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*Advocacy Coalition Framework: Advancing Theory and Evidence
about Phenomena of Policy Processes*

Title of the paper:

*Changes in public policies for low-income families in Brazil: the role
of control body*

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Abstract

The *Cadastro Unico*, Single Registry for Social Programs, is the instrument used in Brazil to identify and characterize families in poverty. It was established in 2001 and has more than 27 million registered families, being used by more than 20 Federal Government social policies (the main is the *Bolsa Família* Program). The internal and external control (in this study, they are analyzed the Federal Court of Accounts (TCU) and Office of the Comptroller General of the Union (CGU)), realize the analysis, monitoring and inspection of the *Cadastro Único* and the social programs that use it periodically. These evaluations may result in determinations and recommendations for the implementation of changes in the management of public policies, in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of governmental action. The objective of this study is to map and analyze the reports forwarded by the CGU and TCU, referring specifically to the *Cadastro Único*, from 2008 to 2018, in order to raise the reflection about the role of the control agencies in changes that occurred in the *Cadastro Único* in this period, analyzing strategies and resources used by these agencies, based on the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF).

Keywords: Single Registry, *Cadastro Único*, Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), body control, social policies

Introduction

The Federal Government's Single Registry for Social Programs, *Cadastro Único*, was created in 2001 in order to rationalize and organize the identification of families living in poverty in Brazil for the target audience of social policies and programs aimed at combating hunger and social development. Priority is given to families with incomes of up to half a minimum wage per person and per month (approximately US\$ 120). Brazil is a Federative Republic consisting of the Union, 26 states, 5,570 municipalities and the Federal District. The implementation of the *Cadastro Único* is decentralized: the process of registration consists of the identification of poor families in the territory, interviews, data entry in the online and national system and updating of records, a process carried out by the municipalities. The Federal Government, through the Ministry of Citizenship, is responsible for the national management of the *Cadastro Único*, defining nationally standardized concepts, procedures and guidelines. The states act in support of the management and continuous training of municipalities teams.



Currently the *Cadastro Único* has more than 27 million families, representing more than 75 million people (almost 40% of the Brazilian population). More than 20 programs and social policies use *Cadastro Único*'s data for selection and monitoring target public, the largest being the *Bolsa Família* Program (*PBF*). The *PBF* is a conditional cash transfer program that serves families with incomes of up to R\$ 179.00 (approximately US\$ 44). Different amounts of benefits are paid, depending on the per capita family income and family composition situation, such as the presence of schoolchildren. The average amount of benefits paid is R\$ 186.00 (approximately US\$ 46 per family per month)¹.

Pursuant to the Federal Constitution of Brazil, the accounting, financial, budgetary, operational and patrimonial supervision of the Union and entities of direct and indirect public administration are performed by the internal and external control agencies. In this way, the control of federal public policies is exercised mainly by external control through the National Congress, by the Federal Court of Accounts (*TCU*²), and internal control is established by each power, being exercised within the scope of the Federal Executive by the Office of the Comptroller General of the Union (*CGU*³), linked to the Ministry of Justice. There is also the action of the Public Prosecutor's Offices, Federal Justice and Federal Police. These institutions compose the Brazilian accountability system.

The internal and external control agencies realize the analysis, monitoring and inspection of the *Cadastro Único* and the social programs that use it periodically. These evaluations may result in determinations and recommendations for the implementation of changes in the management of public policies, in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of governmental action. In general, there is a deadline and sanctions to the federal manager for implement the changes pointed out by the control agencies.

In this context, the objective of this study is to map and analyze the reports forwarded by the *CGU* and *TCU*, referring specifically to the *Cadastro Único*, from 2008 to 2018, in order to raise the reflection about the role of the control bodies in changes that occurred in the *Cadastro Único* in this period, analyzing strategies and resources used by these agencies, based on the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). The paper is divided into five sections: the first presents a brief history of the *Cadastro Único* and the types of uses, the second

¹ Retrived from: <https://aplicacoes.mds.gov.br/sagi/RIv3/geral/index.php>

² In portuguese, the name is *Tribunal de Contas da União* (TCU)

³ In portuguese, the name is *Controladoria-Geral da União* (CGU)



presents a brief review of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), the third presents the methodology of the study, the fourth section presents the results and discussion, and the fifth presents the conclusion, limitations and next steps of research.

1 – “*Cadastro Único*”: Single Registry for low-income families in Brazil

The Federal Government's Single Registry for Social Programs, *Cadastro Único*, is an instrument created in 2001⁴ to attend the demand for identification and characterization of poor families for federal social policies and programs. Currently, the *Cadastro Único* has more than 75 million registered people and is a dynamic database with a monthly quantitative of inclusions and updates of over 1 million families, involving all 5,570 Brazilian municipalities, representing a map of the socioeconomic situation of the poverty families.

The *Bolsa Família* Program (*PBF*) was created in 2003 and is the main user program of the *Cadastro Único*, assisting poor and extremely poor families that are registered in the *Cadastro Único*. The program has three dimensions of action: the direct cash transfer to families, for the immediate relief of poverty; the rupture of the intergenerational cycle of poverty, with the requirement of conditionalities (health, education and social assistance); and the development of families by the integration of actions and policies and access to social rights. The *Bolsa Família* Program serves more than 13 million families, who are automatically selected by the “Benefit System”, based on self-declared information by the family in the *Cadastro Único*, municipal poverty estimates (periodically released by the Ministry) and budget limits. Depending on the income profile and family composition, different benefit amounts are paid. The transfer of the resource is directly to the beneficiary families through a card for the withdrawal of the benefit, which can be carried out at *Caixa*

⁴ According to Decree n° 6,135 / 2007, available in “Collection of the Basic Legislation of the Single Registry and the *Bolsa Família* Program”;



*Econômica Federal*⁵ branches or in the corresponding establishments (lottery and accredited network).

Today these public policies are consolidated as strategies of social development, but this is the result of a historical trajectory of construction and constant revision of institutions. According to Pierson (2004), history matters and plays a fundamental role in decision making processes and in the course, stability and change of institutions over time. The process of building, implementing and reviewing government actions is embedded in a historical, political and economic context, and a diverse set of actors and institutions.

