

REPORT

Social Mobility of First Generation *Bolsa Família* Beneficiaries: Trajectories and Dynamics during the Pandemic



CEO

Paulo Tafner

Research Director

Fernando Veloso

Administrative-Financial Manager

Carolina Roiter

Technical Lead

Leandro P. da Rocha

Content Development Team

Leandro P. da Rocha

Pedro H. Chaves Maia

**Institute for Mobility
and Social Development**

Report: Social Mobility of First Generation *Bolsa Família* Beneficiaries:
Trajectories and Dynamics during
the Pandemic

Rio de Janeiro, RJ, 2025. 24 pp.



Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Initial profile and pre-pandemic situation	3
2.1 Bolsa Família dependents in 2005	3
2.2 Reconnected in the Single Registry in 2019	6
Chapter 3: The Pandemic and Transformations in the Social Protection System	9
3.1 Redesigns in the social protection system	9
3.2 Emergency Aid and return to the Registry in 2020	10
3.3 Brazil Aid and the End of Bolsa Família	13
Chapter 4: Post-Pandemic and the New Bolsa Família	14
Chapter 5: Conclusion	17
Bibliography	19
Appendices	21
Annex A: Databases and Methodological Treatments	22



1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2003, the *Bolsa Família* Program (BFP) has consolidated itself as one of the largest and most recognized conditional cash transfer (CCT) policies in the world. In 2019, approximately 13 million Brazilian households were beneficiaries, with efficient targeting, relatively low cost, and consistent impacts on poverty and inequality reduction (Bastagli et al., 2019; Fietz et al., 2021). In line with the international experience of similar programs, BFP conditionalities in the areas of education and health have been associated with human capital gains among vulnerable children (Campello & Neri, 2013; de Brauw et al., 2015; Souza et al., 2019), without robust evidence of adverse effects, such as disincentive to work or increased fertility (Banerjee et al., 2017). Such results dialogue with the perspective that well-designed social policies can simultaneously alleviate immediate poverty and promote investments in capacities (Fiszbein et al., 2009; Gertler et al., 2012).

Almost two decades after the implementation of the BFP, it has become possible to evaluate longer-term outcomes (Millán et al., 2019). A central issue in this agenda is to understand the extent to which former beneficiaries are able to break the cycle of poverty, stop depending on social programs and access more favorable positions in the formal labor market (Card & Hyslop, 2005; Dahl et al., 2014). Evidence for Brazil shows positive effects on schooling and formal participation, although with heterogeneous results for income and marked inequalities by individual and territorial characteristics (Araujo & Macours, 2021; Oliveira & Chagas, 2020). The role of the local context is also relevant: educational and health infrastructure, as well as municipal economic dynamism, are associated with greater chances of social mobility, with spatial patterns similar to those observed in other countries (Bedran-Martins & Lemos, 2017; Chetty et al., 2014).

In this context, recent studies, such as Fassarella et al. (2024) and Instituto Mobilidade e Desenvolvimento Social (Imds) (2023), analyzed the trajectory of young people dependent on the BFP between 2005 and 2019, measuring social mobility indicators such as emancipation from social programs and access to the formal market. Among the main findings, relevant rates of exit from the protection network and formal insertion stand out, although structural inequalities persist.

The present work expands this analysis to the period from 2020 to 2024, incorporating the impact of institutional changes and recent shocks: such as the *Emergency Aid* (2020), the *Brazil Aid* (2021–2022), and the new *Bolsa Família* (from 2023 onwards). By following the same individuals throughout this period, it is possible to assess patterns of permanence, exit, and return to *CadÚnico*, as well as to identify systematic differences according to skin color/race, sex, and territory (Britto et al., 2022; Sandberg, 2012).

In addition to updating and expanding the historical series, the study adopts the same methodological strategy for linking administrative records used in Fassarella et al. (2024) and the Instituto



Mobilidade e Desenvolvimento Social (Imds) (2023), allowing direct comparability of the results. The analyses include both aggregated indicators and cut-outs by population groups and local contexts, favoring the identification of heterogeneities. Thus, the report provides subsidies to understand how recent transformations in Brazilian social policy influence the mobility trajectories of long-term beneficiaries, contributing to the design of more effective actions for inclusion and socioeconomic emancipation.

The report is organized into five chapters, in addition to this introductory text. **Chapter 2** presents the initial profile of young people who were dependent on *Bolsa Família* in 2005 and describes their situation in the pre-pandemic period, exploring regional, demographic, and socioeconomic heterogeneities. **Chapter 3** examines the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on this cohort and the changes in the social protection system in this period, with emphasis on the role of Emergency Aid (Auxílio Emergencial) in the reconnection of part of young people to the social protection system and the transition to Brazil Aid (Auxílio Brasil). **Chapter 4** addresses the post-pandemic period, marked by the return of *Bolsa Família* in 2023, analyzing patterns of permanence and exit from the Single Registry until 2024. Finally, **Chapter 5** presents the final considerations, connecting the results obtained to the implications for social mobility and for the improvement of public policies.



2. INITIAL PROFILE AND PRE-PANDEMIC SITUATION

The starting point of this analysis is the dependents of the *Bolsa Família* Program registered in the 2005 Payroll. These individuals, mostly children and adolescents, lived in households marked by poverty and social vulnerability. Understanding who these people were and how they were distributed throughout the national territory allows us to establish a solid basis for the analysis that will be developed during the course of this report.

The first part of this chapter outlines the sociodemographic profile of these dependents in 2005, considering variables such as age, sex, skin color/race, family structure, and geographic location. The objective is to characterize the starting line of a group whose trajectory will be followed for almost two decades, a period in which they crossed different economic contexts and public policies.

In the second part, the presence of these same individuals in the 2019 Single Registry is examined, the last year before the impact represented by the Covid-19 pandemic. This step is essential to identify initial signs of permanence or withdrawal from formal social protection networks. The verification of the reconsolidation (or not) of these individuals in the registration databases allows the construction of preliminary indicators on continuity, return or disconnection in relation to the system.

These two subsections form the empirical foundation of the analysis: starting from a known and delimited universe, we investigate how part of it maintained, lost, or rebuilt its links with the social protection network in the years that followed.

2.1 *Bolsa Família* dependents in 2005

This study follows a specific group of children and adolescents identified as dependent on the *Bolsa Família* Program in 2005, aged between 7 and 16 years at the time. The selection of this age group reflects its relevance to the life cycle: it is a decisive period for educational training, cognitive development, and initial socialization in the labor market. From the December 2005 payroll, a detailed portrait of these beneficiaries is reconstructed, combining administrative records and demographic information.

Table 2.1 presents an overview of the main characteristics of the group. From the age point of view, 30% were between 7 and 9 years of age, 33% between 10 and 12 years of age and 37% between 13 and 16 years of age, with a predominance of adolescents. As for sex, the distribution is relatively



balanced: 42% male and 41% female, but 17% of the records could not be identified due to the absence of this information in the 2006 payroll, the first in which it was included.

