' behaviour

Three main arguments are raised in favour of setting conditions to income transfers to needy people (World Bank, 2009: 50). First, it is argued that the potential beneficiaries of the CCT programmes would not behave like informed and rational agents, mainly due to the lack of information regarding the expected returns of increasing the human capital of their children. Thus, the first argument in favour of CCT programmes states that the combination of imperfect information, myopia and incomplete altruism generates choices that would reduce the investment in human capital from its 'true' private optimal.

The argument states that poor adults suffer from myopia – due to self-control problems and excessive procrastination – and their actions are guided by everyday needs.

There is also a problem of 'incomplete altruism' generated by conflicts of interest within the household. In particular, conflicts may arise between parents and children – that is, between those who pay for education and health services today and those who will benefit tomorrow – or between parents. Consequently, rational decisions made by the parents would not be fully consistent with the children's choices. The underlying idea is the so-called micro foundations of paternalism: governments 'know better' than individuals with scarce resources what is good for them (World Bank, 2009: 51–9).

A second argument in favour of setting conditions on cash transfers in a punitive way is that politics involves votes, lobbying, negotiation, and bureaucracy. Punitive conditions could raise public support for these programmes since they would guarantee that income transfers would promote the 'good behaviour' of the beneficiaries (World Bank, 2009: 59–64). The third argument states that even in cases where the poor's expenditure level on human capital could be privately 'optimal', it might not be socially optimal and thus it might not consider the externalities for the society as a whole. These are the so-called social efficiency arguments (World Bank, 2009: 64–5).

In short, CCT programmes are promoted due to their alleged virtues regarding state paternalism and their potential to impose standards of good behaviour on poor people, assuming that they do not know how to spend or act 'appropriately' and that the state is responsible for bypassing their preferences, correcting them, making their children's schooling compulsory or enforcing the monitoring of all the family members' health.

This is not new. Behind the 'productivist' approach arguing in favour of improving the 'human capital' of the poor lies a 'social control' approach that has characterized social policy in Latin America since the Washington Consensus (Lo Vuolo et al., 1999: 103–7). In this way, needy people can be held responsible for their situation, can be classified into 'deserving' and 'undeserving' and bear the burden of acting in a 'positive' manner in order to deal with their lack of resources.

Conditions and targeting under scrutiny

Justifying CCT programmes on the grounds of conditions clashes with the fact that education and health are citizens' own rights in Latin American constitutions. Imposing conditions on access to these rights in practice turns them into something like a 'temporary right' that lasts depending on the individuals' permanence in the programme or on the selection criteria for targeting. Also, sanctions for breaching the conditions seem inconsistent with the 'human capital' argument, since without the benefit it becomes more difficult to go to school and use the health system. Furthermore, evidence does not show better performance in the cases of students who belong to families that earn the conditional benefit, for many reasons ranging from the family background to the quality of schools (World Bank, 2009: 141–5). Thus, even if one believes that these conditions might increase school enrolment, the potential to increase human capital formation is uncertain. In fact, in almost all Latin American countries there are no solid mechanisms for monitoring the conditions to guarantee an efficient follow-up on school attendance or visits to health clinics (Cobo and Lavinas, 2010).

Regarding the alleged 'good behaviour' promotion of CCT policies, it should be noted that factors that influence an individual's behaviour are many and cannot be

isolated. For instance, it cannot be directly concluded that the rise in school enrolment is explained by the conditions imposed, as the World Bank's own analysis asserts (World Bank, 2009: 129). There is evidence that those children whose families are beneficiaries of other programmes paying an income to any member of the family increase attendance at school. Therefore, it could be argued that what fosters school assistance is a bigger family income rather than the conditions and sanctions that are imposed.[11]

Other issues are the flaws in the service supply, the lack of coordination or the absence of complementary policies that would make the programme's requirements feasible. One argument in favour of punitive conditions states that they can exert pressure for better public services, since the lack of access implies losing the benefit (World Bank, 2009: 115–18). However, in order for this to hold true, the state is the one to be punished and not the beneficiaries of the programme. Also, conditions are mainly focused on primary school and primary care limited to mothers and children with no commitment to comprehensive treatment for all health problems and needs.