The *Cadastro Único* was created by Decree n° 3,877, dated July 24, 2001. In this Decree, the single registry was defined by the registration form, its mandatory use by the focused programs and the information processing by the *Caixa Econômica Federal*, system of inclusion and updating registries of the families. At that time each program or social policy had its own data bases, processes of identification and selection of target audience, such as the *Bolsa Escola Federal* Program, Food Card, among others. The *Cadastro Único* was created in the context of rationalization needs and integration of the families selection for the existing public policies. (Chaves, 2013; Cotta e Paiva, 2010; Bartholo, Vieira, Sambiase, Pereira & Ibarra, 2010).

The priority public for inclusion in the *Cadastro Único* is families with per capita family income of up to half a minimum wage. Management is decentralized: municipalities are responsible for identifying the target public, with different registration strategies, such as fixed stations (to attend on demand registration), specific government actions (survey registration) and home visits, conducting interviews, typing data in the system and periodically update the data by repeating interviews with the registered families; states support the registration process in municipalities and carry out the ongoing training.

The effective implementation of the *Cadastro Único* began with the creation of the *Bolsa Família* Program, which unified the existing income transfer policies up to that moment and defined the *Cadastro Único* as the identification tool for its target audience. In this way, the relationship between the rules of the *Cadastro Único* and *Bolsa Família* Program have

⁵ The *Caixa Econômica Federal* is a 100% public sector bank, responsible by *Cadastro Único* system development. For more information, see: MOSTAFA, J.; SÁTYRO, N. (2013) “Cadastro Único: a registry supported by a National Public Bank”, IPC Working Paper, No. 126, Brasília: Centro Internacional de Políticas para o Crescimento Inclusivo.

always been very close, especially for the history of joint implementation and national management to be in the same secretariat of the Ministry of Citizenship: National Citizen Income Secretariat; especially for the period up to 2008, when the construction of management rules and procedures, definition of responsibilities and regulations were in progress, highlighting (Bartholo et al, 2010; Chaves, 2014; Cortizo e Chaves, 2016):

- a) 2004: the creation of the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, consolidating a coordinated national management of the *Cadastro Único* and *Bolsa Família* program;
- b) 2005: access to the *Cadastro Único* database by the Ministry, since only *Caixa Econômica Federal (CAIXA)*, the bank responsible by system developing, had this information; the first action was taken to qualify the data, with the analysis of the reliability of the information recorded (such as multiplicity of person and family, incorrect documents and unfilled information, as well as the accomplishment of data crossing with other administrative records of the Federal Government, as a formal labor market, to identify evidence of omission or underreporting of income data);
- c) After 2006: (I) adhesion of all Brazilian municipalities for implementation the *Cadastro Único* process at its territory, with a financial incentive by Federal Government to municipalities for inclusion and updating actions; (II) normative revision in order to establish the responsibilities of each entity in the process of implementation of the *Cadastro Único* and *Bolsa Família* (decrees and orders norms).

During this period, the Federal Audit Court sent an Operational Audit Report to the Federal Government's Single Registry of Social Programs, through Judgments n° 240/2003, n° 298/2004 (1st monitoring) and n° 252/2005 (2nd monitoring), with determinations and recommendations for the improvement of registration processes, such as continuous training of municipalities and states, development of follow-up indicators, creation of financial incentive to municipalities for inclusion and updating actions, cross-checks with other databases of the Federal Government (such as death, formal work income and social security benefits) and debugging of inconsistencies in the *Cadastro Único* database. The recommendations and determinations of the control agencies were in line with the



improvements implemented by the National *Cadastro Único* managers from 2001 to 2008 and reinforced the need to create and consolidate rules and procedures for decentralized registration and implementation actions. Since the beginning, the *Cadastro Único* and the *Bolsa Família* have always received great attention from the media, public opinion and the actions of the control bodies. In order to coordinate the inspection actions realized by control organizations, in 2005 the Ministry established the “Public Supervision Network” (*Rede Pública de Fiscalização*), from the signing of terms of technical cooperation with the control bodies. Under this network, technical cooperation agreements were signed with the Federal Court of Accounts, the Office of the Comptroller General and members of the state and federal public ministries (Public Prosecutor’s Office).

For the period from 2009 to 2019, the following changes in the path of the *Cadastro Único* stand out (the next section will be related to the reports sent by the control agencies to the national manager of the *Cadastro Único*):

- a) Implementation of a new version of the registration form and the system (national and online) of the *Cadastro Único*, a process started in 2010 and finalized in 2014. The municipalities migrated to the new version depending on internet access for system operation and implementation training. The last municipalities to migrate were the municipalities of the North region, especially the Amazon region, which still has difficulty accessing internet services;
- b) Launch of the Brazil Without Poverty Plan (PBSM) in 2011, the beginning of the mandate of President Dilma Rousseff, whose main objective was to assist families in extreme poverty (families with per capita family income of up to R\$ 70.00, approximately US\$ 17) through access to services, income guarantee and productive inclusion, and defined the *Cadastro Único* as a gateway to the actions of the plan, significantly increasing the number of user programs.

Until 2010, the *Cadastro Único* had 7 user programs. After 2011, the year of *PBSM*'s launch, until today, the *Cadastro Único* has already reached more than 20 user programs (Chaves, 2014; Cortizo & Chaves, 2016; Direito, Koga, Licio & Chaves, 2016). The expansion of these programs is directly linked to the stimulus given by *PBSM* for the development and articulation of public policies aimed at the poor



population and the definition of the *Cadastro Único* as a tool for selecting families for the actions that are part of the plan.