Another relevant aspect is the high proportion of records without skin color/race information (27%). This variable was recovered from the 2012 Single Registry, which means a time lag, but still offers a useful indicator: half (50%) of those identified declared themselves non-white (black or brown) and 22% white. This pattern confirms the association between skin color/race and poverty in Brazil and the concentration of cash transfers in marginalized populations.

Table 2.1. Characteristics of dependents of the *Bolsa Família* Program between 7 and 16 years of age in 2005

Characteristics	Category	Percentage (%)
Age group	07 to 09 years old	30
	10 to 12 years old	33
	13 to 16 years old	37
Sex	Male	42
	Female	41
	Not found (2006)	17
Skin color/Race	White	22
	Non-white (black + brown)	50
	Other (indigenous + asian)	1
	Not found (<i>CadÚnico</i> 2012)	27
Region of residence	North	9
	Northeast	46
	Southeast	28
	South	12
	Midwest	5

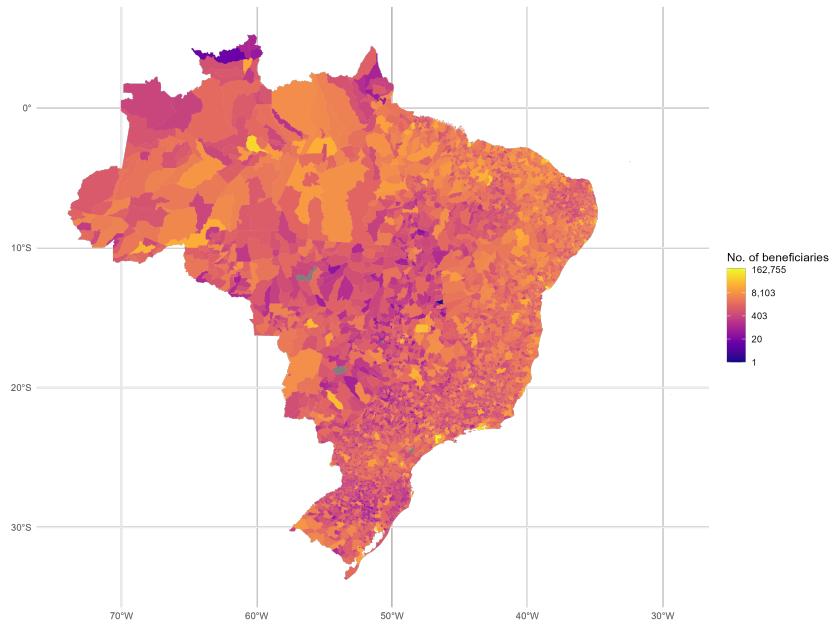
Note: Prepared by the authors based on microdata from the *Bolsa Família* Payroll and the Single Registry for Social Programs. Information on sex was extracted from the December 2006 issue. The skin color/race variables were retrieved from the 2012 Single Registry. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding off or unidentified categories.

From a territorial point of view, there is a strong concentration in the Northeast (46%), followed by the Southeast (28%), while the North, South and Midwest add up to 26%. This distribution confirms the national scope of the program and anticipates regional inequalities in permanence and reconnection analyzed in the following sections.

Figure 2.1 shows the absolute number of dependents per municipality. The presence of the program in 2005 is broad and diffuse, reaching large urban centers in the Northeast, such as Salvador, Fortaleza and Recife, as well as capitals in the North and Midwest. The capillarity also extends to small municipalities, including those in remote areas of the Legal Amazon and the semi-arid region, evidencing the capacity of the *Bolsa Família* to reach vulnerable populations even in regions of low population density and reduced presence of the State.

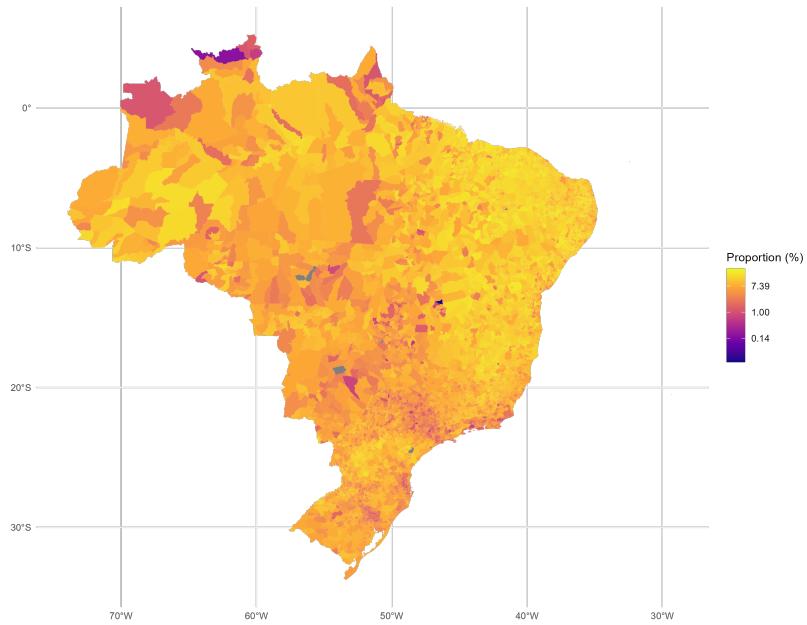
Figure 2.2 complements the analysis by showing, per municipality, the proportion of beneficiary children and adolescents in relation to the total population. This relative perspective reveals that, although the highest absolute numbers are in the large centers, it is in the small municipalities of the North and Northeast that the program achieves greater social density. In many of the aforementioned, more than 5% of the total population was made up of dependents of the *Bolsa Família*, reaching, in extreme cases, more than 7%.

Figure 2.1. Distribution, by municipality, of dependents aged 7 to 16 years, beneficiaries of the *Bolsa Família* Program in 2005



Note: Prepared by the authors based on microdata from the *Bolsa Família* Payroll and the Single Registry for Social Programs.

Figure 2.2. Proportion of dependents aged 7 to 16 years, beneficiaries of the *Bolsa Família* Program in 2005 in relation to the total population, by municipality



Note: Prepared by the authors based on microdata from the *Bolsa Família* Payroll and the Single Registry for Social Programs.

These elements, combined, reinforce that the group analyzed starts from a condition of great vulnerability marked by structural income limitations, racial inequalities, territorial location, and restricted access to public policies.



2.2 Reconnected in the Single Registry in 2019

Almost fifteen years after the initial identification, part of these individuals were found in the 2019 Single Registry. This stage is crucial to the understanding of how a group that, in 2005, was mostly of school age and inserted in contexts of high vulnerability, positions itself years later in the face of current social policies and eligibility criteria. At the same time, it offers an opportunity to explore the dynamics of permanence, exit, and possible re-entry into the system, considering the broad set of economic, social, and institutional transformations that have occurred in Brazil in this interval.

Between 2005 and 2019, the *Bolsa Família* Program consolidated itself as the country's main income transfer policy, expanded coverage, and improved its targeting mechanisms. The period was also marked by demographic changes, such as the aging of the population and the reduction in fertility, advances in the formalization of the labor market until the mid-2010s and, on the other hand, by successive economic crises from 2014 onwards. These factors directly interfere in the trajectories of families, either by improving living conditions that can lead to exiting the program, or by persisting or worsening the vulnerability that keeps individuals in *CadÚnico*.