The case of México is a good example. The *Oportunidades* programme is frequently noted as an example of good practices by multilateral credit organizations, and it has received several awards from them. In 2011, 20,000 indigenous people belonging to the *Rarámuri* people who had been fed with emergency rations due to starvation were dropped from the *Oportunidades* programme for failing to comply with the conditions (Yanes, 2012: 69). According to the programme's national coordinator, they were dropped 'because the nearest hospital is a 12 hour walk away and you can't build a hospital for three families. They also need to walk 12 hours to pick up their food, for us it would take 36 hours to go up.' Besides, 'they also lack nearby schools'. However, 'the rules will not be changed or made more flexible because it is legally very complicated and would cause problems … benefiting some would lead others to not want to comply'.

Another example could be the comparison between the *Bolsa Familia* programme (BF) and the *Benefício de Prestação Continuada* programme (BPC) in Brazil. The BF is a CCT programme that pays benefits under certain conditions which are temporary and subject to permanent evaluation from the authorities. BF beneficiaries have to revalidate their conditions to access the benefit and there are quotas in the number of benefits per jurisdiction (Lavinas, 2012).

In contrast, the BPC operates as a monthly transfer to individuals with a per capita family income that is one-fourth of the minimum wage and who have a severe handicap – at any age – as well as to sick individuals older than 65 (Medeiros, Diniz and Squinca, 2006; Medeiros, Britto and Veras Soares, 2007). This programme is a direct bequest from the Brazilian Constitution of 1988, establishing this group's right to a minimum wage (regulated by the Ley Orgánica de Asistencia Social of 1993). There are no conditions on the beneficiary's behaviour. Doctors and experts who measure the individual's degree of disability mainly perform the selection of the beneficiaries.

Even when the BPC expenditure is similar or even superior to that of the BF, the latter has more press and public visibility. The main reason seems to be that BF is closely related to those directly in office and access needs to be revalidated, while access to the BPC is open to all those who fulfil certain requirements – which are evaluated by independent professionals – and the benefits are guaranteed permanently. In short, the BF

conditions are the main difference and they seem to be imposed mainly for political reasons rather than for its technical rationale (Medeiros et al., 2007: 18). These political reasons are consistent with the World Bank's defence of conditions, which relate to paternalism, social control and punishing of the bad behaviour of the poor.

In the case of Argentina's *Asignación Universal por Hijo para Protección Social* (AUH) –put into practice in October 2009 – the punitive character of the conditions is even stronger. A peculiar rule of AUH is the sanction mechanism that 'holds back' a percentage of the benefit each month with regard to the fulfilment of the conditions and the penalties foreseen for breaching them. Moreover, there exist differences in these matters between formal wage-earners receiving family allowances and the AUH beneficiaries. The former are not punished with a withdrawal or a reduction of the benefit if their children do not attend school. Quite to the contrary, they earn a plus for attending school. Also, formal wage-earners are not obliged to meet the health conditions in order to access the AUH. Finally, for formal workers the five-children limit imposed on to the beneficiaries of the AUH does not apply.

In brief, there is no solid causal relationship between the programmes and the human capital accumulation by the families' children, based on their reaching elementary school and completing the immunization calendar, and the families' escape from poverty. Moreover, the low administrative capacity of the state reduces the possibility of verifying, through standardized and impartial procedures, the rules of access and the effective needs of claimants/beneficiaries.

In this respect, another important feature of the programme is that it puts women as the intermediate operators between the policy and their children, since in most programmes they are the recipients of the monetary benefits. Thus, not only women are perceived as their 'real' beneficiaries but also they are responsible for safeguarding the conditionals in health and education. In this way, the CCT policy takes advantage of the sexual division of labour addressing women in their reproductive and caregiver roles in order to control (to hold back or even stop) their incorporation into labour markets. Compliance with conditions requires additional time and effort, including bureaucratic tasks, attendance at information sessions, awareness-raising workshops, etc.[12] Even when in some cases it has been found that reception of the benefit can increase women's self-esteem, the CCT programme strengthens the traditional work division. These and other issues could be seen as a regression for women's autonomy, which is exacerbated by the punitive character of the conditions and their role as a measure of the worthiness of beneficiaries receiving the transfer.