- c) An Interinstitutional Working Group (*GTI*) was set up to carry out data crossings of the *Cadastro Único* that were beneficiaries of the *Bolsa Família*, to identify families that did not have a profile to receive the benefits (“*pente fino*”, fine-toothed comb operation), in order to establish a line to the post-impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, in which assumes Vice President Michel Temer, and to respond to the massive media disclosure of actions by control bodies to carry out crossings to the identification of beneficiary families of the *PBF* that had indications of not having profile for the receipt (**big data** uses).
- d) Launching of the Network of Users Programs and Term of Use, which establishes the procedures for the use of the *Cadastro Único* by the various public policies and programs, by Administrative Rule n° 501/2017 and launch of the Access Control Policy to *Cadastro Único* data, by Administrative Rule n° 502/2017 (determination of the external control, Court of Audit of the Union, through Judgment 906/2009). In 2017, to facilitate access to the citizen's own information, the Citizen Consultation (app), “*Consulta cidadão*”, was established too, this application was developed by the Ministry so that the citizen himself, registered in the *Cadastro Único*, can consult his information and possible pending issues, such as the need for updating.

The relationship between these historical landmarks and the actions of the control bodies will be analyzed in section three.



2 – Advocacy Coalition Framework: the strategies to influence a public policy

The ACF is a framework for analyzing the political process developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith in the 1980s. The general concept consists of analyzing the subsystem of a given policy that has a thematic and territorial dimension and is composed of coalitions that have influence capacity, depending on strategies, resources and opportunities on one side, and on external events and relatively stable parameters on the other.

The book “Theories of the Policy Process” presents an overview of this framework and has its latest issue published in 2018 (Weible and Sabatier, 2018). For ACF, what brings actors together in coalitions is shared beliefs and values (Sabatier, 1988, p. 133):

Within the subsystem, it is assumed that actors can be aggregated into a number of advocacy coalitions composed of people from various organizations who share a set of normative and causal beliefs and who often act in concert. At any particular point in time, each coalition adopts a strategy(s) envisaging one or more institutional innovations which it feels will further its policy objectives.

The system of beliefs, shared by the actors in coalitions, can be classified in “deep core beliefs”, “core beliefs” and “secondary aspects”, and vary, in this order, from the more deeply held beliefs that are less susceptible to change to the less more susceptible to change.

The change in public policy, one of the central analyzes of the ACF, as Weible and Sabatier points out (2018, pp. 92-93) can occur by the following means: external sources (such as crises, disturbances, changes in other subsystems and socioeconomic conditions), (internal events and crises), policy-oriented learning (which can occur incrementally along the policy trajectory and stakeholder involvement over time), agreements and negotiations. The use of these strategies depends on how the coalitions exploit these events and opportunities

For this study, the focus is on the analysis of the changes that occurred in the history of the *Cadastro Único*, considering the period from 2008 to 2018, based on the perspective of the performance of a specific group of actors: the control bodies. The proposal is to understand the strategies and resources used by this coalition to explore the means of public policy change, especially the legal authority (via sending determinations and



recommendations to the managing body of the *Cadastro Único*, given its attribution to oversee public policies) and use of information (complete and in-depth technical analysis of the data and procedures of the *Cadastro Único* to support the judgments and reports). (Sabatier and Weible, 2018).

Analyzing the design of the public policies subsystem to combat poverty and vulnerability, from the *Cadastro Único* and the ACF, we can initially present as relatively stable parameter the concepts, rules, procedures and definition of the *Cadastro Único* and the social policies that use it, especially regarding their design focused on families in poverty, which define a way of selection and monitoring, based on self-declared information by the family at the time of the interview and decentralized implementation, where the municipalities are responsible for registration actions in their territory. For external events, we highlight two historic landmarks: the launch of the Brazil Without Poverty Plan in 2011, as a political strategy to combat extreme poverty; and the year 2016, the impeachment of President Dilma Rouseff (change in executive power) and the increasing demands for economic and public policy control.

The exploratory study presented in this article, based on the documentary analysis and historical review of the *Cadastro Único*, is part of a broader research, under development for my doctoral thesis, about the decision process involving the implementation of the *Cadastro Único* (permanence and change) and aims to analyze the performance of the advocacy coalitions of the subsystem of public policies to combat poverty, based on the use of technical information and the image of the target audience.

In this article, we will analyze specifically the strategies and resources used by the control agencies to promote changes in the *Cadastro Único* and the social policies that use it, considering the political context and the institutions. It is important to note that individuals, based on the concept of limited rationality advocated by Simon (1957), have limited cognitive abilities to focus attention and information processing and also limited access to all alternatives/preferences/consequences. The social actors, in the daily decision-making process of public policy management, must define priorities of service to the diverse demands and act from this limited rationality. The action of the individual and the institutional structure of public policy are related, as Kahneman (2012) notes: “Every issue involving public policy implies presuppositions about human nature, in particular about the choices that people can



make and the consequences of their choices for themselves and for society” (p. 102). In this way, changes suggested or determined by the control bodies have a greater weight and impact in the progress and implementation of a determined public policy, as well as, it has the attention of the actors in the decision process, given the consequences for the noncompliance, as it will be explored then, due to the authority of the supervisory agencies, the changes suggested in their reports are often the priority demands of organizations.

The following hypothesis of change in the ACF will be analyzed in this research (Weible and Sabatier, 2018):

Significant external or internal disturbances to the subsystem, policy-oriented learning, negotiated agreement or the combination of these are a necessary but not sufficient source of change in the attributes of the political core of a government program.

3 – Methodology

Complementary Law n° 101/2000, entitled Fiscal Responsibility Law, establishes public finance regulations focused on fiscal management responsibility. One of its important definitions is that the holder of each power must prepare the Fiscal Management Report. In the case of the Ministry of Citizenship, each of its secretariats must also prepare the Annual Management Report. In addition to this report, the control agencies can demand specific information from the management ministry in order to exercise the evaluation and control of public policies and the efficient management of public resources. *CGU's* results analyzes are organized through audit reports, evaluation reports on the execution of government programs and evaluation reports on management results; the *TCU* already produces judgments, with specific determinations and recommendations for public policies and the managing ministry. Therefore, in order to identify the mechanisms, resources and strategies used by the control bodies to influence changes in the *Cadastro Único* and in the social programs that use it, the judgments and inspection reports of the control bodies were searched as a source of information. The research used to identify the reports available by the control bodies was:



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TCU: <https://pesquisa.apps.tcu.gov.br/#/esquisa/jurisprudencia>, with the terms “*Cadastro Único para Programas Sociais*” (Single Registry for Social Programs) and “*Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social*” (Ministry of Social Development) and it was select the documents “*Acórdãos*” (judgments): totaling 54 reports. All reports have been read and selected the specific determinations to the *Cadastro Único*: 7 specific reports about *Cadastro Único* and 4 reports referring to policies and programs that use *Cadastro Único* data.