Table 2.2 summarizes the situation: of the 11.6 million dependents aged between 7 and 16 years in 2005, 2.4 million (20%) still received *Bolsa Família* in 2019 and 1.6 million (14%) remained in the registry but without the benefit. In total, 34% remained in the Single Registry, while 66%, more than 7.6 million people, were not located, suggesting a significant pattern regarding their leaving the system.

Table 2.2. Situation of the 2005 BFP dependents in 2019

Observed situation	Beneficiaries (million)	Distribution (%)
Total	11.6	100
Remain beneficiaries of the BFP	2.4	20
Registered non-beneficiaries of the BFP	1.6	14
Not found in <i>CadÚnico</i> (Exit Rate)	7.6	66

Note: Prepared by the authors based on microdata from the *Bolsa Família* Payroll and the Single Registry for Social Programs. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding off.

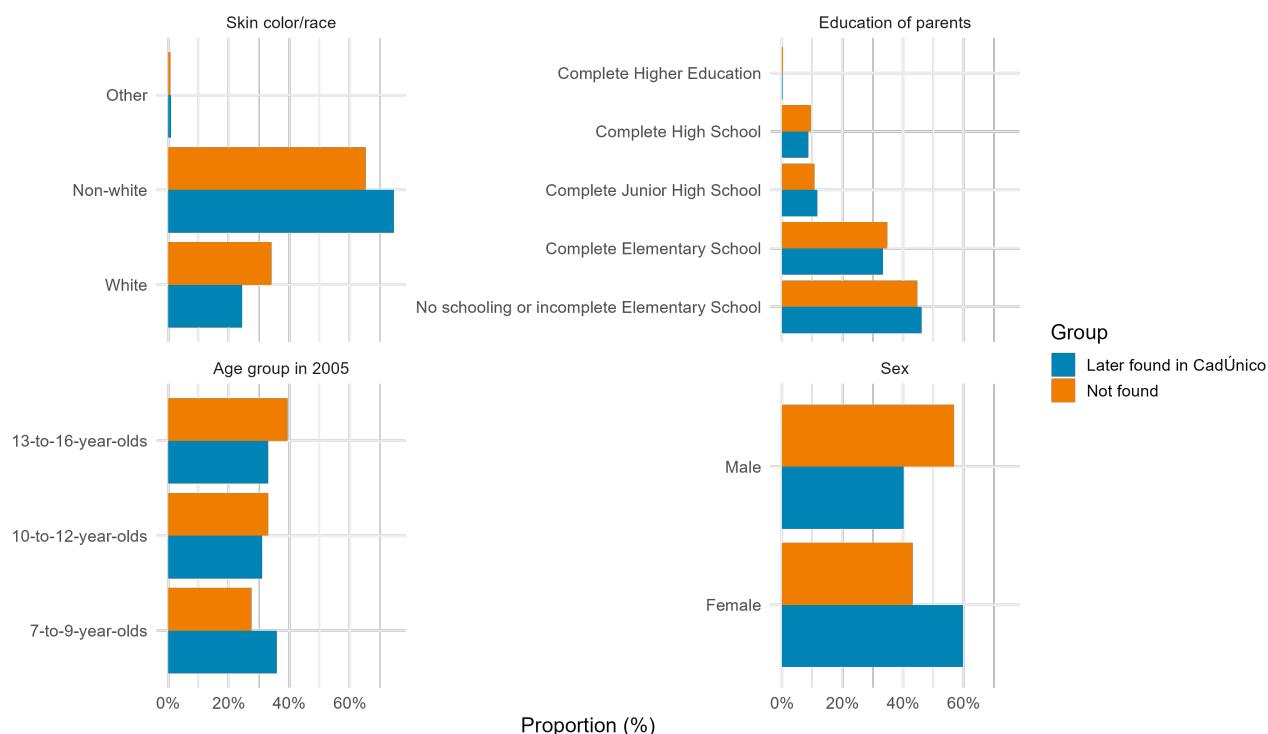
The profile of those rediscovered presents differences associated with the level of education of the guardians. In 2005, individuals from families with less schooling, especially those responsible for children with no formal education or with only incomplete elementary school, were more likely to remain in the system. This result, illustrated in Figure 2.3, suggests that educational barriers, often linked to difficulties in entering the formal labor market, contribute to the greater permanence of part of the young people in the social protection network.

In the cut-out by skin color/race, permanence in *CadÚnico* is higher among non-white people (black and brown), reinforcing the point that racial inequalities persist over time and are reflected in the duration of the bond with the social protection network. This difference is consistent with evidence that the non-white population faces higher unemployment rates, worse employment and income conditions, and lower intergenerational mobility.

The differences by sex are more subtle, but still significant: women are slightly more frequent among those reconnected, a phenomenon that may be related both to the persistence of economic vulnerability among young women and to the centrality they occupy in the Unified Registry, often as heads of households. In terms of the original age group in 2005, the distribution among those re-

discovered does not present great contrasts, although there is slight greater presence of individuals who were between 7 and 9 years of age at the time.

Figure 2.3. Comparative profile of rediscovered and non-rediscovered dependents in the Single Registry in 2019



Note: Prepared by the authors based on microdata from the *Bolsa Família* Payroll and the Single Registry for Social Programs. "No information" categories have been hidden from the graphs.

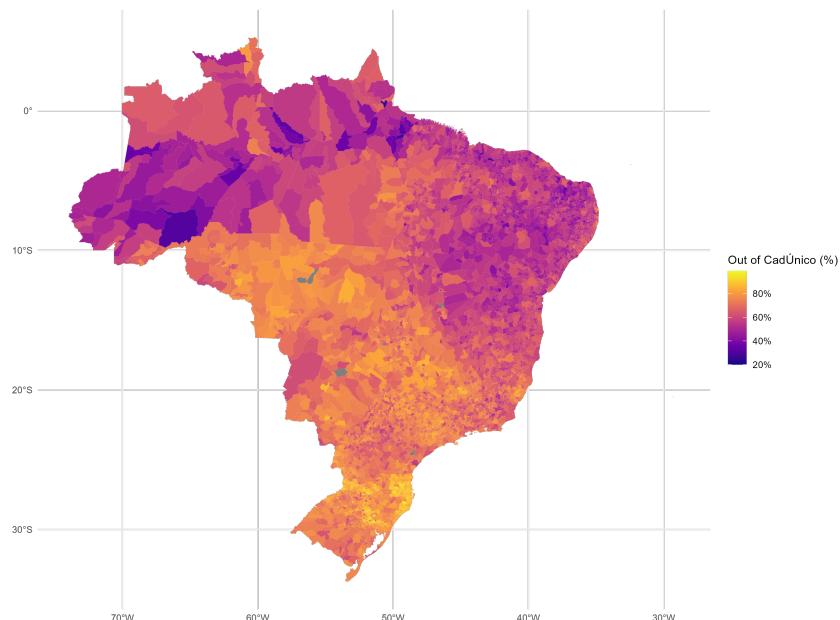
The territorial cut-out adds an important layer to the analysis. Figure 2.4 shows the exit rate of *CadÚnico* by municipality, showing striking regional patterns. In the South and Southeast, cadastral evasion tends to be higher, especially in urban areas of greater economic dynamism, where it exceeds 90% in some cases. In these regions, it is possible that there are many individuals who no longer meet the income criteria.