In practice, CCT programmes preserve the historical fragmentation in the region between 'waged citizenship' and 'assisted citizenship'. This is not only a technical division, but a social division akin to the conservative modernization processes of the past. Thus, the CCT programme appears more appropriate to overcoming poor people's resistance to meeting their civic obligations, combined with containment of public spending, which is far short of providing a broad and diversified set of decommodified services of adequate quality and quantity.

In this way, CCT policy emerges as an efficient tool, not to improve human capital but as an instrument to reinforce social control. CCT programmes are consistent with conservative modernization and the above goals of state paternalism, social control, political

clientelism and the perception that the poor 'are already being helped' and that it would hence be best to put resources to use in different areas.

CCT programmes show how the formal institutionalization of modern public policies is embedded in the modern tension between liberty and discipline. Also, CCT policies confirm that striking contradictions exist between a universalistic rhetoric on social policies and the strict boundaries between social groups as to their access to autonomy.

Democracy, social rights and autonomy in Latin America

In general terms, in modern societies, social rights are those derived from the very fact of living in society. The protection they offer arises from the right to be collectively protected or insured against the risks of living in society. This concept of social rights universally comprising the entirety of the population cannot be observed in Latin American countries.

What can be observed is a collective solidarity between the formally employed and a paternalistic state taking care of those who individually suffer from the consequences of being excluded from waged citizenship. Informal labour markets, social inequalities and fragmented national systems of social protection increase the dilemma of horizontal solidarity in countries where labour ethics have always been the prevailing value, which share the social insurance ethos, and where a large section of the population, including unions and political parties, mistrusts universal policies in favour of conditional targeting programmes.

National social protection systems in Latin America have adopted two central functions of these systems in modern societies: (1) its preventative and insuring role vis-à-vis the contingencies that affect the population as a whole; and (2) its role in unifying different social groups in egalitarian institutions. These functions are consistent with a concept of social vulnerability and collective solidarity as distributed across the entire population. As a result, in the region, there exists an 'institutional transfer' of inequality since social policies are structured along the demarcation lines of social divisions: for those groups that are worst off, social institutions pay smaller benefits, demand stricter conditions, and offer temporary coverage only.

The tendency in the region is to make inventories and catalogues of 'populations at risk' (meaning 'needy') versus the population with social insurance rights. From here derives the widespread adherence to a strategy of combining social insurance for those fortunately in formal employment and targeting assistance programmes, in order to assist some groups of the needy population selected by the political authorities.

CCT programmes are one of the latest expressions of these practices. Behind its aim to improve 'human capital' of the poor lies a political aim: to impose social control on and encourage good behaviour among needy people. Also, it is an effective policy to regulate the sexual division of labour within poor households and the tendency to increase women's participation in the labour market. In this way, poor people can be held responsible for improving their disadvantages and can be classified as 'deserving' or 'undeserving' social assistance.

For a large sector of the Latin American population, social risks are individualized according to personal characteristics, and coverage becomes an individual responsibility

as well. Among other things, this means that when, in the eyes of the political authorities, these risks are circumstantially covered by primary solidarity of the family or markets, they can assert there is no need for coverage by public institutions or that the priority is to cover other groups that 'need more'. Here the 'target technology' becomes a way of classifying not only social need but mainly social duties.

In contrast, under a social rights conception, while the opportunity and place where social risks may manifest are contingent, every person's right to public coverage against them is not. The fact they are collective rights implies they cannot be operated as rights that depend on certain individual characteristics and conditions, such as being poor, old, a mother, a formal or informal worker, etc. In short, it is not possible to exercise collective rights via programmes that are organized based on people's individual characteristics.