CGU: <https://auditoria.cgu.gov.br/>, with the terms “*Cadastro Único*” and “*Ministério da Desenvolvimento Social*”: totaling 36 reports. All reports have been read. 4 reports were selected and analyzed: after 2008 and with specific determinations and recommendations for the *Cadastro Único* for the national manager.

MPF: Operation X-Ray *Bolsa Família* (*Raio-X Bolsa Família*)

Analysis of the specific site of this action:

<http://www.raioxbolsafamilia.mpf.mp.br/raioxbolsafamilia/diagnostico>

Most of the reports not used in the analysis were about inspections in specific states or cities or from public policy analysis using the *Cadastro Único*, but without determining and recommending actions in specific procedures as to the form of targeting (that is, for the *Cadastro Único* itself). Only the reports with determinations and recommendations were selected to the national manager of the *Cadastro Único*.



4 – Results and discussion

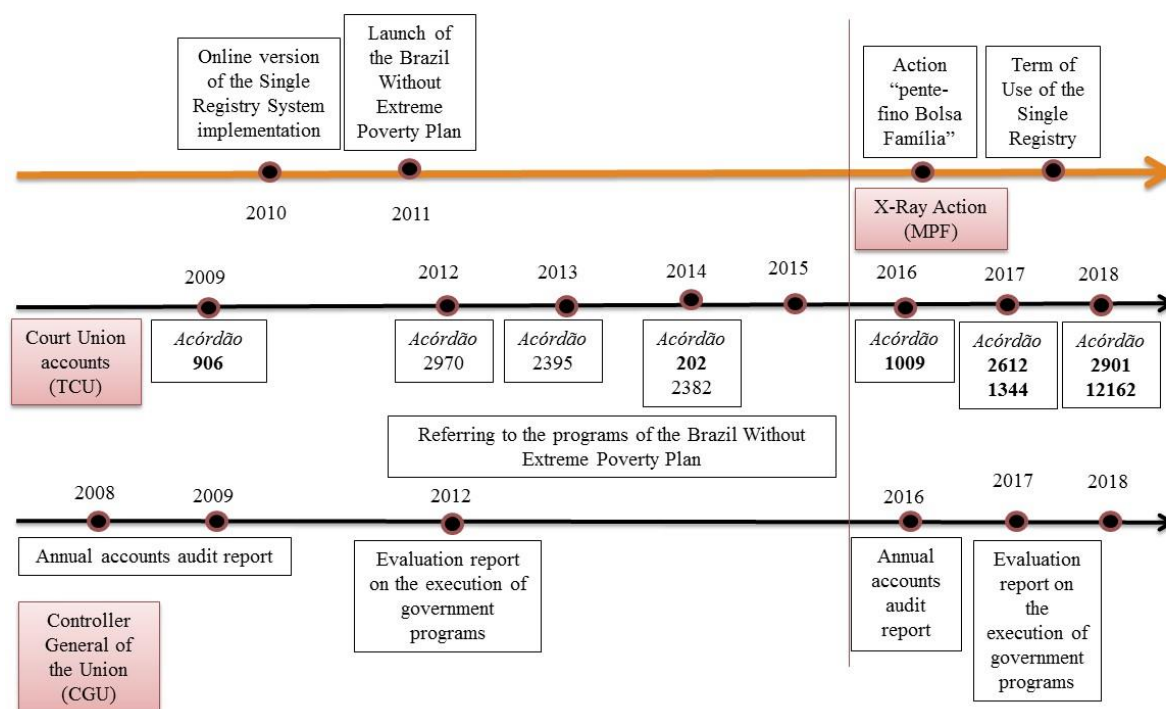
For analysis of the history of the *Cadastro Único* and the reports of the control agencies, the analysis will be divided into two periods:

- a) 2008 to 2015: *Cadastro Único* consolidation, with the implementation of a new form and online registration system in 2010 and launch of the Brazil Without Poverty Plan in 2011, two actions that were important for the significant growth in the number of user programs;
- b) 2016 to 2018: reinforcement of the *Cadastro Único's* qualification agenda, given the increase in demand and perception of public opinion for the control and oversight of public policies, especially the *Bolsa Família* Program, the main user of *Cadastro Único*.

The figure below summarizes the main changes in the *Cadastro Único* and highlights the main reports and actions of the control bodies. The first line highlights the main changes in the *Cadastro Único*:

- 2010: Implementation of the new form and the online version of the *Cadastro Único* system;
- 2011: Launch of the Brazil Without Poverty Plan, as the central strategy of President Dilma Rousseff's Government Plan, focused on combating extreme poverty;
- 2016: Realization of the action “*pente-fino Bolsa Família*” (fine-toothed comb operation);
- 2018: Establishment of regulations for the use of the *Cadastro Único* by public policies, with rules of access and privacy (term of use).

Figure 1 - History of the *Cadastro Único* and reports and actions of the control agencies - 2008 to 2018



Source: Own elaboration

The second line refers to the judgments sent by the external control of the Federal Court of Accounts (TCU), indicating the judgment number and year of publication (*acórdão*). The third line refers to the internal control reports of the Office of the Comptroller General (CGU), which may be annual audit reports or evaluation and execution of government programs. In 2016, we also highlight the specific action of the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office (*MPF*) entitled “X-Ray *Bolsa Família*” (although this is not a focus of the analysis, its report had a major impact on *Cadastro Único*).