In contrast, in the North and Northeast, particularly in the semi-arid region, in the interior of Maranhão and in the Amazon region, lower exit rates predominate, reflecting the permanence of conditions of structural poverty. In these territories, *CadÚnico* maintains its role as the main instrument for registration and access to social benefits, even fifteen years after the initial entry of the group.

By combining socioeconomic profile, demographic characteristics and territorial patterns, the analysis suggests that the permanence or exit from the Single Registry over this period is not random but strongly influenced by structural inequalities and the regional context. This evidence reinforces the importance of considering multiple dimensions (such as income, education, skin color/race, sex, and location) to understand how beneficiaries interact with the social safety net in the long term.



Figure 2.4. Map of the exit rate from the Single Registry between 2005 and 2019.



Note: Prepared by the authors based on microdata from the *Bolsa Família* Payroll and the Single Registry for Social Programs.



3. THE PANDEMIC AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM

The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in Brazil in 2020 caused profound changes in public policies aimed at low-income families. The social assistance system, until then anchored in the *Bolsa Família* Program (BFP) and the Single Registry (*CadÚnico*), had to be adapted quickly to respond to a crisis of major economic, social and health proportions. In a very short interval, the Brazilian State expanded its coverage capacity in an unprecedented way, relaxed access rules and created emergency registration mechanisms, including some outside the already consolidated structures.

These changes directly altered the scenario analyzed in the previous chapter. By following young people who were dependent on *Bolsa Família* in 2005, it becomes possible to verify how their permanence or return to the system after 2019 occurred, in light of the new policies implemented during the pandemic. The analysis focuses on three aspects: (i) the institutional and operational transformations observed from 2020 onwards; (ii) the role of Emergency Aid (EA) as a gateway to re-entry for part of the young people who had left the system; and (iii) the transition to Brazil Aid, with its implications for maintaining the link with the protection network.

3.1 Redesigns in the social protection system

The period that began in 2020 was marked by successive and profound changes in the Brazilian social protection system. These transformations, catalyzed by the Covid-19 pandemic, involved everything from short-term emergency measures to structural reforms in the main income transfer programs.

The health and economic crisis required a rapid and broad response. In this context, Emergency Aid (EA) was created, instituted by Law No. 13,982/2020, with payments starting in April of that year. Initially intended for informal workers, the unemployed and individual microentrepreneurs, the benefit set installments of R600, with double amounts (R 1,200) for single-parent mothers. There was a limit of two payments per family, and *CadÚnico* was used as the main basis to automatically identify those eligible. For those outside the registry, an unprecedented self-declaration mechanism was created via a Caixa Econômica Federal application.

Despite its unprecedented scale (EA reached more than 68 million people), its design revealed important limitations. The priority use of *CadÚnico* as a gateway left out part of the vulnerable families that were not registered in 2020. Emergency registration, in turn, faced operational difficulties, causing delays and under-registration of eligibles, especially in the first months.



In September 2020, the EA was extended with a reduced amount of R\$ 300 (MP No. 1,000/2020). The following year, it became even more restrictive: in March 2021, the installments varied between R\$ 150 and R\$ 375, with a limited number of beneficiaries and duration (MP No. 1,039/2021).

At the same time, the BFP has undergone significant changes. MP No. 1,061/2021, of August, formally extinguished the program and instituted *Auxílio Brasil*, made official in December by Law No. 14,284/2021. With a strong political appeal, the new program increased values, relaxed rules, and included additional conditional benefits. The minimum amount of R\$ 400, established in December 2021 (MP No. 1,076/2021), was made permanent in May 2022 by Law No. 14,342/2022. A few months later, Constitutional Amendment No. 123/2022 added an extraordinary R\$ 200 to the benefit, temporarily guaranteeing installments of R\$ 600 between August and December 2022.

3.2 Emergency Aid and return to the Registry in 2020

The operation of the Emergency Aid (AE) during the pandemic established two distinct paths of access to the benefit. The first was automatic, intended for all individuals registered in *CadÚnico* until March 2020, dispensing with an added registration. The second, created especially for the emergency situation, allowed people outside the registry to request the benefit through a self-declaration process via the Caixa Econômica Federal application. This division gave *CadÚnico* a central role in the emergency policy, while highlighting barriers for those who were not registered, since alternative access required autonomy, organized documentation, and access to digital resources.

For the group of young people who were dependent on the BFP in 2005, this distinction was decisive. In 2019, about 4 million were still registered in *CadÚnico* and, as shown in Table 3.1, in 2020 this number dropped to 2.9 million (25% of the total), possibly due to administrative dismissals due to lack of updating, exclusions motivated by changes in income or family composition, and difficulties in re-registration aggravated by pandemic restrictions.

The majority, 8.7 million (75%), were out of the registry at the beginning of 2020. Within this group, 1.1 million (10% of the total) were able to access the EA through emergency enrollment, while 7.6 million (65%) remained completely out of both *CadÚnico* and the emergency program.

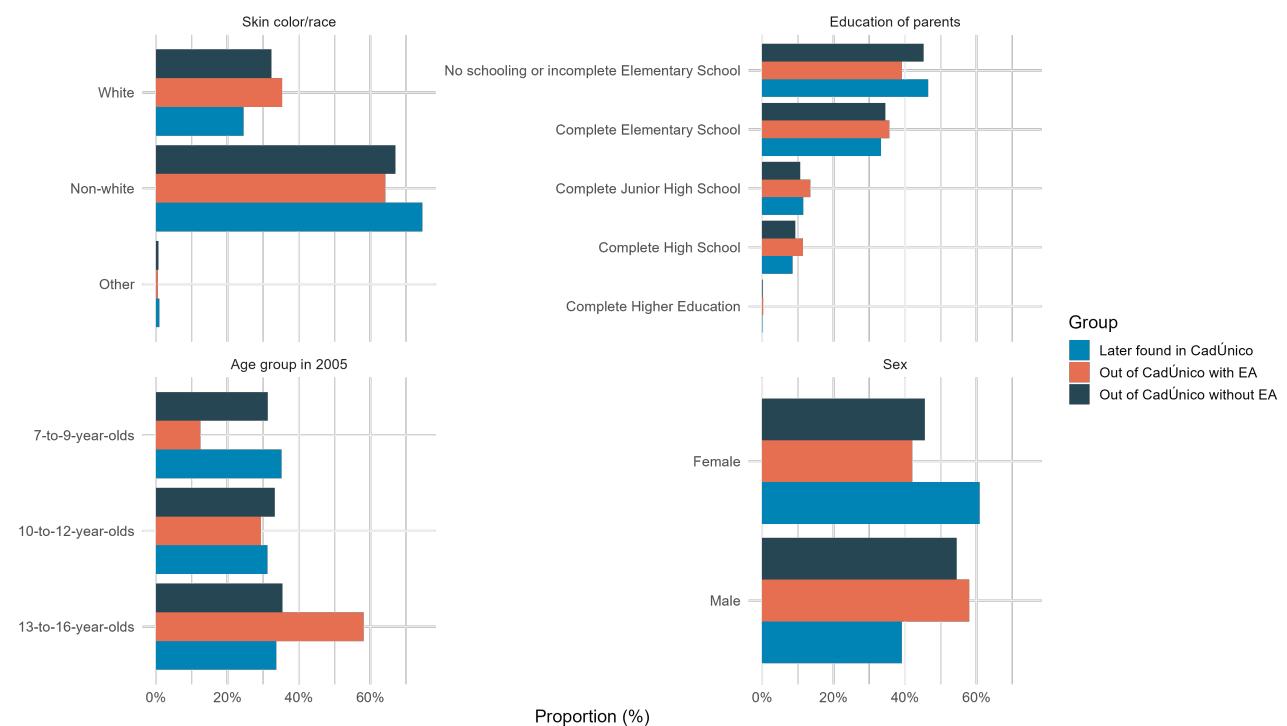
Table 3.1. Situation of the 2005 BFP dependents in 2020

