

Master's Thesis Abstract

Social welfare policies in Brazil Developments and Challenges under the PT Administrations

Julie Lind Madsen

This research project examines the development and challenges within social welfare provision in Brazil. When Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva and the Workers' Party (PT) won the presidential elections for the first time in 2002, a discourse focusing on poverty reduction and welfare was introduced in Brazil. The Government has since then implemented various social policies that affect millions of people living in poverty. Furthermore, universal access to healthcare and education became a priority for the Government. In 2010, Dilma Rousseff became Brazil's first female president, and she continued in Lula's political footsteps. There has been a fall in poverty and an increase in educational enrolments in Brazil since PT came to power. Furthermore, Brazil has experienced economic growth and increased international recognition. Despite the Government's efforts to increase social spending and minimize inequality, recent events in Brazil suggest that the population is dissatisfied with Brazilian welfare provision. From 2013 until today, some of the biggest demonstrations in Brazilian history have been taking place throughout the country as the population has gathered to claim more equality, security, and justice. For understanding the populations' attitudes regarding welfare provisions, it is necessary to examine the characteristics of social welfare policies in Brazil further. In addition to this, I created a survey concerning social welfare and the results are used throughout the analysis. The survey was distributed via an online link to those Brazilians whom I was able to reach.

This research project focuses on four welfare areas, namely *Bolsa Familia*, healthcare, education, and childcare as these are basic pillars in the welfare state. After having analyzed these four areas, it shows that they have various characteristics in common. In spite of high tax burdens and enhanced focus on universal public welfare institutions, Brazilian welfare is characterized as fragmented and unequal. In order to meet the growing demands of high quality welfare, the Government has become dependent on private welfare institutions, and this has created a dual system in Brazil. The dual system especially affects the poorer segments in Brazil as this part of the population cannot afford private alternatives. This suggests that Brazilian welfare is actually maintaining a division in social classes as the people who can afford private

care receive much better quality within healthcare, education, and childcare. To better understand the Government's strategy towards welfare policies, I examine the Brazilian welfare policies in relation to classical welfare state models outlined by Esping-Andersen in *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, namely the *liberal*, the *conservative and corporatist* and the *social democratic welfare state*. When welfare in Brazil is characterized in relation to traditional welfare state theory, the factors responsible for the development and the shape of Brazilian welfare become clearer. However, the contrasting nature of Brazilian welfare provision makes it impossible to categorize within *one* of the classical welfare models. It appears that the *Brazilian model* contains aspects from various models, but it also encompasses challenges that the traditional models cannot grasp. Nonetheless, Brazil resembles the countries examined in the classical models in various aspects concerning customs, religion, and values which can be related to the colonial ties to Europe. Classical theories on welfare constitute thus a useful tool for analyzing the Brazilian welfare model and for examining *how* and *how much* welfare is actually delivered in Brazil. The Government's lack of ability to guarantee equality and universalism regarding welfare has resulted in a growing dissatisfaction with the Government among the population. Furthermore, mismanagement of funds and corruption has infiltrated the Brazilian system for years. President Dilma's approval rates are currently at a historical low as she has become involved in what is assumed to be the biggest corruption scandal in Brazil's history. However, the Government is continuously trying to improve public welfare and minimize poverty by implementing new policies, which until now has assured PT the presidency for more than 12 years.