The vertical line separates the analysis periods from 2008 to 2015 and from 2016 to 2018, as analyzed and discussed below.

Within the scope of the control agencies, for the period from 2008 to 2015, we highlight the following publications from:



a) Office of the Comptroller General - CGU (internal control):

2008: Annual Accounts Audit Report: It presents the indicators of the *Bolsa Família* Program that impact on the *Cadastro Único* and its results in the years 2006, 2007 and 2008, such as “Rate of qualified coverage of registrations” and the “Rate of registered families belonging to the target public”, where the agency points the fragilities in the scope of the updating actions of *Cadastro Único*⁶:

During 2008, CGU implemented control actions to verify the execution of the *Bolsa Família* Program, which uses the data registered in the *Cadastro Único*. 198 municipalities were monitored, and in 82% of these it was verified the outdated data of the beneficiaries. [...] Based on these control actions, **we noticed weaknesses in the updating process**, to be observed by the municipalities to operationalize the updating and maintenance of the *Cadastro Único* database.

2009: Annual Accounts Audit Report: Highlights the progress made by the secretariat in improving the management processes of the *Cadastro Único* and *Bolsa Família*, such as auditing actions, call families and mobilizing municipalities for updating registration and implementing the new version of the form and system of the *Cadastro Único* (such as the realization of integrated workshops, preparation of instructional material and training), stating:

Thus, although several of these actions are in the implementation phase, it is worth mentioning the implementation of Cad 7, **we verified that the manager is looking for adequate solutions to correct the detected failures in the inspections actions, and to insert necessary improvements, in order to identified management problems that made it difficult to achieve the results established for this action.**

2012: Evaluation Report on the Execution of Government Programs n° 7 - *Bolsa Família* Program - Transfer of income directly to families in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty. The strategic issue of this report regarding the *Cadastro Único* is the analysis of the update, specifically regarding addresses not found, deceased persons and

⁶ These translations are the responsibility of the author, including the griffins.



indications of income higher than declared. Based on *CGU* supervision in the municipalities, recommendations were sent to the manager of the *Cadastro Único* (Brazil, 2012, pp. 11-12):

Recommendation 1: To adapt the automated system for registering and maintaining the data of low-income families in the *Cadastro Único* (off-line) **to operate on-line**, aiming at instantaneous verification of changes and updates of beneficiary families data, carried out by the local manager.

Answer provider of the Federal Manager: the secretary has developed a new version of the data entry and maintenance application, the *Cadastro Único 7.0*, which operates online. At the end of 2011, 5,391 municipalities (98%) used the new version

Recommendation 2: Create an automated mechanism for updating the data of the monitored students' school data (school name, INEP code and series) in the *Cadastro Único*, based on information from the Presence Project System, transmitted bimonthly by the Ministry of Education, in order to improve the monitoring of conditionality school attendance.

Answer provider of the Federal Manager: It is in discussion with the Ministry of Education - MEC the integration between the *Cadastro Único* System and the Project Presence System.

Recommendation 3: Create mechanisms to cross-checks databases owned by the operator, in order to check the information of the *Cadastro Único* to verify the veracity; and maintain management with the various Federal Government agencies for access to databases, with the objective of evaluating the veracity of the information about the declared income, thus minimizing deviations from the purpose of the Program.

Answer provider of the Federal Manager: The Unit has been adopting measures to guarantee the quality of the registration information registered in the *Cadastro Único*, through auditing procedures where the data of the *Cadastro Único* are crossed with information contained in other administrative records, in order to identify possible divergences and thus promote its updating.

[...]

In this context, it is also important to make available to all municipalities the Version 7 of *Cadastro Único* system, because it will allow municipalities to register and maintain the data of low-income families through application online. Thus, according to the website of the Ministry, the local manager will consult data directly in the national database of the *Cadastro Único*; carry out the inclusion,



alteration and exclusion of personal and family information; carry out transfers of persons and families within the same municipality or between municipalities; consult the management panel; request scheduling of summary and analytical reports; confirm updates of registry and monitor user access.

b) Federal Court of Accounts- TCU (external control):

Judgment 906/2009 and Judgment 202/2014: The judgment 906/2009 is an “audit carried out by the Office of Information Technology Supervision in the computerized systems that support the operationalization of the *Cadastro Único* and the payment of benefits to it linked” (Brazil, 2009, p.1). The judgment 202/2014 analyzes and follows the recommendations and determinations of Judgment 906/2009, presenting the following balance: of the 61 determinations and recommendations, 10 were in implementation and 3 were not fulfilled. Of the two reports, we highlight the following excerpts:

In general, when the amounts of the records identified in the audit findings, which are presented, are compared with the *Cadastro Único* database and the payment of PBF benefits (paragraphs 1.36 / 1.37), **low percentages are obtained, if the consolidated database. This reflects the maturation and improvement of the quality of these databases, particularly the *Cadastro Único*, which has been in existence for more than seven years.** However, even the signs of irregularities and failures of **low occurrence** were considered audit findings, in this work, when verified the existence of nonconformity of these with the current regulations. (p.9)

This report had already been alerted to the possibility of a fine if compliance with the determinations and recommendations did not occur. In this way, the Ministry endeavor to resolve all pending issues, taking into account all determinations and recommendations. The last pending was the elaboration of an Access Control Policy to the *Cadastro Único* data, finalized with the publication of the Administrative Rule n° 502/2017.

The reports sent by the control bodies, pointing out the importance of the implementation of Version 7 of the *Cadastro Único* System, it was a relevant stimulus to begin the implementation of the new system in municipalities, which is completely online, even in the face of difficulties in accessing the internet (especially in the Amazon region). The Brazil Without Poverty Plan was another relevant factor, due to the increase in the number of



user programs of the *Cadastro Único*, the active search strategy of families in situations of vulnerability not yet registered, and the establishment of partnerships with various agencies, including the Ministry of Defense, which enabled the installation of satellite antennas so that municipalities could access the Internet.