Observed situation	Beneficiaries (million)	Distribution (%)
Total	11.6	100
Found in <i>CadÚnico</i>	2.9	25
Not found in <i>CadÚnico</i>	8.7	75
Received Emergency Aid (EA)	1.1	10
Out of <i>CadÚnico</i> and EA (exit rate)	7.6	65

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the microdata of the *Bolsa Família* Payroll and the Single Registry for Social Programs and ExtraCad. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding off.

The comparison of profiles in Figure 3.1 reveals significant differences between these groups. Those found in *CadÚnico* in 2020 have the characteristics most associated with persistent vulnerability: predominance of non-white people, a higher proportion of women, and guardians with low education. These conditions tend to limit socioeconomic mobility and increase the probability of continuous permanence in the registry, ensuring automatic access to EA.

Figure 3.1. Comparative profile of rediscovered and non-rediscovered dependents in the Single Registry in 2020



Note: Prepared by the authors based on the microdata of the *Bolsa Família* Payroll and the Single Registry for Social Programs and ExtraCad.

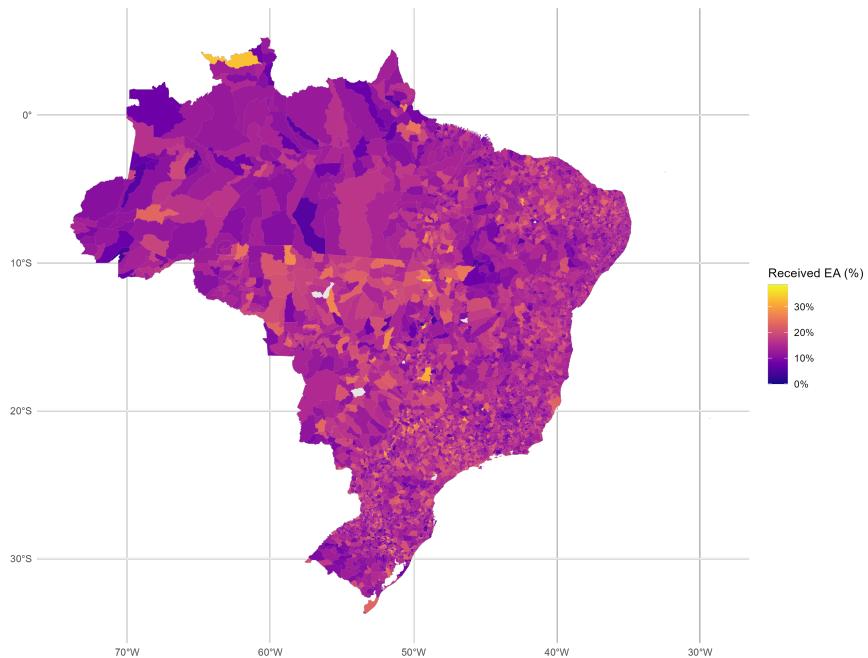
Those who were outside *CadÚnico* and managed to receive the benefit form a group with distinct traits: almost half were between 13 and 16 years of age in 2005, which means that, in 2020, they were already young adults with autonomy to apply for aid in their own name and have a greater male presence, possibly associated with early insertion in the informal labor market, with a higher proportion of whites compared to those who have been rediscovered and have guardians with slightly higher levels of education, a characteristic that may have facilitated navigation through the digital process.

In turn, the group that remained completely outside the protection network – without *CadÚnico* and without EA – exhibits an intermediate profile, combining lower structural vulnerability with possible access barriers, such as lack of information, technological difficulties, or absence of active search for the benefit.

The territorial analysis in Figure 3.2 shows the municipal distribution of the proportion of young people disconnected from *CadÚnico* in 2019 who received the EA in 2020. Although it is possible to perceive some clearer areas in the South, Southeast and part of the Midwest, the geographic pattern is not clear enough to indicate well-defined regional boundaries. The large internal variation in each region, with neighboring municipalities exhibiting different proportions, suggests that local factors may have had relevant weight, diluting a clear visual gradient on the map.

Therefore, Table 3.2 is more appropriate to quantify regional differences. The data show that, among young people outside the *CadÚnico*, the rates of receiving the EA varied from 13.8% in the North and 14.8% in the Northeast to 15.3% in the South, 15.6% in the Southeast and 16.1% in the Midwest. While

Figure 3.2. Proportion of young people who were out of *CadÚnico* in 2019 and received EA in 2020, by municipality



Note: Prepared by the authors based on microdata from the *Bolsa Família* Payroll, the Single Registry for Social Programs and ExtraCad.

the difference between extremes is only about 2 percentage points, it represents tens of thousands more reconnected young people in regions with the highest percentage. These results indicate that the greater use of the digital channel for the registration of the EA may be associated with factors such as better internet infrastructure, greater urban density, and consolidated presence of banking services, although these elements do not translate into a very evident cartographic pattern.

Table 3.2. Proportion of young people out of *CadÚnico* in 2019 who received Emergency Aid, by greater region

Greater region	Received EA (%)
North	13.8
Northeast	14.8
Southeast	15.6
South	15.3
Midwest	16.1

Source: Prepared by the authors from the base of dependents of the BFP (2005), *CadÚnico* and ExtraCad.

Still, the map reveals some relevant points. There are lighter spots in municipalities in the North and Northeast that contradict the general regional trend, suggesting that local mobilization actions, enrollment efforts or intense action by the social assistance network expanded the reach of the benefit.

It is important to emphasize that both the map and the table refer exclusively to young people



who were outside *CadÚnico* in 2019, that is, they do not include those who remained in the registry and received the EA automatically. Thus, the distribution presented reflects only the fraction that had to resort to self-declaration via application, a mechanism that required greater autonomy and digital access.

3.3 Brazil Aid and the End of *Bolsa Família*

The launch of Brazil Aid (*Auxílio Brasil*), in November 2021, marked the formal end of the *Bolsa Família* Program and the creation of an income transfer policy with a renewed institutional arrangement. The new program incorporated higher amounts, complementary benefits, and more flexible eligibility rules, with stated objectives of stimulating the autonomy of families and rewarding school and sports performance. Even so, it maintained the Single Registry as the main selection instrument, which ensured operational continuity and preserved the logic of focusing on low-income households.