What differentiates the vision of individual risks from that based on social rights is not the domain of coverage (health, education, income); rather, it is the way in which the right to obtain protection is recognized. Social rights are the collective rights to society's common resources. Individual risks do not grant rights over these collective resources, but instead set up one personal situation against another, leaving to the political authorities the decision on who deserves public assistance. In the former case, the power lies with the people as members of an entity that claims its rights; in the latter, it is the state that holds the power and acts in the way it deems adequate.

This difference is crucial to an understanding of the link between the political representation system and the social protection systems in modern societies. The political representation system establishes the relationship of people's 'social acknowledgment' of themselves as right-holders (Théret, 1997). For instance, a social protection system based on the universalization of coverage with homogeneous benefits is more consistent with a proportional political system where (more or less corporatist) strong representation exists in all sectors, and with a barely stratified society that stimulates increased autonomy in people's exercising their rights.

A social protection system of the Latin American type is consistent with a political representation system along the lines of 'delegative democracy', since it revolves around a highly stratified society that favours administrative control over subordinate population groups. There are numerous elements to support this claim: arbitrary selection of beneficiaries, interference in people's lives, stigmatization of recipients, inability to achieve universal coverage and to act preventatively with regards to urgent needs, fomentation of poverty traps,[13] and of informal work, etc. This type of democracy and social strategy is common in most right-leaning and left-leaning governments in the region and follows a long-lasting tradition of conservative modernization.

In this way, the political representation system and the social protection system in Latin America do not incorporate the idea that the political independence of people also requires economic independence. That is not only a matter of giving money to the people, but of deciding what class of social dependence is constructed in the process of giving money. Accordingly, democracies in the region function with little citizen scrutiny and auditing of political acts, and the lives of many people are highly dependent on the vicissitudes of fragmented, conditional and selective social policies.

Notes

1. Moore (1966) suggests that such crises of incorporation could explain fascism as a final stage of conservative modernization in Europe.
2. In Latin America, female participation rate in the labour market averaged 55% in most countries in 2010, about 20 points below the respective rate for men. Women are overrepresented in the more precarious occupations (less qualifications, more unstable tenure and less social security coverage). Although decreasing, the average labour income continues to show a gender gap that places women's income at 70% of male income and the feminine poverty index reveals increasing figures. Women's incorporation into the labour market is unequal: the rate for women with higher educational attainment surpasses 70%, while for less-educated women, it is only 40%. See Rodríguez Enríquez (2012).
3. Other structural phenomena also help to explain these results, such as the accelerated (and early) demographic transition, a decline in fertility rates, the aging of the population, the continuous increase of urbanization, etc.
4. These were Colombia, Costa Rica, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic.
5. Even when this kind of rule has been analysed as a chapter in the study of authoritarianism under such names as caesarism, bonapartism, 'caudillismo' or populism, delegative democracy should be seen as a peculiar type of democracy that is present in many regions in the world (O'Donnell, 1994; O'Donnell et al., 2011).
6. See CEPAL (2010, 2011, 2012).
7. See Esping-Andersen (1990; 1999) for the most renowned typologies of the European welfare states.
8. See, for instance, Hicks (1991), Ferrera (1996), Théret (1997) and Gough and Wood (2004).
9. Over the years, the dynamics of Latin American social protection systems have been largely explained by the economic alliance between the political authorities and key groups of salaried employees placed in strategic positions.
10. Family allowance programmes were established right after the pension schemes: Chile, 1937; Brazil, 1941; Uruguay, 1943; Bolivia, 1953, Argentina, 1957; Colombia, 1957; Mexico, 1973; Costa Rica, 1974.
11. In the case of Brazil, a positive trend in school enrolment is verified for other income transfer programmes that do not have these conditions, such as the case of the programmes focused on retired individuals [*aposentadorias y pensões*] (Cortez Reis and Camargo, 2007).
12. In some cases women face inconvenience complying with their programme obligations, while spurring the discontent of the husbands about their wives spending too much time outside the home (Rodríguez Enríquez, 2011: 27).
13. Here poverty trap means a self-reinforcing mechanism which explains why people remain poor. For instance, the situation of being unable to escape poverty because of being dependent on state benefits, which are reduced or even canceled when extra income is gained.

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