The following judgments, although mentioning the *Cadastro Único*, refer to public policies that are part of the Brazil Without Poverty Plan:

Judgment 2970/2012: objective “to carry out a diagnosis on the implementation of the Brazil Without Poverty Plan, a plan that aggregates all programs aimed at eradicating extreme poverty in Brazil, under the aspect of relevance, materiality, risk and operationalization of their principal actions.” (p.1). Despite there are not determinations, for this report, we highlight some points that justify the attention of the control agencies to the *Cadastro Único* and *Bolsa Família*:

The *Bolsa Família* Program is one of the most evaluated federal government programs. As the PBF is the largest income transfer program in the world, it receives much attention from the academic and international community. The TCU itself has already performed an operational audit in the PBF in 2004, as well as two monitoring of this audit in 2005 and 2009, as well as a follow-up in 2006. (p.15)

The PBF is recognized internationally as the social program with the best index of focus. Therefore, the issues related to the families' adherence to the program and compliance with conditionalities by these families have already been previously evaluated, including by TCU. (p. 16)

Judgment 2395/2013: Operational audit for the analysis of one of the user programs of *Cadastro Único*, Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (Ater), which is part of the Brazil Without Poverty Plan. In this report there are no specific determinations to the *Cadastro Único*, but the importance of the active search of vulnerable families still invisible to the public policies, one of the dimensions of the *PBSM*, and reinforcing the role of *Cadastro Único* in identifying de most vulnerable families in Brazil.

Judgment 2382/2014: Systemic report with the aim of presenting a framework on the theme of social assistance. In this report there are no specific determinations to the *Cadastro Único*, but it is highlighted the importance of establishing panels of indicators and studies that



can promote the emancipation of the beneficiary families and socio-territorial diagnoses to the reference centers of social assistance.

In 2016, after the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, there was a change in the minister who was in charge of Minister of Social Development, Minister Tereza Campello, linked to the Workers' Party (even Dilma Rousseff) to Minister Osmar Terra, linked to the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (even of Michel Temer). This period in Brazil is accompanied by a demand from society for more control and enforcement actions and efficient, corruption combat and economic use of public resources.

During this period, the active performance of the control bodies is observed, considering the context of budget constraints and the need to rationalize public policies, public demand for control and inspection actions, integration agenda and interoperability, to promote changes in the *Cadastro Único* and consequently in the public policies to combat poverty that use it. Therefore, this period was considered for a specific analysis (2016 to 2018).

In May 2016, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office filed an action entitled “X-Ray *Bolsa Família*”, based on a Business Intelligence platform to identify indications of undue receipt of the benefits of the program, by means of crossing the recorded income data in the *Cadastro Único* and those of other databases and administrative records of the Federal Government such as death, public service payrolls, entrepreneurs and donors of political campaign in the elections. According to information from the site of disclosure of the action:

Based on the results of the data crossing, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office acted in a coordinated manner throughout the country. From July 18 to September 2, 2016, attorneys from the Republic of all *MPF* units issued recommendations to 4,703 municipalities **to conduct local visits to families identified with suspected irregularities in the registry.**

[...]

The managers have a period of 60 days to send the MPF the balance of these visits, nominally indicating all the benefits that were canceled after the local visits.

As one of the responses to this action, the Ministry instituted an Interagency Working Group (*GTI*), in order to realize cross-checks within federal government databases, with the



objective of identifying families that had no profile for receiving the *Bolsa Família* (fine-toothed comb operation).

Within the scope of the control bodies actions, for the period from 2016 to 2018, we highlight the following publications from:

a) Office of the Comptroller General - CGU (internal control):

2016 and 2017:

(I) Annual Accounts Audit Report: Presents the evaluation of the quantitative and qualitative results of the federal management of *Cadastro Único*. For this, the CGU realized cross-checks within databases to identify undue receipt of benefits of *Bolsa Família* and actions of control of the *Cadastro Único*. The following recommendations were sent in this report (Brazil, 2017, pages 45 and 46):

Recommendation 1: Adopt a **previous process of verification of the information declared in the *Cadastro Único*** as a requirement for validation of the registry, providing transparency in case of divergence with data registered in official bases, assuming the veracity of information ratified by the citizen.

Recommendation 2: **Provide the detailed information of the administrative records** to the Municipalities, regarding the inconsistencies identified in investigation processes (*Averiguação Cadastral*), for purposes of qualified performance of the municipal manager.

Recommendation 3: Regulate criteria for generating pending and invalidating the records of the families identified in the investigation process (*Averiguação Cadastral*), including the case of the families that do not attend to update the data.

(II) Evaluation Report on the Execution of Government Programs n° 7 - *Bolsa Família* Program - Transfer of income directly to families in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty: It analyzes the work and results of the *Bolsa Família GTI* and bases the recommendations indicated in the report previous.

b) Federal Court of Accounts (external control):

Judgments 1009/2016, 1344/2017 and 12162/2018: These judgments are an annual follow-up audit and continuous supervision of the *Cadastro Único*, the social benefits of *Bolsa Família* and Continuous Cash Benefit Program (BPC), and analyze the credibility of the information of the *Cadastro Único* (attributes of completeness, uniqueness, validity, consistency, accuracy and uniformity), typologies (through the cross-checks of formal work income, social security benefits, deaths and other information that are proxy income, such as vehicle ownership) and specific cases of supervision (with analysis of the interview date and the person's failure to declare some income information). The results are grouped in findings and then in determinations that request a plan of action in up to 180 days with the measures carried out and in progress by the federal managing of the *Cadastro Único*.

Judgment 2612/2017: Inspection in the municipality of Japeri-RJ on the application of resources passed on by the Federal Government in the scope of all Ministries from 2010 to 2015. Despite the municipal focus, there are determinations for the national manager of the *Cadastro Único*, pointing out that the *CPF* should be the document obligatory to the citizen in the *Cadastro Único*. *CPF* is the register of individuals used for declarations of assets and income to the Federal Revenue Service in Brazil. The Ministry responded to the Judgment stating that there are still difficulties for the Brazilian population in accessing documentation and, therefore, such a requirement could exclude vulnerable families and individuals.