For the group of young people who were dependent on the BFP in 2005, the transition to Brazil Aid (*Auxílio Brasil*) represented a partial re-composition of coverage. Table 3.3 shows that in 2021, 16% were identified as beneficiaries of Brazil Aid (*Auxílio Brasil*), a proportion that increased to 22% in 2022. At the same time, the contingent of non-beneficiaries registered grew from 7% to 9%, and the percentage totally outside *CadÚnico* fell from 77% to 68%.

Table 3.3. Situation of 2005 BFP dependents in 2021 and 2022

Observed situation	2021		2022	
	Million	%	Million	%
Total number of young people	11.6	100	11.6	100
Beneficiaries of Brazil Aid	1.9	16	2.6	22
Non-beneficiary registrants	0.8	7	1.1	9
Not found in <i>CadÚnico</i>	9.0	77	8.0	68
Received Emergency Aid (EA)	0.6	6	0.3	3
Out of <i>CadÚnico</i> and EA (exit rate)	8.4	71	7.7	65

Source: Prepared by the authors based on microdata from the *Bolsa Família* Payroll, the Single Registry for Social Programs and ExtraCad. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding off.

The inclusion of the Emergency Aid in Table 3.3 reveals that, even after the start of Brazil Aid, part of the young people outside *CadÚnico* continued to receive Emergency Aid (EA): 6% in 2021 and 3% in 2022. This remnant is linked to the extension and staggering of the EA during the transition phase, especially for informal workers and families who did not immediately fit the rules of the new program. However, this is a contingent in strong decline, signaling that the emergency strategy was gradually replaced by the structural redesign of Brazil Aid.

This overlap in policies helps explain why the recovery in coverage in the period was modest. While the EA worked as an alternative channel, with broader criteria and easier digital access, BA returned to being based primarily on eligibility via *CadÚnico*, reintroducing requirements for re-registration and proof of income. Thus, part of the eventual beneficiaries of the EA did not maintain a link with the system, either because they did not meet the criteria, or because of institutional and informational barriers to formalize their enrollment.



4. POST-PANDEMIC AND THE NEW BOLSA FAMÍLIA

The return of *Bolsa Família* in 2023 marked a new stage in social protection policies in Brazil. After a transition period characterized by the Emergency Aid and, later, by the Brazil Aid, the new program resumed a structure closer to the original model but incorporated significant changes in the eligibility criteria and in the instruments for monitoring families.

Among the central changes, the restoration of benefits per person stands out, with specific transfers to children, adolescents, pregnant women and nursing mothers, and the return of the so-called conditionalities, such as the requirement of school attendance and health monitoring. At the same time, a new calculation logic was implemented that combines a fixed amount per family with additional installments according to composition and income. The program also started to incorporate the Early Childhood Benefit, aimed at children from 0 to 6 years of age, recognizing the importance of financial support in the early years for child development.

The management of the new program reinforced the control and updating of registration, with more intense actions to review records, cross-check with other administrative databases and encourage the active search for eligible families. These initiatives increased the accuracy of the public served and favored the reunion with vulnerable families who had no longer been included in databases in previous years.

This redesign, more robust, segmented and with reinforcement in monitoring, seeks not only to mitigate monetary poverty, but also to improve long-term conditions, with a focus on childhood and the prevention of intergenerational reproduction of poverty. For young people who were dependent on the program in 2005, the 2023 redesign created a new point of contact with the system, and their ability to reconnect reflects both the scope of the institutional effort and persistent inequalities in access to public policies.

Table 4.1 shows the distribution, in 2023 and 2024, of these young people from 2005 according to their situation in the Single Registry. A relevant fact is the stability of the proportion of direct beneficiaries: about 24–25% of the total in the two years, a level similar to that recorded during Brazil Aid (2021 and 2022). This continuity suggests that the restructuring of the program preserved the links with those already served, maintaining a stable core of beneficiaries.

The group of non-beneficiaries registered remained relatively stable, oscillating from 15% in 2023 to 14% in 2024. This percentage remains slightly above that observed in 2021 (11%) and 2022 (13%), indicating that part of the young people returned to appear in *CadÚnico*, although without receiving

Table 4.1. Situation of 2005 BFP dependents in 2023 and 2024

Observed situation	2023		2024	
	Million	%	Million	%
Total number of young people	11.6	100	11.6	100
Beneficiaries of the New BF	2.8	24	2.7	24
Non-beneficiary registrants	1.7	15	1.6	14
Not found in <i>CadÚnico</i>	7.1	61	7.3	63

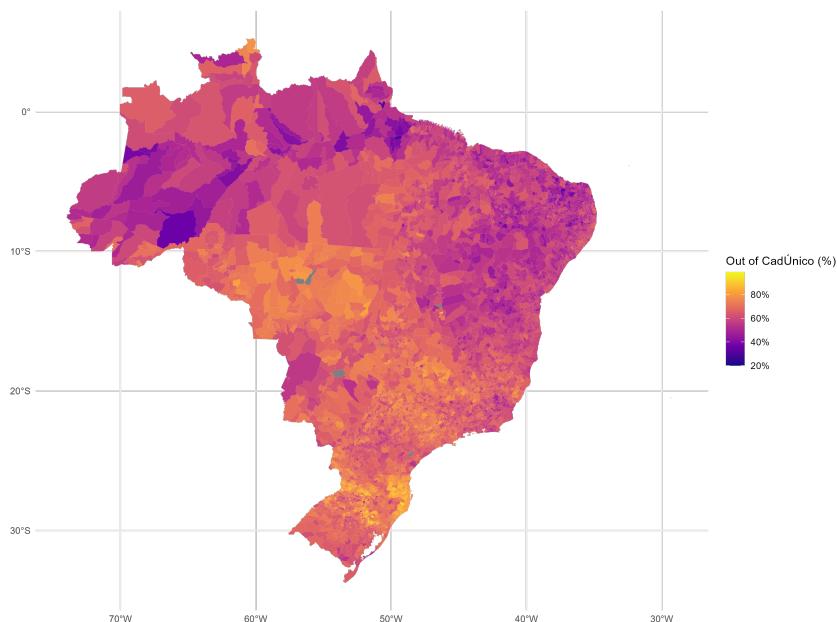
Source: Prepared by the authors based on microdata from the *Bolsa Família* Payroll and the Single Registry for Social Programs. Percentages may not add up to 100

the monetary benefit.

The exit rate, the proportion of individuals not found in the Single Registry, increased by 61% in 2019 to 63% in 2024, remaining, however, below the level of 2019 (approximately 66%). The movement suggests that the reconnection impulse observed in the emergency period has cooled, while part of the dismissals may reflect both socioeconomic transitions that move households away from the eligibility criteria and the decrease in the effort to update and actively search outside the height of the pandemic.