Report that points out the importance of the integration of policies and their respective databases, reinforcing the role of the “Network - User Programs”:

Judgment 2901/2018: Evaluates the public policies for urban and rural productive inclusion, especially the *Progridir* Program and emphasizes the importance of using the *Cadastro Único* for target audience selection, but also for diagnosing the situation of families at the local level, as excerpt:

When one considers the policies of productive inclusion, both urban and rural, one of the issues that stands out is the degree of focus of these policies: **are they reaching the one who in fact most need?** One way of seeking an answer to this question could be through cross-checks between public policy monitoring systems and the *Cadastro Único*, in order to assess whether the people who are enrolled in this



registry are able to receive government incentives in order to encourage their productive inclusion and their emancipation. [...]

This problem of managers' lack of knowledge about the level of reach of their policies to the public of the *Cadastro Único* stems from a much greater problem and even more serious than the **low culture of information sharing between the different bodies of the federal government**. It is not usual for information to be handled together and for sharing the various knowledge niches to support joint decision-making. **These issues involve aspects of power related to the possession of information, but also involve the operational difficulty that arises from the high cost of extracting public databases**, which makes such extractions occasional and extraordinary events rather than routine and essential activities. (page 57)

As regards the intersection of the public policy bases with the *Cadastro Único*, there is an ongoing initiative in the search to solve the problem described above, “*Rede Cadastro Único*” (Network - User Programs), which is implanting a virtual space of interaction between the data of the user programs of the *Cadastro Único*. It is a portal managed by Ministry that will consolidate and cross-check, at least annually, the data of all the *Cadastro Único*'s user programs that join the Network [...] **the Network aims to allow the construction of common identity, standardized procedures and solutions that meet the various needs of social policies that have as a reference the *Cadastro Único*, aiming at a systemic integration of these policies**. [...]

The Judgment directs the following determination to the managing ministry of the *Cadastro Único*:

To determine to the Ministry of Social Development that in 180 days, in view of Decree 8,789/2016, promote the Information Technology infrastructure necessary for the full implementation of the *Rede Cadastro Único* (§ 408).

From the analysis of these reports we can observe how the actions of the control bodies play a fundamental role in the trajectory of the implementation of public policies. First, this is due to the legal authority of these audits to forward determinations to the management bodies, which must be carried out based on a plan of action with a deadline. In the case of the external control (*TCU*), the judgments remain open until all determinations and recommendations are effectively implemented. Beginning in 2016, a new *TCU* workflow for monitoring the *Cadastro Único* is observed, through continuous and annual analysis, monitoring and



supervision. This support is essential for the measures to gain prominence in the agenda of the decision-makers who occupy the high positions of the Ministry, especially minister and national secretaries.

In all the reports there is the use of data and information of the *Cadastro Único* that bases the reports technically. One of the information always present in the reports is **numerical evidence of percentages, proportions and indicators**, such as updating rate and number of families identified with divergence in income data resulting from crossings of administrative records. This information is explored by the media too, which needs more detailed analysis and studies, given the other strategies that can be used as mobilization of public opinion. On the other hand, citations that corroborate solutions being implemented by the managing body are also relevant, such as when the *TCU* recognizes the maturity and improvement of the quality of the *Cadastro Único* over time and the focus of the *Bolsa Família* in comparison to other programs of transfer of income. These statements are important for the recognition of the *Cadastro Único* in the face of public opinion.

Among the reports analyzed, it is observed that there is a relationship between the changes processed in the *Cadastro Único* and the determinations and recommendations of the control agencies. Even when the changes were already underway through the normal process of implementation and improvement, the performance of the control bodies brought the relevance and pressure to public policies makers, especially in the first analysis period (2008 to 2015), where the determinations and recommendations of the *CGU* and *TCU* analyzed in this article were in line with the advances and improvements underway by the national management body itself, such as the implementation of *Averiguação Cadastral* routines (database cross-checks with other administrative records for the identification of omission or underreporting of income information), already carried out since 2005 by the Ministry; the implementation of an online registration system with automatic qualification routines (such as registry multiplicity checks), titled version 7 and the use of *Cadastro Único* in the actions and programs of Brazil Without Poverty Plan, since its focus on the low income population. Therefore, these determinations can be an aid to leverage measures already in progress, a fact that will also be analyzed from the interviews with public servants of the Department of *Cadastro Único* (next steps for a broad research in development for my thesis).



The period of 2016 and 2017, the second cycle of analysis, shows a different performance of the control bodies. First, the non-integration of data crossing actions: all use the data from the *Cadastro Único* with other administrative records such as formal labor market and social security and welfare benefits. The internal and external control bodies have the autonomy to carry out the procedures for monitoring and monitoring public policies, even when they are redundant. Nevertheless, the *CGU's* lack of coordination with the *TCU* (as this body already had and has established an annual routine of monitoring) and a robust and consolidated methodology with the Ministry of Citizenship, may cause re-engineering of the management bodies of the *Cadastro Único* at the national level and, mainly, local, since the municipalities are responsible for the actions of inclusion and updating. Among the sources of data used for comparison, the *TCU* presents innovations, using payrolls of municipal and state servers (data not yet organized nationally), which can be considered a great contribution to the qualification actions already carried out by the Ministry. Therefore, the inclusion of the findings pointed out by the *TCU* in auditory process is already a coordinated and consolidated process in the Ministry.

In 2016, with the operation “X-Ray *Bolsa Familia*” of the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office, the update determinations had a 60-day deadline and were sent directly to the municipality. The Ministry of Citizenship did not receive the data to check if they were already in the audit actions carried out by the Ministry itself or by the *TCU* and *CGU* control agencies (which could better organize procedures and guidelines for families and municipalities). If the municipality did not comply with the measures could be respond administratively, civil and criminal, as the case may be.