Figure 4.1 shows the exit rate from *CadÚnico* in 2024, by municipality. The geographic pattern confirms a regional gradient already observed in 2019: lower rates of disconnection (purple and bluish tones) occur in the Legal Amazon and the semi-arid Northeast, areas historically more vulnerable, with greater dependence on income transfers and where permanence in the registry is higher. In these regions, both the socioeconomic need and the performance of the social assistance network contribute to a high permanence rate.

Figure 4.1. Map of the exit rate from the Single Registry between 2005 and 2024



Note: Prepared by the authors based on microdata from the *Bolsa Família* Payroll and the Single Registry for Social Programs.



On the other hand, municipalities in the South, Southeast and parts of the Midwest have higher exit rates (in orange and yellow), often above 70%. These territories contain many young people who are no longer included in the registry, possibly due to insertion in the formal labor market, migration to other locations or improvement in family income.

The comparison between 2019 and 2024 shows that the direct presence of these young people in the Single Registry decreased during the pandemic, reflecting a drop in their formal connection with the system. At the same time, Emergency Aid and, later, Brazil Aid worked as parallel reconnection mechanisms, allowing part of the disconnected population to access benefits temporarily. This effect, however, proved to be temporary: once the emergency measures ended, the exit rate grew again, approaching the levels observed before the pandemic. This suggests that the reintegration achieved at the height of the crisis is not sustainable in the medium term without permanent efforts to actively seek an updated registry.



5. CONCLUSION

The trajectory of young people who were dependent on the *Bolsa Família* Program (BFP) in 2005 offers a unique opportunity to understand the possible paths of social mobility in Brazil. Over almost two decades, these individuals transitioned from childhood to adulthood – a phase in which, ideally, the need for permanent links with social protection policies should decrease, as families overcome poverty. In this sense, the permanence or exit from the Single Registry works as an indirect marker of these trajectories, reflecting, in some cases, economic emancipation and, in others, the persistence of vulnerability.

By 2019, about two-thirds of the young people monitored were no longer included in the social assistance bases. This proportion suggests that a significant part of the initial cohort may have left the system for positive reasons, such as increased income, household reconfiguration, or youth emancipation. However, the shock caused by the pandemic in 2020 imposed a severe test on this mobility. Emergency Aid (EA), by creating self-declaration and digital enrollment mechanisms, revealed that approximately 1.1 million of these individuals, even outside *CadÚnico*, still lived in conditions of sufficient vulnerability to justify access to the benefit. This selective return indicated that many previous dismissals did not represent consolidated socioeconomic stability.

The analysis showed that re-entry during the pandemic was more common among young people with relatively less vulnerable profiles than those who remained in *CadÚnico* but still exposed to significant risks. From a territorial point of view, EA showed structural differences: municipalities in the South, Southeast and Midwest recorded higher rates of reconnection among disconnected workers, suggesting that access to the benefit was influenced by the combination of local institutional capacity, digital infrastructure, and informational capital of families.

The post-pandemic period, marked by the creation of Brazil Aid (*Auxílio Brasil*) and then the return of *Bolsa Família* in 2023, partially consolidated the links with the protection network: about 25% of young people remained direct beneficiaries, a stable proportion since 2021. On the other hand, more than 60% remained out of the system in 2024, even after the expansion of active search and registration update mechanisms. The inclusion of Emergency Aid in the 2021 and 2022 statistics showed that a small portion of those disconnected still maintained residual access to the emergency benefit, but this contingent fell quickly, reinforcing the temporary nature of the reconnections caused by the pandemic.

This dynamic suggests that many of those disconnected maintain an intermittent relationship with social policy: they are close enough to the eligibility line to resort to the system in times of crisis but remain outside it in contexts of “normality”. Such a pattern challenges the binary reading between permanence and resilience and points to the existence of trajectories marked by discontinuous



entries and exits, in response to critical events or conjunctural variations in income.

The results indicate that, in addition to reaching those below the formal poverty line, public policy needs to develop mechanisms to keep individuals in situation of potential vulnerability visible to the system, especially young people in transition to adulthood. This involves strengthening the mechanisms for updating and active search, with specific strategies to identify and monitor those who have recently left the registry or who are in situation of risk not captured by the traditional criteria, and also the improvement of eligibility criteria, incorporating more complex and multidimensional indicators of vulnerability, capable of anticipating risks before income falls below the formal limit.

In summary, this report showed that the pandemic worked as a revealing marker of the fragility of part of the trajectories of social mobility in Brazil. Although many young people have formally left the protection system, they have remained exposed to risks that have led them to seek emergency support. Social policy, therefore, must evolve not only to reach those in situation of poverty, but to continuously accompany individuals throughout the life cycle, recognizing the limits of income as the only criterion of vulnerability and investing in strategies that are more preventive, responsive, and adapted to the typical transitions of youth.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Araujo, M., & Macours, K. (2021). Education, income and mobility: Experimental impacts of childhood exposure to Progresa after 20 years. *PSE Working Papers*, (halshs-03364972).

Banerjee, A., Hanna, R., Kreindler, G., & Olken, B. (2017). Debunking the stereotype of the lazy welfare recipient: Evidence from cash transfer programs. *World Bank Research Observer*, 32(2), 155–184.

Bastagli, F., Hagen-Zanker, J., Harman, L., Barca, V., Sturge, G., & Schmidt, T. (2019). The impact of cash transfers: A review of the evidence from low- and middle-income countries. *Journal of Social Policy*, 48(3), 569–594.

Bedran-Martins, A., & Lemos, M. (2017). Politics of drought under Bolsa Família program in Northeast Brazil. *World Development Perspectives*, 7–8, 15–21.

Britto, D., de Andrade Fonseca, A., Pinotti, P., Sampaio, B., & Warwar, L. (2022). *Intergenerational mobility in the land of inequality* (tech. rep. No. Research Paper 2022–186). BAFFI CAREFIN Centre.

Campello, T., & Neri, M. (2013). *Programa Bolsa Família: uma década de inclusão e cidadania*. Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (Ipea).

Card, D., & Hyslop, D. (2005). Estimating the effects of a time-limited earnings subsidy for welfare-leavers. *Econometrica*, 73(6), 1723–1770.

Chetty, R., Hendren, N., Kline, P., & Saez, E. (2014). Where is the land of opportunity? The geography of intergenerational mobility in the United States. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 129(4), 1553–1623.

Dahl, G., Kostøl, A., & Mogstad, M. (2014). Family welfare culture. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 129(4), 1711–1752.

de Brauw, A., Gilligan, D., Hoddinott, J., & Roy, S. (2015). The impact of bolsa família on schooling. *World Development*, 70, 303–316.

Fassarella, E., Ferreira, S., Franco, S., Pinho Neto, V., Ribeiro, G., Schuabb, V., & Tafner, P. (2024). Social mobility and CCT programs: The Bolsa Família program in Brazil. *World Development Perspectives*, 35, 100624.

Fietz, K., Falcao Silva, T., Steta Gandara, M., & Morgandi, M. (2021). Balancing stability and transition: A first assessment of regra de permanência in bolsa familia. *Policy Note*, (162843).

Fiszbein, A., Schady, N., Ferreira, F., Grosh, M., Keleher, N., Olinto, P., & Skoufias, E. (2009). *Conditional cash transfers: Reducing present and future poverty*. The World Bank Group.

Gertler, P., Martinez, S., & Rubio-Codina, M. (2012). Investing cash transfers to raise long-term living standards. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 4(1), 164–192.



Instituto Mobilidade e Desenvolvimento Social (Imds). (2023). *Mobilidade social no Brasil: uma análise da primeira geração de beneficiários do Programa Bolsa Família* (tech. rep. No. A005). Imds. Rio de Janeiro.

Millán, T., Barham, T., Macours, K., Maluccio, J., & Stampini, M. (2019). Long-Term Impacts of Conditional Cash Transfers: Review of the Evidence. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 34(1), 119–159.

Oliveira, G., & Chagas, A. (2020). *Long-term effects of conditional cash transfers on children: the Brazilian case* (tech. rep.). Universidade de São Paulo (USP).

Sandberg, J. (2012). Conditional cash transfers and social mobility: The role of asymmetric structures and segmentation processes. *Development and Change*, 43(6), 1337–1359.

Souza, P., Osorio, R., Paiva, L., & Soares, S. (2019). *Os Efeitos do Programa Bolsa Família sobre a pobreza e a desigualdade: um balanço dos primeiros quinze anos* (Texto para Discussão No. 2499). Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA). Rio de Janeiro.



Appendices



ANEXO A. DATABASES AND METHODOLOGICAL TREATMENTS

Annex A – Construction, Processing, and Integration of Databases

This annex describes, in a detailed and sequential manner, the stages of construction, treatment and integration of the bases used in the longitudinal analysis of the young people dependent on the *Bolsa Família* Program (BFP) identified in 2005. The objective is to clarify how each technical step contributed to the generation of the final basis of analysis. The organization follows the methodological path adopted in the study: (i) defining the initial cohort based on the program's payroll; (ii) cross-referencing with records from 2012 and 2019 for enrichment with sociodemographic data prior to the pandemic; and (iii) monitoring of the recent trajectory, focusing on the effects of Emergency Aid (EA) and the reconfigurations of the Single Registry and social programs between 2020 and 2024.

A.1 Selection of Dependents from 7 to 16 years of age on the *Bolsa Família* Payroll of 2005

The initial cohort was defined from the BFP administrative base for the month of December 2005, extracted from the management system of the then Ministry of Social Development. The database covered the 5,561 Brazilian municipalities and contained records of approximately **8.7 million** beneficiary families in that month.

Two main sets of files were used:

- **Bolsa Família payroll for December 2005**, with monthly transfer data (amount paid, competence, municipality, identifiers of holder and dependent);
- **Auxiliary registration files**, containing identifiers (NIS), date of birth, sex and, in some cases, full name and family composition.

Initially, the records were classified as **dependents** (individuals other than the benefit holder) or **holders**, according to the following logic:

- If the dependent NIS field was different from holder NIS → classified as **dependent**;



- If the dependent NIS field coincided with the holder NIS → classified as **holder**.

Only records with competence 12/2005 and compatible reference in the payment field were kept, eliminating inconsistencies. Age was calculated as the difference between 12/31/2005 and the date of birth, and only individuals aged between 7 and 16 years were included.

When there were multiple records for the same individual in the month, the one with the highest benefit value was maintained. After cleaning and deduplicating, the resulting database contained **11,628,405** young people, who constitute the initial cohort followed throughout the study.

A.2 Crossover with the Single Registry of 2012 and 2019

With the initial cohort defined, the next step was to enrich it with sociodemographic and educational information from two extractions of the Single Registry (CadÚnico), representing different moments: 2012 (middle of the transition cycle to adulthood) and 2019 (period immediately before the pandemic).

Single Registry of 2012. With **81.2** million active registrations, the database was filtered to include only individuals with valid NIS and active registration status. Schooling was constructed based on the variables of school attendance, course and completion, categorized as: (i) no schooling or incomplete Elementary School; (ii) complete Elementary School; (iii) complete Junior High School; (iv) complete High School; and (v) complete Higher Education. The education level of the head of the family (father or mother) was inferred from the kinship relationship and attributed to the other members of the household.

Single Registry of 2019. The 2019 database, with **76.4** million registrations, underwent similar treatment, also incorporating main occupation, working conditions, and BFP recipients. The reconnection rate of the 2005 cohort was 64%, which allowed us to identify pre-pandemic characteristics of these young people. The education categories were harmonized with those of 2012 to allow longitudinal analyses.

Integration. The two years of CadÚnico were linked to the original cohort via NIS, enriching the database with information on race/skin color, parents' education, and employment status. This integration served to characterize persistent inequalities and mobility patterns before the pandemic shock.

A.3 The Post-2019 trajectory, Emergency Aid, and Reconnection with the Protection System

The third stage monitored the situation of the cohort between 2020 and 2024, focusing on:

1. Evolution in the Single Registry;
2. Receipt of Emergency Aid (EA);
3. Updating Identifiers (CPF).



Evolution in CadÚnico (2020–2024). The annual databases of CadÚnico, with coverage ranging from 75.2 million to 98.2 million registrations, allowed each individual to be classified in one of three situations: “BFP” (Beneficiary), “Registered” (Not a beneficiary), or “Out of CadÚnico” (Not found).

A Table A.1 shows the total number of registrations in CadÚnico and *Bolsa Família* in the period.

Table A.1. Number of registrations in the Single Registry and in the BFP

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Single Registry	76,417,354	75,220,543	81,774,739	93,626,078	98,200,609	95,324,907
BFP	41,011,875	43,366,279	49,997,084	55,808,906	55,777,848	53,785,055

CPF search. The extraction of CPFs from the 2012 to 2024 databases allowed us to retrieve this information for **88%** of the original cohort, enabling additional links, such as with the EA database.

Integration with Emergency Aid. The processing of the EA base (2020–2022) involved **448.8** million installments paid, with a peak in November 2020 (**49.8** million installments). Linkage was made via CPF and, when not available, by deterministic name pairing. Thus, **1.1 million** young people who were outside CadÚnico in 2019 and received EA in 2020 were identified, revealing a contingent that, although not formally registered, were vulnerable enough to access the benefit.

A Table A.2 summarizes the total number of EA beneficiaries each year.

Table A.2. Number of beneficiaries of Emergency Aid (EA)

Year	2020	2021	2022
EA Beneficiaries	38,257,006	24,124,405	1,512,751

The final Consolidated Base. The resulting analytical panel contains, for each individual, NIS, CPF, annual status in CadÚnico (2019–2024) and EA recipient indicator. This basis is the backbone of the analyses presented in the central chapters, allowing us to measure and compare the reconnection with the social safety net throughout the crisis and in the subsequent period.

Closing. The sequence of steps described here, from the definition of the initial cohort to the construction of the final panel, ensures the traceability of the process and the consistency of the results. Each block of data fed the next, allowing the construction of a robust longitudinal base, capable of capturing demographic, economic, and link changes with the protection network. By associating pre- and post-pandemic information, the final base offers a detailed portrait of how the first generation of BFP dependents evolved over almost two decades and how they responded to external shocks, such as the health and economic crises of 2020.