Due to the difficulties in the operationalization of municipalities, with different capacities to attend families and infrastructure for registration processes, the non-coordination of these processes causes rework and difficulty of understanding and orientation of the Ministry to municipalities, states, and especially families. The lack of coordination between accountability institutions is analyzed in the study by Filgueiras and Aranha (2016, 2019), which analyzes the institutions of the Brazilian accountability system and procedural ecology, highlighting the difficulty of coordination between these agencies (p. 47):

The change in the system of accountability institutions in Brazil was not accompanied by an environmental change in the interactions between these institutions and was not able to produce coordinated

and cooperative actions or ensure rational sequencing of activities aimed at improving accountability. [...]

The interactions between the institutions of the accountability is bound by rigidly defined procedural competences and largely uncoordinated procedural processes, driven by political forces stemming from the critical junctures of corruption scandals and the political interests of agents.

Deepening the analysis from the interviews conducted with public servants working in the control agencies, the authors reinforce (p. 50):

The analysis of the interviews tended to reinforce the assumptions outlined in the literature review: in general, there is a visible lack of coordinated interactions and the predominance of a **competitive relationship between the institutions** - “it is a job done more or less arbitrarily without coordination among the institutions” (Respondent 2, MPF, 2014). The interactions do occur, but by way of a predatory competition between the accountability institutions, **which are greatly concerned about media attention** and usually do not focus on symbiotic cooperation and exchanges. Respondents, in general, reaffirmed that significant changes did occur in each of the institutions of the system. However, the system still lacks coordinated and joint action, thereby hampering the progress of cases. At first, the causes for the competitive logic were sought in personal explanations: **vanity and reluctance to share the merit of investigations**. Furthermore, the interactions between the institutions **responded to the political juncture**. Depending on the political juncture, the body can be open to the interactions or averse to them.

The analysis of the reports for the context of the *Cadastro Único* presents exactly a practical example of the lack of coordination between the actions of the control bodies, as already illustrated by the authors. All bodies realize cross-checks to identify omission or underreporting of income information in *Cadastro Único* and, in all cases, the way of resolution is the same: call the family for a new interview. Moreover, it is also observed how the agents' performance depends on the political context.

As the ACF's literature points out, the coalitions act in the contest of space, resources and opportunities. In the context of the political transition of 2016, we observed from the analysis of this paper, as there is a change in the performance of the control bodies, especially CGU (internal control), with determinations and recommendations focused on procedural changes in the *Cadastro Único* (like the model of self-declaration of income and selection of



beneficiaries by social programs). However, these changes have not yet occurred, and the responses of the managing Ministry do not necessarily meet the changes suggested by these bodies.

What we can conclude from the analyzed events is the confirmation of the hypothesis of change in the ACF that external and internal changes to the subsystem, such as the presidential and ministerial change in 2016 and referral of the determinations and recommendations of the control bodies, are necessary sources, given the power of authority to direct changes, but still not enough to modify the attributes of the political core of a government program. In this way, what are the changes necessary for the improvement of the *Cadastro Único* in the view of federal civil servants and national managers? What other actions and measures are needed to achieve these changes and what is the role of the control bodies in this process? How will the actors and coalitions explore these determinations and recommendations of the control bodies to boost or constrain changes to the *Cadastro Único* and the policies that use it? Issues and challenges that remain and be development in my doctoral thesis.

5 – Conclusion

The analysis of the reports, determinations and recommendations of the control bodies to the Ministry of Citizenship about *Cadastro Único*, developed in this article, allows us to verify that this coalition plays an important role in the historical trajectory of changes in the *Cadastro Único*. The performance of the control bodies, mainly using the authority strategy and system of legal and normative pressure to promote changes in the *Cadastro Único*, has the attention of the social actors, especially in a context of budgetary constraint, where there are difficulties in hiring teams. Among the various tasks and changes to be implemented, the determinations of control bodies are a priority, especially for the consequences of non-compliance, such as issuing fines to the national public policy manager and administrative, civil and criminal measures.

The study analyzed the period from 2008 to 2018. In the period from 2008 to 2015 the important performance of the control bodies was observed to support the changes driven by



the *Cadastro Único's* own management, such as the national implementation of the system totally online and the reinforcement and recognition of the *Cadastro Único* as a qualified tool for identifying and characterizing the low-income population. Factors that were important for the growth of the number of user programs of the *Cadastro Único*, especially after 2011, with the launch of the Brazil Without Misery Plan.

In the period from 2016 to 2018, there is a more active performance of the control bodies, such as the continuous and annual monitoring initiated by the Court of Accounts (*TCU* – external control) and reports, analyzes and determinations of the Office of the Comptroller General (*CGU* – internal control) that refer to procedures and management of the *Cadastro Único*, changes that impact on the basic attributes design, for example, the self-declaration model of income information and subsequent checks.

The changes that will be processed in these periods are still open. There is a significant change in the external context, policy-oriented learning (especially with the work group of data crossing to identify underreporting income in *Cadastro Único* by the families at the interview moment), agreement and negotiations (through the responses to the recommendations and determinations of the control bodies, including different understandings as to the changes that should or should not occur in the *Cadastro Único*); however, confirming the ACF hypothesis, these conditions were not enough to change the core of the single registry design, in particular, the identification model of the poor population through self-declaration of income.

The main strategy used reflects in the reports, through the use of data from the *Cadastro Único* and underlying interpretations that can reinforce its quality as an adequate tool to identify the low-income population, but also opens the way for a greater integration of this base with other Federal Government registries in order to improve efficiency, cost-effectiveness, rationalization and simplification of services, which can be a way to promote change. However, despite this resource of pressure is fundamental to get the attention of public policy makers, especially the high positions as ministers, secretaries and directors, these changes did not alter the fundamental beliefs of the design of the *Cadastro Único*.

To complement this study and as one of the objects under development in my doctoral thesis, in addition to the documentary analysis in this article, interviews will also be conducted with the key actors who work in the control body and also with the public servants

who receive and respond to these determinations and recommendations in the Ministry of Citizenship, in order to analyze the perception, whether positive or negative, of these actions as a system of pressure in the implementation and change of public policies, especially the *Cadastro Único*, that among a broader debate, there are discussions about the their role and procedures for gathering information, especially income and family composition.

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